

THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE

# Policy Focus

• • •

Special Studies on  
Palestinian Politics  
and the Peace Process

International Military Intervention:  
A Detour on the Road to  
Israeli-Palestinian Peace

Robert B. Satloff, Editor

RESEARCH MEMORANDUM

Number Forty-Five    September 2003

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

© 2003 by The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Published in 2003 in the United States of America by The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1828 L Street NW, Suite 1050, Washington, DC 20036.

## About the Authors

---

**Patrick Clawson** is deputy director of The Washington Institute and senior editor of *Middle East Quarterly*. An economist and specialist on Iran, he served previously as a senior research professor at the National Defense University's Institute for National Strategic Studies and as a research economist at the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

**Michael Eisenstadt** is a senior fellow at The Washington Institute. A reserve officer in the U.S. Army, he served on active duty in 2001–2002 at United States Central Command (USCENTCOM). He has published widely on Middle Eastern military and security issues, including *U.S. Policy in Post-Saddam Iraq: Lessons from the British Experience*, coedited with Eric Mathewson (The Washington Institute, 2003).

**Matthew Levitt** is a senior fellow at The Washington Institute specializing in terrorism and U.S. policy. Previously, he provided tactical and strategic analysis for the FBI in support of counterterrorism operations. He is the author of the 2002 Institute monograph *Targeting Terror: U.S. Policy toward Middle Eastern State Sponsors and Terrorist Organizations, Post-September 11*.

**David Makovsky** is a senior fellow at The Washington Institute, director of the Institute's Project on the Middle East Peace Process, and a contributing editor to *U.S. News and World Report*. An award-winning journalist who has covered the peace process since 1989, he has served as the executive editor of the *Jerusalem Post* and a diplomatic correspondent for *Ha'aretz*. He is also the author of *Making Peace with the PLO: The Rabin Government's Road to the Oslo Accord* (The Washington Institute with Westview Press/HarperCollins, 1996).

**Dennis Ross** is director and Ziegler distinguished fellow at The Washington Institute. His two decades in government service included tours as special Middle East coordinator in the Clinton administration, director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff in the first Bush administration, and director for Near East and South Asian affairs on the National Security Council in the Reagan administration.

**Robert Satloff** has served since May 2002 as The Washington Institute's director of policy and strategic planning. For the previous nine years, he served as the Institute's executive director. An expert on contemporary Arab and Islamic politics, he has written widely on U.S. policy toward the Arab-Israeli peace process and U.S. public diplomacy in the Middle East.

• • •

The opinions expressed in this Policy Focus are those of the authors and not necessarily those of The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, its Board of Trustees, or its Board of Advisors.

## *Introduction*

---

As of this writing, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process is enjoying what can be called an “Aqaba summer.” Nearly three years after the Palestinian uprising against Israel broke out, the two parties have taken the first steps toward restoring some semblance of calm—one hesitates to use the term “security”—and beginning, in fits and starts, the process of diplomatic reengagement.

Yet, even with the best efforts of President George W. Bush, Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon, and Palestinian prime minister Mahmoud Abbas, there is a reasonable chance that the calm will not last, that true security will not be achieved, and that the suicide bombings and lethal retaliatory strikes will resume. Under such circumstances, new (and not so new) ideas would likely emerge regarding how to “put the peace process back on track.” Even if the current process does continue, various parties may eventually propose novel ways to bolster it so as to prevent regression.

One idea that is sure to attract attention is a proposal to dispatch an international intervention force (IIF) to impose or maintain calm between Israelis and Palestinians. In recent months, a wide array of interested parties has called for consideration of such an intervention. These include individuals who do not normally share similar views on either Middle Eastern politics or military and security issues: for example, UN secretary-general Kofi Annan; two influential Republican senators, Armed Services Committee chairman John Warner and Foreign Relations Committee chairman Richard Lugar; French foreign minister Dominique de Villepin; and Palestinian foreign minister Nabil Sha’ath.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman and NATO secretary-general Lord Robertson have both raised the possibility that NATO itself might consider sending alliance troops to the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>2</sup> Although there has been no groundswell of approval for the concept of intervention, the fact that such disparate voices have commended it in principle or called for its immediate implementation suggests that support for the idea may, under certain circumstances, be stronger than it appears. In particular, if the Aqaba summer turns sour, international intervention may attract more adherents.

*Robert Satloff*

To be sure, advocates of intervention do not all mean the same thing when they endorse the principle. Generally, they can be divided into two groups: those who advocate intervention to impose peace, and those who advocate intervention to implement peace. The former do not believe that Israelis and Palestinians are willing or able to disengage from their current conflict, let alone negotiate a fair resolution of their dispute; they call for international intervention (in Sha'ath's terms, an "interposition force") to separate the parties and provide breathing room for future diplomacy. The latter group of advocates, although no less pessimistic about the prospects for peace, are more realistic about the political impracticality of imposing peace on recalcitrant local parties via an international force. At the same time, these advocates believe that Israelis and Palestinians would be willing and able to implement a future peace accord only with a robust international presence looking over their shoulders. According to this view, an IIF would ensure that the parties comply fully with their obligations, thereby preventing agreements from unraveling in the execution phase (as happened with the Oslo Accords).

There are further divisions within these two broad groups. For example, some advocate deploying an IIF even without the agreement of both principals, arguing that the urgency of the crisis is so great that the "international community" must act before more lives are lost and the conflict spreads beyond Israel and Palestine. Currently, these "activist interveners" constitute a minority; most advocates of internationalization recognize the virtually insurmountable complications that would result from trying to inject thousands of third-party forces into an environment in which the local regimes (not to mention the radical fringes) oppose the deployment. Yet, one can imagine greater support emerging for this sort of intervention if the level of violence were to increase significantly or if neighboring states were to see even a moderate spillover of violence inside their own borders.

Calls for the establishment of an international "trusteeship" for Palestine constitute yet another form of activist intervention. Here, the goal is more grandiose: not only to redress Israel's inability to pacify the region or the Palestinians' ineptitude at imposing order and fighting terrorism, but also to replace the entire Palestinian Authority (PA) with an international regime that would chaperone a new set of Pales-

tinian political institutions toward the maturity necessary for statehood. The case for trusteeship has been made most cogently by Ambassador Martin Indyk, former assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs and founding executive director of The Washington Institute.<sup>3</sup> Few have endorsed the idea, especially since it implies the political bankruptcy of the new Palestinian leadership on which so many hopes rest. Yet, calls for trusteeship may gain traction if the Abbas government falls apart or the Aqaba summer turns into an explosive autumn or a bloody winter.

These distinctions notwithstanding, virtually all advocates of international intervention are animated by the same two principles: first, that the continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute poses a threat to both regional and global peace, and second, that Israelis and Palestinians cannot achieve a negotiated resolution of their dispute without outside intervention. Though one principle does not necessarily imply the other, they usually run in tandem. Even with the heightened urgency attached to Middle East peacemaking by the Bush administration in the wake of Operation Iraqi Freedom, opposition to these two principles remains strong within U.S. government circles. This fact alone, however, may not impede a rush to endorse some form of international intervention if the conflict takes a dramatic turn for the worse.

Given the possibility that intervention may eventually assume a more important role in the policy debate over the Arab-Israeli peace process, The Washington Institute asked its senior research staff to examine the issue from a range of historical, operational, and political angles. This collection of essays is the result of that effort.

Part I examines the historical and global context of internationalization. For example, useful lessons can be drawn from the rich history of international deployments in the Arab-Israeli arena. Similarly, the experience of recent interventions in civil conflicts around the world provides important context for the Israeli-Palestinian case. Part II examines the challenges that an IIF would face in executing two complementary but not identical functions: fighting terror and ensuring security. Part III places the idea of international intervention in its proper political context. The essays therein address the public receptivity to the idea (or lack thereof) among Israelis and Palestinians. They also

*Robert Satloff*

assess the potential impact of intervention on the long-term process of Palestinian political development, which President Bush and Palestinian reformers themselves have identified as critical to successful peacemaking.

The principal conclusions from these essays can be summarized as follows. First, the key ingredient for a successful peace effort is not an IIF—regardless of how robust its presence or how broad its mandate—but rather the willingness of each side to honor its commitments to prevent violence. Deployments of international forces in the Arab-Israeli arena have succeeded only when the two parties themselves have been strongly and actively committed to implementing their own previously reached peace agreement.

Second, the prerequisites for a successful deployment, even in the event of a political agreement by the two sides, are daunting. Given the experience of recent interventions around the globe, a deployment to the Israeli-Palestinian arena would require sufficient resources and a strong enough mandate to pursue rejectionist militants for an indefinite period; specifically, a deployment of 34,000–85,000 troops would likely be required. Even so, it is unlikely that such intervention would resolve the “final status” political issues at the heart of the conflict or redress the intercommunal hostility that has worsened considerably in recent years.

Third, an IIF could not possibly undertake the counterterrorism prerogatives of Israel and the counterterrorism responsibilities of the PA without the prior agreement of both parties. Even if acceptable rules of engagement were ironed out between the Israeli military, Palestinian security forces, and international troop commanders, an IIF would still have to meet the following requirements:

- be large enough to demonstrate political commitment, yet nimble enough to respond to multiple challenges in multiple settings;
- be deft enough to establish a network of local agents, yet forceful enough to take quick and decisive action against the full infrastructure of terrorist organizations;
- secure sufficient political backing from contributing nations to deal with potential setbacks (e.g., terrorist attacks; retaliatory strikes that go awry);

- develop a viable “exit strategy”—that is, a plan to root out terrorism so thoroughly, to build up local counterterrorism capabilities so efficiently, and to stabilize and reform the PA so effectively that the West Bank and Gaza do not slip back into violence once international forces depart.

Fourth, in a purely military sense, there is little reason to believe that an IIF would do an appreciably better job than the Israel Defense Forces at fighting terrorism or ensuring security. On various relevant tasks—including arresting wanted men, confiscating weapons, policing flashpoints, and dismantling the socioeconomic infrastructure of terrorist organizations—the uninspiring record of interventions elsewhere does not inspire confidence that even U.S.-led forces in the West Bank and Gaza could fulfill their mission. In fact, deploying an IIF could have negative military repercussions, such as introducing tension into the U.S.-Israeli strategic relationship; increasing the already significant level of anti-Americanism among Palestinians and the wider Arab and Muslim worlds; and transforming the United States from mediator to participant in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Fifth, from a political perspective, opposition to an IIF is deep and strong among Israelis, who would reject the idea in almost all conceivable circumstances. Although many moderate Palestinians support the idea, such views are conditioned on international forces being deployed along the 1967 ceasefire lines; deployment inside the West Bank and Gaza would be viewed as replacing one foreign occupation with another. Under certain circumstances, Israelis might reluctantly accept a force composed entirely of U.S. personnel, but this is precisely the structure that Palestinians oppose the most. Therefore, unless an IIF deployment produced quick results—for Israelis, a speedy end to terrorism; for Palestinians, a rapid end to the Israeli occupation—it would likely lead to the worst-case scenario, provoking enmity from both the Israeli and Palestinian publics.

Sixth, in a diplomatic sense, the deployment of an IIF would almost surely delay the day when peace itself would become possible. That is, such intervention would imply that outside parties could be goaded into shouldering the responsibilities that Palestinians themselves must assume as a prerequisite for peace. Indeed, one likely re-



*Robert Satloff*

percussion of an IIF would be the early demise of the Palestinian political reform movement, which has been the most hopeful trend to emerge from Palestinian society since the beginning of the uprising in September 2000.

Taken together, the analysis in the following essays constitutes a cautionary note regarding the wisdom and practicality of deploying an intervention force to the Israeli-Palestinian arena. Three years of violence have not dampened hopes among many Israelis and Palestinians that the two sides can—with the support, not the interference, of outside actors—resurrect the possibility of resolving their conflict through negotiations.

*Robert Satloff*  
*August 1, 2003*

#### Notes

---

1. On Annan, see Akiva Eldar, “Kofi Annan Calls for International ‘Buffer’ Force,” *Ha’aretz* (Tel Aviv), June 13, 2003. On Warner, see his June 11, 2003, remarks on the Senate floor (available online at <http://warner.senate.gov/pressoffice/pressreleases/20030611.htm>) and on CNN (interview by Wolf Blitzer; available online at [www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0306/11/bn.09.html](http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0306/11/bn.09.html)). On Lugar, see his interview with Tony Snow, *Fox News Sunday*, Fox Television News, June 15, 2003 (available online at [www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,89451,00.html](http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,89451,00.html)). On de Villepin, see “Israel Rejects French Peace Plan,” Agence France Presse, June 16, 2003 (available online at [www.news.com.au/common/printpage/0,6093,6607113,00.html](http://www.news.com.au/common/printpage/0,6093,6607113,00.html)). On Sha’ath, see “Mideast Peacekeeping Force Plan Premature: EU’s Solana,” Agence France Presse, June 16, 2003 (available online at <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/030616/323/e2di0.html>).
2. See Thomas Friedman, “A Way Out of the Middle East Impasse,” *New York Times*, August 24, 2001. See also Lord Robertson’s remarks in Paul Ames “NATO May Play Role in Mideast Peace Bid,” Associated Press, June 4, 2003.
3. See Martin Indyk, “A Trusteeship for Palestine?” *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 3 (May–June 2003), pp. 51–66.

PART I

---

# LESSONS FROM HISTORY

## International Forces in the Arab-Israeli Arena: A Brief History\*

Calls for the deployment of international forces in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are usually based on several assumptions: that the two parties are mired in a “cycle of violence”; that they are unlikely to achieve peace and security bilaterally; and that a third party—robust, well armed, and empowered with a broad operational mandate—is needed either to create the circumstances necessary for diplomacy or to ensure compliance with commitments once they are made. At their core, these arguments place great weight on the role of international forces in forging and maintaining peace. Yet, such analysis runs counter to the experience of the various international forces that have been deployed in the Arab-Israeli arena over the past half-century.

Since the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, international forces have been sent to intervene between the parties on seven occasions. Five of these were under a UN mandate; on the other two occasions, “coalitions of the willing” were assembled and dispatched without a UN mandate.

---

\*This essay is drawn in part from Robert Satloff and Rachel Stroumsa, “A UN ‘Protection’ Force for Palestinians: Background and Implications,” *PeaceWatch* no. 296 (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, November 17, 2000). Data is also derived from the official websites and documentation of the UN and its various peacekeeping operations; from the website of the Temporary International Force in Hebron; from the annual reports of the director-general of the Multinational Force and Observers; and from Michael Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

*Robert Satloff*

### **UN-Authorized Deployments**

*UNTSO.* The UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) was established in May 1948 by Security Council Resolution 50 to help the UN mediator and the Truce Commission oversee the cessation of hostilities in Palestine. Since then, UNTSO has performed various tasks entrusted to it by the Security Council, including supervision of the General Armistice Agreements of 1949 and observation of the ceasefire in the Suez Canal area and the Golan Heights following the Six Day War in 1967. Although its mission has long been taken over by other peacekeeping forces, its bureaucracy persists. The UNTSO website states that the organization currently “maintains a presence” in Sinai and “assists and cooperates” with the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in Golan and the UN International Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Headquartered in Jerusalem, with field offices in Beirut and Damascus, UNTSO currently comprises 154 military observers and 215 civilian staff members (113 of the civilians are local, while the remaining 102 hail from 23 different countries), all under the command of an Irish major-general. Its current annual UN appropriation is \$25.9 million.

*UNEF I.* The first UN Emergency Force (UNEF) was established in November 1956 to supervise the cessation of hostilities in Sinai, including the withdrawal of French, Israeli, and British forces from Egyptian territory. Interestingly, although the local parties supported the formation of UNEF, approval for the force had to be obtained through a General Assembly resolution after it was blocked by political maneuvering among members of the Security Council. After the tripartite withdrawal, UNEF served as a buffer between Egyptian and Israeli forces and helped to safeguard the passage of Israeli shipping through the Straits of Tiran. Initially, UNEF’s 6,073 military personnel were deployed along the Suez Canal and the Sinai Peninsula, and later along the Armistice Demarcation Line in the Gaza area and on the Egyptian side of the international border in Sinai.

On May 18, 1967, UN secretary-general U Thant consented to an Egyptian request for the prompt removal of UNEF. Thant’s decision was based on both legal and practical considerations. He did not feel that UNEF could legitimately remain on Egyptian territory over Cairo’s objections. Moreover, given that Egyptian military units had taken over

a number of UNEF posts on May 17 and 18, Thant concluded that the force's "effectiveness as a buffer and as a presence had already vanished."<sup>1</sup> After UNEF's withdrawal, the Gulf of Aqaba was closed to Israeli shipping, which Israel interpreted as proof of the Security Council's fecklessness and unwillingness to honor its commitments.

*UNEF II.* In October 1973, Security Council Resolutions 340 and 341 established a second UNEF to supervise the ceasefire between Egyptian and Israeli forces. The new UNEF commander served as chairman of the Egyptian-Israeli military disengagement negotiations. Following two U.S.-brokered disengagement accords in January 1974 and September 1975, UNEF II was charged with supervising the redeployment of Egyptian and Israeli forces as well as controlling the buffer zones established under the accords. The force was stationed in the Suez Canal area and, later, the Sinai Peninsula, with headquarters in Ismailia.

Although UNEF II was initially authorized at 7,000 troops, several countries withdrew their units in late 1974. Eventually, the force stabilized at 4,000 troops, all from nonpermanent members of the Security Council (Sweden, Indonesia, Ghana, Senegal, and Finland). Over the years, troops from other countries such as Canada and Ireland rotated in and out of UNEF II. One positive aspect of the force was that Egyptian and Israeli officers were attached to it and helped carry out its monitoring activities.

Following the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, the Soviet Union vetoed a resolution authorizing UNEF II's extension, and the Security Council opted not to provide an alternative mechanism. This prompted the United States to take the lead in creating a non-UN peacekeeping force (the Multinational Force and Observers, discussed later in this essay) after UNEF II expired in July 1979.

*UNDOF.* The UN Disengagement Observer Force was established in May 1974 by Security Council Resolution 350 to maintain the ceasefire between Israel and Syria, to supervise the disengagement of Israeli and Syrian forces, and to oversee the areas of separation and limitation, as provided in the Syrian-Israeli Agreement on Disengagement. UNDOF's mandate has since been renewed every six months. The force is deployed in the area of separation along the border; although the border is policed by Syrian authorities, no military forces other than UNDOF are permitted within the buffer area. As of June 2003, UNDOF was manned by 1,060

*Robert Satloff*

civilian and military personnel, with troops from six countries commanded by a Swedish major-general and assisted by 78 military observers and 130 international and local civilian staff. Its most recent annual UN appropriation was \$40.8 million.

For decades, UNDOF has operated nearly without incident. Virtually all analysts agree that the reason for this calm is not the deterrent power of UNDOF but rather the strong interest that Syria and Israel have in maintaining a quiet border, an interest that is itself born of Israel's own deterrent power. Although Syria and Israel have battled in Lebanon over the years (either directly or through proxies), they have long avoided a direct clash over the Golan that could precipitate full-scale war.

*UNIFIL.* The UN International Force in Lebanon was established in March 1978 under Security Council Resolution 425 in response to a protest submitted by the Lebanese government against the incursion of Israeli forces. The purposes of the force were: 1) to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon; 2) to restore international peace and security; and 3) to assist the government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area. Yet, prior to Israel's May 2000 withdrawal from Lebanon, Israelis criticized UNIFIL for failing to prevent Palestinian and Lebanese guerrillas from attacking Israeli soldiers and civilians.

Following the Israeli withdrawal, the Security Council accepted Lebanon's request to extend UNIFIL's mandate for a further interim period. Although UNIFIL was dispatched southward, it has yet to deploy fully across the length of the border. For its part, Lebanon argued for years that it would not dispatch its forces along the border so long as there was no comprehensive peace with Israel, leaving critical areas effectively under Hizballah control. In May 2003, however, the Lebanese army reportedly began to deploy alongside Hizballah, a move that resulted from U.S. insistence rather than UNIFIL importuning. Indeed, UNIFIL spokesmen are on record praising Hizballah's positive, stabilizing role in the area.<sup>2</sup>

### **Non-UN Deployments**

*MFO.* When the UN Security Council opted not to form a peacekeeping force in support of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty (as envisioned

in the treaty annex), the United States assumed the responsibility of organizing and leading such a force. Established in August 1981, the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) was tasked with several missions: to observe and verify compliance with the treaty's detailed limitations on military personnel and equipment; to report violations of these limitations; and to ensure freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran. Headquartered in Rome, with a field command in Sinai and liaison offices in Tel Aviv and Cairo, the MFO is composed of a Civilian Observer Unit as well as military staff. In 2003, eleven countries contributed personnel to the MFO, with costs shared equally by Egypt, Israel, and the United States; additional monetary contributions were made by Germany, Japan, and Switzerland. The force's budget for 2003 was \$51 million—half what it was in 1981.

Over the years, the MFO has observed and reported several treaty violations by both sides; in all cases, the problems were resolved immediately or after a period of dialogue arranged by the MFO. The success of this process has generally been attributed to two factors. First, both parties remain confident in their respective relationships with the United States, as demonstrated by the fact that the MFO has U.S. leadership (an American civilian serves as director-general alongside the non-American field commander). Second, both parties have a strong interest in maintaining the military aspects of their treaty regardless of fluctuations in their bilateral political relationship. Indeed, the most serious challenge the MFO has faced is its own success. Two decades of border quiet, combined with the competing needs of U.S. forces around the world, led the Pentagon to begin substituting National Guard units for U.S. Army troops in January 2002. More recently, the Pentagon proposed reducing the U.S. troop contribution from its current level (nearly one-half of the MFO's total 1,836 personnel) to about one-third of the total force.

Although unofficial voices, especially in Egypt, periodically call for the dismantling of the MFO because of the perception that it besmirches Egyptian sovereignty, the Egyptian and Israeli governments have consistently sought to maintain the force in its current form. In particular, both countries strive to preserve the robust U.S. presence in the MFO. This presence is perceived as the glue keeping the enterprise together; it is also seen as a signal of Washington's commitment

*Robert Satloff*

to engagement in the Middle East peace process and to its bilateral relationships with the two parties.

*TIPH.* Following the massacre of Palestinian worshippers in the Patriarchs' Cave (or al-Haram al-Ibrahimi) by an Israeli settler on February 25, 1994, the Security Council passed Resolution 904, which called for "measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians throughout the occupied territory, including, *inter alia*, a temporary international or foreign presence." Despite this resolution, the UN did not dispatch an international force to the area. In May 1994, however, the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH) was deployed without a UN mandate following an agreement between Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and the three participating European powers (initially, Norway, Denmark, and Italy). The original deployment consisted of 160 lightly armed observers who were tasked with promoting stability in Hebron and providing its Palestinian residents with a sense of security. TIPH was the first armed observer force ever permitted in the territories by Israel, and when its mandate expired in August 1994, Israel did not agree to extend it.

The September 1995 Oslo II accord envisioned a special role for Hebron and a new TIPH. On May 9, 1996, a second, smaller TIPH was created to "assist in promoting stability and in monitoring and reporting the efforts to maintain normal life in the city of Hebron." Subsequently, the TIPH mandate was extended every three months until the signing of the Multinational TIPH Agreement on January 21, 1997, which allowed for an increase in the number of TIPH personnel from 60 to 180 (the actual deployment remains at 60), with three additional participating countries (Turkey, Switzerland, and Sweden). The 1997 agreement also maintained TIPH's mandate, stating that the main task of the organization's all-civilian staff is "to monitor and report on misconduct by either side in the conflict"; TIPH is "not allowed to intervene directly in incidents and has no military or police functions."

In general, TIPH has been viewed as inconsequential, injecting little confidence into the Hebron cauldron. Interestingly, despite its claim to neutrality, the 1997 TIPH agreement specifically states that the organization is charged with helping to "promote stability and an



appropriate environment conducive to the well-being of the Palestinians of Hebron and their economic development.” Indeed, the TIPH website shows the organization supporting an extensive program of “community relations,” including social, cultural, and educational activities, all aimed at Hebron’s Palestinian population. That an international observer presence is, by design, mandated to promote one party’s “economic development” while remaining impartial to security breaches by both parties is a problematic precedent, to say the least.

### **Conclusion**

The record of past UN deployments in the Arab-Israeli arena shows that they have usually been either irrelevant or ineffective. For example, UNEF backed down in the face of adversity and did not protect Israel’s right of passage through the Straits of Tiran. UNIFIL has failed to fulfill its limited mandate of impeding Hizballah activities in southern Lebanon. In no case has an international force been deployed in a manner that would facilitate a cessation of hostilities in the area. Nevertheless, such deployments have usually been long-term operations; the fact that UNTSO observers remain deployed along the Egyptian-Israeli border despite the “truce” of 1949 having been superseded by a full peace treaty (itself nearly a quarter-century old) says much about the bureaucratic tenacity of such institutions.

Only two of the seven international deployments are generally perceived as successes: UNDOF in the Golan and the MFO in Sinai. The reason for their success is simple: more than anything else, UNDOF and the MFO represent the commitment of Syria, Israel, and Egypt to maintaining calm along their respective borders. The two multinational forces are manifestations of that strategic decision, not the reason for it.

Hence, if any lesson is to be drawn from the experience of past international deployments in the Arab-Israeli arena, it is this: the key to peace is not the presence of a multinational force (regardless of how robust it is or how broad its mandate), but rather the willingness of each side to implement its commitments and prevent violence. An international force is more likely to succeed if the two sides in question have already reached a settlement, in which case its main mission is to monitor implementation of the agreement. If the two sides have not agreed on a settlement, history suggests that an international force

*Robert Satloff*

would lack the mandate and capabilities necessary to intervene and impose an end to the conflict. In other words, there is no model for the successful deployment of international forces in the Arab-Israeli arena.

### Notes

---

1. Office of the Secretary-General, UN, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Force* (UN General Assembly document A/6730), June 26, 1967.
2. See, for example, UNIFIL spokesman Timor Goksel's comments in May 2000: "Today's calm in south Lebanon is due to the Lebanese army, Lebanese intelligence and Hezbollah. Hezbollah's local intelligence-gathering has no match. Their input cannot be ignored at all." See "Lebanese Army Ensuring Calm in South with Hezbollah's Help—UN Official," *Daily Star* (Beirut), May 6, 2003. □

## International Intervention Forces in Intercommunal Conflicts: Lessons for the Middle East

The past decade has seen many international interventions in intercommunal and separatist conflicts. International forces have been deployed to countries such as Rwanda, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, and the UN has on three occasions assumed complete responsibility for the administration of a territory: in Cambodia (1992–1993), in the eastern Slavonia region of Croatia (1997), and in East Timor (1999–2002).<sup>1</sup> Three cases are of particular relevance for the Israeli-Palestinian situation: Somalia (the largest intervention in an Arab League country), and Bosnia and Kosovo (both of which did much to shape European thinking about interventions).

One case that might seem relevant is not: East Timor. Despite having to form an entirely new government in an underdeveloped country that had just undergone a bitter intercommunal conflict, the UN mission in East Timor eventually became one of the organization's most successful interventions of the past decade. Yet, the East Timor case is of doubtful relevance to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict because it lacked one key ingredient that so characterizes the situation in the Middle East: the presence of violent domestic opposition to peace. To be sure, pro-Indonesia militias rampaged through East Timor in August 1999 (before and, especially, after the UN-organized referendum on the territory's future), and the UN Assistance Mission in East Timor was unable to prevent the killing of about 1,000 people in a population of 750,000. Yet, the militias responsible for the violence were largely

*Patrick Clawson*

encouraged by the remaining Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) and government personnel; they never enjoyed substantial support among the East Timorese population.<sup>2</sup> Given that a principal obstacle to peace in the Palestinian case—and a central rationale for the deployment of international forces—is the violent opposition of such domestic groups as Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the East Timor example is not particularly applicable.

### **Somalia**

After the failure of the first UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I, launched in April 1992), the Security Council adopted Resolution 794 on December 3, 1992, establishing the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) and authorizing it under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to “use all necessary means to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia.” The next day, U.S. defense secretary Richard Cheney stated, “There will be no question in the mind of any of the faction leaders in Somalia that we would have the ability to impose a stable situation if it came to that, without their cooperation”—a bold statement of intention that was backed up by a massive commitment of resources, vastly superior to what the local combatants possessed.<sup>3</sup>

UNITAF grew rapidly to include over 38,000 soldiers from twenty-three countries (including 25,000 from the United States) before handing responsibility to UNOSOM II, which was authorized by Security Council Resolution 814 on March 26, 1993. UNOSOM II marked the first time a UN-managed military contingent was explicitly authorized to use force under Chapter VII. It generally included approximately 20,000 soldiers, though at one point it reached a peak of 29,284. It, too, was supported by U.S. combat troops, first by a 1,175-man Quick Reaction Force and later by a 17,000-man force in late 1993. U.S. combat forces were withdrawn in March 1994, while UNOSOM II forces were withdrawn a year later, ending UN intervention in Somalia. In short, although the United States and the UN committed substantial forces to the Somalia operation, it nevertheless ended in abject failure. A prudent planner might conclude that any international operation in the Israeli-Palestinian theater would require a proportion-

ally larger force—many thousands of soldiers—committed from the start to remain deployed for several years.

UNOSOM II was charged with monitoring the cessation of hostilities, preventing any resumption of violence, seizing the weapons of unauthorized armed elements, assisting in the repatriation of refugees, and engaging in various vaguely defined nation-building tasks. The UN regarded disarmament as a *sine qua non* for other portions of UNOSOM II's mandate; the military force was to provide a secure and peaceful environment so that political operations could proceed. Shortly after UNOSOM II began its disarmament program, however, its forces came under attack. One particularly important incident was the June 5, 1993, attack by the Mohammed Farah Aideed faction, which killed twenty-four Pakistani peacekeepers. In response, Security Council Resolution 837 was adopted calling for the apprehension of those responsible for the attack. The subsequent large-scale, U.S.-led manhunt ended in a disastrous battle in south Mogadishu on October 3–4, 1993—the well-known “Black Hawk Down” episode, which led the United States to withdraw its troops from the country. Faced with declining support for an ambitious mission, the Security Council adopted Resolution 897 in February 1994, diluting the mission to “encourag[ing] and assist[ing]” the local parties “to achieve disarmament and respect the ceasefire.” This sequence of events led many to believe that U.S. and UN forces can be forced to retreat and eventually abandon a given mission if they sustain casualties. It is worth considering whether Palestinian militants would seek to test this theory if an international force were deployed in the West Bank and Gaza.

### **Bosnia**

Around the same time that the Somalia operations were unfolding, the UN was also active in attempting to halt violence in Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia. Following the February 21, 1992, decision to create UN Protected Areas in the Serb-held portions of Croatia, the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) began deploying in Croatia (April 1992) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (November 1992).<sup>4</sup> The force's initial mission was to protect humanitarian aid shipments and monitor the overall situation. On May 6, 1993, however, Security Council Resolution 824 declared six cities to be “safe areas”; the following month, Reso-

*Patrick Clawson*

lution 836 ordered UNPROFOR to protect those areas, authorizing it to use force under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

Yet, those cities were anything but safe, as seen in the continued siege of such prominent areas as Sarajevo. In July 1995, Serbian forces overran Srebrenica, another “safe area,” and slaughtered thousands of Bosnians. The UN’s focus during 1992–1994 was on maintaining its impartiality. Lord Owen, former cochairman of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY)—the main forum for peace negotiations—has described the prime importance he assigned to remaining neutral despite massive Bosnian Serb violations of ceasefires and UN orders. Moreover, he has criticized the United States for not “accept[ing] the limitation of impartiality on the UN’s military involvement.”<sup>5</sup> That a prominent European politician reflecting on his UN experience would focus on impartiality in the face of genocide must surely dishearten any Israelis considering whether to stake a significant portion of their security on a European or UN intervention force.

A further discouraging factor in the UNPROFOR experience is that, despite the Security Council’s explicit authorization of the use of force, UN authorities were extraordinarily reluctant to assert themselves militarily. Lord Owen has made caustic, almost dismissive remarks about those who suggest that the UN should have made more use of its authority. According to him, the UN had to remain in the good graces of the Bosnian Serb authorities; UNPROFOR would have required substantial military resources in order to fulfill its mission as written, and the major members of the UN made clear that they had no intention of providing such forces. The result was that UNPROFOR personnel were unable to protect themselves consistently, let alone the inhabitants of the UN-declared safe areas. Given this precedent, Israelis and Palestinians have little reason to believe that the international community would enforce any fine sentiments or explicit commitments it issued in support of intervention.

In late 1995, a ceasefire interrupted the long-running hostilities in the Balkans.<sup>6</sup> One way to read that development is to attribute it to international intervention; in August 1995, one month after the massacre in Srebrenica, NATO forces staged 6,000 combat air sorties against Bosnian Serb forces. More important, however, was the changing balance of power between the combatants. The Bosnian Serb army shrank

by 25 percent in 1995, while the Bosnian Muslim army grew by 50 percent, and the Croats developed their own powerful, armed force. Indeed, August 1995 was marked by a Croatian offensive that captured all of the Serb-held areas of Croatia, with a de facto ethnic cleansing leading to the exodus of 200,000 Serbs. At the same time, Bosnian Muslim forces launched an offensive that reduced the Serb-held share of Bosnia to less than the 50 percent that had long been proposed in peace talks. Carl Bildt, the Swede who succeeded Lord Owen as ICFY cochairman in 1995, offered yet another explanation for the ceasefire:

The Bosnian Serbs had made clear all through 1995 that if they could only get their 'Republika Srpska' recognized within a thin Bosnian structure, and be given a more compact territory than the Contact Group so far had been willing to offer, they wanted peace as soon as possible.□.□.□The real political importance of the NATO bombing campaign was thus rather to bring home to the Bosnian Muslim leadership the limits of what NATO and the United States were prepared to do for them.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, the actions and decisions of the parties themselves were the key variable, while the international community's role was distinctly secondary—contrary to the impression in some circles that the West imposed peace in Bosnia and presumably could do the same in the Israeli-Palestinian arena.

After the ceasefire began in October 1995, November negotiations led to the Dayton Peace Agreement. One month later, UNPROFOR was replaced by the NATO-controlled multinational Implementation Force (IFOR), which was itself transformed into the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in December 1996. A High Representative was appointed in November 1995 as well (initially, Carl Bildt). Europe and Washington had diametrically different conceptions of the respective roles of these actors. The Europeans saw the High Representative as embodying political control over the peace operation and ensuring the implementation of political and economic steps that were central to the mission's success. In contrast, Washington emphasized the importance of a robust security force. Such disagreement over the relative roles of security and politics seems to have become a regular feature of joint U.S.-European intervention; it would hardly be sur-

*Patrick Clawson*

prising if these sorts of differences were to emerge in the Israeli-Palestinian arena as well.

Bildt himself evaluated the record of SFOR and the High Representative to be “a mixed success” because “instead of a gradual transfer of more and more responsibilities to the institutions and parties of Bosnia itself, the consolidation period [1997–1998] has seen a gradual increase in the powers and functions of the international community in the country.”<sup>8</sup> For instance, in August 1997, NATO authorized SFOR to use force in shutting down media outlets that incited violence. Despite its increasing authority, however, the international community was unable to reconcile the antagonists. As Bildt noted, “There seems to be no limit to the ingenuity of Croat authorities when it comes to finding ways of blocking the Serbs who want to return to their former homes in the country.”<sup>9</sup> This evaluation is worth bearing in mind when considering the prospects of imposing implementation of a future accord concerning Israeli settlements and Palestinian refugees.

### **Kosovo**

In the late 1990s, Serbia’s persecution of the Kosovars led to protracted international negotiations regarding the deployment of an active peace-keeping force. The failure of those negotiations resulted in NATO’s intensive bombing campaign in March–June 1999. Once Serbia accepted a settlement, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1244 on June 10, 1999, which put sovereignty over Kosovo firmly in the hands of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).<sup>10</sup> Resolution 1244 also mandated a humanitarian effort led by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, a reconstruction effort led by the European Union, and institution-building efforts led by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with security to be provided by the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR). In other words, there was intrusive and extensive international supervision of the conflict zone.

Nevertheless, UNMIK went out of its way to avoid any impression that it was imposing a settlement on Kosovo. UNMIK’s political managers—especially its head, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bernard Kouchner—maintained ambiguity regarding the final status of Kosovo, avoiding definitive answers to questions about its future independence and borders. These delicate questions were



left unresolved in order to bring along uncompromising rivals who would otherwise have resorted to violence. Indeed, the Kosovo experience demonstrated that the international community cannot impose a settlement on bitter rivals; it can only create conditions for peaceful resolution of the dispute by the parties themselves.

The Security Council, NATO, and most Western governments expected UNMIK to move directly into Kosovo in June 1999 and, in short order, establish a working local administration. This proved impossible, however. UNMIK could not recruit and field thousands of international civil servants quickly enough to restore urgently needed public services, so it decided to organize and supervise a civil administration staffed by Kosovars. Yet, this process was seriously impeded by the murderous rivalry between Kosovar moderates and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), a loose collection of secretive paramilitary bands. Because the KLA was hunting Kosovar Albanians whom it regarded as collaborators (or as simply too cooperative with the Serbs), UNMIK moved cautiously. Its strategy was to foster support for peace and the civil administration, which included drawing in the KLA by giving it a share of the spoils in the new structure. At the same time, KFOR was ordered to disarm the KLA. Yet, some KLA elements refused to be drawn in or to disarm. Because these extremists threatened to disrupt the fragile peace, the full weight of KFOR and the UNMIK police had to be brought down on them. Indeed, isolating and combating the extremists who opposed the peace process became one of KFOR and UNMIK's major preoccupations—an important precedent to bear in mind when considering the Israeli-Palestinian case.

In January 2003, more than three and half years after assuming control over the civil administration of Kosovo, UNMIK estimated that international civil servants still held 40 percent of the “competencies” in the territory, which is UN-speak for positions of authority.<sup>11</sup> The target for 2003 has been to reduce this share to 20 percent, even though there has been no progress toward reconciliation between the Serbian and Albanian populations of Kosovo or between the Kosovars and Serbia. Indeed, UNMIK's goal is simply peaceful coexistence, not reconciliation. In other words, the UN-run administration has proved to be a long-term proposition, with no appreciable impact on reducing hostilities between the parties.

*Patrick Clawson*

### **Lessons for the Israeli-Palestinian Arena**

The experiences in Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo suggest several lessons for those considering international intervention in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

- Pursuing militants in the absence of a political settlement is a losing strategy. Somalia showed that the goal of establishing security and peace is insufficient. A political settlement has to be reached before an international force can enjoy the local support required for success.
- Although massive international pressure played an essential role in producing ceasefires in Bosnia and Kosovo, SFOR and KFOR were unable to implement agreements other than those reached by the parties themselves. The international community has not imposed agreements in those cases; rather, it has prodded the parties into adopting and slowly implementing agreements. Moreover, in both cases, the international presence has failed to achieve understandings regarding anything more than simple coexistence. “Permanent status” issues have been left unresolved and, in some cases, unaddressed; many fear that focusing on such issues would inflame militants on all sides.
- Some extremists will actively oppose any international force and will use violence against those in their community who cooperate with it. Hence, neutralizing these militant rejectionists is vital to the success of an international force and requires a major commitment of resources. Failure in this regard, as occurred in Somalia, will cause an international mission to fall apart.
- Observers must be given the resources and political support to use force if they are to stop determined extremists. For example, UNPROFOR was irrelevant, at times even pernicious, giving a false sense of hope to locals and creating the impression that more serious efforts to promote peace were unnecessary. The closest analogue in the Israeli-Palestinian context is the largely irrelevant Temporary International Presence in Hebron (see preceding chapter).
- International forces have been largely unsuccessful in persuading parties to implement those portions of peace accords that require compromise. For example, little has been done to facilitate the

return of refugees or to dismantle illegal institutions in the Bosnia-Kosovo arenas. Local parties have proved quite resourceful at blocking implementation of measures that they resent.

- International forces have not had much success in mitigating intercommunal hatred. This fact is worrisome because it suggests that peace is sustainable only so long as an international force is present, and that war and genocide could flare up once this force leaves. The international community has never found an effective means of dissipating such hatred.

The overall lesson of the UN deployments in Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo is that the requirements for an effective international intervention in the Israeli-Palestinian arena are daunting. Such an intervention would succeed only if preceded by an agreement reached by the parties themselves, rather than one imposed by fiat. Moreover, an international force would require sufficient resources, a robust mandate to pursue militant rejectionists, and a commitment to remain deployed indefinitely. Even if these prerequisites were met, there is little chance that such an intervention would ease the hostility between the two sides.

For some, the above lessons will suggest that international efforts would be better directed at securing a commitment to peace from the parties themselves, rather than dispatching an international intervention force. For others, these lessons may provide a realistic evaluation of what to expect from an intervention in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—an evaluation that, they would argue, could increase the chances of successfully implementing a peace agreement.

## Notes

---

1. The only case prior to the past decade was in the Irian Jaya (then known as West Papua) region of Indonesia, which the UN controlled from 1962 to 1963.
2. After the October 25, 1999, creation of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and the November 1 withdrawal of the TNI, there was little political violence in East Timor. In contrast, considerable violence persisted in West Timor, especially in the camps housing East Timorese refugees. Moreover, although a few violent episodes occurred near the East Timor–West Timor border during UNTAET’s initial months of service, such incidents tapered off and then effectively ended after the January 2001 launch of joint UNTAET-TNI border security operations.

*Patrick Clawson*

3. Quoted in John Hillen, *Blue Helmets: The Strategy of UN Military Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1998), pp. 186–187. The following account of the Somalia operations draws heavily on Hillen, pp. 183–223.
4. The following account draws heavily on David Owen, *Balkan Odyssey* (London: Victor Gollanz, 1995).
5. *Ibid.*, p. 365.
6. The following account draws heavily on Carl Bildt, *Peace Journey: The Struggle for Peace in Bosnia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1998).
7. *Ibid.*, p. 383.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 390.
9. *Ibid.*
10. The following analysis of developments in Kosovo draws heavily on Jock Covey, “Moderating Political Conflict: Channeling the Competition for Power,” in *The Quest for Durable Peace: Evolving Strategies of Peace Implementation*, ed. Jock Covey, Michael J. Dziedzic, and Len Hawley (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, forthcoming).
11. See Office of the Secretary-General, United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo*, January 29, 2003.

PART II

---

**SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF  
MILITARY INTERVENTION**

## International Military Intervention and the Impact on Terrorism

Despite its growing appeal as a way to staunch the bloodletting between Israelis and Palestinians, the idea of dispatching a U.S.-led international intervention force (IIF) poses as many problems as it would solve. Some have suggested that such a force could replace Israeli troops patrolling the West Bank and Gaza and substitute for the ineffective counterterrorism efforts of the Palestinian Authority (PA). Unfortunately, international forces are usually ill prepared to confront and apprehend terrorists; indeed, they often find themselves the target of terrorist attacks. Winning a war against the disparate group of committed terrorist organizations that operate in the West Bank and Gaza would require an unprecedented display of determination, dexterity, and creativity on the part of an IIF's soldiers, commanders, and political leadership.

### **Precedents for Terrorism**

From Lebanon to Somalia to Iraq, terrorism looms large in the recent history of U.S. military intervention in the Middle East. During the early 1980s, for example, the deployment of U.S. and other foreign forces to intervene between warring parties in Lebanon proved to be a costly experience. The terrorist group Hizballah attempted to undermine the peace mission and lash out at what it considered foreign occupation, carrying out a series of heinous attacks against the international presence. These included the suicide truck bombing of

*Matthew Levitt*

the U.S. embassy in Beirut in April 1983; the suicide truck bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in October 1983; the suicide truck bombing of the U.S. embassy annex in Beirut in September 1984; the 1985 hijacking of TWA Flight 847, during which a U.S. Navy diver was murdered; and several kidnappings and executions throughout the 1980s. A total of 256 U.S. military personnel were killed over the course of the intervention in Lebanon.<sup>1</sup> In addition, French and Italian forces suffered significant casualties in various attacks by gunmen and militants armed with rocket-propelled grenades.<sup>2</sup>

Even military operations of a purely humanitarian nature have proved treacherous for U.S. forces. In Somalia, for example, the U.S. military suffered significant losses (including 29 dead), many in attacks orchestrated by al-Qaeda elements.<sup>3</sup>

These experiences show that militants will not hesitate to target international forces on humanitarian or peacekeeping missions if doing so can further their own agenda. In the case of the West Bank and Gaza, where an IIF would be tasked with destroying local terrorist organizations and rooting out their support networks, militants would carry out such attacks out of simple self-preservation. Indeed, Palestinian terrorists have already responded to the presence of international diplomats and observers with violence:

- On March 26, 2002, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terrorists attacked members of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH), murdering two observers (Jinjis Twintuk of Turkey and Catherine Broyikes of Switzerland) and injuring a third (Hussein Asraslan of Turkey). In November 2002, Diab Shawachi (head of a PIJ cell in Hebron) and Abed al-Jabaro (a member of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades recruited into PIJ by Shawachi) were formally charged with executing the attack.<sup>4</sup> According to the indictment, Shawachi fired at the observers' car even though they identified themselves as TIPH representatives. After firing, Shawachi approached the vehicle to make sure that all three observers had been killed; Asraslan survived only by pretending to be dead.
- On May 1, 2002, members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) detonated a bomb in the garden of the British Council in Gaza City. The bombing came just hours af-

ter the transfer of five PFLP terrorists and a PA official to a Jericho jail where U.S. and British civilian observers were stationed to verify their confinement. PFLP claimed credit for the attack in a statement denouncing Britain's role in the incarceration of its members.<sup>5</sup>

- On December 21, 2002, a Palestinian gunman shot at a German diplomatic vehicle at close range as it drove through Jenin. Similar incidents occurred in February 2001 and November 2002, when Palestinian gunmen shot at Canadian and Danish diplomatic vehicles, respectively.

There is little evidence to suggest that the mere presence of an IIF in the West Bank and Gaza, even a robust and well-armed one, would deter groups like Hamas and Hizballah from carrying out terrorist attacks in order to protect themselves and hinder the force's mission. In fact, militant rejectionists would likely regard undercutting an IIF's chances for success as a high priority. For example, Syria, Hizballah, PIJ, and various Fatah elements in Lebanon deployed irregular forces and terrorists to Iraq in an attempt to frustrate, or at least complicate, coalition efforts to liberate the country. As Syrian foreign minister Farouq al-Shara stated publicly in March 2003, "Syria's interest is to see the invaders defeated in Iraq. The resistance of the Iraqis is extremely important. It is heroic resistance to the U.S.-British occupation of their country."<sup>6</sup>

International forces in the West Bank and Gaza would likely find themselves in a situation much more difficult than that which has emerged in Iraq and Afghanistan, where radical elements have targeted U.S. forces in an attempt to destabilize the nascent regimes. For example, as of August 14, 2003, fifty-nine U.S. military personnel had been killed in postwar Iraq due to attacks executed by terrorists and others using terrorist tactics.<sup>7</sup> Although such attacks have not become a strategic obstacle to U.S. military efforts in either Iraq or Afghanistan, they have become a substantial problem.

In the Israeli-Palestinian arena, the terrorist challenge could be even greater. In the event of intervention, Palestinian terrorists would not constitute the last vestiges of a failed or defeated regime; rather, they themselves would be the principal opposition from the outset. By



*Matthew Levitt*

accepting the Quartet Roadmap, Israelis and Palestinians committed themselves to “sustained, targeted, and effective operations aimed at confronting all those engaged in terror and the dismantlement of terrorist capabilities and infrastructure.”<sup>8</sup> If an IIF were to take on this responsibility, it would quickly face a violent backlash from Hamas, PIJ, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, and other elements. Militant groups would portray the international force as a new form of occupation (as the Ba’ath vestiges have done in Iraq) and throw their full resources into attacking it. In addition to the force’s uniformed members, targets would include at least two other groups: civilian foreigners (who would be viewed as supporting the IIF’s efforts to wean terrorist foot soldiers from their leaders) and Palestinians who cooperate (“collaborate,” in the radicals’ terminology) with the IIF.<sup>9</sup> Of course, Israelis—civilians and soldiers alike—would remain high on the terrorists’ target list.

### **The Counterterrorism Challenge**

In the face of continued acts of terrorism, an IIF would have to initiate a large-scale offensive targeting both the operational cells that carry out attacks and the social infrastructure that funds and facilitates their activities. In order to continue Israel’s three-decade-old counterterrorism efforts in the territories, international forces would need to develop and maintain their own network of human and electronic sources; raid safe houses and explosives labs; aggressively pursue terrorist fugitives; and shut down terrorist front organizations operating under the guise of charities or social welfare groups. Terrorists would not take such action lightly; rather, they would use it as further incentive to target IIF troops and civilians affiliated with them, including Palestinian moderates. Alternatively, an IIF could try to avoid a bloody confrontation with groups such as Hamas by not pursuing vigorous military action. Yet, this approach would guarantee the force’s irrelevance and earn Israel’s disdain. The international community could not legitimately deny Israelis the right to pursue terrorists in the West Bank and Gaza unless it were willing to take on that responsibility itself.

Even if international forces were to assume full responsibility for combating terrorism, their effectiveness would be hampered by several tactical challenges. For example, diplomatic and political consid-

erations would likely constrain an IIF's freedom to act swiftly and robustly. Moreover, the deployment of international forces would probably generate heightened demands for the relaxation of checkpoints, searches, and other security measures closely associated with Israeli military occupation. Any such relaxation would provide terrorists with increased freedom of movement and an expanded operating environment, creating new opportunities for attacks. Additionally, force protection concerns would limit an IIF's ability to operate in the villages, towns, and refugee camps of the West Bank and Gaza. U.S. and coalition forces are especially sensitive to this issue in light of the guerrilla campaign being waged against them in postwar Iraq. Even before Operation Iraqi Freedom was launched, U.S. military planners studied Israeli efforts to fight terrorists in the narrow alleyways of Palestinian refugee camps. Hence, U.S. commanders are fully aware of the dangers of confronting militants in densely populated "urban jungles."

Even more difficult to confront (and just as likely to elicit terrorist reprisals if targeted) are the social welfare organizations, or *dawa*, that terrorist groups use to garner grassroots support for their activities. For example, Hamas social welfare organizations play a direct role in facilitating the group's terrorist attacks. Hamas is known to use the hospitals it maintains as meeting places; to bury caches of arms and explosives under its own kindergarten playgrounds; to use *dawa* operatives' cars and homes to ferry and hide fugitives; and to transfer and launder funds for terrorist activities through local charity (*zakat*) committees. All of these activities are supported by funds from abroad.

The Hamas social welfare activists who oversee these organizations are often closely tied to terrorist cells. In fact, many of these activists are themselves current or former members of such cells. For example, according to an FBI memorandum, Fadel Muhammad Salah Hamdan, a member of the Ramallah Zakat Committee, was "directly connected with the planning of suicide attacks and the spiritual preparation of those about to commit suicide attacks, including the Mahane Yehuda attack in July 1997."<sup>10</sup> The FBI document also noted that Ahmed Salim Ahmed Saltana, head of the Jenin Zakat Committee, facilitated the transfer of bombmaking materials in 1992, participated in a car bombing in 1993, and recruited young men working for the charity committee into Hamas. Moreover, in April 2002, Israeli forces raiding

*Matthew Levitt*

the offices of the Tulkarm Zakat Committee found materials lauding Hamas suicide attacks. They also uncovered records indicating that the International Islamic Relief Organization, a Saudi charity deeply involved in terrorist financing, had donated at least \$280,000 to the Tulkarm committee and other Palestinian organizations linked to Hamas.<sup>11</sup>

If an IIF is charged with targeting suspect *dawa* organizations, its civilian arm—or its sponsoring body, such as the UN Security Council, NATO, or some ad hoc “coalition of the willing”—must be prepared for the immense task of fulfilling the numerous social welfare functions performed by such groups. Otherwise, any effort to crack down on them would generate a severe backlash from the Palestinian street. Hamas and other terrorist groups would likely organize and manipulate mass protests against such a crackdown, and their efforts would enjoy grassroots support from the many Palestinians who recognize Hamas—not the PA or the international community—as the provider of many basic needs and social services.

### **Anti-American Rollback?**

Proponents of international intervention often argue that speedy resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—or, at least, a quick end to the violence—is necessary in order to reverse the wave of anti-American sentiment that has swept over many Arab and Muslim countries. Yet, one must consider whether intervention would have exactly the opposite effect—that is, whether deployment of U.S.-led international forces would exacerbate anti-Americanism in the region.

In order to ensure the success of its mission, an IIF would have to act mercilessly against terrorism, perhaps taking steps that even Israel has thus far eschewed for political, legal, or diplomatic reasons. Such actions would give additional fodder to terrorist groups and their sympathizers (e.g., Hizballah in Lebanon; the Islamic Action Front in Jordan; state-run media throughout the region) looking to depict international troops as foreign crusaders doing Israel’s bidding. If, however, an IIF proved ineffectual—by either hesitating to take action against terrorists or opting for dialogue instead of confrontation—it would draw the ire of both Israel and the wider Arab and Muslim worlds. Israelis would be outraged that the force had not delivered security; Arabs and Muslims would be outraged that the force had not produced

enough calm to trigger major Israeli concessions. In other words, whether or not an IIF pursued its mission successfully, the United States would likely face a rising tide of Arab and Muslim discontent, and perhaps Israeli discontent as well.

### **Conclusion**

It would be difficult for a U.S.-led IIF to assume both the counterterrorism prerogatives of Israel and the counterterrorism responsibilities of the PA. Undertaking this task without the prior agreement of the two parties would be impossible. Unless the commanders of the IIF, the Israel Defense Forces, and the PA security services worked out acceptable rules of engagement—either on a trilateral basis or one-on-one with the IIF—deployment would be a nonstarter.

Even if such an arrangement were reached, the international force would have to be large enough to send a strong political message regarding its commitment, yet agile enough to respond simultaneously to multiple challenges (e.g., terrorist attacks, riots, sabotage) in multiple settings (e.g., cities, villages, refugee camps, roads). It would have to be sensitive enough to establish a network of informants, contacts, and other local agents, yet forceful enough to take quick and decisive action against the full infrastructure of terrorist organizations. And it would have to obtain sufficient political backing from the leaders of contributing nations in order to withstand the withering criticism that would likely emanate from various quarters of Israel, the Palestinian community, the wider Arab and Muslim worlds, and the domestic political scene of participating countries. Such support would be particularly crucial when, as must be expected, mistakes happen, terrorists succeed in at least some of their efforts, and soldiers and civilians are killed.

To this litany of challenges must be added the development of an exit strategy—that is, a plan to root out terrorism so thoroughly, and to build up local counterterrorism capabilities so efficiently, that the West Bank and Gaza do not slip back into their current state once the IIF departs. Collectively, these requirements constitute a Herculean task, one that has been attempted in the Arab-Israeli context only once before. And few historians would claim that the British mandate of Palestine was a model of success.

## Notes

---

1. Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, U.S. Department of Defense, "Table 13: Worldwide U.S. Active Duty Military Deaths—Selected Military Operations," in *Worldwide U.S. Active Duty Personnel Casualties* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense Work Force Data Publications, updated quarterly). Table available online (<http://web1.whs.osd.mil/MMID/CA-SUALTY/table13.htm>).
2. For example, see "5 U.S. Marines and 9 Italians Wounded in Lebanon," *New York Times*, March 17, 1983.
3. U.S. Department of Defense, "Table 13: Worldwide U.S. Active Duty Military Deaths."
4. Israel Defense Forces Spokesperson's Unit, "Diab Shawachi Charged with the Murder of Two International TIPH Inspectors," press release, November 23, 2002. Available online ([www.idf.il/newsite/english/1123-4.stm](http://www.idf.il/newsite/english/1123-4.stm)).
5. Sam Kiley, "Released from Siege, Arafat Attacks 'Bethlehem Atrocities,'" *Evening Standard* (London), May 2, 2002; Yoav Appel, "Palestinian Shot by Troops at Church of the Nativity: Sharon Prepares for U.S. Visit," Associated Press, May 4, 2002.
6. "Syria Hits Back at U.S., Says It Supports 'Iraqi People' against Invaders," Agence France Presse, March 31, 2003.
7. Gary Marx, "2 GIs Killed, 3 Others Wounded in Guerrilla Attacks," *Chicago Tribune*, August 14, 2003.
8. Office of the Spokesman, U.S. Department of State, "A Performance-Based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," press release, April 30, 2003. Available online ([www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/20062.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/20062.htm)).
9. The problem of "collaborators" in Palestinian society is a long-standing, highly charged issue. See Andrew Rigby, *The Legacy of the Past: The Problem of Collaborators and the Palestinian Case* (Jerusalem: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, 1997), and Rigby et al., *The Phenomenon of Collaborators in Palestine* (Jerusalem: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, 2001).
10. Dale L. Watson, assistant director for counterterrorism, Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, International Emergency Economic Powers Act, Action Memorandum," memorandum to R. Richard Newcomb, director of the Office of Foreign Assets Control, U.S. Department of the Treasury, November 5, 2001.
11. Israel Defense Forces Spokesperson's Unit, "Documents Captured by the IDF: Large Sums of Money Transferred by Saudi Arabia to the Palestinians Are Used for Financing Terror Organizations (Particularly the Hamas) and Terrorist Activities (including Suicide Attacks inside Israel)," May 3, 2002. Available online ([www.idf.il/saudi\\_arabia/site/english/main\\_index.stm](http://www.idf.il/saudi_arabia/site/english/main_index.stm)).

## The Challenges of Military Intervention in Palestine

An international intervention force (IIF) sent to the West Bank and Gaza would face formidable political and operational challenges that would raise significant doubts about its prospects for success. The following discussion is based on the assumption that the deployment of such a force would depend on the consent of both the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority (PA). Although the PA has repeatedly expressed support for the idea, Israel has consistently opposed it. For a variety of reasons, it is inconceivable that the international community — whether embodied by the UN Security Council or a “coalition of the willing” — would deploy such a force without Israel’s approval. In addition to its close ties with those countries most likely to contribute to an IIF (particularly the United States), Israel has a significant military and civilian presence in the West Bank and Gaza, and Israelis perceive the territories to be important for security, religious, and nationalist reasons.

### **Mandate, Mission, and Composition**

If an international intervention force is to play a meaningful role, what might its mission be? An IIF would likely be called on to implement many of the security measures laid out in the Quartet Roadmap, in addition to security-related elements of previous initiatives such as the Tenet Plan, the Mitchell Plan, and the Oslo Accords. These include preventing terrorism and other forms of violence (or, in the Roadmap’s broader formulation, “fighting terror,” which includes “dismantling the infrastructure” of terrorist organizations<sup>1</sup>); confiscating illegal arms;

*Michael Eisenstadt*

detaining or arresting those involved in violence; imposing or maintaining calm at various “flash points” (e.g., Hebron); and revamping the Palestinian security forces so that they can accomplish these tasks without substantial outside assistance.

The key implication of such a mandate is that it defines the mission of an international force as peace enforcement rather than peacekeeping. That is, an IIF’s task would be to create the conditions whereby a peace agreement could eventually be reached. Thus, its implicit role would be to substitute for the PA’s security forces rather than to monitor or facilitate implementation of a peace accord.

If an IIF is to be palatable to Israel, it would almost certainly have to be organized and led by the United States and consist largely of U.S. troops. The nature of the mandate would likely ensure that only a small number of countries would be willing to contribute troops. Moreover, in light of the political sensitivities and operational challenges posed by such a mission, participation would probably be restricted to those governments willing to sign on to the overall mandate, to avoid the types of internal policy differences that have complicated the operations of, for example, the NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and the Kosovo Force (KFOR).<sup>2</sup>

In addition, an IIF would have to be robust: large and capable enough to protect itself, to maintain a visible and effective presence throughout the West Bank and Gaza, and to deter or respond to attacks by those opposed to its presence. Given the “peacekeepers-to-locals” ratio of recent international operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, and East Timor, an IIF for the West Bank and Gaza might be expected to field anywhere between 34,000 and 85,000 “peace enforcers” for a population of some 3.4 million Palestinians.<sup>3</sup> Such a force would necessarily include a large contingent of special forces to handle counterterrorism missions, as well as armor and mechanized infantry units for operations in built-up areas. Based on these figures, even if only half the force were American, the minimal U.S. contribution would amount to some 17,000 troops.<sup>4</sup> The commitment of a division-size force—particularly at a time when seven of ten active U.S. Army divisions are already committed to peacekeeping or stability operations elsewhere (the Korean Peninsula, the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq)—would place a major additional burden on the Army’s force structure and personnel

system, further reducing its ability to respond rapidly to new contingencies. Those considering the deployment of U.S. forces to the West Bank and Gaza should also prepare for a multiyear commitment, given that most of the previous UN, U.S., and NATO peacekeeping missions in the Middle East and elsewhere have exceeded their original life expectancy.

### **Fighting Terrorism**

Even in the best-case scenario—wherein Israelis, Palestinians, and those countries contributing to an IIF agree on both the mandate and the composition of the force—fulfilling the IIF’s counterterrorism mission would still be a daunting challenge. In this context, useful insight can be drawn from other peacekeeping operations.

In Bosnia, NATO peacekeepers have disrupted attempts by Arab jihadist groups and Iranian intelligence operatives to establish a foothold and lay the foundations for a terrorist infrastructure in the Balkans. In Afghanistan, U.S. forces have pursued remnants of al-Qaeda in the provinces ever since the ouster of the Taliban regime, while the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) maintains stability in Kabul. Al-Qaeda is believed to maintain a significant presence in parts of Afghanistan, however, and recent attacks on U.S. and ISAF forces indicate that work remains to be done.

In order to fulfill its mandate in the West Bank and Gaza, an IIF would have to prevail against Palestinian terrorist groups such as Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. This would almost certainly necessitate the use of many of the practices employed by U.S. troops in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq, including identification checks, roadblocks, snatch operations, targeted killings, and cordon-and-search operations. These methods, which so closely resemble those used by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the territories, would likely inflame the passions of a Palestinian population that is already hostile toward the United States.<sup>5</sup> Many Palestinians might conclude that they had exchanged an Israeli occupation for a U.S.-led one. Similarly, millions of Arabs and Muslims would see an IIF deployment as confirmation that the United States had emerged as a modern-day colonial power in the heart of the Middle East.



*Michael Eisenstadt*

More to the point, an international force could hardly expect to be more successful than the IDF at preventing terrorist attacks on Israeli civilians. An IIF would be less familiar with the operational environment in the West Bank and Gaza, and less likely to accept significant risk to protect Israelis. Such a force would enjoy few, if any, military advantages over the IDF—which has operated in the area for decades—while its commitment would entail major political liabilities for the United States.

Committing an IIF to combat terrorism in the West Bank and Gaza would also raise the issue of popular U.S. support for such a mission in the face of casualties. In the past, peacekeeping missions to Lebanon (1983) and Somalia (1993) were abandoned after U.S. forces suffered losses, and Palestinian groups such as Hamas, PIJ, and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades may hope that inflicting casualties on U.S. members of an IIF would likewise hasten a U.S. withdrawal from the territories. Yet, experience has also shown that when the U.S. public believes that vital American interests are at stake, it is willing to accept significant casualties.<sup>6</sup> Given the massive, three-decade American investment in Arab-Israeli peacemaking, as well as the importance that U.S. policymakers from both major parties have assigned to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, even the prospect of significant casualties would not necessarily undermine public support for U.S. participation in an IIF. More important would be the force's perceived prospects for success, as well as the growing cost—in blood and treasure—of the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

### **Confiscating Weapons**

The Oslo Accords set strict limits on the quantity and types of arms that PA security forces were permitted to have and proscribed the possession of weapons by all other Palestinians. Specifically, the security services were permitted up to 15,000 light arms (pistols and rifles), 240 machine guns, 45 armored vehicles, and 15 light, unarmed riot vehicles. Yet, some Israeli sources estimate that PA forces hold tens of thousands of additional firearms, as well as proscribed weapons such as rocket-propelled grenades, antitank guided missiles, and katyusha rocket artillery.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, before the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising in September 2000, the number of security personnel employed

by the PA was believed to be significantly in excess of the 30,000 policemen permitted under the Oslo Accords—more than 40,000, according to some Israeli sources.<sup>8</sup> Members of Hamas, PIJ, and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades are also believed to possess thousands of weapons, including homemade rockets (such as Hamas's al-Qassam) that have been fired from northern Gaza into Sderot and other Israeli towns.

The confiscation of proscribed arms has been a major part of peacekeeping operations elsewhere, including Cambodia, Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Many of these efforts have had discouraging results, and some have drawn peacekeepers into local conflicts (e.g., in Somalia). Even the more successful efforts (e.g., Cambodia, Kosovo) have rarely brought about significant decreases in illegal arms. For example, two years after weapons collection efforts were initiated in Cambodia in October 1998, only 66,309 small arms had been recovered of an estimated 500,000–1,000,000 weapons loose in the country.<sup>9</sup>

Confiscation efforts have been largely unsuccessful in the Palestinian territories as well. The PA has refused to surrender its own illegal arms or to confiscate weapons in the hands of other Palestinians, apparently fearing that such a move would bring it into open conflict with politically powerful rivals or with members of its own power base. Disarmament would likely be a difficult and dangerous task in the West Bank and Gaza, where gun ownership is widespread and driven by an atmosphere of lawlessness and a culture that lionizes those who engage in “resistance” and seek “martyrdom.” Indeed, attempting to confiscate proscribed arms could bring an IIF into conflict with every major Palestinian armed faction outside the PA, and perhaps even with elements of the PA itself.<sup>10</sup>

### **Arresting Wanted Men**

The Oslo II agreement obligates the PA to apprehend those engaged in violence and either transfer them to Israel or prosecute them under PA law. Although the Israeli government has repeatedly submitted lists of wanted men to the Palestinians, the PA has refused to extradite suspects. Moreover, the PA often employs a “revolving door” policy whereby detainees are freed after short periods of incarceration or house arrest. In April–May 2002, the United States—perhaps foreshadow-

*Michael Eisenstadt*

ing a larger international role in the incarceration issue—brokered a special arrangement in the case of four members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine accused of assassinating Israeli cabinet minister Rehavam Ze’evi. Under this arrangement, the PA arrested the suspects and placed them in a Jericho jail under the supervision of U.S. and British civilian monitors.

Apprehending terrorists, war-crimes suspects, and former members of toppled regimes has been a key goal of peacekeeping and stability operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq, where the United States and its NATO allies have had mixed success. The pursuit of Muhammad Farah Aideded and senior members of his Habr Gadir clan in Somalia brought U.S. peacekeepers into direct conflict with the clan itself, sparking a chain of events that eventually led to the death of eighteen U.S. servicemen and the precipitous withdrawal of U.S. forces from Somalia. The pursuit of war criminals during the NATO intervention in Bosnia was hindered by political considerations, foot dragging by the U.S. military, and fears of a local backlash. In contrast, U.S. troops have registered some impressive successes in Iraq, hunting down both terrorists (e.g., Abu Abbas) and members of the old regime (e.g., former presidential secretary Abid Hamid Mahmud and former deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz).

The pursuit of wanted men would likely be a key feature of any peace-enforcement operation in the West Bank and Gaza. Yet, many substantive and procedural questions would have to be resolved in advance. Would the IIF expect full intelligence cooperation from the IDF and the PA? Would it cooperate with the IDF in pursuing wanted men? Would it pursue individuals who are on Israel’s most-wanted list for past acts, or only those who are currently involved in violence? Would it pursue the “political” leaders of terrorist groups or only the bombmakers and foot soldiers? Would it transfer wanted men to Israel or the PA, or would it try accused terrorists itself? If the latter, by what law? In whose facilities would those arrested or convicted be held?

Underlining all of these questions is the fact that a U.S.-led IIF operating in the West Bank and Gaza would face a hostile, forbidding environment. The force would likely have to confront many of the same dilemmas that Israel has faced in its own pursuit of

wanted men. For example, should an IIF accept risk to its own personnel by attempting to capture suspects in densely populated areas, or should it eliminate such individuals from a distance (e.g., using precision-guided munitions delivered by helicopters or jets)? Both options would risk endangering civilians and engendering a hostile backlash from those Palestinians who regard wanted men as popular heroes and would-be martyrs. Because of such challenges, the leadership of an IIF might be tempted to sidestep the issue entirely, with negative implications for the success of the force's overall mission.

### **Policing Flashpoints**

Several sites in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem have become flashpoints for conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, whether because of their geographic isolation, their demographic makeup (e.g., Arab and Jewish populations living in close proximity), or their symbolic significance to one or both sides. Such sites include Rachel's Tomb, Beit Jala-Gilo, the Temple Mount/al-Haram al-Sharif, and the center of Hebron.

Similar flashpoints have emerged in other cases of international intervention, and the international community has addressed them with varying degrees of success. For example, following the 1995 Dayton peace accords, the contested district of Brcko in Bosnia-Herzegovina was placed under a special international regime. Brcko has enjoyed a degree of stability and civility among its Serb, Croat, and Muslim residents, making it a model of ethnic coexistence for the rest of the region.<sup>11</sup> In Kosovo, however, the town of Mitrovica remains divided between Serbs and Kosovar Albanians and continues to suffer from occasional violence, which KFOR has not been able to stamp out completely. Despite success stories such as Brcko, the most that peacekeepers or peace enforcers can realistically hope to accomplish in such situations is to suppress or contain local conflicts while diplomats work to produce a political settlement. Until such a settlement is reached, it is up to the IIF to prevent major acts of violence. Again, this task would be particularly difficult in the Israeli-Palestinian arena because many of the flashpoints in question have religious and/or national significance for one or both sides.

*Michael Eisenstadt*

### **Training a New Palestinian Security Force**

Following the Oslo Accords, Washington launched a sustained effort to enhance the professionalism and effectiveness of the PA's security services and to improve their ability to fight terrorism. These efforts were halted by the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising in September 2000; they did not resume until the PA endorsed the Roadmap in May 2003. Should circumstances call for the deployment of an IIF, one of its key responsibilities could be reforming and retraining the PA's security services.

Such retraining is not without precedent in peacekeeping missions. In Kosovo, for example, KFOR has overseen the transformation of the Kosovo Liberation Army into the Kosovo Protection Corps, which provides emergency services (but has no security function). In Afghanistan, the United States and its allies are building a new Afghan National Army as a means of facilitating national integration and strengthening the government of President Hamid Karzai. In Iraq, coalition plans call for the creation of a new Iraqi army to replace the old, Ba'ath-dominated armed forces. It is too early to judge the success of any of these efforts, but each will clearly be a long-term undertaking.

An IIF in the West Bank and Gaza would have to decide whether to work with the PA's existing security services or pursue comprehensive security reform through far-reaching organizational, cultural, and personnel changes. On one hand, attempting to reform the current security services without making a thorough effort to identify and expunge those with ties to terrorism might doom the entire undertaking. On the other hand, considerable time (a year or longer) may be required to weed out unsuitable individuals, retrain those who remain, find suitable new recruits, and create a new PA security force that is respectful of the rule of law and willing and able to fight terrorism. In the interim, the IIF would be largely responsible for security in the West Bank and Gaza.

In order to succeed in security reform, however, the PA must continue its ongoing efforts at political and economic reform. These efforts include stamping out corruption; establishing transparency, accountability, and the rule of law; and inculcating the principle that security forces must be subordinated to a civilian leadership committed to pursuing peace and fighting terrorism. From the outset, the ar-

chitects of an IIF would need to recognize that security reform without political and economic reform is a recipe for failure.

### **Coordination with Israel**

Beyond the myriad challenges associated with fighting Palestinian terrorism, an IIF would need to define, before deployment, its relationship with Israelis and the IDF. International intervention in the West Bank and Gaza would entail the insertion of tens of thousands of foreign troops into a compact geographical area where more than 10,000 Israeli troops and security personnel currently patrol roads, engage in counterterrorism operations, secure the borders, and protect some 140 settlements that are home to nearly 200,000 Israelis.

This situation raises several complicated questions. What role, if any, would an IIF have vis-à-vis Israelis in its area of operations? Who would provide security for Israeli settlements and for Israelis traveling on West Bank and Gaza roads: the IDF or the IIF? Would Israeli civilians be permitted to carry arms in the IIF's area of operations? If not, who would disarm them? What role, if any, would the IIF have in border control, countermuggling activities (i.e., preventing the influx of weapons, narcotics, and infiltrators), and naval counterterrorism operations?

Diplomats and military officials may well be able to provide clear answers to all of these questions before deploying an IIF. Even so, practical implementation of the rules of engagement pertaining to Israelis would be tested daily in a highly volatile environment. Inevitably, a certain level of tension, perhaps even conflict, would emerge between IIF personnel and Israelis (settlers, security personnel, the IDF, or all of the above).

### **Conclusion**

The lack of major mishaps involving international peacekeepers in Bosnia, Kosovo, and East Timor, along with recent U.S. military successes in Afghanistan and Iraq, might create the misleading impression that an IIF would stand a reasonable chance of success within the limited confines of the West Bank and Gaza. From the outset, however, an IIF would be a party to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict rather than an engaged, yet neutral, third party standing above the fray. There

*Michael Eisenstadt*

is little reason to believe that a U.S.-led IIF would be any more effective at fighting terrorism than Israel has been. Moreover, the deployment of an IIF would strain relations with Israel; entail the use of measures that are almost sure to inflame local passions and reinforce the perception of the United States as an enemy of Arabs and Muslims; and transform the United States from mediator to participant in the conflict, further complicating efforts to resolve this long and bitter struggle. As a result, an IIF would become part of the problem, rather than part of the solution to the apparently intractable violence that has thus far prevented a diplomatic resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

### Notes

---

1. Office of the Spokesman, U.S. Department of State, "A Performance-Based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," press release, April 30, 2003. Available online ([www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/20062.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/20062.htm)).
2. For more on the friction between various contingents in SFOR and KFOR, see John Pomfret and Lee Hockstader, "In Bosnia, a War Crimes Impasse; NATO Differences with UN Tribunal Mean Few Are Arrested," *Washington Post*, December 9, 1997; Stephen Schwartz, "Plus Ça Change; Our Bullying, Biased, and Unreliable Peacekeeping Partner in Kosovo," *Weekly Standard* 5, no. 31 (April 24–May 1, 2000), p. 17.
3. The ratio in Bosnia-Herzegovina at the height of the Implementation Force's presence in the mid-to-late 1990s stood at 60,000 peacekeepers to 3.25 million locals (1:54); in Kosovo at the height of the KFOR presence in 1999–2000, 48,000 peacekeepers to 1.9 million locals (1:40); and at the height of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) presence in 2000, 8,000 peacekeepers to 800,000 locals (1:100; this figure does not include UNTAET's contingent of approximately 1,300 civilian police). One should bear in mind that all three cases involved peacekeeping forces deployed to relatively permissive environments in which the primary conflicts had ceased.
4. This is nearly fifteen times the number of U.S. troops sent to participate in the Multinational Force and Observers in Sinai upon its inception in 1983 (1,200), about the same number of U.S. troops sent to participate in the Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia in 1996 (16,500), and several times the number of U.S. troops sent to participate in KFOR in 1999 (5,600).
5. The Pew Research Center recently found that anti-American sentiment is stronger among Palestinians (with 85 percent stating that they feel "very unfavorable" toward the United States) than among any other group of people interviewed in a broad global survey. Pew Global Attitudes Project, *Views of a Changing*

## THE CHALLENGES OF MILITARY INTERVENTION IN PALESTINE

- World, June 2003* (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, June 2003), p. 20. Available online (<http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/185.pdf>).
6. See Mark J. Conversino, "Sawdust Superpower: Perceptions of U.S. Casualty Tolerance in the Post-Gulf War Era," *Strategic Review* 25, no. 1 (Winter 1997), pp. 15–23.
  7. Gal Luft, "The Palestinian Security Services: Between Police and Army," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 3, no. 2 (June 1999); available online (<http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/1999/issue2/jv3n2a5.html>). Excerpted from Luft, *The Palestinian Security Services: Between Police and Army* (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1998).
  8. Ibid.
  9. Sami Faltas, Glenn McDonald, and Camilla Waszink, *Removing Small Arms from Society: A Review of Weapons Collection and Destruction Programmes* (Occasional Paper no. 2) (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, July 2001), p. 21. Available online ([www.smallarmssurvey.org/OPapers/OPaper2.pdf](http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/OPapers/OPaper2.pdf)).
  10. According to a Department of Defense study on the U.S. intervention in Somalia, "To commit military forces to the mission of forcibly disarming a populace is to commit these forces to a combat situation that may thereafter involve them as an active belligerent." Kenneth Allard, *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1995), p. 64.
  11. International trusteeship has thus helped to manage, but not resolve, Brcko's problems. The district has yet to hold local elections, and many fear that doing so would bring nationalist parties to power, thus reviving ethnic tensions. Mark Landler, "Rare Bosnia Success Story, Thanks to U.S. Viceroy," *New York Times*, June 17, 2003.



PART III

---

**MILITARY INTERVENTION AND  
THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE**

## Israelis, Palestinians, and the Politics of International Military Intervention

The idea of sending an international intervention force (IIF) to the Middle East appears to be gathering steam, particularly in European and Arab capitals and certain quarters of the United States. Yet, it will face an uphill battle to win the support of the constituencies that matter most. Israelis reject the idea and would almost certainly protest vigorously—and perhaps forcefully—if the international community attempted to impose an outside force without their consent. Moreover, although a significant number of Palestinians seem sympathetic to internationalization, there is ample reason to believe that they would come to oppose the reality of an IIF almost as much as Israelis object to the concept. Advocates of internationalization must devote far more attention to the core political concerns of both publics, as well as their leaders, if the idea is to stand any chance of implementation.<sup>1</sup>

### **Israeli Objections**

Israeli officials and analysts have offered numerous reasons for their opposition to foreign military intervention. In general, they believe that rationales for internationalization are based on the wrong premise. They argue that the core issue is not the Palestinian Authority's (PA's) ability to fight terrorism, but rather its willingness to do so. Given that the PA has tens of thousands of armed men in multiple security services, supported by training and matériel from both the United States and friendly Arab and European nations, the problem is one of com-

*David Makovsky*

mitment, not capacity. If the PA were to demonstrate adequate political will, Israelis contend, issues of technical capacity could be resolved through the provision of additional funds, resources, training, diplomatic support, and so forth, making third-party intervention unnecessary. Alternatively, if the PA fails to exhibit adequate political will, intervention would not be an adequate substitute. In other words, an IIF would be either superfluous or ineffective.

Israel would oppose international forces even if they were led by the United States, the only international actor in which Israelis have any confidence. Eitan Haber, a veteran military commentator for Israel's most widely circulated daily newspaper and a senior aide to the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, described the deployment of even a small number of U.S. monitors as the beginning of a slippery slope, one that would turn the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) into "second-rate cops." As he explained it,

Governments of Labor and Likud have together rejected all ideas and proposals for international inspections and police forces. Any proposal that has just a 'whiff' of such monitoring over us was rejected by the State of Israel, before it left the womb of the United Nations. The pride of Israel is that it has always insisted upon Jewish labor.<sup>2</sup>

The Israeli government has long argued that the responsibility for fighting terrorism rests with the IDF and the Palestinians. Israel does not believe that a third party would be more capable than the IDF or as willing to take casualties in the name of counterterrorism. Nor does Israel believe that a third party could do what the Palestinian leadership must itself do, namely, fight terrorism and thereby earn a seat at the bargaining table to determine the future of Palestine.

Israeli opposition to foreign intervention remains strong at the public level as well. According to a study conducted in 2002 by Tel Aviv University's Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, 61 percent of Israelis oppose the idea of "stationing armed international policing forces that would separate between the sides and take action against anyone who used force."<sup>3</sup> This finding was all the more significant because the poll was taken during a period of unrelenting terrorist attacks in Israeli urban centers, when Israelis

might well have been expected to welcome any idea that had a chance of reducing terrorism.

One of the few scenarios under which Israelis might show greater enthusiasm for international intervention would be in the context of a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from part or all of the territories. In the event that the diplomatic process launched by the Quartet Roadmap and the June 2003 Aqaba summit collapsed, support would broaden for the speedy completion of a “security fence” to separate Israelis and Palestinians, leading to the IDF’s de facto withdrawal from significant areas of the West Bank and Gaza. Under such circumstances, Israelis could view an international force as a stabilizing factor at a time of regional tension and potential chaos. This scenario could spur Palestinian authorities to call for the deployment of an IIF as well, believing it would shield them from Israeli retaliation for post-withdrawal terrorist attacks.

*The UNIFIL nightmare.* One of the main reasons why Israelis generally recoil at the idea of placing an IIF between themselves and guerrilla groups such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad is because the idea has been attempted in the past, with disastrous results. Specifically, the legacy of international intervention in Lebanon has been seared into Israel’s national memory.

In 1978, the UN Security Council established the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) “for the purpose of confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area.”<sup>4</sup> Most Israelis view UNIFIL as an abject failure, a much-derided symbol of the irrelevance and fecklessness of the UN system. They claim that UNIFIL did not halt a single Hizballah attack during the eighteen years prior to Israel’s May 2000 withdrawal from Lebanese territory. Even in the years since the UN certified that withdrawal, Israelis argue that UNIFIL has done nothing to bolster security on the Lebanese side of the border or halt cross-border raids by Palestinians.

The UNIFIL experience has not completely soured Israel to the principle of international peacekeeping forces. Indeed, many Israelis appreciate the ongoing utility of two such missions: the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in Sinai and the UN Disengagement Ob-

*David Makovsky*

server Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights. Nevertheless, Israelis are keenly aware of the contrasts between these two missions, on the one hand, and the prospect of deploying an IIF to the West Bank and Gaza, on the other.

Both the MFO and UNDOF are focused on observing, verifying, and reporting the movement of conventional armies across demarcated boundaries between states that have reached international accords and established security regimes. The success of these two peacekeeping operations depends on the fact that Israel, Egypt, and Syria have a political interest in maintaining their respective security arrangements. In other words, international intervention in these cases has been a reflection of political accords, not a substitute for the lack of such agreements.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, as a result of these accords, Sinai and the Golan are free of guerrilla movements attempting cross-border military agitation against Israel.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, domestic rejectionists in all three countries have been either unwilling or unable to challenge the accords themselves.

In contrast to the MFO and UNDOF, a West Bank–Gaza IIF would have to take the counterterrorism battle directly to the Palestinians without the benefit of a peace treaty providing solutions (or at least compromises) on the most contentious final-status issues. Hence, competing claims on Jerusalem, refugee rights, territory, and other issues would remain unresolved, giving Palestinian terrorists ample pretext for continuing the violence. Within this maelstrom, an IIF would have to perform its mission even more effectively than the IDF in order to assuage Israeli fears regarding security. Moreover, international troops would have to operate under the glare of the Israeli and international press, both of which would be looking for any mistakes indicating the newcomers' inexperience or irresolution.

Another factor in UNDOF and the MFO's favor is topography; Sinai and, to a lesser extent, the Golan are classic buffer regions. Because these areas lack large population centers, peacekeepers can focus on monitoring military movements without having to worry about maintaining order and security among hundreds of thousands of civilians. The West Bank and Gaza, of course, are very different from Sinai and the Golan in terms of topography, demography, history, and numerous other characteristics. These differ-

ences only add to Israeli incredulity regarding the prospects that an IIF could succeed in the territories.

*Tarring the special relationship.* Many Israeli strategists also fear that even a well-intentioned U.S.-led intervention could erode Israel's cherished alliance with Washington. Indeed, Palestinian militants who currently focus their efforts against Israeli civilians would have an even greater incentive to strike U.S. forces, no doubt hoping to trigger a downward spiral in relations between Israel and its foremost ally. U.S. troops in the West Bank and Gaza would be in a fundamentally different position than the U.S. Army technicians or National Guard observers in Sinai, whose risk of death or injury is low. Patrolling the casbahs of Jenin and Jabalya would be a far more perilous undertaking, and American losses can be expected.

Such a situation could undermine a cardinal tenet of the U.S.-Israeli relationship. According to this implicit doctrine, the United States may provide financial, technical, and material support for Israel's defense, but only Israelis should be expected to fight and die for the cause. Israel has long sought to avoid putting U.S. troops in a position where they might take casualties on its behalf; in Israeli eyes, permitting such a sacrifice would be both morally indefensible and politically shortsighted. Indeed, the U.S. intervention in Lebanon provided a nightmarish glimpse of what can happen when this principle is violated. Once U.S. troops were positioned between the IDF and Arab forces there, U.S.-Israeli relations took a rapid turn for the worse. Televised scenes of pistol-wielding U.S. soldiers facing down Israeli tanks served as vivid illustrations of the growing tension that had begun to strain relations between the Reagan and Begin administrations. Such scenes could become far more harrowing—and occur much more frequently—if U.S. troops were sent to fight terrorists in the West Bank and Gaza, especially in the absence of clearly defined rules of engagement endorsed by all parties.

Given all of these obstacles, no Israeli government is likely to support the establishment of a U.S.-led IIF, particularly in the absence of a detailed security accord with the Palestinians. Moreover, given Israel's view that Europe is largely pro-Palestinian, any Israeli hesitations regarding U.S. peacekeepers would be magnified tenfold by the prospect of a European-dominated intervention force.

*David Makovsky*

### **The Roots of Palestinian Skepticism**

Among Palestinian officials, the concept of international intervention is attractive because it seems to offer a quick end to Israeli military occupation. This support is highly conditional, however. Most Palestinians want international forces dispatched along the 1967 ceasefire lines, arguing that deployment inside the West Bank and Gaza could legitimize Israeli occupation. According to Michael Tarazi, legal advisor to the Palestine Liberation Organization, peacekeepers would be welcome along the “international border,” but not inside the territories, where they would amount to “another occupying force.”<sup>7</sup> Israel, of course, does not recognize the 1967 lines as an “international border” and would not accept the deployment of an international force along them.

The Palestinian public is far less enamored with the idea of intervention than is commonly thought. According to an April 2003 poll by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research,

only 38 percent [of Palestinians] would support the deployment of international forces in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in order to force the Palestinians and the Israelis to accept and implement the roadmap. An additional 9 percent would support such deployment only if the forces were European. Forty-eight percent would oppose any deployment of international forces, and less than one percent would support the deployment if the forces were made up of Americans only.<sup>8</sup>

In other words, one of the few remotely feasible scenarios under which Israelis would support internationalization—namely, if the force were composed primarily of U.S. troops—has met with virtually unanimous opposition among Palestinians.

Palestinian distrust of the United States is also evident in recent findings by the Pew Global Attitudes Project. In a State Department poll taken in 2000, when U.S. engagement in Middle East peacemaking was at its height, only 14 percent of Palestinians had expressed a favorable view of the United States; according to the Pew Project, that figure dropped to a mere 1 percent in 2003.<sup>9</sup> Palestinian attitudes toward the UN are not much better; 78 percent believe that the international body has a “bad influence” in the territories,<sup>10</sup> indicating that

they might not view it as a more acceptable source of peacekeeping forces than the United States.

This popular skepticism could lead to enmity. At first, only radicals would likely exhibit open opposition to international forces. Yet, once it became clear that the deployment would be lengthy, feelings of hostility could deepen and extend to other elements of Palestinian society. Before long, an IIF could find itself caught between widespread Palestinian hatred and equally intense Israeli mistrust.

It would be facile and incorrect to place the entire onus for current Palestinian attitudes on the Bush administration's Middle East policies. According to the Pew Project, only 31 percent of Palestinians blame their antipathy toward the United States on President George W. Bush alone.<sup>11</sup> Numerous other factors must be considered, many of which are wholly unrelated to the Arab-Israeli conflict or to Bush administration policy on Iraq, Israel, and other relevant issues. For example, the religious militants who are most likely to conduct suicide attacks on U.S., international, or Israeli targets usually derive their anti-Americanism from a deep-seated view of Christians as infidels or crusaders. Similarly, in other circles, the arrival of U.S.-led troops would be seen as the "Great Satan's" occupation force replacing the "Lesser Satan's" IDF.

Radical elements notwithstanding, few Palestinians are likely to view intervention troops as liberators, and fewer still would trust an IIF's promises to withdraw within a defined period. Moreover, because international intervention would precede any final-status negotiations, foreign troops would be perceived as protecting Israelis, defending Jewish settlements, and preventing Palestinians from mounting any resistance (peaceful or otherwise) to occupation. In other words, it would be easy for militants—and even some moderates—to depict the peacekeepers not as liberators but as keepers of the status quo.

### **Conclusion**

Those looking to dispatch international forces to the West Bank and Gaza would have to overcome a difficult set of political challenges in order to make such a deployment a reality. Israeli opposition can be expected, particularly if the international community attempts to impose a force without Israel's consent. Even if an understanding were reached that allowed for deployment, an IIF would face constant pres-



*David Makovsky*

sure from the Israeli government and public, especially if it failed to produce a clear and quick decline in terrorism.

As for Palestinians, any mainstream support during the opening chapter of internationalization would be offset by radical elements, who would oppose an IIF with all means at their disposal. More ominously, the scope of Palestinian opposition would almost surely grow as the deployment came to be seen as a new form of occupation. Only deft diplomacy and speedy results by the IIF could avert the worst-case scenario, wherein both Israelis and Palestinians become hostile toward international forces.

In light of these obstacles to intervention, the better option is to persist with what all parties say is their preferred strategy: promoting the emergence of a Palestinian partner with the political will to confront terrorism; building a strong PA; and taking decisive steps toward peace. The elevation of Mahmoud Abbas to the new post of PA prime minister is a hopeful sign, especially given his consistent opposition to the use of force as a means of reaching a negotiated settlement. His appointment reflects the maturing of Palestinian public opinion, much of which now recognizes that suicide bombing has proved counter-productive to the Palestinian cause.

In a speech to Fatah activists in Gaza in 2001, Abbas stated that the success of the Palestinian national project depends on Palestinians choosing national responsibility over national unity.<sup>12</sup> If Palestinians internalize this lesson, progress toward their independent state is ensured. In any case, international intervention will not chart the path to statehood; it could, however, be the final detour.

## Notes

---

1. Not all aspects of internationalization are likely to elicit visceral opposition from the local parties. For example, advocates of international trusteeship for the West Bank and Gaza envision military deployment as only one part of a grander effort to rectify both Israel's military occupation and the Palestinian Authority's ineptitude. The civilian component of trusteeship—designed to facilitate nation building and shepherd Palestinian political institutions to maturity—might even be welcomed by many Palestinians and Israelis. Despite the importance of civilian efforts, however, the central element of internationalization is the deployment of a military force, and it is this most controversial element that shapes the following discussion.

## THE POLITICS OF INTERNATIONAL MILITARY INTERVENTION

2. Eitan Haber, *Yediot Ahronot*, June 18, 2003, p. 2.
3. Tamar Hermann and Ephraim Yuchtman-Yaar, eds., *International Intervention in Protracted Conflicts: The Israeli-Palestinian Case* (proceedings of a symposium cosponsored by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, Tel Aviv University, April 29, 2002) (Tel Aviv: Tami Steinmetz Center, 2003), p. 93.
4. UN Security Council, Resolution 425 (March 19, 1978). Available online ([www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1978/scres78.htm](http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1978/scres78.htm)).
5. This lesson is reinforced when one considers the UN Emergency Force's sudden withdrawal from Sinai in May 1967, at a time when Egypt and Israel had not yet reached a political accord.
6. Although Syria supports Hizballah and Palestinian militant efforts to attack Israel in Lebanon and elsewhere, it almost never encourages such activity via the Golan.
7. Mark Matthews, "Concept of Peacekeepers in Mideast Gains Attention," *Baltimore Sun*, June 18, 2003.
8. Survey Research Unit, Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, "Public Opinion Poll #7: Appointment of Prime Minister, Political Reform, Roadmap, War in Iraq, Arafat's Popularity, and Political Affiliation," April 3-7, 2003. Available online ([www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2003/p7a.html](http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2003/p7a.html)).
9. Pew Global Attitudes Project, *Views of a Changing World, June 2003* (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, June 2003), p. 19. Available online (<http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/185.pdf>).
10. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
12. *Ma'ariv*, April 25, 2003.

## International Intervention Force: Path to Peace or Perpetual Conflict?

The concept of international intervention in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has gained currency since the eruption of the Palestinian uprising in September 2000, particularly in light of Yasir Arafat's subsequent inability or unwillingness to end the violence or accept President Bill Clinton's peace proposals. In spring 2001, former Labor Party ministers Shlomo Ben Ami and Haim Ramon were among the first to raise the idea of a trusteeship for the Palestinian territories, marrying it to Clinton's plan for establishing a Palestinian state in roughly 95 percent of the West Bank and all of Gaza, with its capital in Arab east Jerusalem.

Ben Ami and Ramon were motivated largely by despair. After their intense involvement in failed negotiations for an "end of conflict" agreement, they had come to believe that the Palestinians were incapable of being responsible partners for peace. Nevertheless, they wanted the terrible violence of the intifada to stop. Seeing that there was no military solution to the conflict, they felt that Israel's interests dictated a withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza; otherwise, continued occupation would guarantee perpetual Palestinian hostility and create a demographic time bomb for Israel. From this perspective, if the Palestinians were incapable of fulfilling their commitments, a third party would need to assume responsibility for them, which would in turn allow Israel to withdraw.

In essence, a trusteeship would "take formal control of Palestinian territories from Yasir Arafat and the Palestinian Authority and hold

them in trust for the Palestinian people.”<sup>1</sup> External control would be lifted when Palestinians became responsible enough to meet the obligations of statehood, such as policing their territory and ensuring that it was not used as a safe haven for those who would attack Israel. Until then, international forces would be responsible for ensuring security; targeting terrorist groups and their infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza; and shepherding the development of institutions that would be crucial for statehood.

Martin Indyk, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel and a veteran of the Camp David negotiations, refined Ben Ami and Ramon’s concept of intervention. In his view, President Clinton’s plan to give the Palestinians 95 percent of the West Bank should be revised to a more limited initial transfer of 50 to 60 percent, coupled with a trusteeship arrangement.<sup>2</sup> Under this plan, Palestinians would have a greater incentive to work with the trustees, developing their institutions and gradually assuming their responsibilities even as they negotiated the contours of a final-status deal with Israel.

Two emotions seem to motivate much of the recent support for trusteeship: frustration with the Palestinians and a sense of hopelessness regarding the seemingly intractable violence that has come to characterize Israeli-Palestinian relations. Such frustration is understandable. Anyone who has worked to promote Arab-Israeli peace shares the same urgent belief that something must be done to transform the current situation, which has imposed profound costs on Israelis and Palestinians alike. Unfortunately, international intervention—whether it be the grand undertaking of trusteeship or the more limited strategy of deploying an international intervention force (IIF)—is not the answer.

### **The Problems with Internationalization**

Others in this compendium have pointed out the dangers of deploying international forces without an agreement between—and the consent of—the two parties. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine U.S. or other foreign forces raiding refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza in order to root out terrorists; dismantling the social support structure of Hamas in such densely populated areas as Khan Yunis; or preventing Israel from responding to the wave of suicide bombings that could well emerge once its military withdrew from the territories. Many fear

*Dennis Ross*

that such intervention would fail to transform the reality on the ground, instead generating enmity on both sides. Israelis would likely view foreign troops—even U.S. forces—as an impediment to their counterterrorism efforts. For their part, Palestinians would suspect an IIF of perpetuating occupation, a suspicion that would gain force if progress toward a final-status deal did not materialize quickly. Such progress would almost surely come slowly, if at all, given the legacy of the intifada and the mistrust that it has engendered in both Israelis and Palestinians.

Beyond these concerns, there is a more fundamental problem with the idea of international intervention in the Israeli-Palestinian arena. Quite simply, it would delay the day when long-term peace becomes possible, primarily because it would convince Palestinians that they still do not need to assume responsibility for their actions. Indeed, the Palestinian sense of entitlement is one of the principal obstacles to peace. This is not to say that Palestinians deserve all of the blame for the failure of the Oslo process; Israel's settlement activity and reluctance to relinquish control to the Palestinian Authority (PA) combined to make Palestinians feel powerless and contributed to Oslo's collapse. Yet, the Palestinians' belief that they would never be held accountable for their decisions guaranteed that Oslo would not succeed.

Here, one sees Yasir Arafat's most insidious effect on the Palestinian movement: he transformed Palestinian victimization from a condition into a strategy. Arafat used Palestinian victimhood to generate both sympathy and a sense of international obligation. This was a legitimate means of gaining recognition for the Palestinian cause. Once he achieved recognition, however, Arafat needed to change direction and channel international sympathies toward some productive end. Yet, that would have required making difficult choices, delegitimizing those who rejected peaceful coexistence with Israel, and assuming responsibility for Palestinian aspirations rather than waiting for outside actors to fulfill them. Maintaining the victim's role relieved Arafat and other Palestinians of accountability for these tasks. So long as they were victims, they were entitled. They did not make mistakes, nor were they required to learn from the past, because the responsibility always rested elsewhere. Peace is impossible to achieve with such a mentality.

### **From Entitlement to Responsibility**

The appointment of a Palestinian prime minister is a hopeful sign, one that reflects a new Palestinian awareness of the need to become responsible. Although international pressure played a major role in spurring the creation of the new position, Palestinian reformers themselves developed the concept. Reformers such as Kadura Fares, Ziad Abu Amr, and Nabil Amr have come to understand that peace can be achieved only after Palestinians create a society based on the rule of law, which is the essence of assuming responsibility. In 2001, well before becoming the first PA prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas echoed such sentiments when he took the important step of calling for “national responsibility” to supersede “national unity.”<sup>3</sup> In doing so, he addressed one of Arafat’s most profound failings, that of emphasizing Palestinian unity even at the cost of tolerating destructive behavior from some Palestinian groups.

Although Arafat, the national liberation leader, cannot make the leap to statesman, Abbas understands that Palestinians must make difficult decisions if they wish to transform themselves, let alone make peace with Israel. Yet, Abbas and the reformers must still demonstrate that they can shape Palestinian public opinion and behavior. Given Arafat’s opposition and their own limited authority, that remains a formidable challenge.

In this context, replacing Israeli military occupation with an IIF would preempt the very impulse that drives it, namely, the desire to cultivate Palestinian accountability. Who on the Palestinian side would argue for taking difficult steps (e.g., confronting radical groups; establishing the rule of law) when other parties are willing to assume the burden of implementing such measures? Why would Palestinian leaders confront those who reject peace and opt for terrorism when international forces offer to do so? Why would the PA risk civil strife if an IIF were prepared to take on the rejectionists by itself?

Although it is difficult to argue that anything positive could result from the imbroglio of the past three years, one important development has emerged on the Palestinian side: after a thousand days of conflict in which they are by all measures worse off than they were in September 2000, most Palestinians have concluded that the only way to shape a different future is to repair their government and society. This im-

*Dennis Ross*

pulse must be nurtured; dispatching international forces, especially under the rubric of a trusteeship, would only supplant it.

To be sure, rejecting the concept of international intervention does not mean abandoning Palestinian reformers. The Israeli government must find a way to work with them, demanding significant Palestinian action against terrorism while taking steps of its own to facilitate their reform efforts. For their part, the reformers will grow in power and influence vis-à-vis the rejectionists if they can show the Palestinian people that restrictions on movement have been eased, that the military siege of their cities has been lifted, that local control has been restored, that settlement expansion has been halted, and that a return to normal life is possible. None of this will happen if the rejectionists are permitted to employ violence to subvert the prospects for peaceful coexistence. The Quartet Roadmap to Middle East peace provided guidelines, but it could not take the place of concrete understandings between the two sides. The Israelis needed to know how, where, and when Palestinians would take action against terrorist groups and their infrastructure. The Palestinians needed to know how, where, and when the Israelis would take action on checkpoints, unauthorized settler outposts, and other issues mentioned above.

An IIF or some other form of international presence could play a role in the peace process, but only if it is deployed following an agreement establishing clear Palestinian responsibilities. Ideally, Israelis and Palestinians would work toward such an agreement bilaterally in order to delineate a set of mutual responsibilities. An effective agreement could also be established trilaterally (between Israel, the PA, and the United States) or in parallel (with Washington reaching separate bilateral understandings with each party). Whichever route it chooses, the PA must demonstrate in word and deed that it will not tolerate the use of violence by any group or individual, and that it will take systematic and strategic action against militant rejectionists.

Of course, the PA may need help in confronting the entrenched forces of Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, and other terrorist elements. Toward that end, the Palestinian leadership must spell out what it would need from the United States or other parties (in terms of both material assistance and possible support on the ground) in order to root out terrorist groups and their infrastruc-

ture. In any case, the U.S. role should be to reinforce the PA's assumption of responsibility, not substitute for it.

What if the Palestinians are simply incapable of assuming this responsibility? Advocates of internationalization often ask whether the world should continue to sit idly if Israelis and Palestinians fall further into the abyss of terrorism, retaliation, and despair. Would such circumstances legitimize international intervention in the form of a trusteeship? The sad reality is that if the PA is incapable of fulfilling its commitments even with the full support of the international community (including, perhaps, the help of international forces), then international trustees are sure to fail as well. Trusteeship would postpone—not circumvent—the time when Palestinians will have to take responsibility for themselves. As long as the Palestinians lack the will to change course, outside actors will have little chance of success.

#### **Other Possibilities**

If the PA fails to live up to its responsibilities, internationalization will not be the only alternative. Given the pressure of demographic realities—by the year 2010, there will be more Arabs than Jews living between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River<sup>4</sup>—Israel will have powerful reasons of its own to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza. Unilateral separation, coupled with a completed high-tech security fence and the creation of new Israeli “rapid reaction forces,” could establish a new basis for Israeli security and end Israeli control over Palestinian lives. In some areas this fence could run along the “Green Line,” and in other areas it could stretch into the West Bank in a manner that facilitates security during the transitional period between its completion and the resumption of political negotiations. Settlements lying on the Palestinian side of the fence would most likely be evacuated in order to preserve the coherence of the Israeli defense perimeter and avoid the impractical approach of using large numbers of Israeli soldiers to protect small numbers of settlers.

Unilateral disengagement is not a panacea. It would carry its own risks, particularly that of transforming a fence into a new line of confrontation. Yet, however flawed the idea may be, a fence could provide a more sustainable security and demographic situation than the current status quo. It could also give the PA an incentive to respond



*Dennis Ross*

constructively. For example, in order to minimize the transitional period preceding the resumption of final-status negotiations, the PA would have to prevent militants from using the territories to stage attacks against Israelis. If the Palestinians were to request outside help in fulfilling this obligation, the international community should be willing to provide it. Yet, the sine qua non for providing military and material assistance must be the PA's demonstrated willingness to acknowledge and fulfill its responsibilities. Once the PA is ready to meet its security commitments, the Israeli government will be driven—either by acceptance of PA accountability or by Israeli public opinion—to fulfill its own responsibility for accepting Palestinian independence.

The imposition of an IIF or trusteeship in Palestine would only delay the process of accountability, postpone the possibility of peace, and perpetuate the logic of conflict. Despite its good intentions, international intervention in the absence of an Israeli-Palestinian agreement (or, at least, a set of understandings between the parties) would prevent the adjustments to reality that are a necessary prerequisite to peace.

#### **Notes**

---

1. Martin Indyk, "A Trusteeship for Palestine?" *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 3 (May–June 2003), p. 54.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
3. *Ma'ariv*, April 25, 2003.
4. Sergio DellaPergola, *Jewish Demography: Facts, Outlook, Challenges* (Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, June 2003), p. 9.