

New Approaches to Conflict Analysis

Redefining security in the Middle East

Edited by

Tami Amanda Jacoby

& Brent E. Sasley

**REDEFINING SECURITY
IN THE MIDDLE EAST**



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New Approaches to Conflict Analysis

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Until recently, the study of conflict and conflict resolution remained comparatively immune to broad developments in social and political theory. When the changing nature and locus of large-scale conflict in the post-Cold War era is also taken into account, the case for a reconsideration of the fundamentals of conflict analysis and conflict resolution becomes all the more stark.

New Approaches to Conflict Analysis promotes the development of new theoretical insights and their application to concrete cases of large-scale conflict, broadly defined. The series intends not to ignore established approaches to conflict analysis and conflict resolution, but to contribute to the reconstruction of the field through a dialogue between orthodoxy and its contemporary critics. Equally, the series reflects the contemporary porosity of intellectual borderlines rather than simply perpetuating rigid boundaries around the study of conflict and peace. *New Approaches to Conflict Analysis* seeks to uphold the normative commitment of the field's founders yet also recognises that the moral impulse to research is properly part of its subject matter. To these ends, the series is comprised of the highest quality work of scholars drawn from throughout the international academic community, and from a wide range of disciplines within the social sciences.

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*Redefining security
in the Middle East*

Edited by Tami Amanda Jacoby
and Brent E. Sasley

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book had humble beginnings. It was born out of a meeting of the minds of two (as yet) doctoral students who shared a concern about the dearth in critical studies of security in the Middle East. Our thoughts about the field did not correspond with the availability of literature on the library shelves. The end of the Cold War brought about fundamental shifts in the international political system, which many scholars and practitioners believed would have ripple effects in all regions and fields of interest, including what may be termed 'national security'. Literature on security during the Cold War era was focused primarily on the military, the state system and superpower rivalry. However, with the end of the Cold War, the theory and practice of security has been subject to widespread rethinking, taking into consideration a larger range of issues and contexts that were previously neglected. A substantial literature has developed that offers critiques of the orthodoxy of strategic studies as well as means to broaden and deepen the study of security in the global system. Unfortunately, this current has been slow to reach the Middle East, one of the most volatile, yet strategic, regions of the post-Cold War era.

Sometimes, with a lot of effort, ideas come to fruition. For the reasons outlined above, we organized an international conference entitled 'Redefining Security in the Middle East: Effects of the Peace Process' at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, on 23–24 June 2000. In order to undertake such an ambitious project, on such a controversial subject as security in the Middle East, it was necessary to do major fundraising as well as solicit advice from a large number of colleagues: academics, practitioners and administrative staff.

The individuals who assembled at this conference came from a variety of backgrounds, in respect of race, nationality, religion and ethnicity, from three different continents (America, Europe and the Middle East), and from different 'sides of the fence' so to speak in the Arab–Israeli context, whose common interest was in dialogue in support of peace in the Middle East. The main objective of the conference was to investigate the impact of the Middle East peace process on the development of Middle East security agendas, focusing on alternative methods and philosophies of conflict and conflict resolution in the region.

The conference was organized around panels intended to serve as chapters of the book: conceptual issues of redefining military/strategic security, environmental–economic security, multilateral security issues, and gender and social–cultural issues. The papers were submitted prior to the conference and

were given extensive comments and critique by a discussant on each panel. The conference attracted a sizeable audience of scholars, practitioners and members of the public at large. A roundtable discussion provided an opportunity for each contributor to determine how the peace process has influenced the definition and practice of security in the Middle East and how his or her paper fitted in with the overall theme. Each of the papers addressed one or more of the following themes as central to the objective of redefining security in the Middle East:

- 1 issues of knowledge, power, inclusion, and exclusion in the definition and redefinition of 'security';
- 2 the inability of the traditional security concept to explain contemporary concerns and interests of different state and non-state actors in the Middle East;
- 3 the changing nature of security concerns in the Middle East as a facet of the altered strategic context of the peace process era; and
- 4 the intersections of political, social, environmental, cultural, gender, and other collective identity issues in redefining security in the Middle East.

The spirit of optimism that underpinned this project was literally shaken by the outbreak of the second *intifada*, which began at the end of September 2000 (three months after the conference took place). We observed the chain of violent incidents with horror and utter disappointment. From that point on, the idea of analysing the effects of a peace process that ceased to exist (or was terminally ill for quite some time) became problematic, to say the least. Not only did the configuration of circumstances on the ground change fundamentally, but the attitudes, fears and hopes of the participants themselves were challenged to the core, particularly as most, if not all, of them are deeply passionate about and connected to the region through family, friends and other significant bonds.

As the region continued to descend into violence and chaos, a project such as ours became a difficult sell. Observers pointed out that a redefinition of 'security' could not take place during a time of such flux and confusion. Nevertheless, as editors and contributors of the volume, we stand firm in our belief that now is *precisely* the time to think about new concepts, new policies and new discourses about security since it has become quite obvious that the old ones are not working. We do not provide a singular alternative or magical approach that is intended to 'solve' the Arab–Israeli conflict. Our goal is simply to provide a broader terrain for discussion, debate and analysis of the possibilities and constraints for and on conflict and conflict resolution in the region, to consider the complicated reality in alternative ways and to continue – even in times of crisis – to envisage an alternative, more peaceful, future for all the parties involved. Our hope is that students and scholars of the politics of

Preface and acknowledgements

the Middle East, in particular, and the global arena, in general, will employ this book as a means by which to think differently about the meaning and practice of security.

This book would not have been possible without the contributions of many people. We are deeply appreciative of the financial support given by the Department of National Defence (Canada), the University of Manitoba's Centre for Defence and Security Studies (CDSS), Department of Political Studies and Faculty of Arts, and McGill University's Research Group on International Security, Department of Political Science and Faculty of Arts. This support allowed us to finance the travel, accommodations, ground transportation and meals of the participants in the conference. We thank Geoffrey Aronson from the Foundation for Middle East Peace, Washington, DC, for giving an excellent keynote address. We are also grateful to Rex Brynen and James Devine, who offered valuable comments on the papers as chairs/discussants of panels at the conference. We appreciate the participation by members of the audience, some of whom came from afar.

On the administrative side, Pat Kruchak (CDSS) was indispensable in providing assistance on a daily basis for over three years, particularly through the reimbursement quagmire following the conference. Also, our assistants, Lindsey Troschuk and Ariann Kehler, contributed their organizational and interpersonal skills, and their creativity during the conference itself. Lenore Martin offered valuable advice throughout the process of publication, for which we are grateful. We are indebted to the two anonymous readers designated by Manchester University Press who provided critical comments on the initial prospectus. Also thanks to Tony Mason, Commissioning Editor for Politics, International Law & Economics (MUP) for continuous critical guidance on the organization and submission of the typescript for the book, as well as to Marilyn Cresswell for specific advice on contractual issues. The Department of Political Science at the University of Melbourne, Australia, provided a second home for Tami for the last four months of the project, during which time ample administrative support was given.

Our gratitude is also due to all the contributors – some who became involved at short notice in the latter stages of publication, and particularly to those whose chapters were submitted early on – for their continued hard work. We thank also those participants at the conference whose papers were not included in the book, but whose involvement deepened our perspectives a great deal. If not for the Internet, this project would have been near impossible, as we communicated across several continents and saved what may have otherwise been a very lengthy paper trail.

Finally, we thank and dedicate this book to our families. This project impinged on three years of time that were as much theirs as our own. Brent

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Tami Amanda Jacoby
Brent E. Sasley

Introduction: redefining security in the Middle East

Tami Amanda Jacoby and Brent E. Sasley

IN ITS FORMATIVE stages, the study of the theory and practice of security in all the world's regional subsystems, including that of the Middle East, was defined primarily by the logic of superpower rivalry. For over five decades, the Cold War security agenda was distinguished by the principal strategic balance, that of a structure of bipolarity, between the United States (US) and the Soviet Union (USSR). It also served as the core framework of analysis. In that respect, the 'core' was prioritized, both analytically and politically, over what were considered local or regional disputes raging in an area broadly defined as the 'Third World', now more widely known as the developing world. The latter category was considered theoretically insignificant insofar as conflict in the 'periphery' did not escalate to the point of threatening superpower relations and international stability in the core. For this reason, conflicts in the developing world, whether as proxy wars, internationalized civil conflicts or disputes local in character, were considered either as secondary or superfluous to the international system as a whole.

This exclusion of the developing world from mainstream analysis in international relations (IR) was based on a particular understanding of 'the political' in international affairs. Structures representing significant political authority were rendered equivalent to the state system, the military – industrial complex, inter-state war and the diplomatic arena. In particular, the international system and its component parts were defined, for the most part, by the nation state as it developed historically in Europe and was institutionalized through the hegemony of academic and policy-oriented elites in the United States in the post-Second World War era. These Eurocentric and, later, American hegemonic origins were developed as a field of study by, first, realist (Morgenthau, 1973; Carr, 1964) and, later, neorealist (Walt, 1987; Waltz, 1979) scholars who occupied the dominant schools of thought in the field of international relations. According to the realist worldview, security is defined as the protection of the boundaries of a nation state from external military threat with a key focus on

the threat of conventional warfare, plus nuclear weapons proliferation and superpower rivalries. The idea that superpower nuclear deterrence was a stabilizing function of the international system during the Cold War rendered developing world conflicts invisible insofar as their forms, use of armaments and actors did not fit the established paradigm.

However, the United States and the Soviet Union no longer vie with each other for dominance in the developing world, including their Middle East client states. Although the United States still seeks to maintain influence in that region, the Middle East conflict, as it has been traditionally defined, is 'over' (Thomas, 1999: 278). In other words, inter-state war backed by proxy rivals no longer takes place. This change does not suggest that inter-state conflict in the Middle East can no longer occur – that would be to neglect historical and current realities. However, because of the shift in the international system, inter-state violence is no longer the predominant type of security concern. Other forms of conflict in the Middle East are proliferating at an unprecedented rate, with local and international implications, which cannot be understood using traditional variables.

As a result, it is essential to conceptualize these new conflicts using levels of analysis and conceptual frameworks that are fundamentally different from the conventional realist–neorealist perspective. Including the developing world as a central unit of analysis, or what Amitav Acharya (1997) has termed 'the periphery as the core', significantly alters the process of theorizing the boundaries of the subfield and its principal units of analysis. This type of thinking is essential for exploring issues of security in the Middle East as both dependent and independent variables with respect to the post-Cold War international arena.

Since the end of the Cold War, along with the disintegration of much of its rules, power relations and paradigms, the field of security studies has faced a serious challenge, with input from scholars positioned variously in the areas of Marxism–neomarxism, historical materialism, feminism, environmentalism, postcolonialism and postmodernism. This dissident trend, a broad canvas referred to as 'critical security studies', has shed light on some of the emerging patterns of conflict that have dramatically altered both the contours of security and the possibilities for conflict resolution in the post-Cold War era. The task of revisiting the subject of security has involved a broad range of issues with respect to the state and its function as a protection system and a collective identity structure, and has raised questions of an epistemological and ontological nature, as well as other levels of analysis between the local and the global. By challenging the unified, abstract and ethnocentric bias of mainstream security studies and its realist–neorealist paradigm, critical scholars have opened up space for new understandings of conflict and security in non-Western regions. In particular, the issues they have raised are directly relevant

to the Middle East, itself a pivotal regional subsystem in world politics and what Bassam Tibi has referred to as 'a mirror of its changes' (1998b: 216).

This volume seeks to draw from current developments in critical security studies in order to establish a new framework of inquiry for security in the Middle East. The Middle East has always been considered a region of global strategic significance, situated at a crossroads between the continents of Europe, Africa and Asia, bordering the eastern Mediterranean Sea, and site of the world's largest deposit of oil. However, analysis of Middle East security in the current era has been imprisoned in old concepts and outdated paradigms, transplanted from elsewhere, that do not register both the consequence and complexity of conflict in that region. The goal of redefining security in the Middle East is not only to better understand events and processes in that particular geographical area, but to help shed light on other, hitherto marginalized, spaces throughout the world (both within the West and elsewhere) that have been excluded from mainstream analysis. Moreover, our intention is not simply to transport concepts and debates emanating from mainstream IR to the Middle Eastern context, but to capture the complex interface of global and local dialogues as they pertain to the changing circumstances and indigenous understandings of conflict in this region. Our focus is squarely on the Arab–Israeli context in general, and the Palestinian–Israeli context in particular, as these conflicts are yet to be resolved and form the most intractable core of geopolitical relations, issues and transformations in the region as a whole.

Traditional security studies in the Middle East

Until the 1990s, strategic studies of the Middle East have been particularly opposed to the notion of 'redefining security'. Even during the last decade, the literature on this subject has remained small. In comparison to Western regions and states where, it is argued, liberal capitalist democracies do not go to war, especially with each other (Mueller, 1990; Doyle, 1986), the Middle East remains an area in which protracted militarized, armed conditions of conflict are staples of the political process. For that reason, the study of international politics in the Middle East has been characterized as the study of inter-state war. As a result, much of the literature on the Middle East has focused on the chronology of the Arab–Israeli wars of 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the 1991 Gulf War. These wars have been used as benchmarks in the history of the region (see, for example, Bickerton and Klausner, 1991) and as signifiers of collective identities frameworks and loyalties (see, for example, Karsh, 1996; Sicker, 1989).

These methods of studying Middle Eastern politics are predicated upon the Cold War realist logic described above. Superpower rivalry over the region did

not begin in earnest until the 1960s, when American support for Israel began to increase significantly.¹ At that time, the Soviet Union began actively supporting the more radical Arab states opposed to Israel and Western, especially American, involvement in the region, encouraging opposition to Washington and its policies. While American policy centred on defending Israel against threats to its state security and ensuring continued, safe and reliable access to Persian Gulf oil supplies, Soviet goals were to prevent the use of the region as a staging area by the West in an attack on the Soviet Union's 'soft underbelly' of the Caucasus and Central Asia, and to extend Communist influence both in the Middle East as a whole and within each country. Many analysts interpreted the Arab–Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973 as proxy wars between the USSR and the US on account of the use by Israelis and Arabs of their patrons' weapons in battle and their attempt to advance the roles of their benefactors in the area.

The imposition of superpower competition on the Middle East (Ovendale, 1992; Bar-Simon-Tov, 1987) had the effect of bringing the focus of conventional security studies to the region. However, events within the region itself contributed to the spread of realist ideas of conflict and security. On the Arab side, leaders and regimes sought to unite their discontented and/or disparate ethnic, religious and linguistic communities under a patriotic banner defending the country (see, for instance, Hiro, 1989). This type of unity required emphasis on an external enemy to deflect attention away from internal concerns. On that basis, domestic demands could be shunted aside in the name both of national security interests and of regaining, by force, Arab lands lost to Israel in 1967 (el-Shazly, 1986). This process had the effect of generating political legitimacy for otherwise undemocratic and/or illegitimate rulers (Sela, 1998; Safran, 1969). Israel, for its part, felt itself beset by hostile countries on all sides, and thus was concerned primarily with defence matters by virtue of that geographical circumstance (Safran, 1978). For this reason, Israeli resources were directed towards securing the country from external threat, the most prominent and serious concern. Partly as a result of these concerns, tensions and disputes over borders – an important aspect of traditional security concerns – became an issue of paramount importance between states. Israel's relations with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan (until 1994) and Egypt (until 1979) were partly conditional on the resolution of where the border between the countries would fall. A 1975 Brookings Institution report on the prospects of peace in the region reiterated this focus on sovereignty, territorial integrity and secure borders – all realist notions – while neglecting other facets of security. Security studies of the Middle East seemed, therefore, to be a natural method of understanding state behaviour.

Since much of the analyses of security studies took as their empirical reference the more advanced industrial countries of the world (including

democracies and also non-democracies), the end of the Cold War brought to light the inability of such analyses to properly address security concerns of non-developed countries. Scholars began to point out that although war and conflict seemed to be disappearing from the developed world, they remained a constant in the developing world, including primarily Africa, parts of Asia, and the Middle East (Holsti, 1996). Moreover, conflict took place not only between the traditional referent points (i.e. states), but *within* states themselves, between various communal linguistic, religious or ethnic groups, or between the state itself and individuals or societal groups (Holsti, 1998). The restraint imposed by the Cold War competition, which dampened national and subnational rivalries in favour of aligning with and following the lead of one camp or another, was gone. There was nothing in its place. Instead, those groups whose particular interests had hitherto been repressed in the name of Cold War politics realized they could freely pursue their own interests in ways that did not coincide with the inter-state system.

Undoubtedly, one cannot underestimate the influence of these events and theories on the politics of the region. However, since the end of the Cold War, the types of conflict characterizing the Middle East have undergone a profound transformation, requiring new ways of thinking about threat, danger and protection. The challenge of redefining Middle East security is both theoretical and political. Theoretically, new concepts of security in the Middle East have much to offer critical analysis insofar as changes in that region provoke new understandings of trends of conflict and conflict resolution in a globalizing world. Politically, new concepts of security challenge the status quo in the region and offer alternative visions of the Middle East that are more peaceful and optimistic than those of today.

Two of the most significant political events that have served to revise thinking about security in the Middle East are the Palestinian *intifada* from 1987 to 1993, and the start of the Middle East peace process since 1991. Both events altered the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East in profound and unlimited ways, and have provoked scholars and practitioners alike to devise new methods of conflict and conflict resolution in the region.

The Palestinian *intifada*² began in 1987³ as a case of an internal conflict that was irresolvable by military means. Since the 1967 War, Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, although condemned by the international community, has sustained itself with little internal resistance. The uprising was clearly a popular insurrection that defied the conventional rules of war in which soldiers fight soldiers on the battlefield. Instead, the Israeli military faced an 'enemy', composed largely of Palestinian women and youth (*shabab*), that protested within civilian areas, neighbourhoods and the private sphere, spaces that are conventionally understood to lie outside the range of military combat.

Moreover, the discourse of 'enlightened occupation' that had sustained the legitimacy in Israeli public opinion of Israeli control over the West Bank and Gaza since 1967 was exposed during the *intifada* as oppressive and unjust. Additionally, the question arose about the degree to which military occupation served the interests of Israeli security in the first place. Many analysts, including the majority of the general staff of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) (quoted in Thomas, 1999: 252) stated that territory did not necessarily hold strategic value, and could even, as this case demonstrated, become a burden to the occupying society and a risk to Israeli security. Indeed, the increasingly oppressive nature of the Israeli occupation served only to fuel a cycle of violence constituted by Israeli belligerence followed by Palestinian anger, discontent and radicalization. Bassam Tibi suggests that this new pattern of 'irregular warfare' problematizes the civilian–military distinction and the role of the military–industrial complex in conflict resolution in post-Cold War conditions (Tibi, 1998b: 215).

The Middle East peace process⁴ (MEPP) was an additional factor in problematizing the military–strategic concept of security in the Middle East. The MEPP fundamentally altered the structures and symbols of security and statehood in the region, rendering the military option less popular, at least in the view of the international community. A more propitious climate for diplomatic negotiations in the 1990s resulted from a series of international pressures and realignments. Along with the *intifada*, popular opinion in other Middle Eastern societies expressed an increasing dissatisfaction with the human cost of militarized conflict.

The Madrid Peace Conference in 1991 was the first instance in which parties to the Arab–Israeli conflict engaged in direct bargaining at the negotiating table. Madrid set the stage for a series of bilateral and multilateral negotiations that would reflect renewed desire for peace in the region and recognition that the realities of the international system that had contributed to the continuation of inter-state hostilities were no longer part of the predominant framework. In addition to the momentum established at the Madrid conference, a Labour Government, traditionally seen as more willing to engage in peace negotiations, came to power in Israel in 1992 (the first since 1977). That Government entered into secret talks with Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) officials in Oslo, Norway. The Oslo process, as it has come to be known, had the effect of bypassing the very public Madrid agendas and allowed for concrete efforts and results between the Palestinian and Israeli sides without the glare of publicity and attention or the opportunity for hard-liners opposed to such negotiations to derail them. While the secrecy of these talks raised questions about the democratic nature of the peace process, they did manage to produce a series of agreements, namely the Oslo Accord of 13 August 1993,

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the Declaration of Principles signed on the White House lawn on 13 September 1993, the Oslo II Accord of 28 September 1995, and the Wye River land-for-peace Accords of 23 October 1998.

These agreements have resulted in modest advances in Middle East peace. However, at the same time, the different parties to negotiations have become embroiled in the most intractable final status issues such as: the exact contours of Palestinian statehood; borders; Palestinian refugees; Jewish settlements; and Jerusalem. In terms of the broader Israeli–Arab peace negotiations, the talks have continually broken down over Israel’s position in southern Lebanon (until the Israeli withdrawal in May 2000), Israeli–Syrian relations, and wider issues related to the positions of other regional actors. That these issues are ongoing reveals the precarious nature of the peace process as a whole. The assassination of Prime Minister Rabin by an Israeli right-wing extremist in 1995, the election of right-wing governments in Israel in 1996 and 2001, and the outbreak of the second *intifada* since September 2000, further exemplify the unstable nature of negotiations, and perhaps, more importantly, the flawed understandings of peace and security that underpinned the Oslo process. Recently, rejectionist and radical fundamentalist movements have mobilized on both sides, and have increased their popularity as negotiations at the leadership level failed to bear fruit.

As a result of the peace process, and the debates it has engendered, increasing political polarization and radicalization has occurred, both between state and society, and between different social groups. On the one hand, there has been increasing intransigence and potential for violence among a diverse multitude of regional interventions, actors and cleavages. On the other hand, the peace process has challenged conventional taboos about Arab–Israeli relations and has placed on the agenda a variety of new security issues related to environmental issues, economic development, democratization and internal cleavages based on political, social, religious, ethnic and other identities. These unresolved issues resulting from the Palestinian *intifada* and the MEPP demonstrate the futility of conventional thinking about security from a statist–military perspective. The need for new and more inclusive security frameworks has become readily apparent.

A multi-dimensional approach to security in the Middle East does not seek to ignore traditional military security issues, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile technology, arms purchases, counter-terrorism, traditional balance of power calculations, interaction with external influences, borders and territorial disputes, and inter-state wars. However, a deepening of the subject matter would involve consideration of the non-traditional variables that have arisen as security issues in Middle Eastern politics. Critical security has served as a prominent point of reference for new

approaches to conflict in all geographical regions, with particular implications for redefining security in the Middle East.

Critical security studies – a source for revision

Critical security studies is a body of nascent experimental and exploratory knowledge that, as Richard Ashley and R. B. J. Walker argue, serves to ‘transgress arbitrary limits, open up hitherto closed off connections, and enable the construction and circulation of new ways of knowing and doing politics’ (Ashley and Walker, 1990: 264). Despite the considerable diversity of critical voices in IR, a commonality lies in their desire to pry open ‘thinking space’ (George and Campbell, 1990: 269), in an otherwise unyielding paradigm that focuses, almost exclusively, on state sovereignty and its underlying configuration of authority and political identity. The challenge of critical security is to reframe some of the most basic epistemological, ontological and political orthodoxies of the field and include, according to Christine Sylvester, ‘activities we do not often study as IR, and people we think of having no place there’ (1994: 193). This type of thinking is essential for the Middle East, a region where fundamental changes emanating from both international and local politics refocus the gaze on new actors, new concerns and new areas of conflict and conflict resolution.

Critical security would help to transform the meaning of and possibilities for security in the Middle East in two fundamental ways. First, it seeks to *broaden* the field to include the new issues, challenges, actors, relations and units of analysis that have arisen in the post-Cold War era. New threats and dangers in the Middle East are articulated in relation to environmental risk, terrorism, fundamentalist movements, structural violence, neo-colonialism, migration and refugees, economic scarcity, ethnic and racial conflict, domestic abuse/violence against women, and political and human rights. These issues both exceed and render problematic the limited boundaries of the field as they take place across and beyond state boundaries and cannot be resolved by any particular state structure on its own.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, critical security attempts to *deepen* the field by considering epistemological and ontological issues, for example, the relationship between security and its underlying claims to knowledge and images of reality. Theorizing security at this metatheoretical level opens up practical questions about identity, prospects for emancipation, change, justice, political authority and the character of the human sciences. In this way, security can be analysed not as a transparent reflection of ‘national interest’ (broadly defined) or citizenship rights and duties, but as a discursive site of contestation. As Simon Dalby (1997) argues, critical security is ‘an essentially contested concept’, as well as a repository of other meanings and affiliations.

From a critical perspective, security can be regarded as a site for the transmission of values, the legitimization of claims to knowledge, and the production and reproduction of collective identity formations. If the origins of fear and perceptions of threat fluctuate along socio-temporal lines, then the agent and nature of security cannot simply be linked to the state as an abstract entity, but must be regarded as both historically variable and contextually specific (Krause and Williams, 1997). In that respect, the determinants of security, as a theory and as a practice, relate to cultural, religious,⁵ national, social, economic, and familial and other factors. Barry Buzan (1983: 363) reinforces this point in stating that 'attempts to treat security as if it was confined to any single level or any single sector invite serious distortions of understanding'. By broadening and deepening its agenda, critical security opens a vast and more inclusive terrain for the reposing of questions, long considered resolved in the field, about what it means to be 'secure' in the Middle East.

To deepen the field, critical security borrows substantially from the sociology of science debates in such diverse disciplines as sociology, anthropology, psychology, cultural studies and women's studies. These areas have undergone profound transformations in recent years as a result of the influence of New Left thinking (with residual elements of Hegelian Marxism) since the 1960s, feminist theory, constructivism, and the poststructuralist turn since the 1980s.

Influenced to a great extent by the works of German social theorist Juergen Habermas and Italian Marxist writer Antonio Gramsci, critical theory acknowledges the political interests driving theory itself and the unity of empirical research with human emancipation. The concept of *emancipation* has featured in Kenneth Booth's work on security in which he proposes that security be co-terminous with 'the freeing of people (as individuals and groups) from those physical and human constraints which stop them from carrying out what they would freely choose to do' (1991: 319). While some are critical of this broad definition of security because of its perceived lack of conceptual coherence (see Ayooob, 1997), a more inclusive study of security would take seriously the diversity of peoples and the basic, and the more elaborate, means by which humans attain fulfilment and happiness. The orientation of critical security as a people-centred, rather than state-centred, approach renders it necessary to focus on the relationship between theory and political praxis.

The constructivist school of thought in IR (Wendt, 1999) has made a significant contribution to understanding and theorizing the security of people rather than of states. Constructivism's two most significant contributions to redefining security are in its more interpretative approach, which focuses on ideas, norms and intersubjective meanings, and also on its capacity to study security from the perspective of the participant and his/her perceptions of threat and danger based on his/her relationships and affiliations.

Taking this interpretative focus a step further, postmodernist perspectives in IR find evidence of the power to define security in identity construction and language (Madar, 2000). Radical forms of postmodernism preclude the existence of a unified identity in any form. However, postmodern deconstruction of security ‘texts’ have been useful in demonstrating ways in which national security writing is used to justify defence of the state through the production of domestic consensus and repressive hierarchies at home, while perpetuating conflict abroad against the overseas enemy – broadly defined (Madar, 2000: 82). Postmodern analysis in critical security studies has considered the role of language in determining security agendas. For example, Buzan, Waever and de Wilde analyse *security* in terms of a ‘speech act’ or what they call ‘securitization’, to denote the process in which an existential threat and special measures designed to meet that threat are created by uttering particular discourses (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde, 1998).

Influenced to a large extent by Lacan’s definition of ‘the symbolic order’ (1977) and Foucault’s notion of discourse as a ‘social practice’ (1972), critical security studies scholars have demonstrated that security is itself a discourse, or ‘text’, that can be read and interpreted in a variety of ways. Those who wield power and command resources to both define and combat a particular threat have the greater capacity to implement dominant security discourses and thus set the policy agenda. In other words, issues are ‘securitized’ by those in power, despite the fact that threats are tentatively constituted and subject to interpretation by individuals and groups within a particular socio-historical conjunction.

The intervening influence of language in critical security studies demonstrates that representation in any context, or the relationship between the object (threat) of security and knowledge (fear) about it cannot be neutral. As a representational practice, security has been associated with various world-views, cultures, civilizational consciousnesses, theologies and lifeways. From a critical perspective, these forms of representation are treated as neither monolithic nor as aggregate of individual beliefs. Instead, they form an overall picture of mediating claims over the social construction of threat and danger based on various interpretations of indigenous laws, popular customs, social taboos, material circumstances and external influences.

Scholars studying the developing world have contributed a significant set of culturally specific variables to the study of security. Security studies in these regions demonstrate that the predominant diplomatic–strategic conception of security as the physical protection of nation states from external military threats is Eurocentric and inapplicable to many of the quandaries of insecurity in developing and/or non-Western societies. Developing-world security quandaries result from differential patterns of state formation that were often constructed out of colonial power. The colonial element affected elite recruitment and regime establishment and maintenance (Ayoob, 1983–84). In

particular, primary sources of developing-world insecurity are linked to problems of legitimacy, resulting from a lack of congruence between a state's territorial boundaries and its underlying social composition. This pattern of state development has resulted in the protracted social and civil/ethnic conflicts of today (Azar and Moon, 1984).

Popular dissent in developing societies amplifies the contradictions between regime self-preservation (regime security) and social welfare (human security). Developing-world scholars have established the contextual and historical evidence that states often constitute a greater threat to the lives and well-being of their citizens (lack of democracy) than does the threat from external enemies (war). Widespread poverty, underdevelopment, ecological scarcity and overpopulation compound the problem of internal security in the Middle East. These issues are non-military in nature and cannot be contained within the state system or resolved by military action (Azar and Moon, 1984). A focus on context and historical specificity further develops the study of security in the Middle East, itself a crossroads between the developed and the developing world. As such, Middle East security exhibits characteristics from both worlds, and in many ways serves as a meeting point between Western and non-Western dialogues.

Feminist scholars have also made a significant contribution to critical security, articulating new theoretical and practical implications of danger and protection. The field of IR as a whole has been particularly hostile to feminist interventions. This exclusion is a result in part of the nature of its subject matter, i.e. war, security and the state system, spaces that have historically been occupied almost exclusively by men. Feminist scholars have offered strong critiques of the prevailing orthodoxy by pointing out that the depiction of states as rational-unitary actors seeking national security prioritizes military-strategic issues (Sylvestor, 1994; Peterson, 1992; Tickner, 1992; Enloe, 1989; Elshtain, 1987). The construct of the male citizen-warrior predominates in accounts of state making and its protection systems in relation to the exclusion of women from the capacity to control the conditions of their own protection. This dichotomy of protector versus protected represents a prominent, albeit gendered, structure in IR that reinforces the authority of men and states over women, who have traditionally been defined as vulnerable and in need of protection. By establishing the male citizen-warrior as the primary model of citizenship (via his representation of the state's legitimate monopoly over the means of coercion), men become the more significant foundation for analysing strategic studies. As a result, the most pervasive forms of structural and direct physical violence in society by men *against* women, i.e. domestic violence and sexual assault/rape, are rendered invisible in dominant accounts (Roberts, 1984: 196). On account of the dominant position of the military in the Middle Eastern region, issues of gender violence and the connection between gender

and security have only recently begun to surface in public discourses, largely because of the politics of women's resistance and the debates about women's right to fight.

As a whole, this broad terrain of critical security scholars has opened up the field of security studies to new thinking. The context-specific mode of analysis holds important implications for the theory and practice of security in the Middle East. The contributors to this volume draw in one way or another from the cache of tools given by critical security scholarship outlined above. In so doing, they further the debate about critical security studies through different case studies, methodologies and contextual specificities associated with the Middle East.

Implications for security studies of the Middle East

While the development of critical security studies has taken place largely outside the Middle Eastern context, many of its concepts, theories, debates and practices are significant for redefining security in the Middle East. This volume employs critical security studies tools to reframe political, social, gender and environmental issues as security issues.

First, the book considers security in relation to the political sector in terms of processes of democratization in the region and demands of new groups for wider and more meaningful access to political decision making. The notion of political security would address the accountability of governments and public liberties and freedoms, including possibilities for dissent. Leaders in the Middle East have demonstrated clearly an inability to either discern or to accept the desires for change taking place at the popular level and to execute appropriate policy initiatives. By deflecting energies away from domestic issues, political leaders have obstructed the development of a more robust civil society and the involvement of social movements and protest groups with the political process.

Second, the book explores security in relation to the construction of social groups and collective identities. The Middle East consists of a wide range of ethnic, religious, linguistic, ideological and cultural groups that have, for the most part, been collected together in state organizations with little regard for their differences and historical enmities. These reciprocal misgivings and traditional contrarities have problematized attempts at co-operation in the name of higher interests affecting all sectors and have resulted in discrimination against minorities and political persecutions. The social dimension of security must include issues related to cultural integration, confidence-building measures, inter-ethnic dialogue, people-to-people contacts, religious and other collective identifications, discourses and perceptions based on class, gender, religion, ethnicity, nationality, and so on.

Finally, the book examines the significance of ecopolitics in security agendas in the Middle East. Essential natural resources such as water, food, energy and dependence on foreign suppliers are environmental issues that affect not only Middle Eastern national security agendas but human security agendas worldwide. However, by contrast to concerns about macro-environmental issues, such as global warming, prevalent in studies of ecopolitics in the West, the Middle East is plagued by more micro-environmental concerns that affect people's immediate livelihoods and chances for survival. Within this geographical unit, there are shared surface and subsurface water basins, shared seas and bodies of water, and flora, fauna and other natural resources. Conflict is closely related to access to clean water and its distribution. Recent developments have indicated that the age of the oil war may be supplanted by that of the 'war for water', the scarcest resource in the area (Anderson, Siebert and Wagner, 2001: 256). In addition, the Arab–Israeli conflict has brought about environmental questions related to land confiscation, waste management, agriculture, deforestation and air pollution.

The areas of political, social, religious, cultural and environmental security, are all subject to contestation, power relations and collective affiliations. Moreover, these areas have changed dramatically since the start of the Middle East peace process. However, they have been complicated by several factors in the Middle East, and these need to be addressed in terms of a broad security framework.

To summarize, the commitment of this volume is twofold. First, the collaborators seek in various ways to challenge the orthodoxy of security thinking by employing different critical security concepts in relation to the Arab–Israeli context. It is not the purpose of this book to deny the importance of security threats grounded in military or strategic concerns. It is neither assumed that such security concerns should be subsumed beneath non-military facets, nor asserted that the state is no longer an actor of significance: studies based on those facets, as well as on the future of military security in the region, are important for both practical and theoretical reasons. Rather, the book maintains that non-military, non-realist, notions of security are also notable aspects of security studies. There is a small, but growing, literature on this subject,⁶ but few volumes are comprehensive in scope.

Second, the collaborators seek to broaden and deepen the definition of security in the Middle East as a means by which to develop alternative approaches to security that take into consideration the range of issues tackled in this volume. The contributors come from a variety of different social, national, religious, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. The differing epistemologies and political purposes reflected here disavow any common goal on the part of the contributors to develop a single alternative approach to security in the Middle East. That would be counterproductive considering the diversity of identity

expressed in this project. Instead, the goal is to promote a more inclusive dialogue within the framework of a 'critical project' on the meaning and practice of security in the Middle East. This intervention is regarded as part of an emerging and ongoing debate about security in the world in general, and in the Middle East in particular. The Middle Eastern component provides a useful laboratory for raising scholarly and practical issues, but also for promoting peace in Middle Eastern security agendas in a way that includes the diversity of peoples, identities, interests and shared hopes for a better future. In that sense, this study is designed as a heuristic tool for furthering our theoretical understanding of concepts of security, which can help provide more effective models of conflict resolution.

Breakdown of chapters

The first four chapters of the book establish a theoretical context for redefining security in the Middle East by considering a range of concepts, debates and theories that have traditionally been absent from the field. This shift in analysis from *national* security to *human* security (the security of groups and individuals) reflects the transformations of the post-Cold War era by combining military with non-military concerns such as environmental damage, social unrest (refugees, rebellion and revolution), economic mismanagement, cultural conflict, gender inequity and radical fundamentalism. The Middle East is an excellent laboratory in which to investigate these transitions, having acquired new significance in the global arena as an area of concern in itself, yet one still undergoing conditions of protracted conflict.

In [chapter 2](#), Lenore Martin provides an analytical model for redefining national security as a theory and as a practice in the post-Cold War era. This model defines 'national security' as the ability of a state to deter or counter threats to its three components: territory; society; and regime. By way of contrast to realist IR theory, developing-world theorists have proposed a different set of variables to explain the unique challenges facing developing states, where threats emanate from internal, transnational and external sources. Martin proposes a set of five interacting variables with which to analyse security: military capability; political legitimacy; ethnic and religious tolerance; natural resources; and economic capabilities. The explanatory power of the paradigm derives from the integration of these variables, with particular reference to the relationship of Israel and the Palestinian National Authority.

In [chapter 3](#), Jonathan B. Isacoff adopts a historical constructivist perspective for revisiting the concept of security. The main argument is that the character of Arab–Israeli relations can be measured in large part by the evolution of Israeli foreign policy debate from the 1950s to the 1990s, in particular,

the competition within Israeli politics and society between the opposing doctrines of militarism and moderation. This foreign policy lens on the Arab–Israeli conflict suggests that a fully consolidated peace agreement will follow only the waning of militarism and the waxing of moderation as the dominant Israeli doctrine guiding both Israel’s position in the peace process and the establishing of national and personal security within Israel.

Chapter 4, by Bassam Tibi, undertakes a dialogue between Islam and Islamism as a means to broaden the terrain on which conflict resolution and post-bipolar security in the Middle East is to be understood. He argues that political Islam, as the prominent (rejectionist) front against the official peace process and Western influence in the region, has gained the capacity to destabilize, create disorder and participate in the realm of political conflict. However, he points to fundamental differences between Islam as a spiritual faith and Islamism as a politicized form of religion with tendencies to neo-absolutism and violence. This chapter explores fundamental issues related to Islamophobia and the West, the relationship between Islam and democracy, and circumstances for groups and parties to gain political power and effect social change through indigenous tools and symbols. The intricate distinctions are presented between Islam, political Islam, other forms of religious fundamentalism, and terrorism in relation to the Arab–Israeli conflict, the Mediterranean region and the diaspora.

In chapters 5–8 the emphasis is on issues related to gender, environmental, religious, political and societal security. In chapter 5 Tami Amanda Jacoby rethinks the relationship between gender and security in the Middle East, with a particular focus on the politics of women’s resistance in Israel. The Middle East peace process between Israel and the Palestinians since 1991 has problematized struggles for gender equality. First, the predominant understanding of security at the diplomatic level has been become a matter of agreements among states, promoting a limited cessation of hostilities backed by armed force. Second, the focus on diplomatic negotiation not only increased the status of military leaders but usurped the momentum of popular struggle during the occupation era and the Palestinian uprising when women were prominent at the grassroots level. Women have responded in two major ways to the gender boundaries underlying diplomacy, national security and state building in Israel. On the one hand, women have struggled for equal access to the right to fight in the Israeli military. On the other, women have struggled for a negotiated settlement to the conflict within the context of the Israeli women’s peace movement. These divergent roles occupied by women in the peace process era hold different implications for an understanding of gender and national security in Israel.

Jeffrey Sosland introduces, in chapter 6, the notion of *environmental* security, suggesting that security studies scholars have long objected to the inclusion

of the environment in their research agenda. However, regions such as the Arab–Israeli one suffer from seasonal drought, if not continual water crises. As a result, distribution and discrimination are highly sensitive questions that become viewed by the affected riparians as threats to national security. Traditional concepts such as deterrence and verification, employed in treatments of other security issues, fall short of providing peaceful solutions to environmental insecurity. This chapter suggests that violent conflicts in the Middle East often result from resource scarcity. It provides an empirical case study of water scarcity between Israel and the Palestinian areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip prior to, and as a factor in, the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation (*intifada*). Conclusions are then drawn for the present Middle East peace process.

In [chapter 7](#), Thomas J. Butko examines the role of political Islam in the Middle East peace process through a case study of *Hamas*, the Islamic resistance movement, in the West Bank and Gaza, one of the most significant Palestinian forces opposed to the peace process and thus the only viable, albeit problematic, alternative to the PLO–PNA’s hegemony over Palestinian society. This case of *Hamas* is employed to demonstrate that, in examining issues of security in the Middle East, it is important to consider the politicization of religion as a critical discourse positioned against the state system and an important influence over the development of national security agendas in the Middle East. Extremists and rejectionists on either side seek to exploit the weaknesses inherent in the security apparatus to further their own interests. He argues that it is only by including previously excluded groups and their constituencies, such as Islamist movements, and considering the penetration of politics by their belief systems that a concrete and durable peace can be established in the Middle East.

Brent E. Sasley investigates the effects of political liberalization on security in the Middle East. The growth of civil society in the Middle East has occurred in tandem with underlying processes of political and economic liberalization. These changes, examined in [chapter 8](#), have placed increasing demands on the state. Previously, demands for social security and political rights were either ignored or easily placated by focusing attention on foreign policy agendas, particularly the Arab–Israeli conflict. However, and particularly since the start of the Middle East peace process, the pressure to democratize has led governing elites to become concerned for their own position and safety, thus turning their attention from external enemies toward (perceived) internal enemies. This effect of political liberalization not only calls into question the referent object of security (i.e. the distinction between the security of rulers/elites, states and societies), but contributes to debate about threat perception, the appropriate agent responsible for policy development *vis-à-vis* national security and a better understanding of policy options that include the security and protection of the diversity of actors in the region.

Introduction

NOTES

- 1 However, alignment with the moderate Arab states of the region, particularly in the Persian Gulf, had been a plank of US foreign policy since the late 1940s.
- 2 The Palestinian *intifada* (literally, 'shaking off') was ignited on 8 December 1987 by an auto accident in Gaza that sparked rioting, first in Gaza and then throughout the West Bank. For more on the Palestinian *intifada*, see Lockman and Benin, 1989.
- 3 The second *intifada* started in September 2000, and is still raging at the time of writing.
- 4 For more on the Middle East peace process see Peleg, 1998.
- 5 For further discussion of the role of political Islam and the state see Tibi, 1998a.
- 6 For an examination of various facets of national security in the Arab world, see Korany, Noble and Brynen, 1993 and Martin, 1999. For an exploration of societal security concerns within Israel see Bar-Tal, Jacobson and Klieman, 1998.

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Conceptualizing security in the Middle East: Israel and a Palestinian state

Lenore G. Martin

IN A WORLD that has recently undergone seismic change with the collapse of the Cold War and is still uncertain as to the ramifications of the New World Order, it is scholars who have become of key importance to developing theories or paradigms to comprehend changing relationships in the international arena. Novel concepts gain acceptance within the academic community as they attract contributors to their intellectual development and proponents who urge their utility for policy makers. For the careful scholar, the worth of any new conceptualization must be proven through testing, typically by applying it to factual situations in defined periods, and comparing its explanatory power against competing theories. For the prudent policy maker, the validity of any novel construct or worldview lies in its utility for making effective choices among competing policy options. If ultimately successful, these analytical constructs will create questions and goals that develop agendas for both policy makers and academics.

The novel paradigm proposed for conceptualizing 'national security' uses an *integrated* approach that should prove useful for both academics and policy makers in one of the more turbulent regions in the world, the Middle East (Martin, 1999).¹ This chapter will outline the paradigm and apply it to a preliminary analysis of the national security of Israel and a nascent Palestinian state, *vis-à-vis* each other.²

The concepts

What is the new paradigm, and why call it an integrated approach? At the heart of every definition of national security is the concept of threat – and the concomitant three questions: what are the kinds of threats faced, what are their sources, and what are their targets? The two general approaches to answering those questions in the discipline of political science, or the subdiscipline of security studies, are those of the realists (or neorealists) and the liberals (or

neoliberals). For the realists, threats are predominantly military threats; their sources are primarily external states; and their targets are the state, either at its boundaries, i.e. its territorial integrity, or at its core, i.e. its very existence or sovereignty. For the liberals, the threats include military and non-military threats, indeed ranging widely to economic, environmental and ideological threats; their sources are external nations and transnational groups, as well as internal groups; and their targets are not merely the State, but its inhabitants as well.³

The problem with the realist approach to conceptualizing national security was vividly demonstrated by the implosion of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. None of these events had been predicted or were predictable from the realist focus on the military balance of power and the mutual deterrence policies of the global superpowers. The problem with the liberal theorists is that, by avoiding the realist practice of explaining too little, they seek to explain too much. There are too many variables, with inter-relationships too complex for policy makers and scholars to take into account and to prioritize in order to produce policy guidelines or powerful explanations.

Dissatisfaction with realism and liberalism led to the development of alternative approaches to conceptualizing national security (see Walt, 1998; Katzenstein, 1996).⁴ One of these third approaches has been favoured by scholars of developing-world international politics, who are aware of the inadequacies of the global or Western orientation of realism and liberalism. These include Ayoob 1995; Korany, Noble and Brynen 1993; Buzan 1991; Azar and Moon 1988. This third approach accepts the need for military security, but focuses on a few non-military factors that address the threats to the fragile economies and unstable internal politics of developing nations. Thus Buzan 1991: 116–34 offered five ‘sectors’ or types of threats: military, political, societal, economic and ecological (or environmental).⁵ Ayoob (1995: 8) emphasized ‘political security’, recognizing threats emanating from a range of variables.

Where the novel paradigm differs from this third approach is in its selection of a set of components of national security that can be treated as variables and integrated. Thus, national security is treated as a dependent variable – the result of the interaction of a set of five integrated independent variables. Integration is critical to deriving the explanatory power from the interactions of this limited set of variables. It is also necessary in order to derive policy prescriptions from an analysis of the consequences of these interactions. Without an integration of these variables, the analyst presents merely a list of ‘factors’ or ‘aspects’ of national security to the researcher or policy maker. This is much like giving a chef a recipe with only a list of ingredients but without instructions on quantities and how to mix them.

In creating a paradigm, one must first determine the level of analysis at which it will operate. The choices in the field of international relations are

global, regional, statal, societal and individual. The novel paradigm selects the state, still the predominant level of analysis within the field (Carlo, 1998).⁶ How then do we define the state? The state has three components: territory, society and regime (Halliday, 1987).⁷ Each of these components of the state can be the target of threats. National security, therefore, as a dependent variable, represents a continuum. At one extreme, a wholly insecure state faces threats to the continuing existence of its territory, society and regime – for example, Lebanon during the civil war in the mid-1970s and early 1980s, or Kuwait facing Iraqi attack in August 1990. At the other extreme, a more secure state has very few threats or it has the capability to deter most such threats – some would give the United States as the example; but, in any event, there are no such secure states in the Middle East today.

What, then, are the critical variables that enable a state to deter threats to its territory, society and regime, i.e. provide it with a greater degree of national security? Clearly a state needs military capabilities. It also needs four other types of capability: political legitimacy; ethnic and religious tolerance; economic capabilities; and available essential natural resources.

Why not include other variables discussed in the liberal literature, such as population growth rates, population migrations, environmental hazards, or even diffusion of knowledge and technology (Holsti, 1995: 43)? Certainly these variables contribute to the pressures on regimes and societies, and the territories they occupy. However much they affect human security, they are not independent variables that directly affect the national security of the state in the same way as the five variables selected for the paradigm.

On the other hand, there may be some regional bias in the selection of the five variables. States in other regions of the globe may not face threats to the same degree within certain variables, such as political legitimacy or economic capabilities in the established democracies in Europe. Only regional and ultimately global testing of the paradigm will provide a real measure of the value of the selected variables. In the meantime, their use at least for the Middle East region can be tested. What is the utility of the paradigm, accordingly, for security relations between Israel and a Palestinian state?

Applying the paradigm in the context of Israel and a Palestinian state

Adopting the state as the level of analysis creates a problem for exploring the national security of the Palestinian entity, which at time of writing has not achieved *de jure* recognition as a state. Still, the nascent Palestinian state, represented by the Palestinian Authority (PA), is clearly an international actor; however, the PA's status is uncertain in the face of the collapse of the peace process.⁸ The peace process reached a crisis in the latter part of 2000 and the winter of early 2001 when Palestinians and Israelis were unable to resolve

final status issues, and the second *intifada* broke out.⁹ If the peace process were to collapse completely, without likelihood of revival, it may still be possible to refer to a Palestinian state, even if there were no PA. However, it would be difficult to predict the territorial reach of that state. Similarly, it would be difficult to predict the nature of the regime that might emerge as a result of a final collapse of the peace process. Currently, the PA is governed by the autocratic regime of Yasir Arafat with the assistance of the ruling elite within his dominant party, *Fatah*, and within the larger Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) (Rubin, 1999: 4–26; Robinson, 1997a: 177–88). However, Arafat is over 70 and at times ailing. He has not formally designated a successor. And, although the likely contenders for power after Arafat are within the ruling elite of *Fatah* and the executive committee of the PLO, there is no assurance that one of the contenders, or a group of the elite, will come to power or will succeed in continuing in power in the face of strong challenges from outside the ruling elite.¹⁰

On the other hand, it is still reasonable to assume that at some point in time a Palestinian state will emerge within the territorial boundaries of the West Bank and Gaza. For the national security analyst, this hypothetical Palestinian state raises the issue as to how it will preserve its own security, and what will be the impact of a Palestinian state on Israeli national security?¹¹

The paradigm will be used to generate answers to those national security policy issues. First, however, let us explore how conceptualizing the national security of a proto-Palestinian state as well as Israel, *vis-à-vis* each other, can be used to demonstrate the utility of the variables integrated with the paradigm.

The five variables

Political legitimacy

Political legitimacy is defined herein as the willingness of the society to obey the authority of its regime. Regimes seek to inculcate legitimacy in a number of ways, most commonly by associating the regime with the state and inculcating loyalty to the state with the symbols of patriotism and nationalism, such as flags, anthems and political myths.¹² To maintain their legitimacy, all regimes must be viewed by the society as providing effective government, and, in the case of revolutionary regimes, as achieving the goals of social change. For example, a revolutionary regime would be expected to liberate its society from the vestiges of colonial or pre-revolutionary social oppression. There are multiple Middle Eastern examples here, from the revolutionary Arab nationalist regimes that replaced monarchies with autocracies in Egypt, Syria and Iraq, to the Khomeini regime that installed a theocracy in Iran, and to the Atatürk regime that installed democracy, albeit of a uniquely praetorian model, in Turkey.

If the society comes to view the regime as delivering ineffectual or corrupt government, or, as might be the case with revolutionary regimes, failing to achieve declared goals, the regime will face serious challenges from vocal critics and political rivals offering alternative theories of political legitimacy. To counter such risks, the regime may adopt even more authoritarian measures to suppress dissent and engage in more rampant corruption to sustain loyalty among its supporters and co-opt its opponents. Ultimately, without sufficient political legitimacy, regimes may collapse, revolutions occur, and states succumb to outside conquest.

A PALESTINIAN STATE

The Arafat regime, after the PLO's return from Tunis and the establishing of the PA after the Oslo Accords in 1993, faces substantial challenges to its political legitimacy. It has generated considerable criticism for ineffectual and corrupt government (see Robinson, 1997).¹³ The regime often seeks to defend itself for its inadequacies by laying blame on Israel for imposing restrictive economic measures and demanding the apprehension of terrorists. On the other hand, the regime depends for much of its income on foreign subsidies, some of which may be siphoned into private pockets; and it has organized its delivery of governmental services to maximize patronage and in ways that foster corruption. These include establishing governmental monopolies on basic commodities and requiring multiple licenses for goods and services, all of which lend themselves to exploitation for personal gain.

Furthermore, as the leadership of a revolutionary movement, the Arafat regime was expected through the peace process to fulfil the aspirations of the Palestinians for liberation from Israeli occupation and full sovereignty for a Palestinian state over all of the pre-1967 West Bank and Gaza. However, during the final status negotiations, the various compromises that would have been required to conclude peace looked to many Palestinians as if those goals would be thwarted (Shikaki, 1998). These compromises included the need to satisfy the Israelis' concerns for strategic access through the West Bank and Gaza through Israeli-controlled routes and the preservation of large swathes of Israeli settlements that would have undermined the full sovereignty of a Palestinian state. Other apparently intractable issues included the right of return for Palestinian refugees and the sharing of sovereignty over the holy places in Jerusalem. Palestinian opposition to the continuation of the peace process intensified, and Arafat may have held back from full participation in the process after January 2001 in order to shore up the legitimacy of the regime in the face of such opposition (Sayigh, 2001: 47–60).¹⁴

There are four principal sources of opposition to the Arafat regime that can take advantage of its ineptitude and corruption, or its failure to achieve Palestinian aspirations to build support within Palestinian society, and so

challenge its political legitimacy. One consists of factions inside of *Fatah* and the PLO that have rejected the peace process. Within *Fatah* these range from senior, old-line, officials, such as Faruq Qaddumi, who refuse to return to the West Bank and Gaza while any areas remain under Israeli occupancy, to more militant armed groups which seek to fill the vacuum of leadership in providing local security or attacking Israel (Robinson, 2000; Roy, 2001).¹⁵ Outside of *Fatah*, but within the PLO, the rejectionists include the leftist nationalist opposition consisting predominantly of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) (Shikaki, 1998: 30–1).

A second source of opposition to the regime consists of radical Islamists, primarily *Hamas* and *Islamic Jihad*, which also challenge its secularism and offer a competing set of legitimacy principles based upon Islamic precepts.¹⁶ A third source of opposition to the Arafat regime emanates from the so-called ‘insiders’: Palestinians who participated in the first *intifada* of 1987–93 before the return of the PLO from Tunis. Insiders who have not been co-opted by the regime resent its favouring the returnees from Tunis (see Robinson, 1997a: 19–37, 94–131, 174–88). Finally, there are challenges from those demanding increased democratization – Western educated or influenced elites (see Brown, 2000: 25–43).¹⁷

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The breakdown of the peace process and the second *intifada* has had a similar impact on challenges to the Israeli regime. Although Israel has a more entrenched democracy than the Palestinian state, the regime has been vulnerable to violent incidents initiated by political extremists opposed to the peace process. These are exemplified by the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995 and ongoing settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Still, the divisions among Jews within Israeli society over the peace process that have led to a quick succession of coalition governments have not created fundamental opposition to the democratic regime itself.

On the other hand a potential source of opposition to the regime arises from the increased politicization of Israel’s Palestinian population, almost 20 per cent of its total population.¹⁸ The political leadership within this population has been fragmented among the Israeli Communist Party, Arab nationalists, Islamists and others, and displays varying degrees of acceptance of the political legitimacy of a democratic regime that discriminates against Arabs in what is self-defined as the Jewish State (Rouhana, 1997: 94–107; see Stendel, 1996: 80–147). There have been occasional violent incidents from major Israeli Palestinian protests against governmental activities, such as in the general strike opposing land expropriations on Land Day in 1976 and demonstrations on subsequent anniversaries, or the widespread demonstrations in support of the second *intifada*.¹⁹ The Israeli use of bullets to suppress the Palestinians’ October 2000

demonstrations symbolized for the Israeli Palestinians their second-class status within Israel and confirmed that the regime takes the same view of them as it does of Palestinians across the so-called Green Line. As this minority population grows it is likely to become increasingly dissatisfied with its second-class citizenship, in contrast to the full rights which they expect to be afforded to Palestinians in the Palestinian state. On the other hand, it is not clear what protection for personal rights the nascent Palestinian State will develop. Nor is it clear that the PA has any interest in encouraging disaffection of Israeli Palestinians with the Israeli regime (Amara, 2000).²⁰ So the Palestinian minority within Israel could become alienated from both political communities.

Ethnic and religious tolerance

National security does not require ethnic and religious homogeneity or cohesiveness. What it does require is that differentiated ethnic and religious groups avoid internecine conflict and practise tolerance of each other's rights to exist and flourish. Yet ethnic and religious tolerance is a somewhat scarce commodity in the Middle East. In addition to the religious intolerance encountered by Jews in most Arab countries, there are numerous examples throughout the region of intolerance, such as that for (Christian) Copts in Egypt, (Shiite) Alevis in Turkey, Shiites in Saudi Arabia, and Bahais in Iran; and there is considerable ethnic intolerance for Kurds in Iraq, and to a lesser extent in Iran, Syria and Turkey, as well as for Turcomen in Iraq. Without tolerance there will be ethnic and/or religious dissension, and threats generally to the security of the state from civil strife, demands for secession, or external subversion or intervention – as occurred with the Kurdish crises in Iraq and Turkey.

A PALESTINIAN STATE

In contrast to a number of Middle Eastern states that have serious ethnic divisions, the Palestinian state is blessed with a relatively homogeneous ethnic, i.e. Arab, population. Nonetheless, the Palestinian political community does encounter challenges to its mainly secular culture from the more Islamist groups. *Hamas*, in particular, has sought to Islamize Palestinian society, offering welfare and educational programmes and other communal services, thus competing with welfare programmes offered (or not) by the PA. *Hamas* receives support for its programmes from within the Palestinian population as well as from Islamic regimes outside of the State. Iran is a potential source of support, as is its client *Hezbollah* in Lebanon, and as also are the more radical religious groups and individuals in the Gulf.

There has been, as a result, a complex history in the co-operative and competitive co-existence of the Arafat regime and *Hamas* (Mishal and Sela, 2000: 3; Rubin, 1999: 114–37; Robinson, 1997a: 149–73). Consequently,

there is considerable ambivalence over the degree of tolerance for *Hamas* that the Arafat regime will permit. During the active first years of the peace process, the risk of radicalism from *Hamas* may have made Israel more willing to negotiate with the Arafat regime. Thus, before the second *intifada*, the regime was prepared to co-operate with Israeli authorities to thwart *Hamas* terrorist attacks in Israel.²¹ However, with the degeneration of the peace process, *Hamas*, as well as Islamic *Jihad*, have been freer to engage in suicide bombings and other terrorist attacks within Israel. These attacks have stimulated Israeli retaliation that has sought to assassinate the most militant leadership of *Hamas* and Islamic *Jihad*. As much as the Arafat regime might benefit from Israel's elimination of the more militant elements of the Islamic opposition, there is still the risk that suicide bombers and their assassinated leaders would become religious martyrs and their invocation of violent means to liberate Palestinians from Israeli occupation would generate greater popularity for *Hamas* and Islamic *Jihad* within the Palestinian political community. The call by a leading *Fatah* official for inclusion of *Hamas* and Islamic *Jihad* in a unity government lends some support for the reality of this risk.²²

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Although there are social tensions between Sephardic Jews of primarily North African and Middle Eastern heritage and Ashkenazi Jews of primarily European heritage, as well as between secular Jews and the Orthodox and Ultra Orthodox, none of them has erupted into riots and terrorist activities of a kind that might irreparably rend the social fabric of the Israeli political community. Nonetheless, there is potential social rupture from the political controversy over 'who is a Jew'? This has adverse social consequences for 'non-Jews', such as non-recognition of marriages. The more the regime favours the Orthodox Jewish precepts (which limit the definition to those born of a Jewish mother), the more it will alienate sectors of society, including large numbers of Russian immigrants (Lustick, 1999: 417–33).²³

On the other hand, Israel does face ethnic and religious dissension from the over one million or so Palestinians who are Israeli citizens. They may have political rights within Israel, but they also suffer from the indignities of official discrimination in the provision of social services, the promotion of economic development, and from other laws that favour the Jews in the officially Jewish State (Rouhana, 1998: 277–96). During the active years of the peace process, the Barak government had been willing to restore greater equality of rights for the Palestinian population by returning some expropriated land, allowing legal residency in East Jerusalem to be maintained by absentee Palestinians, proposing to establish new Arab towns, and to fund improvements to the infrastructure of Palestinian areas within Israel.²⁴ However, with the degeneration of the peace process, the tough response to Israeli Palestinians' demonstration of support

for the second *intifada*, Israeli rage at terrorist bombings, the discrimination experienced by Israeli Palestinians remains. Over the long term, the superior Palestinian birth rate,²⁵ and the growing political consciousness of the Palestinian population harbingers the likelihood of increasing demands for social equality, and a potential constitutional crisis for an Israeli society that struggles to balance its egalitarian democratic principles with a predominantly Jewish identity.

Economic capabilities

It is almost a truism that states need economic capabilities to preserve their societies and, by implication, their regimes, in addition to supporting a defence budget to maintain military capabilities. Without the economic wherewithal to provide for the welfare of its society, the populace would deny its rulers their political legitimacy. As already noted, if the regime lags in providing social welfare benefits, it provides opportunities for potential dissidents to fill the vacuum and garner support. Little wonder, therefore, that in the Middle East states with weak and developing economies radical Islamic groups can flourish.

A PALESTINIAN STATE

The Palestinian economy ranks among the poorer economies of the developing world, being even below the average for the Middle East and North Africa (Roy, 2001: 15).²⁶ The basic problem for the Palestinian state has been its dependence on the Israeli economy – particularly for employment and the income that employment in Israel generated, but also for trans-shipment of any exports.²⁷ Because of Israeli security measures, Palestinian exports are more costly and so less competitive.²⁸ The weak economy also makes the West Bank and Gaza unattractive to foreign investment and highly dependent on foreign subsidies. Domestic banks prefer to invest outside of the West Bank and Gaza; enterprises within those areas are relatively small, and the labour force has not been trained for an industrializing economy. Moreover, tax collection is low and birth rates are high (Kershner, 1999: 28–9).²⁹ As a result the PA has depended on customs duties and sales taxes that the Israelis collect from goods passing through Israeli ports and borders.³⁰ The PA also depends heavily on subsidies from foreign donors.³¹ Demand for welfare services increases with the population, and may potentially increase further if large numbers of refugees return as a result of final status agreements.

By all indications, the breakdown in the peace process and Israel's harsh economic responses to the second *intifada*, that included denying tax transfers and shutting down the points of entry into Israel for Palestinian labour and goods, have almost bankrupted the PA.³² As a result, the PA has become even

more dependent on outside subsidies from the Arab world, particularly the Gulf Co-operation Council states and the European Community.³³

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The Israeli economy stands in contrast as one of the strongest in the region.³⁴ During the peace process it benefited to some degree from Palestinian labour and the small Palestinian market. With the breakdown of the peace process, Israel has turned to other sources for manual and low-cost labour. The second *intifada* severely affected the tourism sector of the Israeli economy.³⁵ Generally, the Israeli economy relies on trade and investment with and from – and because of its special relationship to – the US and the EU.³⁶ Although during the peace process there were hopes that its successful conclusion would stimulate Israeli trade relations with a number of Arab states, the crisis in the peace process ruptured these relations.³⁷

Availability of essential natural resources

Critical to a state's economic capabilities is the availability of essential natural resources such as water and energy. Territorial conflicts sometimes erupt because of a state's felt need to secure its supply of one or more essential resources. Dependence on foreign suppliers of these resources renders a state vulnerable to threats of embargo or cut-off by the supplier or by third parties. The Middle East generally has much oil and little water. But the distribution of these resources is uneven, heightening the security concerns of those states which lack them. This is certainly the case with respect to Israel and a Palestinian state. Israel and the West Bank and Gaza share three natural sources of water: the mountain aquifer; the coastal aquifer; and the Jordan Valley basin. The mountain aquifer is recharged mainly by rainfall in the West Bank and flows naturally into three basins. Two of the flows go west and north-east into Israel, and the third goes east into the West Bank (Assaf, al Khatib, Kally and Shuval, 1993: 5). The Gaza aquifer is a continuation of Israel's coastal aquifer.³⁸ Because of serious over-pumping in Gaza, the wells have become overly salinated. The water from the Jordan River basin emanates from Lebanon and Syria and flows into Jordan and Israel as well as into the Jordan Valley in the West Bank.

A PALESTINIAN STATE

By comparison with most Middle Eastern states, a Palestinian state is the least endowed. It lacks most of its essential natural resources. Because Israel controls two of the three sources of water for a Palestinian state and the flow of the third (the Jordan River) until it reaches the West Bank, the Palestinians have charged Israel with unfair consumption or diversion of this precious resource.³⁹ For example, the Israelis use a larger proportion of the available water from the

mountain aquifer, including for Israeli settlements on the West Bank, than does the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza (Isaac, 2000: 20; Shuval, 1999: 2B).⁴⁰

From the Palestinian perspective, the rain water that falls on the mountain aquifer in the West Bank is their water, is critical for basic human needs, and should be under their control. The Israelis point out that much of this water from the mountain aquifer flows naturally into Israel and is tapped from the 300 or so wells west of the Green Line (demarcating the 1967 boundaries of Israel) which date back in many instances some eighty years. Yet, after 1967, Israel dug new wells for its settler population on the West Bank, while restricting the amount of water that the Palestinian population could pump (Shuval, 2000: 34 and 39). These claims echo the international legal disputes between upstream and downstream riparians over 'historic rights' and 'prevention of significant damage' – the position taken by the Israelis – and claims of 'appreciable damage' from disproportionate use by the other side – the position taken by the Palestinians.⁴¹

The Oslo II Accord established a joint commission to determine a more equitable allocation of the shared water, but the commission still has much work to do to alleviate water shortages in the West Bank and Gaza (Rouyer, 1999).⁴² Part of the problem for the Palestinians remains their inefficient and localized system for accessing and delivery of water, particularly for irrigation uses (Trottier, 1999: 99–134). Severe droughts and the second *intifada* have exacerbated water shortages, due to closures that interfere with the transport of water by trucks, and also as a result of the uncontrolled drilling of private wells and theft of water from major pipelines.⁴³ Generally, for a Palestinian state to solve the problem of its dependence on Israeli controlled water, it needs to negotiate sharing arrangements for the West Bank and to build desalination plants for Gaza, a substantial investment and strain on its economy. Furthermore, the quality of much of the water for a Palestinian state has been compromised through salination and pollution by chemical fertilizers, the treatment of which needs to be negotiated with Israel (Isaac, 2000: 18 and 29–30).

With respect to energy resources, a Palestinian state may be only slightly more fortunate, as there have been discoveries of natural gas off the Gaza coast.⁴⁴ On the other hand, Israeli control of coastal waters and the breakdown of the peace process have made it impossible for the PA to exploit these discoveries.

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Approximately 25 per cent of Israel's water comes from the mountain aquifer; 33 per cent comes from the Jordan River basin; and 37 per cent from the coastal aquifer (Shuval, 1999: 3B). During the peace process, Jordan River water

became part of the complex negotiations with Syria (Omstead, Makovsky and Stroumsa, 2000: 32; Sher, 2000: 34). To conserve agricultural water, Israeli authorities have been encouraging investment in recirculation plants, and some advocate continued reduction of Israeli agriculture as well as its water subsidies.⁴⁵ Israel's economy can also provide the investment in desalination plants required for its population and for industrial growth.⁴⁶ Israel has also been negotiating with Turkey for the purchase of water from the Manavgat, which may be realized if the importation of water proves cheaper than the costs of desalination.⁴⁷

With respect to its energy resources, Israel depends generally on imported gas and oil from global sources. One of these is Egypt, with which Israel concluded a ten-year \$3 billion natural gas deal early in 2001.⁴⁸ As noted above with respect to a Palestinian state, there have been discoveries of natural gas off the Gaza coast. Israel could proceed to develop them in the absence of peace with a Palestinian state. During the first years of the peace process, there was speculation that, if it succeeded, Israel may be able to import energy from Middle East suppliers; however, the crisis in the peace process and the second *intifada* have dashed such hopes.

Military capabilities

A state's military capabilities provide a direct measure of its ability to withstand and deter military threats from its external enemies as well as threats from groups within the state seeking a violent overthrow of its government, regime and/or social elites (as in a revolution). There are also indirect measures of a state's military capabilities. These include the somewhat intangible determination of its society to withstand violent threats. Another measure is the capability of a state to form alliances and the willingness of its allies to provide deterrence or come to its defence. Ideological conflict, for example, restricts potential alliance partnerships. Finally, there may be a willingness of a state to limit its own tangible military capabilities, or to restrain an arms race, by engaging in arms control regimes.

A PALESTINIAN STATE

During the peace process many assumed that a Palestinian state would have no armed forces and only a limited internal security force. Indeed the only serious military threat facing a Palestinian state would be from re-occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel. Even if there were remote threats from surrounding Arab states, Israel has a shared interest in deterring them. Notwithstanding limitations on an internal security force, there are reports that the General Security Service (GSS) has exceeded these limitations, and most of its

components do not engage in straight police work. These various components act against opponents to the regime, and oversee border security, as well as providing personal protection to Yasir Arafat.⁴⁹ During the second *intifada*, they also engaged in armed clashes with Israeli forces. Before the breakdown of the peace process in 2000–1 there was much speculation concerning widespread importation of mainly small arms weaponry into the West Bank and Gaza, and these suspicions increased with the outbreak of the second *intifada*.⁵⁰ It is also possible that the Palestinian activists of the second *intifada* will gain some tangible support from other militant opponents of Israel, such as *Hezbollah*.⁵¹

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Israel maintains, on multiple fronts, a multi-purpose military force to deter and defend against military threats from both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Israel depends upon its alliance with the US for defence budget assistance as well as strategic support in meeting these deterrence and defence goals. In the 1990s Israel has entered into military co-operation agreements with Turkey to enhance its strategic capabilities in the Middle East.

One of Israel's key strategic resources is its well-provisioned army of conscripts that will stave off a conventional attack long enough to allow the mobilization of reserves to counter the enemy force. To what extent do even lightly armed forces of a Palestinian state have the capability to interfere with that mobilization and undermine that strategy? Part of the reluctance of the Israelis to concede full sovereignty over all of the West Bank and Gaza has turned on a hard-line concern that this could prove to be a problem. Hence the hard-liners assert the need to maintain certain strategically located Israeli settlements on the West Bank that would function as guardians of mobilization routes.

Another, longer-term, possibility that would affect Israeli military capabilities would be reduction of the risks of regional conflict by tacit arms control regimes or explicit agreements on the limitation of weapons, particularly weapons of mass destruction. On the other hand, there are difficult questions that need to be addressed before such a possibility would become evident (Evron, 1999).⁵² These include the role of weapons of mass destruction in limiting war or increasing the dangers of war, and how verification of reductions in such weapons would be conducted (e.g. international or mutual verification).

Integration of the national security variables

The ways in which the five variables in the national security paradigm integrate may be illustrated by assessing the extent of the national security of a Palestinian state and of Israel, and considering the policy implications that arise from their security relations.

Assessing the security of a Palestinian state and Israel

A PALESTINIAN STATE

How much national security would a Palestinian state have and how will this affect its relations with Israel? On all dimensions of the national security paradigm, a Palestinian state would appear to be tremendously insecure. There are multiple challenges to the *political legitimacy* of the autocratic regime of Yasir Arafat. These range from general claims of ineptitude and corruption to specific challenges from rejectionists of the Oslo Accords within *Fatah* and the PLO, as well as *Hamas* and Islamic *Jihad* who reject peace with Israel and decry the secularism of the regime. Challenges also arise from 'insider' resentment of PLO favouritism for the Tunis 'outsiders' and from democratic elite opposition to the authoritarianism of the regime. The more that the Islamist groups gain in popularity, particularly by supplying social welfare and educational programmes which the regime is incapable of providing, the greater will be the challenge to the society's *tolerance for religion*, in the sense of respect for flexible interpretation of Islamic doctrine, respect for secularism, and nondiscrimination against non-Moslems. Palestinian *economic capabilities* are feeble, which would leave the state dependent on foreign support and on Israeli economic co-operation that can be handicapped by Israel's security measures. This economic insecurity contributes to the inefficiency and corruption of the regime, giving all its opponents further opportunities to undermine its political legitimacy, and extending its Islamic opponents' opportunities to gain public support for a more religious polity. Furthermore, the lack of water and, to a lesser extent, of energy resources, both *essential natural resources*, would increase the economic burdens of a Palestinian state. In particular, a Palestinian state would be highly dependent on Israel's willingness to share control over water sources. And the feeble economic capacity of a Palestinian state would render solutions to its water dependence, such as desalination plants, unaffordable. The inadequacy of Palestinian water supplies will also inhibit development of its economic capacity through agricultural and industrial growth and will make the regime even more vulnerable to challenges to its political legitimacy as demands for water increase with population growth. A Palestinian state would have very limited *military capabilities*. Its feeble economy and its security relations with Israel hamper its ability to improve these capabilities or even to impede the distribution of arms to potential opponents of the regime.

In sum, a Palestinian state will be highly vulnerable to security breakdowns that involve civil strife. These would include violent succession struggles as opponents to the regime take advantage of its lack of political legitimacy to promote competing principles of legitimation in their struggle for power. Civil strife might also erupt as the regime seeks to repress challenges from more popular Islamic militants or through civil disobedience arising from economic

deprivations, including lack of water. The military capabilities of such a weak Palestinian state may be inadequate to effect the quick restoration of civil order.

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Even though Israel enjoys a far higher degree of national security than would a Palestinian state, in this Israeli–Palestinian context it also experiences an interactive set of security concerns that arise from the large group of Palestinian citizens within Israel and a Palestinian state across most of its borders. If discrimination against Palestinian-Israelis continues, this *lack of ethnic tolerance* will increase their dissatisfaction and encourage more extreme responses, including challenges to the *political legitimacy* of the regime as the proponent of the Jewish State. In its most extreme form, such dissension would also create a potential diversion of Israeli *military capabilities*. This potential diversion would become even more serious for Israeli security if it occurs at the same time as military conflict in the wider Middle East. Sharing its scant water supplies, an *essential natural resource*, with a Palestinian state increases the cost of alternative water sources, such as desalination or imports from Turkey, and will have an impact upon Israel's *economic capabilities*.

In reality, Israel possesses a substantial extent of national security, at least when considered in terms of its relations with a Palestinian state that Israel will clearly dominate by demanding the latter's demilitarization, controlling much of its water supplies and being able to impact upon its economy.

Policy implications

Generally, the policy implications of the integrated national security paradigm for any state require decision makers to integrate their domestic and foreign policies, as well as their defence policies. Devising national security policy that concentrates on military defence does not necessarily optimize the national security of a state (Martin, 2000). What, then, are the policy implications for the regime of a very weak Palestinian state that is vulnerable to social and political breakdowns, and for the regime of a dominant Israel in relation to such a weak state?

A Palestinian state

Even after the establishment of a Palestinian state, as posited in this paper, its regime is likely to face challenges from political segments that adamantly reject the peace and propose more militant relations with Israel. The regime will therefore need to shore up its political legitimacy, at least among the non-rejectionist segments of Palestinian society. To do so, it would need to

operate in less authoritarian ways, constrain corruption and increase regime effectiveness. By gaining more popular support, the regime could bid for better relations with its dominant neighbour without becoming vulnerable to challenges to its political legitimacy from rejectionist opponents. Improved relations would increase the state's economic capabilities and essential natural resources, particularly water, hence reinforcing the effectiveness of the regime and feeding back to bolster its political legitimacy. If the regime is incapable of ruling honestly and effectively, the state will be destined to suffer civil strife and potential collapse.

Israel

The prospect of civil strife and the collapse of a Palestinian state might, of course, be appealing to Israeli hard-line rejectionists of peace. On the other hand, that would be a highly shortsighted policy position, at least from the perspective of integrated national security for Israel. In its security relations with a Palestinian state, Israel will hardly benefit from handicapping the Palestinian economy, restricting its water supplies, or generally undermining the legitimacy of its regime. The consequences of the collapse of a Palestinian state include vulnerability to direct or indirect intervention by other Arab states, including those hostile to Israel, and the risk of a rejectionist regime being installed in the Palestinian state, be it a coalition of rejectionists or one dominated by Islamic militants. A rejectionist Palestinian regime might trigger renewed demands in Israel, particularly by its own hard-liners, for re-occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, or stimulate anti-Israeli disaffection among Israel's Palestinian population. In either situation, the diversion of military capabilities and the social disruption within Israel would undermine Israel's own national security.

NOTES

- 1 The contributions in Martin, 1999 (*New Frontiers in Middle East Security*) of many noted Middle East scholars illustrate the utility of each of the five variables used in the paradigm. More rigorous testing remains to be done.
- 2 This is the elaboration of an analysis presented by Martin as 'A Preliminary Approach to a Framework for Security for Israel and a Palestinian State' (unpublished paper), 15 April 2000, Harvard University Middle East Seminar. The paradigm has also been applied in an analysis of Turkish national security in the context of the Middle East. See Martin, 2000, and also Martin, (forthcoming).
- 3 For the most prominent advocates of the realist/neorealist and the liberal/neoliberal approaches, see Kegley, 1995.
- 4 Walt, 1998: 38, 40–1 discusses a third approach called 'constructivist' that analyzes the environment of international politics in which cultures and identity shape the development of national interests and international relationships. A limitation of the

constructivist approach is that, by focusing on ideas, it is unable to predict future ideas that may develop and shape policies and relationships.

- 5 In a later formulation, Buzan *et al.*, 1998 call the fifth sector 'environmental'.
- 6 There are international actors other than states, the most well-recognized of which are 'transnational actors' such as multinational corporations, non-governmental organizations, multilateral institutions, and organized crime. However, it is still the state that is represented in international institutions and remains the predominant actor in the international arena.
- 7 This definition follows the international relations tradition, as opposed to the sociological tradition that refers to the 'state' as the governing institution in society.
- 8 Uncertainty arises because the juridical legitimacy of the PA under the Oslo Accords was scheduled to expire in May 1999. If the authority of the PA were challenged internationally as a result of the collapse of the peace process, the Palestinians would most likely activate the self-declaration of statehood made by the Palestinian National Council in 1988. See Legrain, 1999: 6.
- 9 For the breakdown of peace negotiations by 2001 see Sontag, 2001; Malley and Agha, 2001.
- 10 See Legrain, 1999: 9–15; also Robinson, 2000: 77–90; Martin, 2002: 1–13.
- 11 A Palestinian state would also have an impact upon other states in the region, but this inquiry has been limited to the Palestinian–Israeli relationship.
- 12 For a Middle Eastern example of political myth making, in the form of a rewriting of history, see Al-Rasheed, 1999: 25–46.
- 13 One publicly highlighted articulation of such criticism appeared in the manifesto in November 1999 complaining of systematic corruption in the PA by twenty politicians and academics and stimulating an abusive reaction from the regime's security forces. See the *Mideast Mirror*, 29 November and 2 December 1999; *The Jerusalem Report*, 31 January 2000.
- 14 See also the letter of 13 January 2001 to Arafat from the National and Islamic Forces leading the second *intifada*, available online: <http://www.jmcc.org/new/01/factionlet.htm>
- 15 See Robinson, 2000: 79, referring to Qaddumi and other Fatah rejectionists; *New York Times* (hereafter *NYT*) 7 July 2001, A4, referring to armed groups of *Fatah* members, such as the Popular Resistance Committees; *Financial Times* (hereafter *FT*), 8 February 2001, describing the local anarchy and referring to Martyrs of *al-Aqsa* targeting PA officials suspected of corruption; and Roy, 2001: 17 referring to other *Fatah* militias, sometimes acting through the National and Islamic Forces that spearhead the second *intifada*.
- 16 See the Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement, 18 August 1988; Mishal and Sela, 2000.
- 17 Brown describes the frustrated efforts of this elite to write democratic principles into the new constitution for the PA.
- 18 Precise demographic statistics are difficult to obtain. Most observers consider the Israeli Arab population to be at least 1 million. See *NYT*, 26 January 2001, 1, referring to Israeli Arabs as 18 per cent of a population of 6 million; Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics projects an increase in the Arab population from 1 million (in 2000) to 1.4 million in 2005 out of a total Israeli population that may be 6.8–7 million, i.e. 20–20.6 per cent. Available online: http://www.cbs.gov.il/mifkad/popul00_051_e.htm (accessed 19 August 2001).
- 19 Six Arab Israelis were killed on Land Day in 1976 (Rouhana 1997: 100); and thirteen were killed in the October 2000 incident (*NYT*, 26 January 2001, 1).

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- 20 See Internet version at <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/meria/index.html>
- 21 NYT, 27 September 2000, 10.
- 22 FT, 7 August 2001, 3; NYT, 12 August 2001, 8.
- 23 The criteria for immigration from the former Soviet Union into Israel under the Law of Return have enabled a large number of traditionally non-Jewish immigrants to settle in Israel, which, to some, has diluted the concept of the Jewish State.
- 24 FT, 11 April 2000, 8; NYT, 7 April 2000, 1. The Israeli High Court has delegitimized the exclusion of Arab residents from Jewish communities built on state land (FT, 7 November 2000, 9).
- 25 Estimates of comparative birth rates in 1998 were: Palestinians, 4.76 per cent; Jews, 2.98 per cent. Central Bureau of Statistic, *Israel in Figures 1999*, 8.
- 26 In 1999, the figures for annual per capita GNP were \$1,600 for the West Bank and Gaza, \$2,000 for Middle East and North Africa (*West Bank and Gaza at a Glance*, 22 September 1999). One estimate for the spring of 2001 (during the second *intifada*) put Palestinian per capita income as \$1,060. A report of the United Nations special co-ordinator in the occupied territories for the end of 2000 described over one-third of Palestinians as living below the poverty line and claimed unemployment to be at 28 per cent (FT, 17 August 2001, 3).
- 27 Before the second *intifada* some 110,000 Palestinians worked in Israel, 60,000 of whom were legally registered, constituting 25 per cent of the Palestinian workforce (*Israel Line*, 23 December 1999). Because of the security measures by Israel, and from fear of being labelled as an Israeli collaborator, very few permits were given out or accepted after the second *intifada* (FT, 17 August 2001, 3).
- 28 In the first half of 2001, principally because of the second *intifada*, exports from the West Bank and Gaza shrank from over \$500 million in 2000 to practically none (FT, 22 June 2001, 7).
- 29 The population growth has been estimated as increasing from 3 million to 7.5 million in 25 years.
- 30 An estimated 60 per cent of the PA budget for 2000 (\$600 million) derived from taxes and duties collected by Israel (NYT, 6 December 2000).
- 31 Some \$4.1 billion of foreign donor support was pledged up to 1999, \$2.5 billion of which had been spent by the end of 1998; and another \$3.3 billion was pledged for the period 1999–2004 (Council on Foreign Relations Task Force Report, 'Strengthening Palestinian Public Institutions' 1999). The European Union provided more than \$1.5 billion to the PA from 1994 to 2000; the US (indirectly to Palestinian social programmes and not directly to the PA) approximately \$750 million; others, approximately \$750 million (NYT, 20 March 2001, A8). In addition, pledges were made in November 2000 by Saudi Arabia (\$250 million), Kuwait (\$150 million), the United Arab Emirates (\$150 million) and other members of the Arab League (collectively, approximately \$150 million) (NYT, 6 December 2000, A10).
- 32 *Wall Street Journal*, 20 February 2001, A15; NYT, 17 February 2001, A3.
- 33 The PA received promises in March 2001, from the Arab League, the Islamic Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund, plus transfers from Persian Gulf and other Arab states, of an aid package that would assist it to maintain its operations for six months (NYT, 20 March 2001, A8).
- 34 Israel's per capita GDP in 2000 was \$17,500 (Israeli Ministry of Finance, available online: http://www.mof.gov.il/beinle/ie/israe_1.htm).
- 35 FT, 16 March 2001, 5. Other factors impacting the Israeli economy included slowdown of the US economy and a slump in Israel's technology sector.
- 36 Israeli trade with the EU and the US represented 32 per cent and 30 per cent respectively

of its 2000 exports, and 22 per cent and 41 per cent respectively of its imports (*FT*, 16 March 2001, 5).

- 37 Oman, Tunisia, Morocco and Qatar all severed relations with Israel within two months of the start of the second *intifada* (*FT*, 10 November 2000, 8).
- 38 Assaf, al Khatib, Kally and Shuval (eds), 1993, 10.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 5–11. For the Israeli responses, see Shuval, 2000: 40–3.
- 40 Average Israeli consumption of water in 1999 was allegedly four times that of the Palestinians, and settlers in the Gaza Strip consumed seven times as much daily as did Palestinians there (*FT*, 17 July 2000, 3).
- 41 Shuval, 2000: 44–5.
- 42 See also Elmusa, 1994 for a discussion of applying international law to the negotiation of equitable sharing of water.
- 43 *Ha'aretz*, 23 May 2001.
- 44 *NYT*, 28 September 2000, A6.
- 45 *Ha'aretz*, 18 October 2000; *ibid.*, 20 March 2001.
- 46 Israel has approved the construction of two new desalination plants (*Ha'aretz*, 14 February 2001), and has contemplated investing in new reverse osmosis desalination facilities, which, although cheaper for processing water, costs three times more than natural water (*Ha'aretz*, 18 October 2000, 6).
- 47 *FT*, 7 November 2000, 4.
- 48 *NYT*, 1 February 2001, A3. Israel also has a \$300 million contract for importing Egyptian oil (*ibid.*). However, due to the second *intifada* these projects have been suspended.
- 49 Luft, 1999, 5–6.
- 50 *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 December 2000.
- 51 *NYT*, 15 October 2000, 11; *FT*, 13 August 2001, 2.
- 52 Evron (1999) discusses confidence and security-building measures that might be adopted to create a common security regime in the region, such as limitations on military deployments, restructuring military forces, improved communications, learning and socialization. He proposes the creation of a Centre for Conflict Management to aid this process. One of the preconditions for achieving an arms' control regime is implementation of the Israel–Arab peace process, a shared precondition for the creation of a Palestinian state.

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Between militarism and moderation in Israel: constructing security in historical perspective

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THIS CHAPTER EXAMINES the concept of security through discursive contestation at the leadership level in a critical Middle Eastern case – that of Israel. The approach adopted here can be called *historical constructivism* in that it traces the fractured construction of security as a phenomenon that changes dramatically, and with significant political implications, over time. This historical constructivist approach is predicated on two fundamental claims. The first is that concepts such as ‘state’, ‘security’ and ‘nation’ are socially constructed and thus will hold different meanings in different spatial and temporal contexts. The second is that the meaning of any socially constructed phenomenon is perpetually contested. That is, one cannot allude to a single ‘objective’ understanding of security at any point in time.

From these basic assumptions the chapter argues that it is both possible and necessary to distinguish between security – a state of protected existence – and the referent object of security – that which is to be protected.¹ Related to this point is the contemporary Israeli notion of national or strategic security versus individual or ‘current’ security.² All states and peoples want to be secure. In the case of Israel, however, the lines between these various and otherwise distinct concepts – security v. referent object; and state v. individual as referent object – have been constructed in an increasingly blurred fashion over time so as to advance the political agendas of specific political groups. In order to explain how and why this is the case, the chapter examines the specific discourses of security employed by opposing political groups during key periods in the history of the Arab–Israeli conflict.

Turning to the Israeli case, it is striking how little the State of Israel in 2001 resembles the nascent state declared during May of 1948. Most of the goals of the first generation of state-builders – territorial consolidation, demographic stability, international recognition, economic prosperity – have been attained, in many instances beyond the wildest imagination of the leaders of the pre-state *Yishuv* (the Jewish community in Palestine). In the light of these transformed

realities and of contemporary Israel's preponderance of power, the question of why there is still not a fully stable and institutionalized Palestinian–Israeli peace is all the more intriguing. There are a number of possible approaches one could take to explain the puzzle of the missing Palestinian–Israeli peace. A traditional or systemic international relations approach would examine the effects of the anarchic self-help context of the Middle East and assess the distribution of power capabilities among various regional actors in order to see how and why peace, or a lack thereof, is attained.

This chapter takes a different approach. It suggests that neither the Arab–Israeli conflict generally nor contemporary Palestinian–Israeli relations specifically are well explained by a systemic IR approach. Instead, it argues that the basis of the contemporary conflict rests on a historically significant divergence among the worldviews of Israeli elites regarding the interrelated matters of state development and security. On the one hand, a predominant hard-line doctrine, or what some have termed Israeli 'militarism', has espoused the notion that the Arab–Israeli conflict can be resolved solely through the 'language of force'.³ Elites who support this position have, over time, effectively institutionalized a doctrine of militarism within the Israeli State and society. On the other hand, minority Israeli moderates have long advocated diplomacy and internationalism as vital not only toward resolving the Arab–Israeli conflict but as means towards establishing a prosperous and just state and society.

The following pages argue that failure to resolve the fundamental dispute among Palestinians and Israelis stems directly from the victory during the 1950s of the more hard-line militaristic Israeli approach towards state security and development. In order to demonstrate the cogency of this argument, the first section begins by discussing in more detail the shortcomings of a systemic or structural realist approach to the question of the Palestinian–Israeli peace. The second section of the chapter establishes a historical basis for the dispute between Israeli militarism and moderation with a focus on the critical period of the early to mid-1950s. It is argued that the victory during that period of the Ben-Gurion over the Sharett 'lines' led in the short term to the 1956 Sinai campaign and ultimately to the institutionalization of the use of force as the preferred means of dealing with the Arab–Israeli conflict for many decades thereafter. Section three jumps ahead to assess the contemporary implications of the doctrines of militarism and moderation with regard to the Palestinian–Israeli conflict during the 1990s. It is argued that the divergent approaches to security and the Palestinians of Benyamin Netanyahu and Shimon Peres during this time represent contemporary instantiations of the ongoing traditions of Israeli militarism and Israeli moderation, respectively. Finally, the conclusion asserts that the lingering dominance of the militaristic approach helps to explain why a fully consolidated and formalized Palestinian–Israeli peace is yet to be.

Why the balance of power does not matter

For better or for worse, the academic international relations literature of the past several decades has been dominated by the influence of structural realism and its variants, all of which emphasize the power of anarchy to influence state behaviour with regard to matters of conflict and peace in world politics. Since the anarchic structure of the international system is constant, the most important variable for understanding international relations is the relative distribution of state power, typically defined in terms of military capabilities.⁴ Given these propositions, the persistence of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict during the 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century presents a quandary for structural realism. As tables 3.1 and 3.2 below clearly illustrate, contemporary Israel enjoys a preponderance of power relative to its Arab neighbours in just about every possible way that power can be measured. If distributions of military capabilities and regional position under anarchy were determinative of outcomes, Israel should have been capable of effecting a peace settlement on terms favourable to itself some time ago.

From a strategic perspective, three additional factors further bolster the case for Israeli power. First, Israel has enjoyed several decades of stable and consistent peace with its most serious adversary, Egypt. Second, Israel's – poorly kept secret – nuclear deterrent puts it in a league of its own in the Middle East. Third, the fall of the Soviet Union has effectively arrested much of the ability of Arab armies to equip, train and finance fighting forces that could pose a legitimate

Table 3.1 Relative indicators of state military power

	Total military expenditures (\$US, 1998, est.)	Total military personnel (1997)	Combat aircraft (1997)	Tanks (1997)
Egypt	3.28 billion ^a	665,000	510	2,550
Israel	8.7 billion ^b	631,000	780	3,900
Jordan	608.9 million	154,200	91	1,226
Lebanon	500 million	51,400	16	350
Syria	0.8–1 billion ^c	512,500	520	4,800

Notes:

^a 1995–96 fiscal year;

^b 1999 fiscal year;

^c 1997 fiscal year based on official budget data that understate actual spending.

Sources: Central Intelligence Agency 2000; Heller and Shapir 1997.

Table 3.2 *Relative indicators of state developmental power*

	GDP per capita (purchasing power parity, \$US 1999, est.)	Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 births, 2000, est.)	Life expectancy (2000, est.)	Literacy (% of total population) (1997)
Egypt	3,000	63.33	63.33	51.4 ^a
Israel	18,300	7.9	78.57	95 ^b
Jordan	3,500	21.11	77.36	86.6 ^a
Lebanon	4,500	29.3	71.25	86.5
Syria	2,500	34.86	68.46	70.8

Notes:

^a 1995, estimated;

^b 1992, estimated.

Source: Central Intelligence Agency 2000.

threat to Israel, much less any one else. In light of these realities, Israel is a 'superpower' in terms relative to the power of its Arab neighbours, not only militarily, but economically and developmentally. With such a preponderance of power and so little opposition to balance against it, it is surprising, at least from the structural realist perspective, both that Israel has been unable to impose its will with regard to peace and that the various Arab parties have not yet utterly capitulated to Israeli power. It is precisely for these reasons that an alternative approach to explain the course of the Arab–Israeli conflict is necessary.

The consolidation of Israeli militarism: David Ben-Gurion v. Moshe Sharett

The Ben-Gurion v. the Sharett 'lines'

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, a group of 'new historians' achieved a good deal of success, as well as infamy, for producing a significant corpus of literature critically reinterpreting the origins of the Israeli State and the Arab–Israeli conflict.⁵ More recently, a second wave of 'new' historiography in Israel studies has begun to recast common understandings of Israeli politics during the 1950s. In particular, new emphasis is being placed on the significance of the bitter political clash between two opposing camps within the ruling Mapai Party during the period.⁶ In that struggle, one wing of the party centred on

Israel's first and third prime minister (1948–54 and 1955–63) and leader of the Mapai David Ben-Gurion, while the other supported the second prime minister (1954–55), Moshe Sharett. Crucial to this emergent theme is the view that the struggle was not merely one between individual adversaries but was rather a broader existential/ideational conflict between opposing perspectives on Israeli grand strategy and security and the political-cultural future of the Israeli polity. Sharett's biographer Gabriel Sheffer asserts:

In more than one sense the story [of Moshe Sharett's struggles with David Ben-Gurion] is also a history of the moderate camp in the Yishuv and Israel Labour movement, of the compromise reached between the moderates and the activist hard-liners, and of their respective contributions to the establishment and well-being of the Jewish state. (Sheffer, 1996: 2)

On the one hand, Ben-Gurion and his followers, most notably Pinhas Lavon, defence minister (1954–55), Moshe Dayan, Israel Defence Forces' (IDF) chief of staff (1953–58) and Shimon Peres, director general of the Defence Ministry, advocated a more militant and aggressive orientation, not only for Israel's foreign and military policies but for the structuring of Israeli society in general. This included a hard-line and escalatory approach towards retaliation against Arab incursions, violent or otherwise, into Israeli territory. As Dayan asserted in 1955, the IDF 'had the power to set a [high] price on our blood, [a price] that no Arab village, army, or government would feel was worth paying' (cited in Morris, 1993: 176).

According to the Ben-Gurion line, then, international legitimacy and law were at best merely epiphenomena and at worst serious impediments to the ability of Israel to secure its existence territorially and economically. Foreign relations with the Arab world were most effectively communicated through the 'language of force', whereas diplomacy, it was felt, was perceived by the Arabs to be indicative of Israeli weakness. As the British minister in Amman, A. S. Kirkbride, observed in a communication of June 1950: 'The Jewish authorities . . . always preached the doctrine that the only way to control Arabs was by the utterly ruthless exercise of force' (cited in Morris, 1993: 175, n. 6).

On the other hand, Moshe Sharett and his supporters, including Abba Eban, ambassador to the United States (US) and the United Nations (UN), and, at times, Levi Eshkol, prime minister (1963–69), advocated an aversion to military conflict with the Arab states and the Palestinians and a commitment to diplomacy and negotiation as the means by which to address Israel's foreign and military problems. According to the Sharett line, international legitimacy and diplomatic prestige were long-term means toward the end-point of a secure existence and a just society. The Arabs, in Sharett's view, could understand diplomacy as well as force as a means of resolving fundamental conflicts of interest. Thus, Sharett,

'profoundly appalled by Ben-Gurion's strategic conclusions and recommendations', searched for

political solutions to the Arab–Israeli conflict that would avert the possibility of another war. He felt an overriding need to consider dealing with this danger [of a new war] through non-military means, such as implementing solutions to the refugee problem – a courageous concrete proposal to pay compensation, mending fences with the powers, and continuing efforts to reach an agreement with Egypt. In a nutshell this was the outline of the alternative political orientation that he would try to develop further and implement after his appointment as Israel's second prime minister. (Sheffer, 1996: 690)

Sharett defined the two lines, his own and Ben-Gurion's, and the sharp distinctions between them in similar terms: 'The activists believe that the Arabs understand only the language of force', asserted Sharett in a November 1957 speech. He continued:

The State of Israel must, from time to time, prove clearly that it is strong, and able and willing to use force, in a devastating and highly effective way. If it does not prove this, it will be swallowed up, and perhaps wiped off the face of the earth. As to peace – this approach states – it is in any case doubtful; in any case, very remote . . . If [retaliatory] operations . . . rekindle the fires of hatred, that is no cause for fear for the fires will be fuelled in any event.

But, according to Sharett, the activist approach was not the only alternative. Thus, a more moderate line called for the pursuit of peace under all circumstances. 'This is not only a political calculation in the long run, this is a decisive security consideration . . . We must restrain our responses [to Arab attacks]. And there is always the question: is it really proven that retaliatory actions solve the security problem?' (Quoted in Morris, 1999: 280)

Thus at this early phase of the Arab–Israeli conflict, we find alternative and conflicting notions of how Israel could attain a secure state of existence during the long term. Whereas Ben-Gurion's activist line called for the use of force in order to push through the incontrovertible reality of Israel's permanence and strength, Sharett believed that political accommodation would best preserve the stability of Israeli existence in the long term.

Ben-Gurion v. Sharett, rounds 1–2, and the debate over reprisal policy

The fundamental divide between the two lines in Israeli politics manifested itself across the entire range of policy issues in Israel during the 1950s: the problems of Israeli Palestinians, Palestinian refugees, water concerns, international diplomacy and military spending. But in no sector was the clash between Sharett and

Ben-Gurion more prominent than in the Israeli hard-line reprisal campaign against both violent and non-violent Arab incursions into Israeli territory. Sharett 'had never been enthusiastic about retaliation, doubting its political and military efficacy either as a punishment or deterrence' (Sheffer, 1996: 684). This is evidenced clearly in numerous diary entries in which he sharply criticized a growing Israeli lust for revenge under the guise of security-based reprisal. In response to calls for retaliation against an Arab raid during January 1955, Sharett writes: 'The [Israeli public's and army's] rage must be defused. That alone is the logic, none other [in launching retaliatory strikes]. I do not believe that the reprisal will help in any way in terms of [improving] security. On the contrary . . .'. Two months later, following a major raid into Gaza (later known as 'the Gaza raid'), Sharett laments:

We have taken off the psychological and ethical brakes on this [revenge] instinct [*yetzzer*], which is embedded, for ill, in human nature, and have thus permitted and enabled the Paratroop Battalion to turn the matter of revenge into a moral principle . . . [The principle of revenge] has been sanctified in this battalion, which has become the State's collective tool of revenge. (Morris, 1993: 173–4)

Sharett's views were thwarted by an entrenched interest in militarism and the use of force on the part of the Israeli military; an interest that was strongly reinforced by Ben-Gurion's long-standing dual capacity as defence minister in addition to prime minister. Israeli militarism, despite the efforts of Sharett during his stint as prime minister to effect change, had profound policy outcomes, the most notable of which were large-scale reprisal raids against Arab targets, many of which resulted in substantial loss of life. As the frequency and scale of the raids increased, so too did the divide between the two Israeli political camps. The dispute over the logic and propriety of reprisal raids reached a peak with the Qibya operation in October 1953, which resulted in the death of more than seventy Palestinians, including women and children. 'There is no doubt that the Qibya affair profoundly exacerbated relations between Sharett and Ben-Gurion. In turn, these recurrent clashes influenced Ben-Gurion's attitude towards the succession question: these tensions pushed him to an even more determined support of Eshkol' over Sharett to succeed him as prime minister (Sheffer, 1996: 690).

Sharett won out in this first round of political competition, gaining the crucial support within Mapai's inner circle to be appointed prime minister in 1954. No sooner had Sharett assumed office, however, than Ben-Gurion, through his proxies in the government, began to criticize and undermine the prime minister's authority. Sharett fought back, proposing cuts in military spending to the 1954–55 budget, immediately incurring the wrath of Dayan and Lavon (Sheffer, 1996: 714). By 1955, relations between Sharett and

Ben-Gurion further deteriorated and it soon became clear that the Sharett line in Israeli politics was gradually losing support among both the elites and the public. Cognisant of the realities surrounding him, Sharett wrote in his diary in April 1955:

Ben-Gurion was heading towards war and any barrier that would be erected on his way should be removed . . . his belief in reprisals remained strong as ever, and he justified it by saying that the masses of citizens in this country as well as military leaders, like Moshe Dayan and Yigal Allon, would not tolerate murderous actions without punishment . . . a strange justification for the doctrine of revenge. (Quoted in Sheffer, 1996: 798)

Ben-Gurion's response was straightforward: 'Contrary to Moshe [Sharett]'s opinion . . . reprisals are imperative. There is no relying for our security on UN observers and foreign states. If we do not put an end to these murders now – the situation will get worse' (quoted in Morris, 1999: 280). Upon his return to the Defence Ministry in February 1955, Ben-Gurion tellingly remarked to an aide that Sharett 'is raising a generation of cowards. Infiltrators are coming in and we are hiding behind fences again. I will not let him. This will be a fighting generation' (quoted in Tal, 1996: 67). By November 1955, the Ben-Gurion line finally won out over Sharett's more moderate worldview, and Ben-Gurion himself replaced Sharett as prime minister.

The foundation and implications of the Ben-Gurion line

That Ben-Gurion ultimately won out in his personal competition with Moshe Sharett is clear, regardless of the historiographical position, new, old, or otherwise, one adopts. What are less clear but perhaps more interesting are some of the broader underlying reasons for and the implications of the victory of the Ben-Gurion line. Uri Ben-Eliezer argues in a recent study that the course of the Arab–Israeli conflict can be understood in large measure as an outcome of entrenched and institutionalized militarism within Israeli society and culture. 'During the two decades beginning in 1936', Ben-Eliezer asserts, 'the idea of a military solution to the Arab–Israeli conflict was gradually legitimated first within the Yishuv, the Jewish community in Palestine, then within the new state and crystallized into a value, a formula, and a doctrine' (Ben-Eliezer, 1998: x). Israeli militarism is most vividly seen in the growth and prominence of the Ben-Gurion line during the 1950s. Accordingly, an

institutional trade-off was undertaken between central forces in society, by which the inculcation of the idea that it is possible and desirable to solve 'the Arab problem' by military means was counterbalanced by the clarification and concomitant order of relations of authority . . . the military solution was universally accepted as the legitimate and desirable way to end the Israeli-Arab conflict. *It became part of the*

natural order and was preferred over possible political solutions involving diplomacy and compromise. (Ben-Eliezer, 1998: 13–14; emphasis added)

According to this interpretation, then, Israeli security policy decisions, such as large-scale reprisal raids and the Sinai campaign itself, are better viewed as choices that were to an extent pre-determined by cultural and institutional norms and ideologies than as strategic calculations based on rational assessments of systemic variables. This perspective is supported by the findings of Yagil Levy, who recently has suggested that Israeli militarism can be explained by the relationship between super-ordinate and subordinate groups within Israeli society. To elaborate: the selection of military solutions to the Arab–Israeli conflict over available alternatives, coupled with the promotion of military prominence within Israeli society, served the ability of the Ashkenazi elite to solidify and enhance their dominant role within society.⁷ Thus, the Arab–Israeli conflict provided a basis for the Ashkenazim to attain a ‘legitimation of inequality owing to the war-driven internal empowerment of the state’ (Levy, 1997: 23). Increased militarization and bellicosity were important in asserting Ashkenazi dominance over other ethnic groups and, in particular, over the Sephardim, from Arab and North African countries, in the hierarchy of the military. The more daring the operations, the more admiration and prestige were given the military by the Ashkenazi political leadership, especially Dayan and Ben-Gurion. The more admiration and prestige were given from the top down, the more the elite units of the military responsible for implementing the most bellicose operations became magnets for Ashkenazi youth. Thus, ‘the military had taken part in aggravating the external threat and concomitantly acquired prestige by repulsing this very threat. Self-creation of symbolic resource was at work’ (Levy, 1997: 85–6).

Satisfied with the newly created war-based reality, social groups’ openness to receiving force-oriented signals transmitted by the military command was greater than their openness to hearing moderate calls voiced even half-heartedly in Arab countries . . . Satisfaction, by nature, dictates low demand for information. A public discourse that allowed for two or more alternative avenues to deal with the regional threat . . . was averted. Nor was the Ben-Gurion–Sharett debate voiced publicly. (Levy, 1997: 91)

Key to the logic of this argument is that strategic decisions were not taken in response to systemic stimuli *per se*. On the contrary,

agents did not rationally calculate several alternatives in terms of losses and gains; at least in the long term they possibly could have partly satisfied their interests even had the state selected a more pacifist policy. Rather, agents reconciled their interests to the newly created reality that satisfied them *relative* to a past reality, not necessarily to a tentative one. (Levy, 1997: 92)

In other words, militarism empowered already dominant groups in society, inspiring them to press for further militarism regardless of future losses in terms of war with the Arabs. ‘The immediate results were pronounced in the Sinai Campaign. It was managed as an “elite war”. Conceived and planned in complete secrecy by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and a few advisors, it was not brought to the cabinet for approval until almost the eleventh hour’ (Levy, 1997: 93).

These interpretations are not unsupported by the ‘empirical data’ on the events leading up to the 1956 War. As early as October–November 1953, toward the end of his first stint as prime minister, Ben-Gurion revealed plans for reorganizing the IDF

based on the assumption that the ‘second round’ would occur in 1956 when, according to his evaluation, the Arab armies would be ready to launch a new war against Israel. This assessment dictated Ben-Gurion’s future political and military actions and moves and would contribute to the decision to launch a ‘war of Choice’ in 1956. (Sheffer, 1996: 690)

Similarly, Motti Golani, who has been the first to review the most recently released archival material in London and Israel on the Sinai campaign, argues: ‘my research led me to conclude that Israel had been ‘in search of a war’ before the onset of the Suez Crisis and without any connection to it’ (Golani, 1998: viii). Thus, during 1954–55, Israel’s retaliation policies underwent a subtle but crucial shift away from punishment and deterrence towards provocation and escalation in the effort to explore the possibility of a ‘war of choice’. Despite being justified for their deterrent value, ‘[p]aradoxically, during the years 1955–56 (and perhaps as early as 1954), retaliatory strikes were also launched by the IDF in order to draw the Arab states into a premature war’ (Morris, 1999: 276). ‘Dayan wanted war, and, periodically, he hoped that a given retaliatory strike would embarrass or provoke the Arab state attacked into itself retaliating, giving Israel cause to escalate the shooting until war resulted’ (Morris, 1993: 178–179).

A turning point in the tenor of the Israeli retaliation policy was clearly symbolized by the massive Gaza raid of 28 February–1 March 1955, codenamed ‘Operation Black Arrow’, which caused the death of thirty-eight Egyptians and Palestinians and brought injury to several dozen more.

Far from curbing infiltrator attacks, the Gaza Raid proved a great catalyst of Israeli–Egyptian violence. Before February 28, 1955, attacks across the Gaza frontier into Israel had been local and sporadic, not state policy; thereafter, they were promoted and directed by Cairo . . . The Gaza Raid proved to be a turning point in Israeli–Egyptian relations and in the history of the Middle East . . . Gaza had not only led

to Egyptian counter-raiding. It had also set in motion a massive arms race, bound to end in war. (Morris, 1993: 334)

Not surprisingly, then, both 'Sharett and Dayan showed far greater concern over possible escalation due to border incidents, the former viewing it as a danger, the latter as a prospect' (Golani, 1998: 8). Even one Israeli historian who disagrees with the overall revisionist interpretation of 1956 acknowledges: 'It was Israeli reaction that overlaid the infiltrations with a political dimension, as Israel did not treat them for what they were but linked them to the broad Arab–Israeli context and to the country's political and security problems' (Tal, 1996: 61).

It is important to point out that the preceding view of Israel's reprisal policy as other than a purely strategic effort to attain deterrence is not merely an interpretive move on the part of modern scholars. At a meeting of Israeli intelligence executives during February 1953, Yair Elgom, head of the Jordan desk in the Foreign Ministry asserted that 'most of Jordan's violations [of the armistice agreement] . . . were a reaction to our own violations. Jordan's secondary violations do not justify our sharp reprisals . . . justice . . . was not on our side. This in itself may not be important, but it is so obvious that it will be difficult to hide it for long from the West . . . It is time that we reviewed our actions' (quoted in Morris, 1993: 216–17). Similarly, the IDF Intelligence Department in early 1953 reported: 'During the past few months all our reprisal raids have ended in failure, lowering Israel's prestige in Arab eyes and causing other damage . . . The existing retaliatory strikes against border villages must cease, as it does more harm than good' (quoted in Morris, 1993: 217).

There are two conclusions to be drawn from the preceding discussion. The first is that by the time of the 1956 Sinai campaign, the hard-line Israeli approach toward the Arab–Israeli conflict, instantiated in the Ben-Gurion line, had ultimately won out in the competition with Israeli moderates. That victory, in turn, represented a crucial consolidation of power for the Ashkenazi elite, who benefited tremendously from the political rewards gained by successfully implementing aggressive military policies *vis-à-vis* the Arabs. Second, and more important, the events of the 1950s, culminating in the 1956 War, were a victory as much for the Ben-Gurion line as they were on the battlefield. As a result of these twin victories, one military and the other political, a doctrine of militarism was institutionalized within the Israeli State and society with profound implications for the future trajectory of the Arab–Israeli conflict. The victories ensured that security would be to the fore in all future debates regarding Israel's relations with the Arabs, whether in the context of war or peace. Additionally, the 'language of force' would henceforth be the preferred option in resolving the conflict over other available alternatives.

From militarism to territorial security

The Netanyahu v. the Peres line

Israel's strategic situation has changed somewhat dramatically since the 1950s. No longer does Israel face an imminent threat from its most deadly Arab adversary; nor must Israeli military planners be concerned with the prospect of facing first-rank Soviet-trained and supplied Arab fighting forces. Perhaps of greatest consequence, especially at the perceptual level, is the attainment of a nuclear deterrent unmatched by the Arab states. It is interesting, then, that the 'language of force' remains prevalent in the thinking and discourse of Israeli political and military leaders, even through the present juncture. In acknowledgement of the changed realities of Israel's strategic position, the 'language of force' is no longer so much a matter of the 'next round' in terms of conventional inter-state warfare, although even that discourse persists in some quarters of the Israeli polity.⁸

For the most part, however, contemporary Israeli militarism is manifest in the doctrine of *territorial security* espoused by the Likud Party and a number of right-wing parties and organizations allied with it.⁹ The doctrine of territorial security, much like the Ben-Gurion line of the 1950s, holds that the most effective means by which to deal with the Palestinians are through the language, if not the outright use, of force. Accordingly, Israel treats the Palestinians as a security threat rather than as political partners, and all issues pertaining to the Palestinian–Israeli conflict – especially territorial issues – are addressed through the discourse of security rather than in terms of political partnership and diplomacy. Instead of acknowledging the preponderance of Israeli power as a basic starting-point from which to approach the Palestinians, the Likud and its allies have retained the discourse and strategy of militarism toward the Palestinian 'problem'. In the process, security and strategy replace politics as the dominant issues within the thought and language of Likud politicians and their supporters. By linking the issue of land with that of security, the Israeli right wing has essentially prolonged the Palestinian–Israeli conflict beyond what would have otherwise been its 'natural' life.

In contrast to the doctrine of territorial security espoused by the Likud, the left wing of the Labour Party and its allies inherited the legacy of Israeli moderation originally and most eloquently espoused by Moshe Sharett.¹⁰ Thus, the leading proponents of the doctrine of moderation discuss the importance of diplomacy, negotiation and, most centrally, partnership.¹¹ The moderate line thus argues that security is better attained by creating new political realities than by identifying and responding to perceived threats. In accordance with these views, the Palestinian problem is seen as one of politics and not of security, *per se*. At the core of this doctrine is the notion of 'land for peace', whereby long-term security is linked not to control of land but rather to the exchange of

land for a stable and institutionalized peace. The following subsections discuss the most important proponents of the two opposing doctrines during the 1990s, namely, Benjamin Netanyahu and Shimon Peres.

Benjamin Netanyahu and territorial security

The most eloquent and influential proponent of territorial security during the 1990s was Benjamin Netanyahu, who served as prime minister from 1996 to 1999. During the years both prior to as well as following his electoral victory in May 1996, Netanyahu carefully and cogently constructed and advocated the militaristic doctrine of territorial security, which emphasizes several key themes. The most important is the underlying assumption that the Palestinian question and, indeed, the Palestinians themselves are a security problem, or threat, rather than political partners. Accordingly, matters of Palestinian–Israeli relations are addressed as responses to threats rather than as political negotiations to be resolved through co-operation and partnership. The foremost instantiation of this approach is in an effort to inextricably link territorial control with the concept of security. That this view may lead to confrontation as opposed to reconciliation Netanyahu readily admits: ‘continuing struggle does not necessarily mean perpetual war, but it does mean an ongoing national exertion and the possibility of periodic bouts of international confrontation’ (Netanyahu, 2000: 372).

Netanyahu worked assiduously to construct a discursive field whereby land is equated with security, so that, by definition, to give up one entails a diminishment of the other. According to this logic, diplomacy is ‘idealism’ and true security can be attained only through territorial control. ‘Most of the wars’, writes Netanyahu,

including the wars between Kuwait and Iraq, the invasion of Kuwait, were based on conditions of peace. There were peace treaties galore, all over the place. Most wars in the world start from a state of peace treaties and normalisation. Now, I think that ultimately guarantees are important, but they cannot substitute for actual security. I, for one, would like to see American guarantees . . . But one thing I do not want: I don’t want American boys coming in to defend Israel. And that’s what you’ll end up doing if Israel is denuded, if Israel strips away these buffer strips, the wall of the Golan Heights, the wall of the West Bank that protects Israel.¹²

For Netanyahu, ‘land-for-peace’ is a strategic rather than a political problem. ‘Given the specifics of the West Bank’, Netanyahu contends, ‘the slogan ‘land for peace’ is singularly inappropriate: To achieve a sustainable peace, Israel must maintain a credible deterrent long enough to effect a lasting change in Arab attitudes. It is precisely Israel’s control of this strategic territory that has deterred all-out war and has made eventual peace more likely’ (Netanyahu, 2000: 319). The doctrine of territorial security thus views Israeli power as

providing a pretext for continued territorial control rather than as facilitating a process of compromise from the standpoint of strength. Accordingly, Netanyahu contends, 'a territorial peace is hampered by the continuing concern that once territories are handed over to the Arab side, they will be used for future assaults to destroy the Jewish state . . . Ironically, the ceding of strategic territory to the Arabs might trigger this destructive process by convincing the Arab world that Israel *has* become vulnerable enough to attack' (Netanyahu, 2000: 322). Thus, Netanyahu suggests that accumulation and consolidation of land are in point of fact necessary requirements of security, generally speaking. That said, Netanyahu somewhat ironically claims that 'Israel does not ask for additional territory, only that the present strategic depth (and strategic height) of the West Bank be left intact' (Netanyahu, 2000: 303–4).

In all public forums where the issue of land is raised, Netanyahu invariably draws upon the linkage between territorial control and Israeli security. Guiding a plane tour of Israeli politicians and members of the media during 1994, he pointed out: 'The last house in [the Israeli settlement] Kfar Sava is just 200 meters from [the Palestinian town of] Qalqiliya. The government of Yitzhak Rabin is going to establish a Palestinian state there. They don't admit it in public, but MKs are talking about it in the corridors.' This, according to Netanyahu, would pose a grave danger to Israel, prompting him to lament about 'what this would mean for [Israeli] security'.¹³ In response to the Hebron massacre of twenty-nine Palestinians by the settler Baruch Goldstein that same year, Netanyahu remarked that 'Jews are slain on the roads every day and none of these cases was ever inquired into. We need an inquiry into the overall deterioration of security in this country since the government made its deal with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It would be wrong to isolate a single atypical event like an artificial island in time and space.'¹⁴ Following a shooting of IDF soldiers by Palestinian policemen at the Erez checkpoint in Gaza, also during 1994, Netanyahu asserted that 'the important lesson to learn from the PLO's failure in keeping the agreement and the security in Gaza is that Israel must keep exclusive responsibility for security and order in Judea and Samaria in the hands of the IDF'.¹⁵ Both of these statements reflect a consistent militaristic worldview according to which two assumptions follow: (1) the Palestinians represent a fundamental threat; (2) accordingly, control of Palestinian land is essential toward maintaining Israeli security.

Following his election victory in 1996, Netanyahu institutionalized the doctrine of territorial security in the guidelines for the governing coalition between the Likud and its allies.¹⁶ The guidelines' text states: 'Settlement in all parts of the Land of Israel is an expression of our right to the land and it represents an inseparable part of our national security. The government will ensure the continued existence and development of new settlements and will allot the

required funds for that purpose.’¹⁷ In less than a year, however, Netanyahu came under increasing pressure from both the United States and within Israel to tone down these positions, especially following a deadly confrontation between Palestinian police and the IDF following the opening of an archeological tunnel in the Old City in September 1996. Netanyahu, however, persisted in steadfastly resisting such pressure. As peace talks with the Palestinians repeatedly stalled, it became clear that Netanyahu’s basic approach toward the peace process, as called for by the doctrine of territorial security, was one of confrontation and threat rather than one based on political partnership and compromise. After rejecting an American-sponsored peace proposal in March 1998, Netanyahu declared on national television: ‘Understand that Israel is a tiny country, and every piece of territory here is tied to security, every piece. Every per cent is the size of Tel Aviv. And this territory that abuts our major cities determines whether we can effectively guarantee that additional territory is not turned into a Hamas base, a terrorist base.’¹⁸ ‘You can very quickly reach a situation in which you endanger the security of the state, and I will not (do it).’¹⁹ By the end of 1998, Netanyahu’s failure to produce any results on the peace front, coupled with a series of domestic political scandals, grated on the Israeli public and in May 1999 he was defeated in national elections by the Labour Party leader Ehud Barak.

Shimon Peres and the politics of partnership

From within the older generation of Israeli leaders who can be described as ‘moderate’, few make a less likely candidate than Shimon Peres. Having been a ‘Ben-Gurionist’ for most of his career, Peres’s transformation from a hard-liner to an internationalist caught many Israelis, even some close to Peres, by surprise. ‘Many of my friends’, Peres himself admits,

and even more of my opponents, have asked me how my concern for the armed defense of Israel . . . has been supplanted by fervent dedication to the peace process . . . As far as I can tell, it was not I who shifted course from the traditional concept of national defense, which depends mainly on military and weapons systems, to the modern concept, which is of necessity based on political accords, and embraces international security and economic considerations. Rather, the world has changed. And the process of change compels us to replace our outdated concepts with an approach tailored to the new reality. (Peres, 1993: 33–4)

Whereas Netanyahu, as discussed above, views the Palestinian question as a matter of security and threat, Peres emphasizes the political nature of the Palestinian–Israeli relationship and the importance of partnership and cooperation to that relationship. ‘There are two ways in which to end the conflict

with the PLO', Peres remarked during a meeting with US Secretary of State Warren Christopher: 'With the power of power or with the power of wisdom. Wisdom is better than power. If we all act wisely, the PLO will become a partner in peace instead of an obstacle to it' (Peres, 1993: 29–30). Elaborating on the theme of the Palestinians as partners, Peres notes that he and former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin 'tried to look upon Arafat as a partner. Netanyahu looks upon him as an agent. Arafat cannot exist as an agent. You cannot give him orders . . . We can meet as partners for peace, but we cannot make out of him an instrument to realize our policies' (Peres and Littell, 1998: 95–6). 'In order to make peace', Peres writes,

you must have a partner more than a plan. If you have a plan and you don't have a partner, you have a piece of paper that's of no value. Only when you have a partner can you try and find the proper plan . . . Now enemies are the raw material of partners. Dangers are the raw material of hope. How to overcome them? How to take an enemy and make a friend of him? How to take a danger and turn it into an opportunity? . . . when you finally meet the other person, you are surprised to learn that he is a human being like yourself. (Peres and Littell, 1998: 74)

On the sharp contrast between his worldview and that of Netanyahu, Peres makes a number of important points. First, whereas Peres campaigned in 1996 on the platform of 'land for peace', the Likud claimed 'that you can have peace for nothing. Which is nonsense. Saying that you can have security before peace. Which again is nonsense' (Peres and Littell, 1998: 89). 'Mr. Netanyahu made a terrible mistake when he said he would provide security before peace. For peace you need a majority. For terrorism a tiny group of people can do whatever they want . . . when you say, I will not make peace unless all the bombs disappear, you encourage the terrorists to continue' (Peres and Littell, 1998: 96–7). Second, Netanyahu, according to Peres, is incapable of properly comprehending the Palestinian perspective on the Arab–Israeli conflict, which is, in turn, essential towards resolving it. Netanyahu 'sees himself as a great authority on terrorism. On many occasions he looks at the Arab side through the eyes of an expert on terrorism. His book is devoted to the issue of terrorism. I am not sure that he understands [the Arab side]' (Peres and Littell, 1998: 22). Accordingly, whereas Netanyahu believes Israeli power is a means toward the end of dictating the resolution of security problems, Peres adopts almost precisely the opposite view: 'To achieve peace, the basic problems of the Middle East need to be approached realistically. First and foremost, we must all acknowledge the futility of war: the Arabs cannot defeat Israel on the battlefield; Israel cannot dictate the conditions of peace to the Arabs' (Peres, 1993: 49). Peace, then, can be brought about only by political rather than military means.

Peres's vision of the Middle East, much like that of Moshe Sharett during the 1950s, is formed of a cosmopolitan outlook according to which security

issues are a function of diplomacy and co-operation rather than problems that are best resolved through the 'language of force'. Accordingly, Peres argues that the Palestinian question is really a subset – albeit a crucial one – of the broader matter of overall Middle East peace. To attain peace on a regional level requires

bilateral and multilateral pacts, extending beyond the borders of the countries involved and covering whole regions . . . the key to maintaining an equable and safe regional system is in politics and economics . . . True power – even military power – is no longer anchored in the boot camp, but on the university campuses. Politics should pave the way from pure military strategy to an enriched political and economic repertoire. (Peres, 1993: 34–35)

Thus, Peres adopts a moderate and cosmopolitan, rather than a hard-line militaristic, worldview with regard to the international relations of the Middle East generally, and the Palestinian–Israeli peace process specifically.

Israeli politics during the 1990s reveal a very clear picture of the contrast between the militaristic and moderate worldviews with regard to resolving the Palestinian question. For the latter part of 1993, while Netanyahu established himself as leader of the Likud, Peres oversaw and later participated in the secret Oslo negotiations, which culminated in the now-famous Oslo Accords, signed at the White House on 13 September 1993.²⁰ Peres attained his greatest success in promoting and implementing his moderate doctrine while serving as foreign minister under Yitzhak Rabin from 1992 to 1995, during which time he successfully shepherded the Oslo negotiations to fruition and convinced Rabin of the need to agree to them. Following Rabin's tragic assassination in 1995, Peres assumed the prime ministers' office and was soon plagued with political difficulties, the most damaging of which was a series of deadly suicide bombings by the Hamas group. In the wake of the bombings, Peres was defeated at the ballot box by Netanyahu in 1996 and was subsequently replaced as Labour Party leader by Ehud Barak.

Conclusion

Theirs 'was a struggle between hard-liners and soft-liners, security-centredness and diplomacy, intractability and conciliation, and the certainty of war and a chance for peace' (Morris, 1993: 227). While this statement by the founding new historian Benny Morris alludes to the historical competition between David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Sharett discussed earlier, it is remarkable how aptly the words also apply to the divergent doctrines of Shimon Peres and Benjamin Netanyahu during the 1990s. As this chapter has attempted to demonstrate, the ongoing insolubility of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict is not well explained by systemic international relations theory for the simple reason that the balance of power in the Middle East has changed dramatically, while the dispute between Palestinians and Israelis and among Israelis themselves is in large measure

unchanged. The preceding sections have therefore traced two competing strands of thought regarding state development and strategy in Israel: a dominant line of militarism and security, and a minority line of moderation and diplomacy. While the militaristic doctrine has been in the ascendant since the victory of the Ben-Gurion over the Sharett lines during the 1950s, the competition between the two perspectives is still very much apparent today. This raises two very interesting and significant issues worthy of discussion. The first pertains to the matter of security as a concept. The second regards the present and the future of the Palestinian–Israeli peace process.

The preceding historiographical accounts of the Arab–Israeli conflict reveal the important conclusion that security is in practice a constructed phenomenon in so far as it carries different meanings in different historical and cultural contexts. This has at least three important implications. First, it is both possible and necessary to distinguish between security – a state of protected existence – and the referent object of security – that which is to be protected (see Campbell, 1998: 2–3; and Buzan, 1990: 22–8). All states and people want to be secure. However, as Ben-Gurion and his followers recognized, there is an innate distinction between national or strategic security v. personal or ‘current’ security’ (see Alpher, 1995, Academic Index Internet version). Whereas the Ben-Gurionists were concerned with both forms of security, their primary consideration was national/strategic, not personal/current.

For the present, Benyamin Netanyahu, Ariel Sharon and the Likud have maintained the prominence of security as a fundamental national issue, but the referent object of security has changed quite profoundly as the nature of the threats to Israel and Israelis have been transformed. At the start of the twenty-first century, Israelis have much more to fear from individual suicide bombers than from airborne jet bombers. Second, and relatedly, Netanyahu and Sharon and their allies, most notably the National Religious Party and the *Gush Emunim*, have intentionally blurred this important distinction between national and current security in order to play on the fears of the Israeli public and further their goal of maintaining territorial control over Palestinian lands. Thus, the doctrine of territorial security is in an important sense a façade employed to justify the irredentist claims of the settlers rather than a genuine effort to further the requirements of security in either of its forms. Third, and most importantly, by promoting the doctrine of territorial security, the Likud and the settlers have antagonized the Palestinians by continuing to approach them as security problems rather than as legitimate, if flawed, negotiating partners. In doing so, the Likud has essentially undermined the entire basis for a stable and institutionalized settlement. In short, territorial security and ‘land for peace’ are fundamentally incompatible.

Turning to the present and the future of the Palestinian–Israeli peace process, it is not insignificant that Israel has seen two new prime ministers since

the departure of Netanyahu in May 1999.²¹ One might ask, why focus on Netanyahu and Peres at all in light of the waning of their respective careers? The response is simple: while neither Netanyahu nor Peres is currently in power, their articulations of the doctrines of militarism and moderation, respectively, remain as robust as ever. It is also far from clear that moderation has replaced militarism as the dominant doctrine in Israeli politics, especially with the previously unthinkable election of the quintessential hawk Ariel Sharon to the office of prime minister. Indeed, it seems that the notion of territorial security and the fear of the Palestinian 'threat' are still quite prominent among many, if not most, Israelis (see Benvenisti, 2000: A31; Livnat, 2000: A21; Sharansky, 2000: A25). As Netanyahu himself most recently and clearly put it, 'the vast majority of Israelis have once again realized that our enduring conflict with the Palestinians is rooted in a dispute not over the borders of the Jewish state but over its very existence' (Netanyahu, 2001: A19). Furthermore, the *Gush Emunim* has not disappeared, thus guaranteeing that the linkage between territorial control and security will not diminish appreciably any time soon. While many point to the outbreak of the *al-Aqsa intifada* in the fall of 2000 as a major impediment to peace, this chapter would caution against thinking with too short a time horizon and thus conflating precipitating with underlying factors pertaining to the peace process. Rather, the analysis here suggests that a formal and institutionalized peace will remain elusive until the majority of Israelis come to support moderation over militarism in their basic perception of the politics of Israel–Palestine.

NOTES

- 1 For discussion of referent objects of security, see Buzan, 1990: 22–8, especially. For a related discussion of risk and referents marked as dangers, see Campbell, 1998: 2–3.
- 2 Yossi Alpher (1995, Academic Index internet version) discusses these two conceptions as they relate to the peace process.
- 3 The term 'doctrine' is employed in a very traditional sense. For the present purposes, a doctrine is defined as a set of principles that is taught and learned by a group or groups that claim, explicitly or implicitly, to adhere to that doctrine. On Israeli militarism, see Ben-Eliezer, 1998.
- 4 All of the core propositions of structural realism are laid out most elegantly by Waltz in his classic *Theory of International Politics* (1979). For examples of structural realist approaches to modern Middle East politics, see Telhami, 1990; Walt, 1987.
- 5 For overviews of the 'new historiography' in Israeli Studies, see Lustick, 1997b: 157–62. See also Levy, 1999; Slater, 1994; Heydemann, 1991; and contributions to the special issue *History and Memory* (1995). The first and most well known texts on the new historiography are Morris, 1987 and Shlaim, 1988.
- 6 The Mapai is the precursor party to the modern Labour and contemporary One-Israel Parties.
- 7 The founding Ashkenazim, or Jews of European ancestry, historically have dominated Israeli society and politics. Sephardim, or Jews of Arab and North African origin, have traditionally been members of the lower classes, both socially and politically speaking.

- 8 One settler leader in Gaza recently put the matter of the 'next round' as follows: 'Egypt still considers a war option viable and that it can dispatch its army across Sinai in a single day while Israel scrambles to summon its reserves. The only guarantee that the Israeli army will remain at strategic points in Gaza . . . is on the pretext of guarding settlements. The army isn't protecting us, say settlers, as much as we're ensuring its presence in Gaza' (*Jerusalem Report*, 26 October 1998, 15).
- 9 The Likud is the second-largest and most important right-wing party in Israel. While it is traditionally allied with the settler movement, the latter maintains its own grassroots organization and party, the *Gush Emunim* (Bloc of the Faithful) and the National Religious Party (NRP), respectively.
- 10 The left wing of the Labour Party refers to the faction led by Shimon Peres, Yossi Beilin and Haim Ramon. The Labour left wing's principal ally is the leftist Meretz Party.
- 11 For further discussion of the conception of partnership in the Palestinian–Israeli peace process, see Lustick, 1997a: 741–57.
- 12 *Larry King Live*, 7 December 1992, Transcript no. 713.
- 13 'Likud Fights PLO Pact with Scattershot', *Los Angeles Times*, 14 January 1994, A4, col. 1; brackets added.
- 14 *Jerusalem Post* 1994a, 2.
- 15 *Jerusalem Post* 1994b, 2. Judea and Samaria are the names employed by Israeli settlers and many right-wing Israelis to refer to the West Bank. The names are derived from the Old Testament.
- 16 See note 9, above.
- 17 *Mideast Mirror* 1997. The *Mirror* gives the statement from the newspaper *Ma'ariv*.
- 18 *International Herald Tribune*, 1998, 2.
- 19 *Associated Press* 1998.
- 20 For a chronological account of the Oslo negotiations, see *New York Times* (1993: section I, 1); Savir, 1998; and Elon, 1993.
- 21 They are, respectively, Ehud Barak and, as of the time of this writing, Ariel Sharon.

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Between Islam and Islamism: a dialogue with Islam as a pattern of conflict resolution and a security approach vis-à-vis Islamism

Bassam Tibi

IN THE CONTEXT of broadening the scope of international relations (IR) and of the related field of security studies in light of the changed international system after the end of the Cold War, Islam and Islamic movements have moved to the fore of this discipline. At the surface it looks as if the study of the 'geopolitics of Islam and the West' has taken the place of the earlier Soviet studies (Fuller and Lesser, 1995). Students of IR concerned with the study of the Middle East and those who have turned to focus on Islamic civilization are caught, however, between a tremendously increasing Islamophobia in the West and the need to inquire into the threats to security by what is termed 'Islamism'. Those who study Islamism while dealing with security are thus often challenged by the question: 'Why then are you involving Islam in security studies? Isn't this a part of Western Islamophobia?' This chapter does not escape this challenge which has increased since September 11.

The chapter begins by arguing that there are many different ways of responding to this question. Some scholars specializing in Islamic studies rightly question those efforts in the West that view Islam as a 'threat', a view which they qualify as perpetuating a myth (Esposito, 1992). They also deal with the question of the compatibility of Islam and democracy, and give a positive answer. In light of these answers we may doubt any inclusion of Islam in a study concerned with redefining security in the Middle East. But then we are intrigued by the rise of fundamentalist and rejectionist movements most hostile to the West and the Arab-Israeli peace process.

It is true that when existing threats, violence and instability are related to Islamic movements there is a need for security studies to inquire into this issue. In redefining security in the Middle East after the end of the Cold War while also focusing on the peace process, we cannot escape looking at the events in which political Islam has become the ideology underpinning the rejection of peace and the promotion of anti-Western ideologies. This study, in doing so, takes as its point of departure the distinction between the religion of Islam and Islamism.

The focus is those groups, in the main non-state actors, which represent Islam in a politicized pattern. The term 'Islamism' refers to political Islam – particularly in the Arab world. In this chapter Islamism is viewed as a variety of religious fundamentalism. In the effort to redefine security the challenge of religions fundamentalism, not of Islam itself (Tibi, 1998a), is of concern. The groups representing political Islam¹ do in fact pose a threat to security at domestic, regional and international levels. It follows that the inquiry needs to focus on the politicization of religion, because that process elevates religion to an issue of security, and that compels us to put it on our agenda in the study of IR.² Despite September 11 the main security threat of the Islamists is related to domestic order. This explains why Arab governments themselves feel threatened by Islamism and why, therefore, Islamists encounter hostility in their own countries and therefore seek political asylum in Europe.

Political Islam and post-bipolar security in the Middle East

As a recent development, the politicization of religion is not restricted to Islam, insofar as it can be observed in other religions as well, be it Hinduism or Judaism – among others.³ When it comes to Islam one cannot escape witnessing the Bin Laden and, earlier, the Iran connection of terrorism.⁴ In Algeria the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS) and the *Groupes Islamiques Armées* (GIA) envisage the toppling of the existing state order⁵ to replace it by a divine one they call *Hakimiyyat Allah*.⁶ Similarly, we see in Egypt *Jihad* and other groups, which legitimize themselves by references to 'true Islam', attempts to destabilize the state, which they identify as a deviant secular order. On a regional level, militant groups like the Kashmiri (but based in Pakistan) United *Jihad* Commando, the *Hezbollah* in Lebanon (Jaber, 1997) or *Hamas* and *Jihad Islami* in Palestine (see Milton-Edwards, 1999) ignite great tensions and contribute to what one may conceptualize as an Islamization of regional conflicts. Our focus on the peace process in the Middle East, while studying security in post-bipolar politics, compels us to pay specific attention to this anti-peace-oriented Islamization of conflict. The study of regional conflict in light of political religion and ethnicity therefore becomes a major concern in the study of IR. If we are committed to inter-faith dialogue as an instrument and a framework for preventing what is called a 'clash of civilizations' (Herzog, 1999; Tibi, 1999a: 107–26), we must expose ourselves to the serious challenge posed by this question: 'Given the existence of Islamophobia in the West, how can you combine your commitment to dialogue with your inclusion of Islam in the study of redefining security in the Middle East?' This question needs to be taken most seriously, and only a security analysis on sound foundations can provide the proper answer to it. This is not to ignore the assumption lying behind it, namely that Islam replaces communism as the 'enemy' of the West. But this assumption needs to be treated with great caution.

At issue here is a fact-based distinction between the religion of Islam and the political ideology of Islamism (Tibi, 1998a). That ideology refers selectively to the religion of Islam and then engages itself in politicizing it in an arbitrary manner so as to legitimize political action. In our case, this action is directed against the Arab–Israeli peace.

In response to the question of whether Islam poses a threat, Esposito argues that the question itself is misplaced because there is no monolith that we may call ‘Islam’. The religion of Islam must be differentiated from the many varieties of Islamism as political ideology. The religion of Islam is not a threat. However, as a political ideology Islam clearly is, insofar as it poses a threat to the existing order. Esposito fails to see this and explores the relationship between Islam and democracy. Understanding this relationship is crucial to redefining security for two reasons: First, religious fundamentalism and ethnicity are among the major challenges to security in the post-Cold War era. Jean-François Revel suggests we view the tolerance practiced *vis-à-vis* political–religious and ethnic groups, particularly those related to Islam, according to the formula ‘Democracy against itself’ (Revel, 1993: chapter 12). By this Revel means that democratic systems allow non-democratic groups to operate. Supporters of political Islam acting in the West have no problem making use of democracy in pursuit of their ends while they simultaneously antagonize democracy in their actions and look down at it as an indication of the decline of the West. One of the spiritual fathers of political Islam, Mawdudi, for instance argues:

I tell you in all clarity, my brethren in Islam, secular democracy stands in all aspects in contrast to your religion and beliefs . . . Islam being your belief, and that is why you call yourself Muslims, is different from this ugly democracy . . . and therefore there can be no concurrence between Islam and democracy . . . There where democracy rules Islam cannot prevail and when Islam dominates there is no place for democracy. (Quoted in Dharif, 1992: 98)

With regard to this fundamentalist attitude, Islam is only compatible with democracy if it is interpreted in a liberal Islamic manner. In contrast, Islamism clearly rejects democracy. Second, in this security-related study, reference is made to democracy because of the idea of a democratic peace (Russett, 1993).⁷ It is for that reason that democracy is placed on this agenda while dealing with security. Liberal Islam approves of democracy, while Islamism does not. Without outlining the distinction between Islam and Islamism, one can not formulate a new approach necessary to redefining security in the Middle East.

Based on the above distinctions, the hypotheses underlying this chapter are:

- 1 Political religion is becoming a major issue in the study of conflict in the Middle East. Conflicts addressed in religious terms cannot be resolved because the belief in the absolute is the substance of every religion. This leaves no place for negotiating peace.

- 2 With the exception of Iran, groups and parties committed to Islamism – the expression of politicized religion – are not in power and therefore these challengers are basically non-statal actors. Currently they are not able to seize power, but they can destabilize and create more tensions and disorder. This observation creates a challenge to traditional state-centred security studies.
- 3 In acknowledging the relevance of the idea of democratic peace for the post-Cold War era, the assumption to be dealt with is that undemocratic, and to an even greater extent totalitarian, ideologies and the groups representing them are a threat to peace and thus to security.

These three hypotheses must include the differentiation pertinent to all of them. Those who politicize the Islamic faith to make out of it an ideology claiming an Islamic order, both for the state and the world, by and large can be identified as Islamists. To employ a broader concept (see related contributions in Marty and Appleby, 1991) we may address them as religious fundamentalists. Yet there is still a need for further distinction between religious fundamentalism and terrorism. Every supporter of the idea of an ‘Islamic state’ or an ‘Islamic world order’ is clearly a religious fundamentalist. Therefore, and in a broader sense, all political groups related to these ideologies are a threat to the stability of the existing orders.

At the same time, not every fundamentalist is a committed terrorist. There are plenty of fundamentalist individuals and groups who do not subscribe to ‘terror in the mind of God’ (Juergensmeyer, 2000) or the related use of force. This commitment to violence and force is the dividing line between fundamentalist terrorism (e.g. those engaging in *Jihad*) and non-terrorist fundamentalism (e.g. the Muslim Brethren in Egypt). However, both share the intention to topple the existing order; but their means of reaching their goal are different.

In short, the study of security in the Middle East is related to the important task of redefining security in the international system. Post-Cold War developments require a new approach to security that goes beyond preoccupation with the state (see Tibi, 1998c). To do so, one must embrace non-statal actors in the analysis, and put them at the top of the agenda. In this case, groups and parties of political Islam in the Middle East are at issue. The next step is to explain how religion comes to the fore in security studies, i.e. when it undergoes a process of politicization.⁸

The politicization of religion, destabilization and irregular war: redefining post-bipolar security

The analysis begins with the study of the circumstances and conditions that led to the politicization of religion in the international arena. Even during the

Cold War, political religion as a source of potential conflict was on the scene. However, bipolarity was a veil to hide religion, ethnicity, culture and other factors by subsuming these divisions beneath the East–West rivalry. Since the disappearance of bipolarity and the bisected world of the Cold War, new conflicts and new forces related to politicized religion have been on the rise. In fact, emerging religious fundamentalism and ethnicity do indicate these phenomena. These changes necessitate a new concept of security in world politics. There are some, however, who claim that fundamentalism is a passing phenomenon tied merely to current events, and others go even further and maintain it has already ended (Kepel, 2000). Events even prior to September 11 clearly show how mistaken these analysts are because all current international conflicts are related either to fundamentalism or to ethnicity. In some cases, like in the Balkans, Chechnia and Kashmir, we even find a mixture of the two, merging them to a kind of ethno-fundamentalism. The established thought-patterns of the study of security as well as of related policies cannot provide adequate answers to these new challenges. Hence the need of a new approach.

In view of the developments in the post-bipolar Middle East, there is a clear connection between fundamentalism and security. It must be emphasized here that it is not the religion of Islam as such that is at issue. Clearly, there can be a dialogue with Islam as a religion in pursuit of peace; it is Islamic fundamentalism – not Islam – that is a concern of security policy. While Islam is a world religion whose followers number one-fifth of the world population (1.4–1.5 billion people), Islamic fundamentalism represents a new pattern of political mobilization carried out by a great variety of groups. They instrumentalize and misuse religion for non-religious ends. These groups are a minority in the world of Islam, but they are well organized and equipped and cannot, therefore, be ignored. The numbers matter little, though, for these groups are very capable of destabilizing activities and creating disorder.

In short, the new approach for redefining security that takes account of the politicization of religion is one based on a differentiation between Islam and ‘Islamism’, with the latter defined as religious fundamentalism. In dealing with this security concern, the present chapter pursues several lines of reasoning to reach some conclusions about the topic under issue. These are referred to as ‘issue areas’, and they are discussed in this section in the following manner:

First, Islam is a religion and framework for a civilization,⁹ but it is – as argued earlier – not the proper object of the needed security approach, as Huntington suggests. Islam is a monotheistic religion based on divine revelation. As a world religion and civilization, it manifests great religious diversity, between Sunnite and Shi’ite, and between different religious denominations and numerous sects. Islam is further characterized by great cultural diversity. For example, African Islam is entirely different from the Islam of Southeast

Asia, that of the Indian subcontinent, or even its original Arab form. The addressed religious and cultural diversity¹⁰ are also reflected in Islamic fundamentalism throughout the world of Islam. There is thus a weakness in those security studies – e.g. Huntington’s 1996 *Clash of Civilizations* – which claim the existence of a monolith called ‘Islam’. In highlighting the issue in terms of security policy, there are multiple political Islamist movements that seek to legitimize themselves through religion. They proclaim one Islam but are themselves as diverse as Islam itself. Above all, these groups adhere to similar concepts of political order based on religion and divine law.

When security experts posit the questionable idea that Islam is a threat to the West because of the alleged unity of action claimed by the Islamists, it becomes necessary to clear up this misinterpretation through more precise analyses. In order to do so, two schools of thought must be rejected: first, those who refuse to include Islamism in security studies; and, second, those who confuse Islam and Islamism.

Samuel Huntington, for example, correctly recognizes what is termed the ‘cultural turn’ in seeing how cultures and civilizations play an increasingly important role in international politics. The major problem with his approach is that he believes civilizations can engage in world political conflicts. Huntington attempts to evade the implicit impasse by introducing the concept of ‘core states’ (Huntington, 1996: chapter 7), each of which is supposed to lead a civilization in international politics. In the case of Islam, this construct is not promising for the simple reason that none of the existing fifty-five Islamic states is in a position to lead the entire Islamic civilization. The major argument of the present study is that security questions are related neither to Islamic states nor directly to the civilization to which they belong. Some expert may contradict this by pointing at the ‘security threat’ posed by Saddam Hussein of Iraq (Cockburn and Cockburn, 1999). However the exceptional character of this case must be considered despite all the false connections of Iraq and al-Qaida.

In contrast to Huntington, the argument presented here is that civilizations cannot themselves engage in international conflict, but there is a sense in which they do matter. The study of IR in the post-Cold War era needs to acknowledge that worldviews of civilizations play a more important role in world politics today than they did previously. In considering this fact and in continuing this line of reasoning, war is not understood here as a military conflict between states. *The War of Civilizations* (Tibi, 1995), suggests that we consider the conflict of different worldviews and of particular norms and values in the analysis of security because this conflict affects the issue of order. This conflict revolves around the understanding of five issue areas:

- 1 the state;
- 2 law;

- 3 religion;
- 4 war/peace; and
- 5 knowledge.

The outcomes differ and therefore conflicting concepts of world order emerge.¹¹ Conflicts of values have nothing to do with armies, but they do contribute to the emergence of real conflicts. The 'war of civilizations' is therefore a war of values and worldviews that directly affects conflict on all three levels: domestic, regional and international.

In our time we need to include cultural dialogue as a peace strategy for the twenty-first century in the study of security and the related conflict studies as an alternative to the clash of civilizations (see Herzog, 1999; Tibi, 1999a). Dialogue is a means of conflict resolution. Fundamentalists, by contrast, politicize differences of worldviews between civilizations and thus fan the flames of conflict and create an area of security concern. In this light it must be recognized that security policy has two levels: first, conflicts of values, which have political effects but cannot be settled by military means; and, second, the violence of the fundamentalists believed to be in the 'mind of God'. It is extremely important to distinguish between these two levels at this stage of the analysis in shedding light on the politicization of religion, while being wary of any involvement in Islamophobia.

Second, having clarified the area of concern on the grounds of the distinctions made, the discussion can now move to the area of fundamentalism as a political ideology resulting from the politicization of religion. As argued earlier, this is not an exclusively Islamic issue since the phenomenon is cross-cultural and global, i.e. covers all religions.¹² In analysing fundamentalism in terms of security, two distinctions must be made. One is the fact that it is common to all varieties of fundamentalism to politicize religion in order to arrive at concepts of political order which challenge existing secular orders. The second is that fundamentalism does not confine itself to a confrontation of worldviews; the resort to violence as part of irregular military actions (i.e. the resort to terrorism) is an actualization of the conflict related to worldviews (both aspects are analysed in Tibi, 1998a).

The major target of the political and military activities pursued by the fundamentalists is the secular state. This applies to fundamentalists in all religions. It is, however, unique to Islamic fundamentalists to go beyond the state in embracing the universalism of Islam in order to contend that Islam provides a concept of world order. This belief leads to a contestation of concepts about world order. In addressing this conflict between two concepts of world order, the prevailing Western one and the Islamic one envisaged for the future, the scholar of Islam John Kelsay states: 'in encounters between the West and Islam, the

struggle is over who will provide the primary definition to the world order'. Then, on the same page, he asks, who will lead the world in the future?

Will it be the West, with its notions of territorial boundaries, market economies, private religiosity, and the priority of individual rights? Or will it be Islam, with its emphasis on the universal mission of a transtribal community called to build a social order founded on pure monotheism natural to humanity? (1993: 117)

Islamic fundamentalists answer this question by referring to the spiritual father of their ideology, Sayyid Qutb, who in his *Road Signs* (1989: 6–7) states that Islam will lead the world. It is clear that these questions and the answers given indicate a competition between Western and Islamic concepts of world order that cover different understandings of the notions of war and peace, as well as of law and justice (Juergensmeyer, 2000). This is the content of 'war of civilizations'. It follows that we are confronted not only with a new era for the study of security but with new substance.

Mark Juergensmeyer does not deal explicitly with world order, but with the secular nation state as challenged by fundamentalism. In his study he predicts a confrontation that leads to an emerging 'New Cold War' (1993). When fundamentalists escalate this conflict of worldviews to one related to irregular war as neo-*jihad*, the politicization of religion becomes a real security problem. Some of the cases in point are Kosovo, Macedonia, Chechnia and Kashmir. In the Middle East it is most unfortunate to see the *al-Aqsa intifada* shifting the conflict over occupation to one of order related to religion and civilizational worldviews in viewing the uprising as an Islamic *jihad*.

At this point, Westerners need to be cautious and to refrain from immediately thinking of Islam when they hear the word 'fundamentalism', since Western media focus almost exclusively on terrorist acts committed by Islamic fundamentalists. Without addressing the substance of conflict and without referring to related cases, for example, the destruction of the *Ayodhya* mosque in India by Hindu fundamentalists or similar terrorist acts by fundamentalists of other religions, such as the Hebron massacre by Jewish settlers in the occupied territories of Palestine, have been downplayed in the media. In stating this concern about the potential for Islamophobia in the West, the objective is not to belittle the threats of Islamic fundamentalism to security. The following three, interconnected, points are essential for an understanding of how fundamentalism can become a security threat.

- 1 A new security agenda must include the threat of fundamentalism. Because fundamentalism has a dual nature, i.e. religious and political (Jansen, 1997), it can draw on the former in pursuit of the latter – thus, it politicizes religion. By drawing on religious symbols and grounding their message in

religion, fundamentalists are very appealing. This makes them able to 'fight' without conventional military means. In order to effectively combat such a security threat, a new kind of security approach is thus required (Buzan, 1991), one that is no longer fixated on the state and on the predominance of military mobilization by organized armies.

- 2 In all religions, fundamentalist ideology is based on the belief in a divine order. Most fundamentalists fight for this goal with political means; only a minority among them employs violence and acts of terror to enforce their concept of order. Thus, it is simply empirically false to equate fundamentalism with terrorism. It follows that 'terror in the mind of God' (Juergensmeyer, 2000) is only one aspect of fundamentalism; much more important are its worldviews about order and its politicization of a conflict of values. Nevertheless, terrorism¹³ has to be covered by the new approach, given the resort of some fundamentalists to this means.
- 3 When referring to the politicization of Islam, certain well-intended Europeans prefer to use the term 'Islamism' as an alternative to the term 'Islamic fundamentalism'. In this chapter, the terms 'political Islam', Islamism and Islamic fundamentalism are used interchangeably. However, if the intent is to use the term 'fundamentalism' as a means of spreading prejudice, then the effect is utterly misleading. Although the term 'fundamentalism' has been hardened into a cliché, it is a scholarly and analytical concept for studying the politicization of religion. By using the term 'Islamism' as an alternative way of referring to the global phenomenon of fundamentalism as such, these scholars unwittingly contribute to the stereotyping of Islam by implicitly restricting the politicization of religion to Islam. By electing to call this fundamentalist phenomenon exclusively 'Islamist', they limit the phenomenon of politicized religion to Islam only, thus denying its global character.

The third issue area refers to the field of security studies itself, and the need to look at fundamentalism as the subject of a new approach within security studies to what has been addressed as 'new frontiers of security'.¹⁴ The new approach demands an advance on the traditional concept of security dominated by military thinking, with a broadening of scope and a deepening of insight. Since the end of the East–West confrontation¹⁵ (see Hogan, 1992) conventional Clausewitzian wars between states and their organized, institutionalized armies have almost disappeared – and it is most unlikely that they will recur in the foreseeable future. Therefore, most of the issues must be thought through anew. Security experts have long been arguing that this change has to be taken into consideration, and have underscored the need for a new security approach. Barry Buzan (1991), and later Martin van Creveld and Kalevi Holsti (see Holsti, 1996: chapter 7), have been pioneers in announcing the end of Clausewitz's

thesis of classical war as a confrontation between institutionalized armies. Non-military aspects are emphasized more and more strongly, and are quickly becoming central subjects of security policy. In that sense, and that sense only, it is argued that religious fundamentalism should become one of the major subjects of study in the new security approach.

Organized armies are helpless against the terrorist acts of fundamentalists or ethnic nationalists, as the examples of Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Afghanistan and, more recently, Kosovo and Macedonia, clearly demonstrate. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces could overpower the Serbian army with its arsenal of weapons in 1999, but in 2000 and 2001 they were unable to contain the religious-ethnic UÇK irregulars' acts of revenge against the Christian Serbs and Macedonians. In the traditional historical (not the theological) Islamic understanding, *jihad* is a war of irregulars against the infidels. This understanding is currently gaining topicality for determining 'Islam' and 'war' (see Tibi, 1996; Kelsay, 1993: chapter 5).

Any security concept for combating fundamentalism should guard against equating the political activists of these new tendencies with Islam itself. It cannot be reiterated enough how important it is to make clear the distinction between the religion of Islam and its fundamentalist abuse. This – missing – distinction also reinforces the claim of the Islamists to be the 'true voice of Islam' as such, and allows them to demonize their critics as the 'voice of Islamophobia'. The logistics of Islamic fundamentalism in the West have become an important component of this movement. Therefore, the study of security must inquire into the networking between the region of conflict itself, in this case the Middle East, and what is termed the 'gated Diaspora'. Categorizing the values-based conflict between political Islam and the West as Islamophobia obscures complex categories and is misleading.¹⁶

The Middle East and the quest for democratic peace: the place of Islamism

The final part of this chapter proceeds to focus exclusively on the attitudes of Islamic fundamentalists *vis-à-vis* the Arab-Israeli peace process. It might confuse some readers to see these attitudes illustrated with respect to neither *Hamas* nor *Jihad Islami*, but rather with reference to the case of Islamic fundamentalism in the Maghreb. There are two reasons. First, the scope of the study is broadened in the Middle East by extending the concept of peace from an Arab-Israeli one to a Mediterranean peace. In this understanding of Euro-Mediterranean peace¹⁷ fundamentalism is viewed as a threat to political stability in the Mediterranean (Tibi, 2000c). Second, the direct security threat posed by *Hamas* or *Jihad Islami* is pertinent, but it is for a scholarly analysis more illuminating to showcase the issue on other Islamist movements.

At the outset some remarks on the differences between the first *intifada* (1987–93) (Hunter, 1993) and the recent one (beginning at the end of September 2000) are necessary and most pertinent to understanding the Islamization of the conflict. The first *intifada* was a national one led by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It is wrong to blame the PLO for initiating the uprising, for early on it did not control it for some time. Clearly, the Islamists led the second *intifada*, referred to as the *al-Aqsa intifada*. In what way does this difference matter to peace and security? In the preceding sections, it was argued that political Islam is not in favour of the peace process as based on mutual acceptance in terms of each 'acknowledging the other's nationhood', as Herbert Kelman of Harvard, a mediator in the peace process, has put it (1992: 18–38). In this regard we need to ask whether, and in a commitment to peace, the Islamists acknowledge the place of Israel in the Middle East¹⁸ and the right of the Jewish people to sovereignty over the grounds of mutuality regarding the rights of the Palestinian people to establish their own state and determine their own destiny (Farsoun, 1997: 311ff.). Clearly, the answers are negative. From this vantage-point, Islamism is seen as an impediment to the peace process. In the dominant stream of security studies, we see a continuing focus on the state, and thus the aforementioned issues are ignored insofar as the so-called 'deadly struggle for peace'¹⁹ is viewed as a struggle between the states of the Middle East.

In a redefined concept of security Islam does have a place in Middle Eastern peace. With reference to the concept of democratic peace pertinent to post-Cold War security studies, there is a compatibility of Islam, understood as morality, with modern democracy. In contrast, Islamism is not a religion-based morality, but rather a concept of political order. To be sure, it is not democratic order (Tibi, 1998a: chapters 7 and 8). The assumption is that a democratic peace is a guarantee of non-belligerent conflict resolution in that democracies negotiate, but do not wage wars against each other (see Russett, 1993). In this regard, the question is whether divine orders, based on the *Sharia* (Islamic law) or, alternatively, on the *Halakha* (Jewish law) could commit themselves to peace. The hypothesis is that states based on divine law can not do so, that only secular orders are able to commit themselves to democratic peace. This is not to ignore the place of religion. However, it is necessary to establish harmony between 'religious commitment and secular reason' (Audi, 2000) while searching for peaceful conflict resolution through dialogue.

For the final part of this study, the working hypothesis is that an Islamic state as envisaged by the Islamists is not designed to accept Israel as an equal partner for Arab Muslims. The Maghribi Islamists are a case in point. In contrast, the traditional Islam-based monarchy in Morocco²⁰ has proved to be most supportive of the idea of peace with Israel. The late King Hassan II left considerable records as a positive legacy in this regard. In commenting on the death of the Moroccan king in July 1999, Shimon Peres acknowledged in a BBC

TV-interview that Hassan II was a friend of the Jewish people and a supporter of an Islamic peace with their State. The published records by Abu Mazen, alias the Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, support this statement (Abbas, 1995: 186).

Before moving to examine the impact of the working hypothesis on the negative connection between peace and Islamism in the case of the Maghreb, it is pertinent to explore the notion of 'peace' used here. Prior to the age of nationalism and the formation of the State of Israel, Muslims and Jews lived in peace with one another to the extent of having a Jewish–Islamic symbiosis²¹ – to use the term of the most distinguished Jewish historian Bernard Lewis (1984). In arguing on secular grounds for a lasting peace, Jews and Muslims can learn from European history that only after the peace of Westphalia, i.e. after establishing the mutually accepted secular sovereignty of all states, religion-based wars in Europe disappeared.

One must further determine the scope of the envisaged democratic peace in broadening it from an Arab–Israeli and a Jewish–Muslim peace to a Euro-Mediterranean partnership (see Khader, 1997; see also Tibi, 2000c). Domestic and regional stability in the southern Mediterranean is needed, and the Islamization of politics is viewed as a security threat to peace in this region.

In applying the findings of the earlier, more general, deliberations in the preceding parts of this study to the case of Maghribi Islamists, the following two hypotheses are formulated:

- 1 Islamism, viewed as the Islamic variety of religious fundamentalism, is in this concrete case primarily a concept of political order for the Arabo-Islamic Maghreb. Religious fanaticism, extremism or even terrorism are in fact only side-effects of this phenomenon: they do not pertain to its substance as a worldview underpinning a concept of *nizam siyasi* (political order), labelled by the Islamists themselves as *Hakimiyyat Allah* (God's rule) (see Marty and Appleby, 1991). It follows that the pending challenge in the Maghreb is not merely a religious one, but rather one related to a new Islamic order aspired to and as such a security issue. Thus, Islamism matters in the first place as an alternative political order envisioned by the Islamists as counter-elites opposed to the ruling elites. To be sure, in considering the professed commitment to democracy, this is not to suggest that the ruling elites in the Maghreb, or in any other part of the world of Islam, are more democratic than the challenging Islamist counter-elites.
- 2 Religious fundamentalism as political Islam, or Islamism, has been introduced to the Maghreb from outside of this sub-region of the Arab world with the implication that it can only work if successfully indigenized, i.e. Maghrebized in being adjusted to local conditions. The external sources of religious fundamentalism in one of the three Maghreb states (Algeria)

referred to in this section are to be located in their respective domains. In the main, the introduction of Islamism to the Maghreb from outside can be located at three points of impact:

- Ideologically, the major impact comes from the Arab east (the *Mashrek*). In terms of countries, Egypt and Syria are to be mentioned, and in terms of organizations, the Muslim Brotherhood (see Mitchell, 1969) ranks at the top. The writings of the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb and his followers are most pivotal in this regard.
- Politically, the Iranian Revolution (Arjomand, 1988) generated great impact on the Maghreb: it 'breathed life into Islamist movements everywhere' (Burgat and Dowal, 1993: 185). Though the Iranian Revolution has been based on *Shi'i* Islam, which is clearly alien to Sunni Maghribi Muslims, it has been able to exert great ripple-effects on the unfolding of political Islam in North Africa. It is true that the envisaged export of the revolution failed,²² but the addressed ripple-effects should not be underestimated. In addition, there exists clear evidence of an 'Iranian Connection' (O'Balance, 1997) that also applies to the Maghreb. There is evidence that many Maghribi Islamists went to Iran and that several of their movements received funds from Teheran. Both the Egyptian and Iranian connections determine a fundamentalist Maghribi rejection of the Oslo peace.
- Militarily, the war in Afghanistan had considerable effects on the transfer of political Islam into military action throughout the world of Islam, and in particular the Arab world. Again, the Maghreb has been no exception. Algeria is to be mentioned in the first place. The Islamists returning from Afghanistan are the foremost exponents of radical Islam (Draz, 1993). There were numerous Algerians among them who now also act in Western Europe, as well as in North America. Among the *Mujahidin* combating the 'infidel' communist Soviets in Afghanistan, after their invasion of December 1979, about 20,000 Arabs participated in the war of resistance. A leading figure among them was Usamah Bin Laden, who has recently made international headlines and received global media coverage.²³ The origin of the phenomenon that has been named 'the Arab Afghans' in the Western-Islamist co-operative element in the Afghanistan war is well known to experts, but not yet acknowledged by the politicians involved. Among these warriors of political Islam there were 2,000 Algerians and a great, but not exactly known, number of Tunisians and Moroccans. In short, there existed a considerable Maghribi contingent in Afghanistan. After the end of the war these militarily trained Islamists returned to the Middle East and North Africa. They were diffused throughout the

region while engaging themselves in politically destabilizing irregular military actions addressed as terrorism. Students of war like Kalevi Holsti (1996: [chapter 7](#)) view this military action as ‘war of a third kind’. Irregulars constitute a new type of soldier, which compels revision of earlier concepts of security in favour of envisaging ‘new security’ (Tibi, [1998c](#): see chapter 12 in particular). September 11 has been the most prominent case of irregular war.

In addressing this ‘new security’, it must be reiterated that Islam, as a world religion and a belief system, is by no means a ‘whatever threat’. Islamism is a threat, not to NATO, but rather to regional stability in North Africa and other parts of the world of Islam, and also to Arab–Israeli peace. From that point of view the spread of political Islam in North Africa is a tough challenge to the existing political order and thus a distinctly geopolitical issue that matters to stability. A Maghribi Islamist supports the reference to political Islam as a concept of political order with regard to the advocated education in political Islam in this manner: ‘These were no longer lessons on how to wash one’s hands, or to pray or fast. They had become lessons on how it might become possible to live in an Islamic State’ (quoted in Burgat and Dowal, [1993](#): 258). To be sure, this envisaged ‘Islamic State’ has roots neither in the *Quran* nor in the *hadith*,²⁴ but is basically a political belief of the Islamists.

The call for an Islamic state unfolded in the Maghreb at three levels and according to three different steps, particularly in Algeria where Islamists resorted to the use of force (Ayashi, [1992](#)). At the outset it was the mosque, which has ‘constituted the first framework for a gestation of the Islamist discourse’, as François Burgat tells us; the Islamist movement then ‘left the obscurity of the mosque . . . and began via the university to come into public view’ (Burgat and Dowal, [1993](#): 86f.). Thus, the mosque,²⁵ the academic campus, and then the urban street as well as the sub-proletarian suburb were the major spaces in which this process unfolded. The outcome has been a new movement, which has become, as argued earlier, a security challenge to the nation state,²⁶ both to its legitimacy as well as that of the ruling political elites themselves.

Another important issue is the contest for power among those who rule and those who want to replace them in office by shattering the system itself.²⁷ The *Hakimiyyat Allah* concept, representing the Islamists’ alternative order, is supposed to supersede the existing nominally secular nation state (Tibi, [1990b](#): 127–52).²⁸ The Islamists target the weak Arab states. The weakness of their statehood affects their ability to make peace. The issue under question clearly pertains to political and regional stability – a top security issue. In response to this challenge the religious establishment backing the existing order made an effort to curb the politicization of the mosque. The Algerian Islamist Abbasi Madani challenged this effort in pointing to the fact that ‘the mission of the

mosque is not the same as that of a church . . . The mosque is a place . . . in which all the affairs of the umma are treated . . . It is from there that the armies left to confront the enemy (quoted by Burgat and Dowall, 1993: 90).

In historical terms Abbasi Madani is right, but this is not the religion of Islam as revealed ethics; rather it is Islamic history. The historian of early Islamic *jihad* in the sense of conquest Khalid Yahya Blankinship (1994: 15f.) informs us that the mosque indeed served as part of the logistics of the Islamic wars of *futuhat*, which stand in the historical context of *jihad* and crusades, i.e. of enmity (Tibi, 1999b). In our age, Mediterranean peace and intercultural bridging are necessary in order to avoid revising that tradition, and instead to engage in the politics of preventing the clash of civilizations. This requires an effort on both sides. Islamism in all three Maghreb states is clearly opposed to peace with Israel, as are other varieties of this movement throughout the world of Islam.

Conclusions: how can we cope with fundamentalism?

In considering the fact that Islamic fundamentalism in North Africa is not only a threat to the security of the states of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, but an obstacle to Arab–Israeli reconciliation and to peace in the Mediterranean, one can conclude that Islamism is an issue area in the study of security. In this understanding, the present case exceeds the domestic level as a threat to regional security. This is a serious challenge to stability with which we need to cope. Given the great sectarianism of groups and subgroups among the Islamists and the related splits in their movements, their capability to seize power is clearly limited. Islamists will probably fail to establish the divine–political order they envisage, but nevertheless are continuing and will continue to be in a position to destabilize and create disorder (see Tibi, 1998a). The result would be regional instability and turmoil.

The redefinition of security studies is a challenge to design policies capable of dealing with changed situations. We need to put on our agenda the study of the political strength of the Islamist movements and of their ability to mobilize and thus create a real threat to stability. In policy terms Islamism is to be viewed as the major force of opposition in the world of Islam. It follows the need for a policy that helps to determine the ways in which we deal with this political movement.

In moving from the case of Islamism in the Maghreb to the entire Middle Eastern regional state subsystem, which represents the arena of the Arab–Israeli conflict,²⁹ the search is for peaceful conflict resolution, which goes beyond the states. At issue is the rise of Islamism as a new political opposition. The foremost goal of Islamism is to establish a new political order described as an Islamic state. Despite the inclusivist inclination of this study, i.e. the plea not to ‘other’ the Islamists, but rather to integrate them with the political system, the

present analysis views a lasting peace in terms of democratic peace. This position leads to major reservations *vis-à-vis* the Islamists because they would never accept a peace with Israel based on mutual acceptance of sovereignty.³⁰ A tactical peace is not a lasting peace. In addition, an Islamist state based on the *Sharia* is not a democratic state based on democratic pluralism and secular civil society and therefore it could not be part of a democratic peace, either in the region of the Middle East or worldwide. Nevertheless, a temporary peace is better than war, regardless of whether it is waged between states or as an irregular war. Two ideas will conclude the thoughts developed in this study.

First, Islamism is diverse, but it can be viewed in a general manner as a threat to domestic, regional and international security. Most Western experts on Islam, who are trained as philologists not social scientists, correctly point out the cultural diversity of Islam. Unfortunately, from this fact they then go on to draw the false conclusion that any generalized judgement is inadmissible. Rejecting generalization deviates from this traditional wisdom peculiar to the general logic of philology, but not from the study of politics and society. In particular, in security studies it is patently false to argue this way. On the basis of research and expert knowledge, generalization is possible and often even necessary if only up to a certain point. Otherwise, one runs the risk of failing to perceive the true problem. The world of Islam is diverse, but this diversity is part of a general spectrum which could be called Islamic civilization. Similarly, Islamism is characterized both by diversity and unity. Furthermore, as *the* approach which dominates Islamic studies, philology is unable to recognize either the phenomenon of fundamentalism or the security dimension related to it. Therein lies the limitation of Western Islamic studies and its practical relevance for our inquiry. Its anti-social-science attitude hinders a scholarly dialogue toward a better understanding of the problems at issue.

Second, fundamentalism results from both a crisis of meaning and a structural crisis that derives in part from the poverty of populations in many parts of the world. In this environment, fundamentalism functions as an ideology of salvation, which promises a better life by making glorious promises. Terrorists are a minority among fundamentalists; they are in large part youths without any prospects in life who get sucked into the bog of underground terrorism and firmly believe they are acting in the name and interests of Islam. As laymen who are not very familiar with Islamic teaching, they do not realize that their actions violate all basic Islamic norms and values. To be sure, the Islamic doctrine of *jihad* allows violence, but has clear rules that unequivocally prohibit terrorism. For instance, the rules of *jihad* prescribe an early warning of violence and direct confrontation in contrast to terrorist acts based on surprise and the use of ambush tactics (see Tibi, 1996).

In the Middle East itself every politics of confrontation contributes to a dilution of the lines between liberal and militant Muslims. Thus it is a security

concern in the post-Cold War sense of averting all kinds of confrontational politics. The peace movement in Israel contributes more effectively to the security of the country than do current Israeli Prime Minister Sharon and his supporters. The only alternative for a promising future is to return to the spirit of mutual acceptance and respect. This spirit was the ground for establishing mutual confidence. Under the former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu all confidence measures were shaken (Lockery, 1999),³¹ and under Sharon they were ultimately bulldozed.³² It is time to teach politicians that post-bipolar security is based on a search for peace, not on *jihad* nor on the military and its capabilities for retaliation.

NOTES

This chapter was completed at the Georgia–Augusta University’s Center for International Relations, which I chair. I had the luck of a scholarly encounter with Tami Amanda Jacoby and Brent Sasley at the 2001 Chicago Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association. They invited me to join their project on Redefining Security in the Middle East despite the fact that I was not among the participants of the 2000 Montreal conference. I thank both for including me and for comments on the early draft, which have led to this more elaborated version of the chapter. My research assistant Anja Zückmantel thankfully provided much helpful assistance, which I acknowledge as I do also the meticulous word-processing of various versions of the paper by my staff assistant Elisabeth Luft. My views on security as reflected in this study were deepened through my work at Harvard and the long years of debates with Lenore Martin and with my late colleague Werner Kaltefleiter.

- 1 For further studies on political Islam see Ayubi, 1991; Roy, 1994 and (in Arabic) Dharif, 1992: 98 as well as Tibi, 1998a and 2001c.
- 2 See the special issue of *Millenium* 29:3 (2000) on Religion and International Relations. My contribution is on pp. 843–60. See also Haynes, 1998.
- 3 See the related contributions in Marty and Appleby, 1991.
- 4 See O’Balance, 1997. On Bin Laden see Draz, 1993 and Bergen, 2001.
- 5 On Algeria see Stone, 1997; Malley, 1996; and Willis, 1996.
- 6 On the concept of *hakimiyyat Allah*, see Tibi, 2000b: chapters 5 and 8. See also al-Awwa, 1983. The term *hakimiyyat Allah* was first coined by Sayyid Qutb, 1989.
- 7 See also the reprint of the classic by Emmanuel Kant, 1799, ‘Entwurf zum ewigen Frieden’ (pp. 37–82), in Richard Saage and Zwi Batscha, eds 1979, *Friedensutopien*, Frankfurt am Maine.
- 8 Such an ambitious analysis, which examines all the three listed hypotheses, cannot be exhaustive. These confines are noted and there is no claim to do more than lay out the lines needed for the new approach.
- 9 Civilizations do matter for the study of IR, in particular since the end of the Cold War. Lipson, 1993, is seminal and includes rich references to Islam. On Islam as a civilization see Hodgson, 1974.
- 10 On this diversity see Geertz, 1971.
- 11 *The War of Civilizations* is divided in five chapters, each of which is devoted to one of these listed issue areas of conflict between Islamic and Western civilization.

- 12 These are the major findings of the Fundamentalism Project, pursued at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences under the chair of Martin Marty and Scott Appleby and published in five volumes by Chicago University Press in 1991–95. See Tibi, 1998a; Marty and Appleby, 1991.
- 13 In addition to Juergensmeyer, 2000, see generally on terrorism, Hoffman, 1998; Wardlaw, 1998.
- 14 This is the title of the research project chaired by Lenore Martin and also of the published series *New Frontiers in Middle East Security*, edited by L. Martin (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).
- 15 Mary Kaldar (1990) suggested viewing the Cold War as an imaginary one. The changed understanding of war since the end of bipolarity is suggested by Toffler and Toffler, 1993.
- 16 This is a criticism of Gerges, 1999, and Hunter, 1998.
- 17 The Kreisky Foundation, Vienna, organized an international conference on this in October 1999. See Tibi, 'Searching for Euro-Mediterranean Peace', published in the *Newsletter* of the WCFIA at Harvard University, 14:1 (Winter, 2000), 2–3 and 6.
- 18 On this issue see Rejwan, 1998.
- 19 This is the perspective of Kemp and Pressman, 1997.
- 20 See the chapter on Morocco in Tibi, 1990a: 160–77.
- 21 See Lewis 1984 and also the review article on the German edition of this book by Tibi, 'Die Geschichte einer Symbiose', in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 24 May 1989, 14.
- 22 See Tibi, 1999c.
- 23 Usamah Bin Laden is a pivotal person as a leader of the 'Arab Afghans'. See Bodansky, 1999; Cooley, 1999.
- 24 *Hadith* (or *Sunnah*) refers to the second source from which the teachings of Islam are drawn. *Hadith* literally means a saying conveyed to man, or the sayings, actions or practices of the Prophet Muhammad.
- 25 On the mosque, see also Rouadja, 1991.
- 26 On the crisis of the nation state as the background to the rise of Islamism see Tibi, 1998a: chapter 6.
- 27 See Tibi, 'The Attitudes of Middle Eastern Elites and Counter-Elites Towards Political Order: The Islamic–Fundamentalist Challenge to the Secular Domestic and International Order', in Samuel Huntington ed., *Conflict or Convergence: Global Perspectives on War, Peace and International Order*, Project conducted at the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies (mimeographed Cambridge, MA, 1997). Published version in *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, 23:1 (winter/spring, 1999), 191–210.
- 28 This work was partly reprinted in Anthony D. Smith ed. 1996, *Ethnicity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 174ff.
- 29 On the scholarly subsystem debate see the conceptual chapters in Tibi, 1998c. See also Tibi, 2001b.
- 30 As evidence, consult the writings of Hamas included in *Ahmad Izullidin, Harakat al-muqawamah al-Filistiniyya Hamas* (the Movement of Palestinian Resistance, Hamas), Cairo: Dar al-Nashr al-Islamiyya, no date; the entire historical Palestine (including the territory of Israel) is considered *Waqf Islam* (Islamic divine property), and p. 54. See also Mush Antobowie no date, *Limadha Narjud al-Salam ma'a al-yahud* (Why Do We Reject Peace with the Jews)?, Cairo: Kital al-Mukhtar.
- 31 For more critical perspective see Tibi, 1997.
- 32 Tibi, 'Bulldozer im Konflikt: Scharons Wahlsieg', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, 11 February 2001, 6.

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Gender relations and national security in Israel

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IT IS WIDELY assumed that war is a man's world. Male soldiers fight enemy soldiers on the battlefield to protect their homelands and their families from existential threat. The woman's role during war, on the other hand, is to remain steadfast on the home front, support her man, keep the home fires burning, and wait anxiously for his safe return. On the basis of this scenario, the motivation for the 'citizen warrior' to take up arms is ultimately to shield the honour and integrity of his 'beautiful soul' against the perils of a dangerous and anarchic world (Elshtain, 1987). Whether or not this account of warfare is accurate, it is the quintessence of the conventional rendition of national security, namely, protection of the boundaries of a nation state (homeland) from external military threat. The accompanying script of home front (safety) versus battlefield (warfare) as respectively feminized and masculinized is a powerful interface of discourses and practices that designate particular roles to men and women in conflict zones.¹

However, upon consideration of gender as a major analytical category, the real landscape of war and national security is often revealed as less exclusively male (Enloe, 1989), as women participate beyond the home front, and practices of warfare are not necessarily confined to the battlefield as typically defined. Women occupy many diverse positions in relation to international conflict, not only as supporters of men, but also as combatants, guerrilla warriors, terrorists, and so on. As well, divisions between home front and battlefield are not necessarily exclusive when the social context of warfare is considered. In short, a consideration of gender renders ambiguous many of the common assumptions held about male–female domains in war, as well as the nature and effectiveness of protection systems (i.e. security). This has significant implications for redefining security from the perspective of feminist debates and concepts.

The Middle East is a valuable laboratory for investigation of the dynamic between gender and security. Because of the protracted conditions of warfare in many Middle Eastern states, gender roles are structured to a great extent by the

exigencies of the national security agenda throughout that region, and hence the predominance there of the military in political decision making. States in the Middle East are characterized by unsettled boundaries, civil/ethnic disputes, guerrilla warfare, proliferation of weapons, militarism and a general context of insecurity. These political circumstances spill over into the private sphere in the form of militarized social relations and gendered insecurity. The vulnerability of women often results from the dependence of regime self-preservation on a centralized form of patriarchal authority, a disproportionate military defence budget and uniformed male decision making in times of crisis.² For the general population, this situation of chronic emergency can be experienced as a mechanism for order and social control. The militarized and masculinized form of leadership in the Middle East tends to impinge upon the rights of minorities and other collectives, the identities of which are based on class, ethnicity, religion and gender, groups whose main interests may not coincide, and may even conflict, with those of the state. Women tend to be positioned in such sub-state groups and, as such, comprise a major category from which to understand the exclusive nature of security in the Middle East.

In this chapter, Israel is the immediate context for exploring gender roles ascribed by national security, and the cleavages that result from a society in constant state of war. Israel is the epitome of a war society in which all aspects of life are conditioned, to some extent, by the security policy predicament. The predominance of warfare in Israel developed in tandem with the process of state building. Israel's origins as a pioneering community led to the dual objectives of assimilating a diverse immigrant population and of transforming the Jewish national character from a persecuted minority in the diaspora into a sovereign and independent majority in Palestine. The army was given a special role in the transformation of both the Israeli citizen and Israeli society (Almog, 1993), and the process of state development. Over the years, the protracted Arab–Israeli conflict has effectively positioned the state and its security apparatus as the overarching power structure that impinges upon all other aspects of life in Israel, whether in the political, economic, cultural or social spheres.

Until recently, the primary role of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) was not subject to public scrutiny or criticism. However, changes to the strategic environment in the 1980s and 1990s opened space for civil society and dissenting groups to question their roles in national security and to promote new understandings of the relationship between national and personal security in Israel. This process of reflection on the military in Israeli society has developed further in the context of the Middle East peace process (MEPP). Peace negotiations have altered the context in which the theory and practice of security in the region are understood. Although internal conflict is raging in the Israeli–Palestinian context, inter-state war in the Middle East is no longer regarded as a legitimate political mechanism, and this has resulted in new constraints on and

opportunities for social groups struggling for change, whether through violent or non-violent means. Women have played a significant part in ongoing political transformations. Women have occupied a large role in protest movements, and they have also contributed significantly to ongoing discussions about national security, which hold crucial implications for conflict zones in the post-Cold War era.

This chapter has two main lines of inquiry. First, it seeks to explore the gendered aspects of national security in Israel and to consider the ways in which women are domesticated within their protection systems. This line of inquiry considers how current gender boundaries have developed historically and in relation to the political process in Israel. Second, within the context of these gender boundaries and symbols, the chapter turns to the politics of women's resistance in order to explore women's alternative understandings of security. Israeli women have organized around two main responses to the gendered structures of war, responses that correspond to the mainstreaming versus independence debate in feminist theory (Jacoby, 2000).

On the one hand, Israeli women have waged an arduous struggle for equal access to the 'right to fight'. In Israel, women undergo compulsory conscription but have not, until recently, entered the last bastion of male exclusivity in the state – combat. A consequence of the predominance of the military in Israeli society is that, women's right to fight is equivalent to women's equal access to all the leading structures of authority in Israel. Since the 1973 War and the quandaries that resulted from the lack of womanpower on the home front, the goal of women's career advancement in the military, and later women in combat, became an issue on the political agenda. The struggle for women's right to fight involves working towards equality within existing structures and rules, and participating in the mainstream political process alongside men.

On the other hand, women have articulated a feminist agenda within the context of the women's peace movement in Israel. Women's peace activism represents an oppositional constituency with roots dating back, in large part, to the 1982 Lebanon War and the 1987 Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.³ Although not a pacifist movement, women in the peace camp have expressed critical and dissenting views *vis-à-vis* the State and its military policy. In its actions and ideologies, the Israeli women's peace movement has articulated understandings of security that, in relation to feminist identity and social justice, lie outside the mainstream agenda, and an affinity with their Palestinian women counterparts. This strategy combines a campaign against war with a struggle for women's equality. Significantly, women's peace activism in Israel has taken place largely outside the predominant structures of the Israeli political system.

While both strategies – mainstreaming and independence – promote women's voices in the national security agenda, they hold different implications

for female liberation in Israel – broadly defined – as well as for the nature of a negotiated settlement to the Arab–Israeli conflict. The main question is the extent to which either strategy for women’s activism helps or hinders a redefinition of security in support of the dual goals of gender equality and peace in Israel.

Finally, the chapter considers the significance to gender relations in Israel of the changes currently taking place in the military–industrial complex as a result of the evolution of the strategic environment and the new circumstances set in motion by the Middle East peace process. In the contemporary Middle East, a complex of relations, both formal and informal, has been forged to support normalization and peaceful coexistence. While not always successful in political terms,⁴ these relations influence the opportunities and constraints for women’s struggles and the perception of women’s roles in society.

Israeli women and national security

For the purposes of this discussion, and notwithstanding the wealth of debates within feminism,⁵ the definition of gender used here is that of a ‘constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes’ (Scott, 1988: 42), and as a primary way of signifying relationships of power. Gender is understood, therefore, as a social rather than a biological category underpinning the male–female distinction as well as the separation of male and female bodies in all the major structures of society. In this sense, gender is both a discourse and a practice. As a discourse, gender produces and reproduces what Cynthia Enloe (1989) refers to as a ‘bundle of expectations’ about socially valuable and culturally acceptable norms related to ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’. As a practice, gender is a concrete representation of the power dynamics between actual men and women in terms of their access to economic, political and military authority.

A growing body of seminal works has begun the process of critical reflection on the relationship between gender and national security in Israel (Emmett, 1996; Kandiyoti, 1996; *Palestine–Israel Journal*, 1995; Sharoni, 1995; Mayer, 1994; Azmon and Izraeli, 1993; Bernstein, 1992; Swirsky and Safir, 1991). A major theme of this literature is the fundamental contradiction in Israeli society between the myth of gender equality and the reality of women’s marginalization. The gender equality myth in Israel draws from such significant cultural signifiers as women’s compulsory conscription, Golda Meir (the first and only woman prime minister of Israel), communal childcare in the *kibbutz* (co-operative settlement), images of the pre-state pioneering women and of women’s fighting roles between 1947 and 1949. A result of these indicators of gender equality in the historical development of Israeli society is the

often-encountered assumption that the problem of feminism in Israel either has never existed or has already been resolved.

By way of contrast, Israeli feminist scholarship has begun to challenge the gender equality myth through revisionist history and gender analysis by exploring ways in which the Israeli political system has simultaneously mobilized and marginalized women. This 'mobilization–marginalization' phenomenon in Israel has been linked to the primary role of the military in Israeli society and the underlying prioritization of military over civilian interests. The predominance of the Israeli military is upheld by the widespread belief that, as a result of the protracted conflict, the existence of the State of Israel has yet to be guaranteed. This notion of an 'existential threat' has given elite military men, including those in the upper echelons of the military hierarchy and those generals who have made the horizontal move into politics, the responsibility for making key decisions for the State on such crucial matters as war and national security. As part of this perspective on national security, Israel has invested a disproportionate amount of spending in the military sector,⁶ thus creating a large military–industrial complex at the expense of other areas such as health, education and social services. The predominance of military–industrial over civilian interests has developed simultaneously in Israel, therefore, with the predominance of men over women, who occupy a secondary role in military affairs and a disproportionately large role in the private sphere.

Israeli women have always had a difficult relationship with the Israeli military–industrial complex. Historical accounts relate that the early Jewish immigrants to Palestine from Eastern Europe and Russia in the early 1900s were motivated by the common goal of building a new egalitarian society that would be collectively organized and committed to social transformation. However, the early egalitarian objective of the Jewish community in Palestine did not extend to equality between men and women. The harsh physical conditions and security issues led to social norms being eventually surpassed by the glorification of physical labour, militarism and masculinized traits. Productivity targets and the prioritizing of physical labour intensified the segregation of men and women. Women's work became associated with a lack of productivity and power and was thus rendered less valuable than men's work, in particular the physically demanding tasks associated with agricultural labour (Bernstein, 1992). Although women did work alongside men in the fields, their inclusion in the nation eventually became synonymous with motherhood and child-bearing, and other traditional feminine functions such as childrearing and various unremunerated social services.

A similar gendered dynamic of inclusion and exclusion took place in the pre-state military sphere. During the initial stages of warfare, women struggled to be equally included in military operations. However, the issue of gender

equality was continually sidelined as tensions escalated between Jews and the local Arab population opposed to the Zionist settlement project. Women were excluded from the first Jewish pre-state defence organization, *Hashomer*, an authoritarian para-military group that espoused power and male superiority (Rein, 1980: 35). However, as a result of the deterioration of security in the early 1920s *Hashomer* was replaced by a new and secret defence organization, *Haganah* (literally defence), that recruited all able-bodied men *and* women to struggle against the Arab population as well as against British restrictions on Jewish immigration. Nevertheless, although *Haganah* women were trained with men in techniques of discipline and weaponry, women's service was segregated into such feminized areas as communications, first aid and medical assistance (Bloom, 1991: 129). The early articulation of gender relations in Israel was characterized, therefore, by the domestication of women *within* the key structures of Israeli society, despite the ideology of equal inclusion in labour and defence that underpinned the pre-state period.

Following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the persistent security situation continued to impinge upon gender relations. However, the period of statehood established an additional factor in the social construction of biological difference between the sexes in Israel. The lack of separation between religion and statehood in the State of Israel further complicated the role of women in the national security agenda. Israel was initially established as a political solution to the persecution of Jews in Eastern Europe. Although a large portion of Israeli citizens currently identifies itself as secular, Israel has remained a Jewish state with laws that favour Jewish over non-Jewish citizens.⁷ An unwritten accommodation between religion and statehood known as the 'status quo' gave the Orthodox rabbinical authority a monopoly over personal status law.⁸ The disproportionate political power of the Orthodox as opposed to other streams of Judaism, such as Conservative, Reform or Reconstructionist, pertains to a broad range of areas, such as marriage and divorce, child custody, inheritance and burial. This reliance on Orthodox Judaism for monitoring the contours of the Jewish nation has problematized women's struggles for equality since, according to Orthodox interpretations of scripture and custom, women occupy traditional roles as mothers and bearers of children. In fact, according to Orthodox interpretations, a Jew is defined as having been born to a Jewish mother, thus establishing a maternal lineage for reproduction of the Jewish nation. However, Orthodox women do not play an important part in public prayer and political life, the key staples of authority in religious communities.

In a zone of conflict such as Israel, religion serves two major purposes. On the one hand, religion is a source of solace and community in times of crisis. On the other hand, religion can be manipulated as an ideological tool to serve political ends. Since the 1967 War⁹ and the acquisition by Israel of key

holy sites in the West Bank and east Jerusalem, policy debate about national security has become integrated with fundamental belief systems. Since 1967, both the Labour and Likud Governments have sought to populate the occupied and/or annexed land. Since 1967, strategic reasons for control over disputed territory have increasingly mixed with religious and messianic arguments in support of the biblical Land of Israel (Sprinzak, 1991; Lustick, 1988).

This increasingly politicized role of religion in Israeli politics has served to radicalize political platforms, and has allowed the Jewish settlement imperative to impinge upon the most intimate relations in Israeli society – those of the family. The Israeli–Palestinian conflict has seen the family become a primary tool in the demographic struggle between Jews and Palestinians in disputed territory. At its core, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is fought over the settlement of territory and the designation of borders. Families are needed to populate conquered territory. As a result, strategic arguments have permeated the personal arena of sexuality, fertility and reproduction. The notion of strategic superiority maintains that soldiers must defend borders, while the Bible gives the cardinal commandment ‘Be fruitful and multiply’ (Genesis 1:28). The synthesis of religious and strategic arguments over land renders national security synonymous with the need to reproduce, settle and populate territory, and this has had a direct impact on women’s reproductive freedom in Israel in both Orthodox and non-Orthodox circles.

In both instances, the idea of the ‘nationalist family’ is a normative structure that embodies strategic value. The gendered significance of this politicized understanding of the family lies in its impingement upon women’s obligation to the nation. The nationalist family perpetuates domesticated notions of women’s role as reproducers of culture and social continuity, and members of the national collectivity (Yuval-Davis and Anthias, 1989). This female image has had very concrete effects on women’s struggles for independence in Israel. For example, controversy over population control in the 1970s became connected with the campaign to legalize abortion in Israel. The State’s pronatalist policy rendered any form of decreased fertility (such as abortion) as inimical to the political exigency of Jewish reproduction in Israel. In other words, abortion was regarded as a threat to Israeli national security. The State clashed on numerous occasions with the women’s movement over a woman’s right to decide about her own reproduction. The coincidence of women with national reproduction is reinforced in Israel by the association of womanhood with territorial integrity and notions of the Jewish nation as a ‘family writ large’ (Katz, 1996). The male domination of military and labour relations, the patriarchal religious establishment and the patriarchal family, all represent key gender structures in Israel that combine to define a problematic relationship between women and national security in Israel (Jacoby, 1999).

**The politics of women's resistance in Israel – peace or
the right to fight?**

In response to these gender boundaries in Israel, the politics of women's resistance has taken two major forms. The first is defined by the struggle for the right to fight, while the Israeli women's peace movement represents the second. This section explores these strategies for women's resistance in terms of their contribution to women's liberation – broadly defined – and their association with security and a peaceful resolution of the Arab–Israeli conflict.

Israeli women and the right to fight

Israeli Jewish women¹⁰ have undergone compulsory conscription into the IDF since the establishment of the State of Israel on 15 May 1948, followed by the passing of the Defence Service Law on 8 September 1949. The compulsory military service of women, during times of peace and war, is a distinguishing feature of the Israeli context in so far as that most other instances of international conflict do not involve women serving as soldiers. This participation of women in the national security agenda creates an array of challenges and opportunities that are unique to feminist struggles in Israel.

Women's right to fight is a complex dimension of international feminist theory. Female soldiering contradicts the two major assumptions of conventional feminist scholarship on gender roles in war. On the one hand, conventional feminism posits a coincidence between women and pacifism (Ruddick, 1989; Gilligan, 1982). This female pacifist role is, in many respects, diametrically opposed to men's supposed predisposition to aggression. The literature on women and war assumes that women's aversion to violence derives from the feminine qualities of motherhood, care giving, morality, emotion, connection, holism, and value for the sanctity of all life (Reardon, 1993). It is assumed that these qualities are universal and exhibited by all women, in all places and at all times. However, the Israeli context renders problematic these basic categories of feminist theory.

In Israel, women's organizations, such as the Israeli Women's Network (IWN) and the Parliamentary Committee on the Status of Women, have contradicted the assumptions of Western feminists by waging a strong battle for women's right to fight. Although women have always served in the IDF, controversy has lingered over women's entry into combat positions. Arguments in favour of women in combat imply that women's liberation and their attainment of full civic rights depend on equal representation with men in all domains and leadership positions where policy is made.

However, women's marginalization in the Israeli military and obstacles to their career advancement have been a serious concern for the Israeli feminist movement. Galia Golan, a veteran Israeli feminist, academic and peace activist,

has argued that 'the military stands as the quintessence of a patriarchal institution reinforcing the stereotypical role of woman as subordinate, subservient and superfluous' (1997: 115). One of the major issues in women's service derives from job segregation. Statistics show that the majority of women conscripts serve in clerical and service positions under the authority of a male of higher rank. In 1994, the largest category of women in the IDF was clerical, representing 33 per cent.¹¹

The most significant factor in women's marginal role in the military has been their exclusion from combat.¹² In Israel, combat duty is considered the most prestigious area of military service on account of the national security situation. Elite combat units such as *Sayeret Golani* (footsoldiers), *Sayeret Tsanhanim* (paratroopers), and *Sayeret Matkal* (special forces) are seen as protecting the State from existential threat. For that reason, these units are recognized as the most honourable soldiers, since they risk their lives for the good of the State. Soldiers who remain on the home front are derogatorily referred to as *jobnikim*, soldiers who preserve a low rank and entertain no risk. Combat is not only considered a prestigious arena *within* the military: it serves as an all-encompassing rite of passage into other areas of Israeli society. For example, many high-ranking soldiers translate their decorated military careers into material and political benefits in the governmental, commercial and industrial sectors upon retirement to civilian life. Women's lack of combat experience has effectively denied them such benefits and opportunities.

The campaign for women's career advancement in the military in Israel began in the aftermath of the 1973 War. During the war, while the male-dominated labour force was resituated at the front lines, problems resulted from women's lack of training in areas of manufacturing, agriculture and public transit. After 1973, the armed forces were restructured in a way that broadened the number of professions open to women. For example, in 1978 women became eligible to instruct on combat courses such as tank and artillery. In the 1990s, major gains were achieved by women struggling for the right to fight. In 1995, a woman whose objective was to become a military pilot petitioned the Israeli Supreme Court of Justice which forced the Air Force to create accommodations for women in pilot training courses. In fact, in 1999 the first woman completed the Israel Air Force's pilot's course and was assigned to an F-16 squadron, while other women have since entered basic flight training. Women were recruited to border-guard units in 1996, and since 1998 women have been integrated into anti-aircraft defence units, which train personnel in the operation of Hawk and Patriot missiles, and *Ramit* radar systems.¹³ Women have also served as flight navigators, as spotters on the northern border, and have trained in the navy's ship commander's course.¹⁴ The gradual opening of all positions in the military to women has dismantled one of the last bastions of male privilege in the national security agenda – at least formally.

However, issues for Israeli women in combat continue to arise. First, formal rights to career advancement in the military do not necessarily translate into concrete gains. A serious complicating factor is that women in the military structure continue to face informal barriers to advancement. First, women's right to fight in war does not account for some of the most pervasive forms of structural and direct physical violence in society by men *against* women, i.e., domestic violence and sexual assault/rape. Indeed, the military is not exempt from this type of gendered violence, and some would argue that militarized masculinity in the IDF contributes to an environment in which violence against women is tacitly condoned. For example, a serious concern for female soldiers has been sexual harassment. In mixed-gender units, a substantial number of court cases have involved women charging senior officers with rape and/or sexual misconduct.¹⁵

One strategy for responding to male-female tensions in the military has been to train women separately from men. This strategy has been undertaken in the Israeli military with underlying gendered connotations. Israeli female soldiers belong to the Women's Corps, or *Chen*, which refers literally to charm and grace. Simona Sharoni has pointed out that this is not a 'linguistic coincidence', but rather reflects the fact that women in the Israeli military are encouraged to emphasize their femininity and neat appearance, and are actually provided cosmetic guidance as part of their basic training (1995: 46). While the separation of men and women in the military may avert problems of inappropriate physical contact, it inadvertently replicates traditional female roles as women are segregated into such traditional fields as caring for male soldiers and providing 'moral support' (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 101). As a whole, the Women's Corps in the Israeli military is seen as secondary to the more serious business of the male combat soldiers. While many women have moved over into elite and mixed-gender units, it is clear that women's individual career advancement does not necessarily eradicate the formal and informal gendered structures that characterize the construction of sexual difference in the Israeli military and in society at large. In this sense, the experience of women in combat offers limited insight towards a feminist transformative agenda, not to mention the negative implications for the Middle East peace process of increased numbers of women willing to go to war.

A major difficulty is that women's entrance into male-dominated domains, such as military combat, reproduces the standard for citizenship in Israel that relies on the male citizen warrior as a role model. Feminist critics argue that this standard is inappropriate, and even unattainable, for a functioning society that would ideally value the reproduction and moral education of children, the harmonious functioning of families, and the growth of society. Rebecca Grant has suggested that 'bellicose women' are an 'ambiguous model for reform' (1992: 93) because women soldiers are trained to reproduce the masculine

norms and modes of behaviour of militaristic systems that restrict and repress many other women, and also women's traditional domains. Women's assumption of the masculine role does not, in itself, challenge patriarchal norms. Indeed, women in combat do not necessarily promote men's increased role in reproduction and care giving. In fact, critics suggest that the advancement of so-called 'token women' may even undermine a transformative agenda for the vast majority of women who are marginalized within the war system and its underlying norms of militarism and violence. In short, critics of the right to fight point out that women in combat reproduce the association of citizenship with the bearing of arms and thus do not contribute to the transformation of society in a way that values women, reproduction and peace.

One of the main conclusions to be drawn from the campaign for women's right to fight in Israel is that while it may be a positive step for the advancement of individual women or groups of women, it does not address the overall gendered aspects of a society at war in terms of the association of security with certain norms and modes of behaviour associated with 'masculinity' and the devaluation of 'femininity'. Although women in combat are notable for their struggle for gender equality, they may do so at the expense of replicating the dominant renditions of national security established by men and the state system. For that reason, the contribution of women in combat to a redefinition of security is rather limited in terms of taking into consideration women's traditional roles and interests, and attempting to transform the war system into a more peaceful society. This limitation may be partially attributable to the constraints on women working for change within the system. The next section explores women's struggles for peace outside of the formal political process and determines their contribution to redefining security.

The Israeli women's peace movement

A second major political strategy pursued by women in Israel has taken the form of the Israeli women's peace movement. Since the late 1980s, Israeli women have articulated an agenda for liberation that coincides with a distinctly feminist anti-war sentiment. The Israeli women's peace movement has not been identified as 'pacifist' along the lines of women's movements in the West. The message of female peace activists has been clearly defined as opposition to violence with support for the right to defence – when necessary. Indeed, many female peace activists were conscripted and have male family members who serve either in the army or do reserve duty. This close connection between women peace activists and the military is a key distinguishing feature of the Israeli context that blurs the lines between peace activism and the right to fight. There exists a considerable overlap between those individual women involved in the IWN and the Parliamentary Committee on the Status of Women (the right

to fight) and women involved in the peace movement. However, there is also a key ideological difference between the two strategies insofar as the former condones women's participation in war, while the latter supports a peaceful rather than a military settlement to the Arab–Israeli conflict. Many Israeli women struggle simultaneously on both fronts.

The Israeli women's peace movement is comprised of a number of organizations, whose roots can be traced back to women's opposition to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.¹⁶ The Lebanon War and the aftermath of protest was the first time Israeli women occupied a dissenting role in the national security debate and made public statements against Israeli foreign policy. Massive anti-war demonstrations took place throughout the country, as both men and women vehemently protested Israel's tacit involvement in the massacres by Christian militia in the *Sabra* and *Shatilla* Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Women came to form the majority of the rank and file of one of the most visible mixed-gender protest movements, Peace Now. However, women were underrepresented in Peace Now's positions of authority and did not represent the movement publicly.¹⁷ This underrepresentation of women in the Israeli peace movement was mirrored a decade later when women had to struggle for representation in the official peace process that started at the international conference in Madrid in 1991. Women were most active at the grassroots level, in neighbourhood committees, public demonstrations, and mass movements, admonishing both Israeli and Palestinian leaders to make progress on the peace issue. However, from 1991 onwards, the diplomatic level appropriated the momentum established by popular struggle where the initiatives for peace originated, and women disappeared from public view.

Because of their marginalization in both the mainstream peace movement and the official peace process, women formed their own separate organizations and the Israeli women's peace movement was born. One of the initial women's peace organizations was Women Against the Invasion of Lebanon (renamed Women Against the Occupation, *Shani*, in January 1988), a markedly feminist anti-war group established to protest the Lebanon War. Women against the Invasion of Lebanon was represented negatively in the Israeli media because of their combination of feminism with support for Palestinian women's struggles. For both Israeli and Palestinian women, however, their affiliation was a celebration of sisterhood beyond the national divide. The Israeli public nonetheless perceived it as a serious act of disloyalty, particularly during times of crisis.¹⁸

After the Lebanon War, the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation, *intifada*, in 1987 was the second major catalyst for the organization of feminist peace activities. Israeli women were particularly moved by the nature of the *intifada* itself. The uprising was not a typical war, but rather a popular insurrection comprising Palestinian men, women and children. Scenes of Israeli soldiers

beating women and children were televised worldwide, bringing stark images of the violence, brutality and oppression created by the State of Israel into the homes of Israeli families. The media, along with condemnation expressed by the international community, had enormous influence over many Israeli feminists, whose personal struggles against gender oppression in Israeli society were rekindled by the *intifada*. For example, many of the women who organized politically during the *intifada* had worked in rape crisis centres and shelters for battered women, and had participated in struggles for the right to abortion in Israel in the 1970s (Rein, 1980). Their experience of struggle against patriarchy informed their struggles against Israeli political oppression of the Palestinians. This combination of feminism with support for Palestinian national self-determination was expressed pervasively through the political ideologies and activism of the Israeli women's peace movement.

Along with over 180 Israeli and Israeli–Palestinian mixed and women-only peace organizations¹⁹ *Shani* organized against Israeli military policy during the *intifada*. However, its unique approach was to establish Israeli–Palestinian dialogue and co-operative activities in support of peace at the social, political and personal levels. While organizations such as Peace Now made public pronouncements against the *intifada*, *Shani* embarked on solidarity visits to hospitals, nursery schools and individual homes in the occupied territories, and staged protest demonstrations for the release of Palestinian political prisoners or against school closures in the West Bank ('Women and Peace' a 1989 pamphlet).

The emphasis of women's peace activities on the social dimension of war contrasts with the State's diplomatic focus. During the *intifada*, Palestinian women were invited to parlour meetings in the homes of Israeli women to discuss their experiences and try to dismantle long-standing psychological barriers created by military occupation and war.²⁰ Israeli women travelled to the Israeli occupied territories to visit Palestinian women's committees and production co-operatives. Through these personal contacts, strong friendships were formed. This combination of the personal and the political is a long-standing objective of women's movements around the world. The extra cross-cultural dimension of these organizational activities in the Israeli–Palestinian context helped to create dialogue at the social level and meaningful exchange about the perspectives on peace and security of the different women involved in the conflict.

The most significant contributions of the Israeli women's peace movement have been in the independent organizational structure for women's cross-cultural activism, and in the articulation of an alternative perspective on peace and security. Since the *intifada*, Israeli women peace activists have emphasized the need to establish security based not primarily on military power and statehood, but on justice, reconciliation and coexistence between Israeli and

Palestinian people. All members of mixed-gender peace groups campaigned for an end to the violence, but Israeli women peace activists linked this claim primarily to their support for the cause of Palestinian national self-determination. This focus on the rights of the other destabilized the affinity between security and the State of Israel, and established a point of solidarity between women whose primary focus of identification was not the nation state. The Israeli women's peace movement has always suggested that peace does not result from agreements between leaders, but from establishing good relations between people and providing the fruits of peace that render those agreements solid and long-lasting to begin with. According to this new definition, security is detached from the state and positioned in relation to the protection of individuals and their communities. In other words, the term *security* is rendered meaningful in relation to the needs and interests of people, rather than the protection of national boundaries.

To further the human element of security, the Israeli women's peace movement has employed the symbol of motherhood. In such conservative societies as Israel, and even more so in the Palestinian areas, motherhood has offered women a legitimate platform from which to protest in the public arena. It has also provided a common foundation to bolster the partnership and the shared experience of Israeli and Palestinian women. In a zone of conflict, motherhood is often politicized as a symbol of bereavement. When grieving for children takes the form of opposition to a state's authority to declare war, the public generally embraces the mothers. Opposition to war expressed by feminists, on the other hand, has elicited more highly controversial and negative connotations. During war, the struggle for equality between men and women is perceived as divisive to society, particularly when that struggle is made in conjunction with 'enemy women', so to speak. This was apparent in the negative responses to such groups as Women in Black.²¹ For example, while perceived as making overtures to the 'enemy' because of their partnerships with Palestinian women, the Israeli Women in Black met with a harsh and often extreme public reaction. During silent vigils, male bystanders called the women 'whores of Arafat' and 'traitors', and shouted for them to 'go home and clean the house'. Others threatened, spat, and assaulted the women physically. This deeply gendered response to Women in Black vigils represents a deep-seated hostility in Israel toward a feminist anti-war sentiment. This was not the typical reaction to mothering groups²² whose cause was perceived as beneficial to the Israeli family. Women in Black and other feminist components of the Israeli women's peace movement have generally been chastised for collaborating with groups and individuals perceived by Israeli society as 'the enemy'. This type of cross-cultural activism is rejected, particularly during times of crisis when many Israelis feel the need to 'close ranks' and prioritize internal unity over relations outside the nation.

Nevertheless, the politicization of motherhood in Israel has served as an important means by which to blur the lines between nation and enemy. Feminist anti-war activists worked to replace a parochial or nationalist motherhood discourse with a universalist discourse of motherhood emphasizing commonality between Jewish and Arab people. Their symbol of universal motherhood involved a transition from caring for their own children to caring for the children of others or even all children, for that matter (Orleck, 1997). Feminist organizations have, often reluctantly, employed the symbol of motherhood for campaigning purposes. The Jerusalem Link, an organization of Israeli and Palestinian women,²³ expressed one of the most notable examples of this type of platform in an advertisement entitled 'Every Person Has a Mother' published in October–November, 1996. The ad featured a common list of Jews and Arabs murdered during the conflict, followed by the statement 'We don't want to see our sons, our spouses, or our brothers – IDF soldiers – fighting in a useless war in the territories.' The point of unity resulting from Jewish and Arab casualties was the tragedy of bereavement experienced among mothers (and fathers) in both communities and their joint renunciation of war as a political tool.

On the basis of the use of such concepts as universalism, bereavement, motherhood and justice, the Israeli women's peace movement has established an alternative discourse on the meaning and nature of peace and security among Israelis and Palestinians. Women's articulation of peace entails the building of a 'new society' from the ground up rather than from the top down. This transformation of society would involve a transition from the militarist culture that prioritizes security to a society that values education, social services and civil society. For these women, the challenge of peaceful coexistence is both to overcome the deep psychological barriers resulting in stereotypes and prejudices between Israelis and Palestinians, and to eradicate the symbols of violence that continue to be produced and reproduced in cultural forms such as the media, arts, and education.

For the Israeli women's peace movement, a broader definition of peace begs a reconsideration of the meaning of Israeli national security. The official definition of Israeli security in foreign policy and popular discourses is territorial and oriented toward military solutions. By way of contrast, Israeli and Palestinian women have forged a different understanding of security that emphasizes connection with and legitimization of 'the other' as a means to acquire protection for the self. In this sense, protection derives neither from separation nor boundaries, but from connecting with and understanding the other's motivation, and struggling for the rights of the other. A member of the Israeli women's peace group *Bat Shalom* (the Israeli part of the Jerusalem Link) describes this sentiment by suggesting that security is not a question of keeping people out, but of bringing them in. 'Security does not come from walls, fences or guns, but from removing the initial desire to harm or climb that wall

in the first place.²⁴ Her perspective on the security quandary in Israel crystallizes the notion that power is a problem rather than a solution to the personal insecurity Israelis experience. National security does not consider the reasons why Palestinians protest, and even fuels Palestinian discontent, thus intensifying the underlying motivations for Palestinian violence against Israelis in the first place. This redefinition of security holds profound implications for resolving the Arab–Israeli conflict in ways that promote justice, coexistence and social transformation.

This chapter has explored some of the alternative perspectives on security articulated by women peace activists. It was suggested that, in Israel, a feminist anti-war sentiment has greater implications for redefining security than a liberal campaign for women's right to fight. While women in combat may contribute to the feminist goal of gender equity, feminism must be combined with peace in order to promote a society in which women can be equal with men and also live without the fear of violence. This means that gender equity cannot serve the interests of women in isolation from a transformative agenda. Such an agenda would link feminism with peace and a diplomatic, rather than military, solution to the Arab–Israeli conflict, since the two are interconnected. In so doing, it would seek to improve the overall context within which women struggle for their rights and opportunities.

Post-peace process strategic environment

Since the 1990s, significant changes have taken place in the Middle East military–industrial arena because of the evolution of the strategic environment. These changes have crucial implications for gender relations in Israel. New circumstances have been set in motion by the Middle East peace process and its breakdown (primarily the second *intifada* since September 2000). The most important social consequence of the negotiating process was that it fostered higher expectations in Israel that violence would disappear and security would prevail. However, Mark Heller (2000) claims the opposite. Although the possibility of inter-state war remains greatly reduced in the peace process era, counter-insurgency and counter-guerrilla warfare has risen as a top security concern in Israel. These violent measures are not contained within the battlefield as traditionally defined, and threaten civilian targets, including women and children, in all areas of Israel, both public and private. As a result of the impasse in Israeli–Palestinian peace negotiations, along with the election of right-wing governments in Israel in 1996 and 2001 and the apparent delegitimization of the Palestinian Authority, security has returned to the Israeli policy agenda as a national priority. Civil society groups, including the Israeli women's peace movement, have yet again been sidelined as the State of Israel has come to rely more heavily on military solutions to the conflict. This strategy has been witness

to ongoing retaliatory attacks by F-16 fighter planes and helicopter gun-ships against Palestinian targets in response to suicide bombers since the spring of 2001.

On the other hand, despite the escalation of violence, the Israeli military has been influenced by changes in a society that expresses serious 'war fatigue' and strives to participate in the era of globalization. In the 1990s, the IDF has moved away from its traditional self-image as a 'people's army' by adopting the policy of selective service (Cohen, Eisenstadt and Bacevich, 1998: 57–58). A more professional army would be characterized by greater technological capabilities that could respond to the increased threat of ballistic missiles and the proliferation of other weapons of mass destruction in the region. This change in Israeli military policy has also resulted from a reduction both in popular support for the high levels of defence spending in Israel and in the decreased willingness of the average Israeli to serve and sacrifice his/her life so long as the private sector and development in high technology offer greater opportunities than the military for economic status and social mobility. These changes in societal outlook in Israel have accompanied a rise in standards of living, and in individualistic and consumerist attitudes that conflict with both the essence and nature of military service.

These changes in Israeli society have greatly affected the contours of women's struggles in Israel. On one hand, the reorganization of the IDF towards the image of a professional army has problematized women's right to fight by reducing the time of women's service from twenty-four to twenty-one months, thus further dissuading women from pursuing a military career. Furthermore, the prospect of cutting expenditures has focused on those soldiers who are considered 'expendable', and women have become increasingly associated with this category on account of their lack of high-level military training. The Israeli Women's Network has argued that the decreased service time for women is part of a broader trend to 'diminish the status of women in the IDF' (*Women in Israel*, 1996: 77). This process is a grave concern for those women soldiers for whom career advancement in the IDF depends on the opportunity to serve alongside men on equal terms. On the other hand, women are entering combat positions at the same time as the military is becoming a less important institution in Israeli society as a whole. This begs the question: should women reorient their energies toward inclusion in areas that hold greater promise in the future such as high technology and the private sector? Along with the growing trend toward privatization in Israel, these professions have surpassed the military as lucrative and growing sectors of the Israeli economy in which young students and urban professionals seek employment. This economic trend couples with the growing criticism of military policy and the state's authority to declare war expressed by protest movements and ordinary citizens since the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Despite the absence of a comprehensive peace settlement and despite

increasing personal insecurity in Israel (because of terrorist attacks) decreased respect for and investment in the military may characterize security policy in the years to come. As a result, combat duty, for both women and men, may not be the most conducive avenue for attaining social mobility in Israeli society. This development stands in sharp contrast to the early years of state building and inter-state war when the military stood as the ultimate institution in Israeli society representing the sacrifice and fraternity that defined citizenship in the State of Israel.

Concluding remarks

In a zone of conflict, involvement in society tends to be characterized by the precedence of equality of duties over the equality of rights. The primary duty is to bear part of the defence burdens of the community. In order to produce and reproduce the national security agenda, societies in conflict make demands of the citizen that otherwise peaceful societies would not. As the Israeli context demonstrates, women have been particularly torn between their individual rights and their collective duties. On the one hand, war has served as the catalyst for the political mobilization of Israeli women as they have entered the political sphere in order to struggle for equality of inclusion in the national security agenda. This has involved an arduous campaign for women's right to fight and women's entry into combat positions in the IDF. The result of these efforts has been an increase in the number of women who strive to be equally responsible for the security of the State of Israel. On the other hand, simultaneously with women's right to fight, there has developed a feminist peace sentiment in Israel that eschews the militaristic undercurrents of Israeli society and seeks social transformation on the basis of women's support for peace and social justice. The feminist rejection of peace relates in an ambiguous way to the feminist acceptance of women in combat. While both are definitions of 'feminism' in Israel, their objectives can often contradict one another.

Therefore, war has mobilized women in the public sphere both 'for' and 'against' military combat. However, war also marginalizes women by transferring the burdens of conflict to the traditional family and by reinforcing the domesticated roles of women as wives and mothers. In this sense, the equality of duties has tended to constrain the opportunities available for women to participate at all levels and in all sectors of Israeli society. As a result of the militarized and masculinized characteristics of war, which have a tendency to spill over into the private sphere, women have forged a connection in their political activism between the dual goals of feminism and peace. The right to fight and the right to peace are two distinctly separate objectives for Israeli women that coexist uneasily in their political struggles. While the former does not help to

redefine security, the latter is problematic at a time when peace negotiations are at an impasse and Israeli society is struggling against serious security concerns. The appropriate path for Israeli women's struggles will remain ambiguous and problematic for so long as the security situation persists and changes continue to occur in Israeli society and its economy. However, it is clear that, with respect to women in Israel, future peace negotiations must necessarily include gender issues in order to fully address the rights, freedoms and securities of all members of that society, both male and female. The relationship between gender and security in Israel will depend to a large extent on the evolution of the strategic environment and the capacity of feminist groups, regardless of their goals, to fully participate in forging women's roles in the theory and practice of Israeli national security.

NOTES

- 1 For a more comprehensive discussion of 'zones of conflict' – or what they refer to as 'zones of turmoil' – see Singer and Wildavsky, 1993.
- 2 Not all leaders in the Middle East are in the military although many have a background in the armed forces.
- 3 For more on the Israeli occupation and Palestinian *intifada*, see Lockman and Benin, 1989.
- 4 Indeed, at the time of writing, the second *intifada*, as it has come to be known, since September 2000 has caused a breakdown in peace negotiations and an escalation of violence in the region.
- 5 For a comprehensive overview of different feminist perspectives see Tong, 1989.
- 6 Israel spends approximately US\$8.7 billion on the military, 9.4 per cent of its GDP. For more information see the CIA Factbook at www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook
- 7 For example, the 1952 Law of Return provides that any Jew throughout the world can emigrate to Israel and obtain Israeli citizenship automatically.
- 8 The 'status quo' was established to placate the demands of the religious sector, and has been kept indefinitely because of the disproportionate influence of religious political parties in all subsequent coalition governments.
- 9 For more on the 1967 War, see Khouri, 1976; Smith, 1988; Parker, 1992.
- 10 Arab women citizens of Israel as well as Jewish women who are married, pregnant or claim a religious way of life are exempt from military service.
- 11 According to the Israel Women's Network, female soldiers in 1994 were categorized thus: 12.6 per cent were officers, 10 per cent worked in technical professions, 9 per cent in instruction and training, 7 per cent in intelligence, 7 per cent in communications, and 1 per cent in the military police.
- 12 Until recently, women served only in combat support positions.
- 13 See *Ha'aretz*, Friday, 9 April 1999.
- 14 See *The Jerusalem Post*, Monday, 19 April 1999.
- 15 For example, the debate over the promotion of Brigadier General Nir Galili to major general was taken to the Israeli High Court of Justice after he was accused of raping a female soldier. See *Ha'aretz*, Friday, 26 March 1999. Other less publicized cases of rape and sexual harassment in the military have raised serious questions about women's position in the military.

- 16 In response to the bombardment of Israeli cities in the north by Palestinian militants in southern Lebanon, the IDF staged a siege of west Beirut. This mission deviated from the national consensus and the agreed-upon 40-kilometre security zone thus causing outrage in the Israeli public directed against the government.
- 17 Chazan, quoted in 'The Israeli Woman – Myth and Reality: An Interview with Naomi Chazan', *New Outlook: Middle East Monthly*, June–July 1989.
- 18 The Palestinian reaction to the Israeli–Palestinian women's partnership was equally hostile during times of crisis. In fact, the Islamic resistance movement threatened female members of the Palestinian side of the Jerusalem Link and reinforced the negative atmosphere for joint work with Israelis.
- 19 Women's peace groups in Israel included Women for Women Political Prisoners, The Peace Quilt (an Israeli–Palestinian project exhibited at the Knesset on 5 June 1988), *Reshet* (the Israel Women's Peace Net), Women in Black, and the Jerusalem Link (an umbrella organization for two Israeli women's centres, an Israeli centre in west Jerusalem and a Palestinian centre in east Jerusalem).
- 20 'Parlor Talks for Peace', *Jerusalem Post*, March 1990.
- 21 Women in Black is a loose network of women dedicated to peace and social justice, and opposed to war and violence. The women-only silent and non-violent vigils were established as a formula for action in Israel in 1988 with the objectives of protesting Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and promoting a peaceful settlement of the conflict. See www.chorley2.demon.co.uk/wib.htm
- 22 For example, Parents Against Silence (dubbed Mothers Against Silence) during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Parents Against Moral Erosion in response to the 1987 Palestinian uprising, and Four Mothers since 1997 for Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon. These groups, of disproportionately female composition, express the *feminine* rather than the feminist discourse for peace, emphasizing the private sphere and mothers' concern for their children – in these cases, concern for sons serving in IDF combat units.
- 23 The Link is a co-ordinating body of two independent women's centres, the Israeli *Bat Shalom* (Daughters of Peace), in west Jerusalem, and the Palestinian *Marcaz al-Quds la FNissah* (Jerusalem Centre for Women), in east Jerusalem.
- 24 Personal interview with Susan Techner, Jerusalem, 11 December 1997.

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Understanding environmental security: water scarcity, the 1980s' Palestinian uprising and implications for peace

Jeffrey Sosland

DID WATER SCARCITY precipitate the 1980s' *intifada* – the violent conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis? This difficult question is the type of issue with which environmental security researchers grapple. Obviously, violent conflict results from multiple factors, such as ethnic tension, failed deterrence, and misperception. The environmental security analyst must untangle the sources of conflict to determine whether the violence would have occurred had not environmental resource scarcity been a factor. In other words was Israeli and Palestinian water scarcity the precipitating factor for the *intifada*?

Environmental security is an emerging and vigorously debated subfield of security studies. Although Cold War issues have dominated the international security research agenda for the past fifty years, a different set of global dangers – earlier overshadowed by the East–West conflict – now receive more attention (Lynn-Jones and Miller, 1995). In the field of security studies, the focus has now changed, for example, from how to reduce the risk of nuclear war between the superpowers to how to alleviate a broader range of potential global and regional conflicts (Dabelko and Simmons, 1997; Matthew, 1995). The growing attention given to renewable resource scarcity and to its negative impact on human welfare is redefining security to encompass environmental issues (Mathews, 1989; Ullman, 1983; Brown, 1977). In redefining security studies, some analysts have challenged the status quo *statist* approach for examining environmental scarcity (Myers, 1993; Gurr, 1985). In response, more traditional security scholars have argued that the definition of environmental security dilutes the true meaning of security. Security ought to be left narrowly focused on military threats, they argue, if it is to be a useful concept and effectively operationalized. In particular, security studies' scholars such as Stephen Walt and Lawrence Freedman object to including the environment in the research agenda. Freedman argues that 'once anything that generates anxiety or threatens the quality of life in some respects becomes labelled a "security problem", the field risks losing all focus' (1998: 53; Walt, 1991).

Indeed not all environmental problems are relevant to security studies. Most environmental issues have more to do with international co-operation, economics and demography than with questions of force and conflict (Haas, Keohane and Levy, 1993). Some environmental problems, though, in particular resource scarcity, can be a source of political tension and may contribute to violence within and between states. The environmental security subfield has dodged the tricky issue of defining security by initially focusing on instances where environmental problems clearly lead to acute conflict, because, as Paul Diehl and Nils Gleditsch point out, the 'conceptual debates about whether to include environmental security in the realm of traditional security studies are moot if there are no empirical connections between the environment and violent conflict' (2001: 3). The focus, then, for many environmental security scholars is not to debate the definition of security, but rather to examine the linkage between resource scarcity and violent conflict and to understand the relationship between the politics of scarcity and international relations (Homer-Dixon, 1999; Homer-Dixon and Levy, 1996).

Water scarcity is a pivotal environmental security issue. Fresh, renewable water is a precious resource today in much of South Asia, northern China, parts of Africa and in the Middle East. These regions find it increasingly difficult to provide sufficient water for agriculture, industry and household needs. In regions such as the Middle East that suffer from seasonal drought, if not from continual water crises, perceived discrimination in the distribution of resources is a highly sensitive question. Many affected riparians, as well as specific domestic groups, view water scarcity as a threat to their existence, and so well worth fighting for. Moreover, water scarcity issues inevitably become co-mingled with other factors and so may play a significant role in heightening tensions among feuding parties. Some of the most enduring conflicts in the international arena, including the Arab–Israeli conflict, the India–Pakistan dispute and the Syrian–Turkish conflict, to name only a few, have all involved serious disagreements over sharing common water resources (Elhance, 1999). Additionally, when riparians are engaged in an extended cold war, strained political and military relations make co-operation more difficult and outright conflict more probable. This is the case in the Middle East, the region most likely to experience future conflict over water. By looking at this region, we are better able to understand the issue of water scarcity and conflict, and to develop and test an approach to analysing environmental security, in general. In this chapter, the term 'environmental security' is most appropriate when states or domestic groups are experiencing intense renewable resource scarcity and where a lack of effective domestic or international institutions further aggravates the problem.

This chapter first clarifies those concepts that have led to confusion in the water scarcity and environmental security literature. The second section offers

arguments why water scarcity rarely causes war, and then considers how scarcity under certain circumstances can nevertheless lead to acute conflict. Examined here is a 'most likely' case, which is intended to validate the environmental security hypothesis that water scarcity under certain conditions can lead to violent conflict. The focus here is on warlike acts in relation to water disputes prior to the advent of the 1987 Palestinian uprising. Finally, the implications of water scarcity for the ongoing Middle East peace process are examined. In this case, water scarcity is perceived as an important factor prior to the onset of violence. There is an important relationship between water scarcity and violence, although other variables are also at work.

A better understanding of water and politics

For environmental security to be a productive subfield of security studies, it must have focus. Environmental security analysts cannot merely state that 'water is a big issue!' or claim that 'there are serious risks of future "water wars"' (Gannon, 2000: 6). Environmental security scholars must be precise about what they are explaining, about causal relations, and in defining key concepts. This section differentiates between domestic and international water conflicts, explains the causal relationship between water scarcity and conflict, and clearly defines the terms 'violent water conflict' and 'environmental scarcity'.

To better understand the connection between scarcity and conflict, it is important to differentiate between water conflicts that are *intra-national* (for example, the *intifada*) and those that are *international* in scope (for instance, the 1960s Jordan River clashes between Israel and Syria). Since the end of the Second World War, most of the violent conflict around the globe has occurred in or between developing countries. Slow development and modernization, weak government and ethnic conflicts create instability within these states. Deep-seated ethnic, political, economic and regional animosities can drive intra-national conflicts. Furthermore, intra-state water conflict may result from unequal social distribution of water, from relocation of large numbers of people due to the construction of dams and other major water projects, and from weak or failed states that are unable to provide a sufficient or expected quantity of water for their citizens. These domestic problems, in turn, can put pressure on governments to increase the water supply from international sources at the expense of other states, so that 'domestic' problems are often inter-state problems in the making. In the past fifty years international water conflicts have rarely occurred, and never between industrialized states. Such conflicts usually involve developing states that share a common water source and rely heavily on their agricultural sector. Often developing world riparians lack the political and institutional expertise to resolve their scarcity dispute peacefully.

While scholarly and popular discussions of the subject tend to muddle the different levels of water conflict, this study differentiates between water wars, water-related acute conflict, and tactical attacks on water facilities. Unlike the other two categories of water conflict, tactical attacks on water facilities occur during wars and are a result of military and not political objectives. For example, during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, both sides targeted dams, desalination plants and water-conveyance systems because they had a tactical military value during the war, not because the warring states had a water dispute. In a water war, by contrast, mass organized violence is the method for resolving a water conflict between states and it results, by definition, in over 1,000 civilian and combatant deaths (Singer, 1972). It is true, as geographer Aaron Wolf notes that in the last 4,000 years ‘there has never been a single war fought over water’ (1997: 8). However, water scarcity certainly has been one of many issues that initiated violence, not as a precipitant, but as an intermediate or long-term factor. An acute conflict, unlike war, has limited scope and size but still involves violence,¹ as was the case in the 1960s Israeli attacks on Syrian and Lebanese Jordan River diversion projects. While water was a primary reason for the conflict, it was not the only cause of the fighting, and, unlike a war, the violence was limited (Baechler, 1998: 8).² These conflicts may be contributing factors to a larger conflict, as illustrated by the events leading to the 1967 Arab–Israeli War (Bickerton and Klausner, 1998). This chapter deals primarily with the political tension that conceivably leads to acute conflict. The challenge is to understand how and why water scarcity leads to political tension and then how those pressures result in acute conflict.

Since the function of water scarcity varies from case to case – ranging from mere background noise to a direct trigger of violent conflict – it is important to clarify its role. A trigger is anything that serves as a stimulus and initiates a reaction. More specifically, a trigger can predispose an actor, who previously preferred non-violence, to seek violent action. For example, the damming of a river can result in acute water problems for lower riparians, and if this action is carried out to deny access to resources, the water issue is a trigger. In this case, the water issue becomes an exogenous or necessary factor for violent conflict – in other words, the conflict would not otherwise have occurred without the water scarcity issue (Baechler, 1998: 35–8). On the other hand, the water issue can also provide a secondary reason for conflict. Unlike a trigger, a secondary reason is background noise that can vary in importance, but is not an exogenous causal factor. This chapter’s focus is on international and intra-national acute conflict over scant renewable water resources to determine when water scarcity should be considered an exogenous causal factor.

A distinction should be made, as well, between the two types of natural resource – those that are non-renewable, such as oil and gold, and those that are

renewable, such as river water, most groundwater, and air. A non-renewable resource, by definition, has a finite supply, while a renewable source receives incremental additions over a period of time. A renewable that is not degraded or depleted will continue to be available, although if it is over-exploited it can become non-renewable. For the most part, non-renewables are not interdependent and so are less difficult to study (Homer-Dixon and Blitt, 1999: 2). For instance, depletion of oil does not affect a nearby supply of gold. However, renewables such as water and air are usually part of an ecosystem and thus are interdependent. Given this fact, renewable analysis should consider all relevant environmental factors that affect the supply, such as pollution, global warming and human population growth.

Isolating how individual factors affect renewable resources can prove difficult because of this interconnection. We can reduce water scarcity and environmental scarcity in general to three types: increased demand (either because of population growth or greater per capita consumption); decreased supply (due to pollution); or unequal social distribution (as occurs when a government concentrates a limited supply in the hands of one part of the population while the rest experiences shortages). These factors usually interact with one another, though, and are pivotal in understanding the dynamics of scarcity (Homer-Dixon and Blitt, 1999: 5–7). Given the fact that international conflict affects the status of renewable resources so profoundly, the field of environmental security focuses only on this class of resources.

The water non-conflict thesis

Although this chapter sees water scarcity as an important factor in some conflicts (and therefore as a legitimate subfield of security studies), it is important to recognize that water scarcity rarely leads to violent conflict, and never *precipitates* war by itself. Proponents of the water non-conflict thesis primarily argue that this is because states and domestic groups utilize human ingenuity through market mechanisms to mitigate the negative impact of water scarcity. This point of view sees international rules and laws as helping to decrease state insecurities over water scarcity. Informal or formal international institutions or regimes enact rules between states that prescribe roles, constrain activities and shape expectations (Keohane, 1989: 383). They also provide critical information, reduce transaction costs, establish focal points for co-ordination, and facilitate reciprocity (Keohane and Martin, 1995: 42). This is critical for states that seek to co-operate in an international environment but lack the means to enforce agreements, since, according to the institutionalist literature, cheating or non-compliance is the greatest obstacle to co-operation (Keohane, 1995; Kratochwil, 1995). These obstacles to co-operation are of course, exacerbated in a protracted conflict.

While general international water law has been ineffectual, bilateral and multilateral treaties that address the issues of water allocation, pollution and other aspects of joint management have been effective in reducing water related conflicts. In fact, some 145 water-related treaties have been ratified in the past 100 years (Wolf, 1997: 10). Both the International Court of Justice and the 1997 Convention on Non-Navigational Uses of International Water Courses encourage states to negotiate water disputes and to carry out joint-management activities. State leaders have multiple interests: thirsty states might need water but they also have other priorities, such as foreign aid and trade, which might be negatively impacted by aggressive military action to capture water resources. For instance, a powerful state not directly involved in the water dispute, such as the United States (US), might use its influence to prevent a water dispute or a violation of an agreement from degenerating into violent conflict by threatening economic sanctions against the aggressor. And, in general, governments are reluctant to use violence to realize their water-related interests. A strong international norm exists, which member states codified in the United Nations Charter, which obligates states to resolve all disputes peacefully. While wars do occur, states are usually hesitant to challenge this principle of international law. In addition, waging war is a complicated prospect. If an upstream state builds a disputed dam, then a more powerful downstream state has a tactical target. Capturing a source of water is difficult unless a state is willing to be an occupying force, which today has many political, military and economic drawbacks (Orme, 1997–98: 143). Because inter-state war is not an attractive option, states have often resolved their water disputes through means other than violent conflict.

Proponents of the non-conflict thesis argue that when the larger political environment improves, water politics also improve. In basins where analysts predicted acute conflict, such as the Jordan and Ganges, conflicting riparians have recently signed treaties (Wolf, 1997: 14–15; see also Postel, 1997). Although the economic argument against a state fighting a water war is that water is a cheap commodity compared to the costs of war, in these cases it was not economics or hydrology, but regional and international politics, that mitigated the problem of scarcity and conflict. Water disputes and protracted conflicts necessarily complicate each other. With the end to the protracted conflict or important changes in international relations that directly influence the feuding riparians – the end of the Cold War, for example, or domestic political changes such as new national leadership – the chances of international co-operation become more probable (Lowi, 1993).

Human ingenuity and the role of the market are especially important, in the non-conflict thesis, for reducing the chances that scarcity will lead to violent conflict. Political scientists Daniel Deudney and Ronnie Lipschutz maintain that resource wars, in general, are unlikely for the foreseeable future because, as

many economists argue, governments can often procure resources through trade ('virtual water' or buying water intensive products, such as cotton and oranges through international trade instead of producing it domestically). Additionally, technology has made it possible to develop substitutes for many materials (through desalination for fresh water), greater efficiency and conservation (Deudney, 1990: 470; Lipschutz, 1989). In fact, some economists argue that scarcity is not a problem or a source of conflict, but a catalyst for human ingenuity. According to this approach, scarcity pushes mankind to search for a substitute, to conserve and recycle, so that in the end the service provided by the original resource costs less. For example, the cost of copper and oil over the last 100 years has declined because scarcity has promoted ingenuity (Simon, 1981: 46).

Most dry countries have strengthened domestic water management through policy changes, such as improved pricing, efficiency and conservation initiatives that have successfully lessened the impact of resource scarcity. These countries have avoided the need to develop new sources of water supply by carrying out intelligent water conservation and demand management programmes, for instance, installing efficient new equipment and applying appropriate economic and institutional incentives to maximize efficiency. Such policies have successfully reduced water use through efficiency without sacrificing economic productivity or personal welfare. In fact, a trend has been emerging since 1980 in which developed states, such as the US, have been steadily decreasing water use even though their population and economy continue to grow. This trend runs counter to the conventional belief that water use inevitably rises along with population and economic growth. It shows that states do not necessarily need to find new sources to develop economically; rather, they need a bureaucracy that can institute means for using the resource more efficiently (Stevens, 1998).³

Proponents of the non-conflict thesis point out that technological advances ease the pressure of water scarcity. When states make the largest water-using sector – agriculture – more efficient, supplies are freed up for other sectors and total demand is reduced. In fact, in most developing countries agricultural water use is inefficient because old or poorly constructed pipes and aqueducts lose water. Policy analyst Sandra Postel estimates that more than half of all water diverted for agriculture never produces a crop, so advanced irrigation technologies would substantially decrease the quantity of water used and increase crop yields. In fact, in certain countries, drip irrigation in combination with other policies has produced dramatic increases in crop yields while cutting water consumption by up to two-thirds (Postel, 1997: 103–7). Because drip irrigation calls for planning and financial capital, albeit in the short run, it is easier and cheaper to use flood irrigation, which is extremely wasteful, than to deliver water through a network of small porous pipes that are installed on or below the soil

surface. Such a system serves water directly to the crops' roots, keeping down evaporation and seepage losses and maintaining water efficiency at approximately 95 per cent. When farmers automate the system with computers and monitors, they can sense the best time to distribute the water. Still, such a system is expensive, requiring an initial outlay of \$1,500–3,000 per hectare (Postel, 1997: 103–4). Moreover, the farmers need to be trained on how to use the equipment.

Other technological advances, such as the use of alternative types of water, have also increased the supply but they, too, require expertise and capital. Israel has an extensive wastewater reclamation programme that treats and uses a large percentage of waste water for the agriculture sector. Some Israeli analysts speculate that within a couple of decades fresh water will go first to cities and industries and the only reliable source for agriculture will come from the use of treated waste water (Gleick, 1998: 28–9). Building waste-water treatment plants and the piping system to distribute reclaimed water is a multi-million dollar endeavour that calls for significant bureaucratic and technical planning, as does another important technological advance – desalination. Although there is a virtually endless supply of accessible seawater available to numerous water-poor states, the resource is not economically feasible because desalination plants require substantial investments of energy, technology and capital. Consequently, most of the world's desalination plants are in the energy rich countries of the Persian Gulf and are not economically feasible solutions for most resource-hungry developing states. With recent technological advances, desalinated water is becoming more economically feasible for drinking water, but is still too expensive for agricultural use.⁴

In addition to technological advances, economic solutions, such as instituting a market-based water-pricing system, would increase efficiency, but elites are reluctant to introduce such measures. More realistic pricing, combined with metering, stimulates the agricultural and industrial sectors to use water more wisely. Pricing also encourages users to re-evaluate their overall use of water. It alters the perception that because water is renewable and comes from nature it is a common good that should be free. Since governments allocate a large portion of available water to agriculture, even a small shift away from irrigation can make a considerable difference for a national water budget. Moreover, the economic returns from water used in irrigated agriculture are far less than in domestic and industrial use. However, this economic reality remains largely invisible when the state subsidizes water for agriculture. Overall, a rational water policy becomes difficult if not impossible when water pricing does not reflect all the costs of delivery and regulation.

Supporters of the non-conflict thesis are correct in saying that good domestic and international institutions and human ingenuity have decreased the water scarcity leading to violent conflict. Purchasing water-intensive crops

through international trade, where water-poor states import 'virtual water' is an example of this kind of thinking. To grow an orange in water-poor Gaza, farmers use many gallons of water, but by importing that produce, the water can be used for needed human consumption or for higher economic yield crops such as flowers or planting seeds (Allen, 1996: 76). Of course, a state must have the financial resources to be a food buyer on the international market. The problem with the optimism of the non-conflict approach, then, is that some less developed states do not have sufficiently strong institutions to facilitate ingenuity, enough capital to invest or even the requisite political stability. Water-conflict thesis proponents build on this real-world problem.

The water-conflict thesis

A recent CIA report acknowledges the real world obstacles to instituting the ameliorative measures emphasized by the non-conflict approach:

Measures undertaken to increase water availability and to ease acute water shortages – using water more efficiently, expanding use of desalinization, developing genetically modified crops that use less water or more saline water, and importing water – will not be sufficient to substantially change the outlook for water shortages in 2015. Many will be expensive; policies to process water more realistically are not likely to be broadly implemented within the next 15 years, and subsidizing water is politically sensitive for the many low-income countries short of water because their populations expect cheap water . . . Water shortages occurring in combination with other sources of tension – such as in the Middle East – will be most worrisome. (Central Intelligence Agency, 2000: 17 and 18).

Proponents of the water conflict thesis have these obstacles in mind when they argue that in the past fifty years both growth in population and development of industry and agriculture have resulted in increased water pollution and demand, which, in turn, have augmented the odds of violent conflict over scarce water resources (Gleick, 1995: 85; Gleick, 1993: 9). Contradictory international water law, weak international institutions, conflictual political relations, government bureaucracy, and the marketplace's inability to adapt to the new demands of scarcity will all intensify this trend. Population growth itself exacerbates scarcity in a somewhat complex fashion. Environmental scarcity heightens demand, which leads to either degradation or unequal social distribution of renewable resources. In the most direct case, water pollution from growing industrial and agricultural sectors can reduce the available supply of this scarce resource. Even without industrial pollution, though, ecosystems are sensitive and depletion itself can lead to pollution of the remaining supply. For example, over-pumping ground water will not only diminish the resource but may induce salt water to invade and pollute the remaining freshwater supply, such as has occurred in the Gaza Strip (Homer-Dixon and Blitt, 1999: 5–7).

Thomas Homer-Dixon argues that violent conflict results from the interaction of many variables, only one of which is environmental resource scarcity. However, this variable needs to be better understood because of its increasing importance in the chain that often ends in violence (1991). Homer-Dixon's more recent research on environmental scarcity and acute conflict focuses on fresh water scarcity in addition to other renewable resources such as firewood and fish stock (1999; 1996a; 1994). Environmental scarcity increases migration and inter-group tension, and reduces economic productivity. Weakened states that are unable to adapt are more prone to ethnic conflicts, government instability, and deprivation of the masses, which occasionally can lead to intra-state acute conflict. Homer-Dixon concludes that 'environmental scarcity rarely, if ever, causes inter-state war. Instead, it contributes to chronic and diffuse strife within countries' (1996a: 46). However, he does argue that 'the renewable resource most likely to stimulate interstate war is river water' (1996a: 48).

Peter Gleick, who focuses on water scarcity threats, agrees, contending that while most water resource disputes do not lead to violent conflict, in certain regions, water scarcity is accelerating. Moreover, water's importance for economic and agricultural development has been increasing. As a result, 'water is evolving into an issue of "high politics", and the probability of water-related violence is increasing' (1995: 7). In regions such as the Middle East, states perceive water as a crucial strategic resource. Disruption of access to adequate water supplies can have a critical impact on a state's capability to fight wars and to develop economically. As for inter-state conflicts, Homer-Dixon points out that

wars over river water between upstream and downstream neighbours are likely only in a narrow set of circumstances: the upstream country must be able to restrict the river's flow; there must be a history of antagonism between the two countries; and, most important, the downstream country must be militarily much stronger than the upstream country. Research shows that conflict and turmoil related to river water is more often internal than international; this conflict often results from dams and other major water projects that relocate large numbers of people. (Homer-Dixon, 1996a: 48; see also Lowi, 1993: 203)

Kimberly Kelly and Homer-Dixon explain the causal chain that leads from intra-state water scarcity to violent conflict: water scarcity leads to agricultural decline and health problems; this, in turn, exacerbates economic decline, weakens state legitimacy, and increases grievances against leadership; the weakened state then is unable to handle popular dissatisfaction and violence results (Homer-Dixon and Blitt, 1999: 67–107). Peter Gleick suggests several indices for predicting the likelihood that the water issue will lead to violent conflict: first, the degree of water scarcity; second, the extent to which two or more states or intra-state groups share the supply; third, the relative power of those riparians

or groups; and, fourth, the ease of access to alternative sources (Gleick, 1998: 108; 1995: 104–9).

Proponents of the water-conflict thesis are pessimistic about the likelihood of a peaceful long-term outcome here, given the pressures on water resources. Today, half the world's inhabitants live in urban areas. In the past half-century many cities have tripled or even quadrupled in size. The growing world economy together with the demographic explosion has placed great pressure on the planet's renewable resources. Today, 'per-capita water demands are increasing and per capita water availability is declining due to population growth and trends in economic development' (Gleick, 1998: 1). This reality, some argue, is damaging developing countries' natural resource base, the national assets upon which their economies and stable political order rely (Kahl, 1998: 81).

Global fresh water resources are not evenly distributed, a fact of nature that could be overcome if financial resources were available. In some desert regions there is almost no precipitation and in some tropical areas 30 feet of rain fall in a single year. To make matters worse, in many water-poor regions precipitation does not occur during the summer period, the time of greatest water demand. Unfortunately, developing states lack an infrastructure such as irrigation networks to move water to where it is sought and to store it in reservoirs for when it is needed.

To complicate matters, economically struggling states are drawn into a water development dilemma. Developing countries first look to agriculture to grow the economy through export earnings, to supply jobs, and to stem the flight to overcrowded cities. For this policy to be successful, the agricultural sector depends on a sustained supply of water that is cheap and reliable. Most developing states, even those with a water deficiency, need to use 70–90 per cent of all their fresh water supply for agriculture. A swelling population and growing cities lead to water supply cutbacks to agriculture, but less farming means fewer rural jobs, lower export revenues, and more flight to urban areas. Reductions in agriculture also threaten a state's policy of food security even where a country is not as vulnerable to an international embargo of food as, for example, Iraq was during the 1990 Gulf crisis.⁵ In many states, moreover, the agriculture sector is politically powerful: policy changes relating to its water supply are perceived as a threat to farmers' and landowners' livelihood and thus opposed vigorously.

On the international level, water-conflict theorists point out that riparians share water supplies and thus states become vulnerable to the actions of others. A significant portion of fresh water resources flows through international river basins and this geographical dependence has led to disputes over common water resources, including the Nile, Euphrates, and Indus. Indeed, some thirty states receive more than 30 per cent of their surface water supply from across their borders. In arid or semi-arid regions, where international rivers are the primary

source of water and agriculture is a pivotal economic development component, riparians deem these sources of fresh water to be critical national interests worth defending. From a strategic perspective, upstream states have a geographical advantage in controlling the water, with downstream riparians more vulnerable to the actions of the higher riparians, but relative military strength, as discussed earlier, is also important. An upstream state that is weaker than a downstream state will be reluctant to challenge the stronger state's vital water interests.

For the most part, international law and institutions do not have the capacity to resolve these difficult disputes involving shared water resources. International courts and arbitrators might make rulings in specific disputes based on international water law, but enforcement depends on the good will of the parties involved. Over the past fifty years international water law, like international jurisprudence generally, has been ineffectual in settling difficult conflicts. If the water-sharing environment was not conflictual, riparians tended to negotiate agreements to share their common resource efficiently, but when the situation was conflictual and the riparians were unable to agree on a system of sharing a river, the ambiguous elements of water law became a tool to legitimize each party's position.

In addition to the impact of population growth and weak international legal institutions, poor state management also has exacerbated water scarcity. In fact, water-conflict theorists argue that this inability to supply the ingenuity needed to solve scarcity may be the core problem. Many developing states lack capital, a trained work force, and a competent bureaucracy. In addition, they are not able to rehabilitate infrastructure, reform institutions, provide incentives to encourage conservation, invest in new technology or properly regulate users (Homer-Dixon, 1995; 1996b). Some farmers and industries pollute scarce water resources with fertilizers, insecticides or industrial waste, for example, and weak states cannot stop them. Also, because water pricing subsidies to the agricultural sector offset the economic punishment that results from wasting water, farmers in dry areas occasionally grow water-intensive crops and use inefficient infrastructure and methods, such as flood irrigation, that result in the considerable loss of water to evaporation and ground seepage. Additionally, developing states' urban centres waste as much as 50 per cent of their water supplies through poor delivery systems and theft. Together, these domestic factors greatly exacerbate a state's need for additional water. These core problems are all present in the following case study.

Intra-state conflict: the advent of the *intifada*

It is well documented that in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank⁶ the human population and water pollution are on the rise and that fresh water quantity and

quality are on the decline. Growing demand and scarce supplies have been problems for the region for the past half-century (Lonergan and Brooks, 1994). This case shows how structural scarcity evolves and how the resulting environmental scarcity, along with weak domestic institutions, played an important role in the advent of the *intifada*.

On 9 December 1987, an Israeli truck collided with oncoming Palestinian cars in Gaza, killing four Palestinians and wounding seven others. This automobile accident was the precipitating factor in the popular Palestinian uprising, known as the *intifada*, or 'shaking off' (Bickerton and Klausner, 1998: 230). By mid-1990, over 800 Palestinians had been killed by Israeli security forces and the Palestinians had killed forty-seven Israelis (Bickerton and Klausner, 1998: 236). But to understand this violent conflict one must go beyond the precipitating factor. The intermediate factors were many: the Palestinians suffered under high unemployment and low living standards, as well as frustration with other Arab states and with the exiled Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) for not representing their political interests. The Arab Summit held in Amman in November 1987, for instance, was preoccupied with the Iran–Iraq conflict, and failed to raise the Palestinian issue, while for the first time West Bank and Gaza Palestinians were starting to feel the need to take matters into their own hands. While the deep or long-term issue was certainly the political desire for Palestinian self-determination and an end to the Israeli occupation, water scarcity did play an important part as an intermediate factor in the *intifada*.

Between 1948 and 1987, West Bank and Gaza Palestinians had almost no autonomous institutions which could foster the ingenuity necessary to mitigate water scarcity because those institutions were dependent on the occupying power. During Jordanian rule of the West Bank and the Egyptian administration of the Gaza Strip, investment in water infrastructure was minimal. Moreover, by June 1967, Israel was dependent for approximately one-third of its total consumption⁷ on ground water that originated in the West Bank and flowed underground to Israel. Once Israel took control of the West Bank during the 1967 Arab–Israeli War, it limited Palestinian water use through administration of the territory and its water system, a policy that helped to maintain Israel's historical usage of West Bank ground water. In an effort to preserve water resources for Israel and to increase Palestinian water efficiency, Israeli water policy restricted the number of permits granted for digging new agricultural wells. This policy was intended to augment agriculture productivity by more efficient use of existing resources and by increased control over water use at the individual farm level (Kahn, 1983: 26). In fact, while the Labour Party did increase structural scarcity for Palestinians by diverting a larger percentage of West Bank water to Israel, Israeli institutions prior to 1977 also attempted to address supply and demand issues. The guiding principle of the Labour Party's

West Bank policy was that Israel must retain sections of the West Bank to have defensible borders. However, they did not settle the densely populated Arab hill regions, anticipating that they would trade this area in a 'land for peace' agreement with Jordan.

Unlike the Labour Government, the Likud coalition did not concern itself with maintaining the West Bank status quo. Between 1977 and 1992, Likud led governments – at times in a national unity government partnership with Labour – concentrated Israel's resources on enlarging the West Bank's Jewish population. Government policy moved from Labour's security-based settlement plan to Likud's treatment of the West Bank as Israel's religious and historical heritage (Alpher, 1994: 10). Likud continued Labour's policy of strict control over Palestinian water use, but the Likud's motivation differed from that of Labour: it restricted Palestinian water use so that more water would be available for the growing number of Israeli settlements. Likud's new policies heightened Palestinian tension over water because they increased scarcity. The Israeli water agency Mekorot, which in 1982 took responsibility for managing the West Bank water system, developed water sources primarily for settlements and continued to make water use difficult for Palestinians (Elmusa, 1993b: 2; Schiff and Ya'ari, 1991: 97; Davis, Maks and Richardson, 1980: 13). The state comptroller's office – Israel's official watchdog agency – reported one case where Mekorot expropriated land from an Arab owner to drill a well for a nearby Jewish settlement, but failed to obtain permission from the Civil Administration and initially did not compensate the owner for his land. Only later, after some news reports of the case surfaced, did the company offer to compensate the owner (Schiff and Ya'ari, 1991: 97). Israeli drilling of new deep wells in the West Bank to supply water for irrigation of Jewish agricultural settlements in the arid Jordan Valley lowered water tables and dried up some Palestinian springs and shallow wells. One example of the impact of this drilling was that two-thirds of the farmers in the Jordan Valley village of al-Ouja had to abandon their land when their 150-year-old spring went dry (interview by author with Research Institute analyst, Bethlehem, 13 May 1996; Beschorner, 1992–93: 14; United Nations, 1980: 13–15). The state comptroller reported that Jewish farmers were overusing their water quotas by as much as 44 per cent, while Arab allocations continued to be strictly monitored. Additionally, because of subsidies in 1987 from non-governmental organizations, Jewish settlers obtained their water at a lower price than the Palestinians.⁸ The Likud Government made developing land in the West Bank increasingly difficult for Palestinian farmers and increasingly easy for Jewish settlers (Lowi, 1993: 190).

As a result of these policies, the rate of farm production growth and income decreased in the West Bank Arab agriculture sector. Furthermore, Israel reduced government assistance for West Bank agriculture – and for Israeli agriculture, for that matter. Subsidizing West Bank settlements became the Government's

priority, and development initiatives for Arab agriculture became an activity of the past (Benvenisti, 1986: 1–3; Kahn, 1983: 118). By the mid-1980s, West Bank Palestinian farming could no longer function properly given the existing water and economic constraints imposed by the Israeli Government. Moreover, with a general economic downturn in the Middle East, job markets in Israel, Jordan and the Gulf States were no longer able to supply employment opportunities for West Bank and Gaza Palestinians. The shrinking Palestinian agriculture sector, which, prior to 1967, provided the majority of jobs, did not have the capacity to hire the returning labourers. Rising Palestinian unemployment combined with the Likud's settlement policy intensified Palestinian awareness of the inequitable water distribution between Israel and the West Bank and between Palestinians and settlers. According to Brigadier F. Zach, Israeli deputy co-ordinator for the occupied territories, West Bank Palestinians used 119 cubic meters (cm) of water per capita, while Israeli settlers used almost three times that amount in 1990 ('A Dwindling Natural Resource', *Washington Post*, 13 May 1992, A29). In Gaza, unequal water distribution and general scarcity of resources were even worse than in the West Bank. Although the Gaza Strip does not share a major ground water source with Israel, severe water scarcity has heightened tensions and instability between Gaza Palestinians and Israel. The Gaza Strip is on the coastal plain bordering the Mediterranean Sea, the Sinai desert and Israel. The climate is arid, with less than 200 millimetres (mm) of precipitation annually. Surface water is only available following rainfall and groundwater is contained in two shallow aquifers. But unlike the West Bank's aquifers, Gaza's are shallow and easy to tap, and, historically, over-pumping has been allowed by occupying powers. As well, during this period Gaza's population was expanding.

Currently, Palestinians in Gaza pump water from more than 2,000 wells, primarily for irrigation. They withdraw approximately 110 million cubic meters (mcm) per year, while the natural recharge provides only 70 mcm annually (Water Resources Action Programme Task Force, 1994: 6). With hundreds of illegal wells, many farmers use approximately 90 per cent of the pumped water and water extract beyond their quotas. Palestinian farmers' high water use for citrus fruit accounts for two-thirds of Gaza's agriculture – a water intensive crop, citrus remains Gaza's economic mainstay. The ongoing problem of over-pumping has resulted in salt-water intrusion, both from the Mediterranean and from lower saline aquifers. Additionally, heavy use of fertilizers and pesticides, as well as poor sewage control, has polluted the aquifer. As a result, many Gaza residents have been consuming contaminated water and are unable to use water from their taps at home (Water Resources Action Programme Task Force, 1994: 6–7; Shawwa, 1993).

Between 1967 and 1977, Israel did attempt to regulate Gaza water usage to prevent any further deterioration of the supply that occurred with the

over-pumping permitted by the Egyptian administrators prior to 1967. However, under the Likud Government in the late 1970s, Israel also became laxer in regulating Palestinian pumping, a policy that can be attributed to the fact that Gaza's drinking source was not connected to Israel's (interview by author with former water commissioner, Tel Aviv, July 1995). As a result, the hydrological situation in Gaza deteriorated even further. Along with severe poverty, Gaza Strip Palestinians lacked clean drinking water on a daily basis. In 1986, estimated per capita consumption by Gazans was 142 cm, while that of the settlers was 2,240 cm (Elmusa, 1993a: 61; Roy, 1987).⁹ Prior to the advent of the *intifada*, Gaza was experiencing all three environmental scarcity types: demand, supply, and unequal social distribution. From 1967 to 1987, Israelis often disregarded the economic and political needs of Arabs living under their control and even came to look upon Palestinians as passive subjects. The inclination to ignore growing water scarcity in Gaza and the West Bank was part of this picture. The Palestinian *intifada* forced Israelis to pay greater attention to the plight of the Palestinians and eroded Israeli public support for maintaining the status quo.

In the summer and fall prior to the December 1987 outbreak of the *intifada*, the Israeli Government and individual ministers took a number of actions with strong symbolic significance that intensified Palestinian anxieties about the intentions of the Israeli Government.¹⁰ For example, the water commissioner and Mekorot announced plans to drill inside the West Bank and to transfer some of this water to Jerusalem's Jewish neighbourhoods. The plan was in direct opposition to Israel's stated policy of not mining West Bank water for transfer across the Green Line to Israel proper. A quarter to a third of the pumped water was to go to Arab communities, with the remainder to go to Jerusalem and to Jewish settlements. Large shafts were to be dug and 18 to 20 mcm were to be pumped annually. The depth and scale of the wells, some Palestinian hydrologists believed, threatened to dry out shallower wells serving large Arab communities in the surrounding West Bank area (Tessler, 1994: 846, n. 5; see also 'Rabin Okays West Bank Water Drilling Project', *Jerusalem Post*, 3 July 1987; 'New Plan to Have West Bank Water Pumped to Israel', *Jerusalem Post*, 26 June 1987). The drilling site was to be near Herodion, southeast of Bethlehem, where Israel was already pumping water for both Jewish settlements and Arab communities in the Hebron and Bethlehem areas. Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij insisted that 'this plan threaten[ed] our [the Palestinians'] very existence' (Peretz, 1990: 29). Freij also stated that 'those who try to obtain my agreement to the plan do not understand that anyone who supports it will be considered an unpardonable traitor' (Schiff and Ya'ari, 1991: 98). Jordan, Egypt, the United Nations, the European Community and the United States all opposed the plan. The US state department's legal advisers argued that Israel, as an occupying power, had the right to exploit West Bank water sources for the benefit of

the local inhabitants. However, Israel was not entitled to transfer the water to its own territory (Schiff and Ya'ari, 1991: 98).

In reply to Palestinian and international concerns, Israel promised to safeguard Palestinian interests, but the plan was ultimately dropped because of opposition from all sides. Israel's Co-ordinator of Activities in the Territories Shmuel Goren stated that 'if Arab rights are harmed, we will not allow this project to get underway' ('No Water Project If Arab Rights Aren't Guaranteed', *Jerusalem Post*, 7 July 1987). He pledged to commit this to a legally binding contract and promised that the civil administration would demand compensation for Arab communities if their water costs increased because of the project ('No Water Project If Arab Rights Aren't Guaranteed', *Jerusalem Post*, 7 July 1987). He also vowed that Palestinian needs would receive first priority – should existing Palestinian wells in any way be damaged by the new Herodion wells, Israel would compensate the Arabs with water from other sources. Upon hearing this offer, Jewish settlers themselves rejected the plan as discriminatory. Palestinians, for their part, believed that if the Israeli Government drilled these wells linking Israel to such a large water source, the likelihood of Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank would diminish significantly. Palestinians perceived the plan not only as another scheme to steal Palestinian water, but also as part of a broader strategy to reduce Arab control of the West Bank, which would increase the likelihood of Israeli annexation. And opposition to the plan within Israel also existed. The head of the West Bank's civil administration, Brigadier General Ephraim Sneh, resigned during the Herodion plan controversy because he had adamantly opposed the project and its handling by his superior, Goren. It should be noted that Sneh planned to enter politics and had many serious differences with Goren, but to him the water plan truly represented an unacceptable policy change ('Sneh Resigns Over Drilling', *Jerusalem Post*, 16 September 1987). Soon after, in October 1987, Israel dropped the plan because of division within the Israeli National Unity Government and because of international opposition. Nevertheless, these actions exacerbated Palestinian tensions over Israeli water policies and West Bank directives. Two months later the *intifada* began.

It is true that the *intifada*'s origin stemmed from a complex mixture of political and economic forces. In fact, water was one of many functional and political issues that played an important role in the advent and continuation of the *intifada*. But, as Homer-Dixon argues, 'water scarcity and its consequent economic effects contributed to the grievances behind the uprising both on the West Bank and Gaza' (Homer-Dixon, 1994: 14). The uprising began in Gaza refugee camps, largely because of poor socio-economic conditions there that were partly produced by water scarcity. Lack of clean drinking water was an important source of frustration, as was high unemployment due, in part, to a shrinking Arab agricultural sector that did not have enough water supply

to thrive.¹¹ The resulting popular support for and continuation of the uprising was due largely to political motivations – the desire for Palestinian self-determination, and frustration with Israel's policies of reducing Palestinian control and furthering *de facto* Israeli annexation of the West Bank. Suspicions of Israeli water 'stealing' and plans for water transference, through, were important symbolic issues that heightened Palestinian–Israeli tensions before and during the *intifada*.

In fact Schiff and Ya'ari have argued that socio-economic rather than political factors precipitated the uprising, noting that the initial riots by Gaza refugees were directed against both Israeli targets and against richer Arab neighbourhoods. Granting their claim that the first stage of the *intifada* was motivated by poverty and frustration with the socio-economic situation, it becomes clear that water scarcity, the resulting unemployment, and the general lack of fresh drinking water are exogenous factors. To be sure, theorists like Salah argue that the advent of the *intifada* was wholly political; he asserts that it is 'impossible to make a direct causal connection between economic trends and the rise and decline of the national struggle' (Nassar and Heack, 1990), a claim that would discount water scarcity as a necessary factor. In the end, though, Schiff and Ya'ari's analysis is the most convincing because it is supported by empirical evidence. Schiff and Ya'ari in fact interviewed the first wave of detainees, and states that they had not yet developed the requisite political or national consciousness for starting an uprising.

Implications for the peace process

Israel and the rest of the Jordan River basin are in the midst of a critical water shortage. As Mekorot, Israel's water utility company, warned, by 2001 all three primary reservoirs would reach unprecedented low levels, and would be unavailable as a water source. In the midst of a serious drought, how will water scarcity impact peace talks and what policy prescriptions can we cull from the above discussion on water scarcity and acute conflict? First, an Israeli–Palestinian peace agreement must include a water annex. That part of the treaty should incorporate an international component addressing such issues as how water would be divided and how the parties would avoid pollution and over-exploitation. Moreover, there ought to be a domestic water management section in the international treaty, specifying that the parties agree to implement a market-value pricing system for water. This would increase its efficient usage and promote important domestic institutions for providing innovation and ingenuity, when needed.

Although the core issues of the peace talks include refugees, borders, security and the status of Jerusalem, Israel will need to be especially conscious of the

Palestinian ingenuity gap regarding water scarcity. Today, Israel is a developed state capable of adapting to environmental scarcity. For the first time in Israel's history, it plans to import water from Turkey as an emergency measure. A discharge terminal will be built south of Ashkelon to receive the transported water, and from there water will be pumped to a nearby reservoir. The project will require laying a 13-km-long pipeline, and a converted 250,000-ton oil tanker for transport and will cost a total of \$20 million ('Emergency Summer Water Imports "Unavoidable" – Mekorot', *Ha'aretz*, 20 June 2000). As a developing state, by contrast, a future Palestine will experience a water-related gap between scarcity and the ingenuity needed to address it, in other words, an ingenuity gap. It simply does not have the domestic institutions to address water scarcity.

As well, verification and compliance were issues already stressed during the Oslo II negotiations, when Israel emphasized to the Palestinians that it could not permit unsupervised water drilling in the West Bank. After Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip, some Palestinians drilled hundreds of unlicensed wells and it seemed clear to Israel that the Palestinian Authority had lost control over its own people in dealing with water conservation. Israeli policy makers feared that such uncontrolled drilling would seriously damage the shared West Bank ground water if the Palestinian Authority permitted it (interview by author with senior Israeli water talks negotiator, Tel Aviv, 17 November 1995; also see 'Again Forgetting the Water', *Ha'aretz*, 11 August 1995, B1 [in Hebrew]). Agriculture Minister Yaakov Tsur stated that 'water is the most political issue of all because there is a shortage of water and water is linked to life. There is no doubt that we will not be able to leave the [West Bank] area without supervisory measures to prevent drilling' ('Tzur on Water Accord Supervision', *Qol Yisrael*, 24 August 1995, [FBIS-NES-95-165, 25 August 1995, 17]). 'Israel can't leave the area', he stressed, 'without the question of water being fully defined', a strategy that includes monitoring water pumping and quality. 'We have to check what they are pumping. We also have to check the sewage. If they don't treat the sewage, it will affect the groundwater.'¹² Such comments suggest that water resource management and institutions are gaining the importance they deserve in the peace process.

In the end, this case has demonstrated a strong connection between environmental resource scarcity and violent conflict. Therefore, it adds to the argument for including environmental security in overall security studies. It also illustrates why policy makers need to go beyond points of conflict *between* states. To realize environmental security, in particular water security, riparians and users of a common river basin must focus on both the international politics of scarcity and the peace partner's ingenuity gap, in particular by trying to strengthen its domestic institutions.

NOTES

- 1 Homer-Dixon defines acute conflict as one 'involving a substantial probability of violence' (1991: 77).
- 2 Wolf argues that there have been only seven such incidents in the past fifty years, two of which occurred in the Jordan River basin (1997: 7–8).
- 3 The energy sector has also been successful for the past three decades in the wiser use of electricity and gas, while cutting consumer cost and use at the same time.
- 4 At present desalinated sea water costs consumers \$1 per cubic meter. Water priced higher than \$0.85 is not economically viable for agriculture, the biggest user. Unlike oil or other natural resources, water cannot be transported economically in large quantities.
- 5 Complete self-sufficiency in food has proved unattainable in the Middle East, since all states in the region must import large quantities of comestibles, especially cereals, because of water scarcity.
- 6 This area is also known as Judea and Samaria, the administered territories and the occupied Palestinian territories. No political intent is implied by the term West Bank.
- 7 This figure is based on Israel's total consumption of 1,400 mcm and use of West Bank water. Israel's other main water resources are the Lake of Tiberias and the coastal aquifer.
- 8 The comptroller reports that Jewish settlers pay Mekorot only 15 *agorot* pcm for agricultural supplies while Arab farmers pay the civil administration almost five times that amount (70 *agorot* pcm) for Mekorot-supplied water. Local Arab authorities charge 1–1.60 new Israeli *shekels* per cm for domestic use by Palestinians while Mekorot charges settlers only 23 *agorot* ('Territories' Water Supply Drying Up with Overuse', *Jerusalem Post*, 2 July 1987). Also see Kahn, 1983: 114.
- 9 The settler population in Gaza (1988–89) used 2 mcm or 3 per cent of the total ground water, while the Arab population consumed 92 mcm or 97 per cent (Elmusa, 1993a: 61; Roy, 1987).
- 10 Israel took control of most of the East Jerusalem Electric Company, then Industry and Trade Minister Ariel Sharon purchased an apartment in the Muslim Quarter of the Old City. See Shalev, 1991.
- 11 By 1987 the West Bank's economy was dependent on outside employment. Increased water supply would have created more jobs, but would not have created enough employment to absorb all of the returning Palestinian workers.
- 12 Tsur pledged to keep supplying West Bank settlements with water. Major settlements will continue to be linked to separate Mekorot lines, and smaller settlements will be connected to the Palestinian Water Authority but provided with emergency reserves in case the Palestinians interrupt their supply ('Water Dispute: No Immediate Solution On Tap', *Jerusalem Post*, 21 July 1995, 11).

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Political Islam and the Middle East peace process: a veiled threat

Thomas J. Butko

IN THE MIDDLE East, security is strongly influenced by politicized forms of fundamental belief systems. This chapter examines the dual role of political Islam, with specific focus on Palestine and the case of *Hamas*, the Islamic Resistance Movement, in the West Bank and Gaza. In this context, political Islam represents a general rejection of the Arab–Israeli peace process as well as an instrument of political protest against an indigenous Arab regime.

Hamas is an excellent case study with which to demonstrate the role religion performs in political conflict. Currently, *Hamas* is gaining in popular support due to renewed violence in the Middle East and the Palestinian population's increased endorsement of suicide or 'martyrdom' operations against Israeli targets.¹ Consequently, *Hamas* will continue to pose a significant threat to peace and stability in the region with its seemingly unhindered ability to strike deep inside Israel. *Hamas* thus represents both the most significant Palestinian force opposed to the peace process, initiated by the secret talks between Israel and the Palestinians in Oslo, Norway, and the only viable alternative to the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)/Palestinian Authority (PA)² and its dominance over Palestinian society.

In examining the issue of security in the context of the Middle East, it is the various actors themselves – groups, parties, movements – when forced to interact within a structure of insecurity, that possess the potential to either contribute to or undermine the peace process. In that sense, general insecurity exists when neither the Israeli military nor the Palestinian Authority can truly guarantee the lives of their respective citizens. Extremists (or rejectionists) on both sides attempt to exploit the weaknesses inherent in the security apparatus to further their own interests. For its part, *Hamas* has consistently demonstrated a willingness to derail the peace process in support of its own narrowly defined objectives.

In the context of the Arab-Israeli peace process, although *Hamas* is a unique movement,³ it should be seen as representing a general oppositional or

counter-hegemonic trend in the Middle East. Thus, Islamic movements in general (e.g. Algeria, Egypt, Turkey) have sought to present themselves as political alternatives to the contemporary system by articulating the grievances of those segments of society that feel the most politically alienated, socially marginalized and economically insecure. In the case of Palestine, in spite of pronouncements to the contrary, *Hamas* remains essentially a political movement. This can be demonstrated by focusing on the essentially pragmatic or flexible approach it has assumed toward the Palestinian issue and its tendency to emphasize the national (i.e. political) aspects of the Israeli–Arab dispute over the more universal (i.e. religious) orientation of Islam’s worldview.

Most specifically, *Hamas*’ main role in the Palestinian context has been to provide a legitimate alternative to the PLO and to attempt to supplant what *Hamas* and its supporters perceive as the corrupt, oppressive and ineffectual rule of the PLO. In the current environment, *Hamas*’ alternative nature is most clearly demonstrated by its rejection of the Oslo process and its embodiment as its principal opponent. In terms of support, *Hamas* continues to garner most of its popular backing when the peace process stalls and is perceived as providing most Palestinians with few, if any, tangible benefits. This pattern can be observed in the round of violence and instability gripping the Middle East since September 2000 to the time of writing. While *Hamas* faces an uncertain future, as long as peace continues to elude the two principal parties of the Arab–Israeli conflict, it will remain a legitimate threat to the entire peace process and a necessary ‘evil’ that both the Israelis and the Palestinian Authority will be forced to address.

Political Islam in the Middle East

Hamas in Palestine is a national manifestation of a more regional phenomenon (Mishal and Sela, 2000: 1). Throughout the Middle East over the past two decades Islam has appeared as the only true oppositional force to the prototypical one-party state. While perceived as essentially religious movements concerned with issues of religious principle and moral doctrine, Islamist movements should be more accurately interpreted as political movements utilizing Islam as an instrument of political protest to attack and denounce the legitimacy of the ruling regimes. Consequently, ‘political Islam’ should be viewed primarily as an indigenous response to problems associated with attempts at economic development and the subsequent failure to create a more inclusive political structure (Faksh, 1997: xii; Sivan, 1997: 125). Most individuals who support the Islamists do so not necessarily for religious reasons, but because they possess a deep-seated discontent with the status quo and desire a radical restructuring of the current order (Esposito, 1995: 189), a change it is believed that can only be provided by contemporary Islamic movements.

Political Islam has been able to most effectively articulate and express the grievances experienced by an ever-expanding segment of the population in the Muslim world. Increased frustration with growing unemployment, the lack of adequate housing and the loss of cultural identity, in addition to feelings of marginalization and alienation resulting from the perception that the Government is unresponsive and that there is still a lack of real participation within the system, has continued to draw individuals to the Islamist cause (see Sivan, 1997: 125; Esposito, 1995: 15–16; Ayubi, 1991: 158–60; and Qureshi, 1983: 76–7). In the current environment, it is Islam that has been most effective in expressing the social, economic and political injustices experienced by a large segment of the masses in the Middle East.

The Islamists continue to garner most of their support because of their ability to provide a counter-force to the current regimes. It has been this ‘unity through opposition’ that allows all those individuals disenchanted with the present system to coalesce around the Islamists, while the Islamists have capitalized on the fact that only they have been able to portray themselves as an authentic alternative to corrupt, inefficient and sometimes repressive regimes. According to Ayubi:

A wide variety of groups are attracted to the Islamist thesis because . . . [it] imparts a certain sense of intimacy and assurance, and because they also share with the militants a certain degree of antagonism towards the existing social order and the state that keeps it in place. The Islamic language therefore most fundamentally represents a broad alternative system of meaning and power to the hegemonic system represented by the existing social – political order which invariably marginalizes and/or alienates certain individuals and certain social groups. To an extent, the details of the Islamic thesis become less important than the fact that it is a very different thesis from that advocated by the State. (1991: 175)

In the Muslim world there clearly exists a need for some type of oppositional force to counter the Government’s hegemonic domination over all facets of the State and civil society. There are two principal reasons for the effectiveness of the Islamists in filling this void as opposed to other opposition groups. First, political Islam utilizes vocabulary and imagery that already deeply resonate with a large segment of a population nurtured on such rituals and ideas, bestowing on Islam a legitimacy that no other ‘ideology’ can attain.⁴ Second, Islam remains essentially ‘uncontaminated’. With the exception of Iran, Islam is the one ideology that has not been tainted by the actual exercise of power and proven ineffectual in terms of solving the problems of the various populations. Past hegemonic ideologies, such as National Socialism, Pan-Arabism, and even the contemporary variant of Liberal Democracy have all demonstrated varying degrees of failure in this regard. As AbuKhalil has succinctly stated: ‘Since the 1970s, Islam has emerged as the one political ideology that has not been tried and exhausted. Its distance from the actual political process represents its

greatest advantage at a time when all ruling ideologies are perceived as bankrupt' (1994: 677; see also Faksh, 1997: 34–45).

Hamas (the Palestinian context)

Political Islam in Palestine performs a very similar role to that of other Islamic groups throughout the Muslim world. Most specifically, it represents an oppositional force (i.e. a practical alternative) to the dominant power(s) and articulates the grievances of those marginalized and frustrated by the current system and ruling elites. In that sense, the individuals who tend to support *Hamas* do so more for what they oppose – the status quo – and less for what they propose – an authentic Islamic state (i.e. one based on the *Sharia*⁵) situated in the entire mandated area of Palestine (including Israel and the West Bank and Gaza Strip).⁶

However, the situation in Palestine is unique for two fundamental reasons. First, the environment of occupation has clearly exacerbated the problems associated with marginalization and alienation. Three decades of Israeli occupation have included such policies as land expropriation,⁷ collective punishments (including house demolition), deportation, the usurping of Palestinian water (preventing widespread agriculture) and continuing Palestinian economic dependence (see Abu-Amr, 1994: 53).⁸ Consequently, while feelings of marginalization and alienation are seen as determining factors in the decision of certain individuals to lend their support to Islamist groups in general, Ahmad argues that the conditions of Israeli occupation have added an extra dimension to such experiences, especially among the more educated members of Palestinian society frustrated and embittered by their current circumstances (1994: 27–9).⁹

Second, *Hamas* does not confront a single hegemonic force, but instead two – the Palestinian Authority and the Israelis. This unique circumstance is based on the fact that the Islamic movement in Palestine is engaged in fighting not simply an indigenous government or regime, but a foreign occupying power. This colonial status obviously constitutes a distinct situation for the Palestinian Islamists.¹⁰ Yet, although Israel will remain *Hamas*' principal adversary so long as the occupation of Palestine continues, the Islamists still ultimately seek to supplant the PLO as the dominant or hegemonic force within Palestinian society. In other words, the actual armed conflict may be against Israel, but *Hamas*' political struggle is clearly focused on the PLO and Yasser Arafat (see Usher, 1995: 70).

In terms of the PLO's status in the occupied territories (the West Bank and Gaza Strip), while it is true that it does not possess all the instruments of power or the autonomy of a state in the traditional sense of the word, the PLO does represent the primary source of legitimacy in the territories, in terms of both domestic and international recognition. This was reinforced with the signing

of the Oslo Accords in September 1993 (Legrain, 1997: 169). While it only recently acquired the state-like apparatus of a police force and a more fully-defined administrative structure, the PLO has long been the principal distributor of services and patronage through its control of civil institutions and financial resources (Mishal and Sela, 2000: 149) and, more importantly, has long been recognized as the true governing power in the occupied territories by the Palestinian people themselves. Prior to the *intifada*, according to Mishal and Sela, 'no serious Palestinian political or military group existed outside the PLO's sphere of influence. All the major groups were either affiliated with or identified with the PLO. It had become the dominant force in Palestinian political life, its symbolic status, charismatic leadership, and political influence among the Palestinian people were beyond question' (2000: 149).¹¹

Hamas (a political movement)

In attempting to present itself as a legitimate alternative to the PLO, it must be demonstrated that *Hamas* is a political movement interested in acquiring power rather than a religious organization concerned solely with moral pronouncements and issues of religious doctrine. First, *Hamas*' pragmatic approach to the Palestinian issue is examined to demonstrate that political considerations have always assumed more significance than dogmatic (i.e. religious) principles in its views and actions toward the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Second, in spite of Islam's international orientation and universal declarations, *Hamas* has always focused on the specific national (i.e., Palestinian) context over this more global worldview. In other words, *Hamas*' aims have always been primarily motivated by its national aspirations and its desire to protect Palestinian interests.

Though there is little doubt about their religious devotion and their belief in the fundamental principles of Islam, the Islamists in Palestine have consistently demonstrated a willingness to adopt a more pragmatic stance when deemed necessary. In fact, the degree of flexibility assumed by *Hamas* in all areas of its struggle is cited by a number of authors as its defining characteristic. According to Mishal and Sela, 'Hamas is fully acquainted with and adaptable to the political world, driven by primordial sentiments, conflicting interests, and cost–benefit considerations, a world of constant bargaining and power brokering, multiple identities and fluid loyalties – in which victory is never complete and tension is never ending' (2000: viii; see also 85–6 and 147). As Milton-Edwards succinctly puts it: 'In this field the leadership of Hamas has turned the politics of pragmatism into a fine art and positive attribute' (1996: 216).¹²

It is not surprising that *Hamas*' pragmatic approach to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict has intensified in recent years. This more flexible stance is

in response to both the perception of the antiquated nature of some of its policies (e.g. a Palestinian state in all of the mandated area of Palestine through *jihad*¹³), and the belief within the leadership in the importance of increasing the potential for growth in the post-Oslo environment. As a result of this willingness to be both ideologically flexible and more pragmatic in its approach to the conflict, *Hamas* remains the most significant and only real legitimate threat to the PLO. As Al Jarbawi argues: 'Thus, while expectations are limited for the influence to be exerted by the . . . other Islamic movements on the future of political life in Palestine, the scope of possibilities for *Hamas*, in addition to its pragmatism and multiple options, make it a major and fundamental element for the future' (1994: 153).

As head of the 'moderate' wing of *Hamas*, Shaykh Ahmad Yasin has on various occasions demonstrated his readiness to be pragmatic for reasons of political gain and a willingness to adapt his strategy to the realities of the situation. As early as September 1988, when asked if *Hamas* might negotiate with Israel, Yasin did not quote the recently published *Hamas* Charter (August 1988), which explicitly forbids any talks with Israel, but instead put forward certain pre-conditions for future negotiations (Klein, 1997: 116). In 1993, Yasin explicitly differentiated between full-fledged peace (*sulh*) with the Jews and a temporary armistice (*hudna*) which he would accept if Israel would immediately withdraw from the occupied territories.¹⁴ In addition, in late 1995, Yasin led the moderate wing of the Party in endorsing *Hamas*' participation in the Palestinian elections of January 1996, though hard-line members of *Hamas* eventually forced the movement to boycott those elections (Amayreh, 1995: 8).

In terms of the primacy of political considerations over issues of religious doctrine, *Hamas* has had to confront the type of fundamental dilemma that has faced Islamic movements throughout the Middle East. Essentially, all Islamist movements are torn between the need to consider the practical implications of a strategy emphasizing the primary importance of their unique national context, versus a more internationalist approach as demanded by the universalism of their ideology: in other words, while the religion of Islam demands a universal approach, their audience and its particular goals are clearly national in scope.¹⁵

In the Palestinian context, prior to 1987, the Muslim Brotherhood had assumed a decidedly international approach to this question by preaching the need to spread Islam throughout the Muslim world, while deliberately de-emphasizing the centrality of Palestine in terms of the Israeli–Arab dispute. With the outbreak of the *intifada*,¹⁶ a fundamental shift occurred in terms of the Islamists' overall strategy from the universalist approach of the Muslim Brotherhood to the more nationalist orientation of *Hamas*. The *Hamas* Charter (published 18 August 1988) gives the clearest indication of this fundamental change in orientation from a universal strategy to one emphasizing the primacy

of the Palestinian issue. In terms of its Palestinian dimension, the Charter asserts that *Hamas* 'is an outstanding type of Palestinian movement' (Charter of the Islamic Resistance Movement (*Hamas*) of Palestine, 1993: Article 6), and that 'Palestine is the heart of the earth, the meeting of continents, and the lure of the avaricious since the dawn of history' (Article 34). Consequently, 'the liberation of Palestine is obligatory for every Muslim, no matter where he is' (Article 13). Klein summarizes this transformation in *Hamas*' strategy, and the change in focus from its universal orientation to the national context and, hence, from the religious to the political realm: 'Since its inception, Hamas has "Palestinianized" the universal claim of Islam and given the movement a national-religious-political profile. This trend may be interpreted as the Hamas leadership giving preference to "Palestinianizing" Islam over "Islamicizing" Palestine' (Klein, 1997: 112-13).¹⁷

Hamas: the only alternative

Throughout its short history, *Hamas* has continued to depict its movement most fundamentally as a clear and viable alternative to the secular forces led by the PLO. *Hamas*' basic nature as a counter-force to the PLO was originally articulated in its Charter. Another consequential repercussion of the Charter was that it helped to clarify the crucial distinctions that existed between the secular and Islamic forces within Palestine, especially those differences *vis-à-vis* Israel.

The Charter explicitly mentions *Hamas*' relationship to, and views of, the mainstream PLO: it specifically refers to the *Hamas*-PLO relationship as that 'of a son toward his father, and the brother toward his brother, and the relative toward his relative', and states that 'our nation is one, plight is one, destiny is one, and our enemy is the same' (Charter, 1993: Article 27). Furthermore, the Charter states that 'all nationalist elements working in the arena for the sake of liberating Palestine should be assured that it is a helper and supporter and will never be anything but that' (Charter, 1993: Article 25).

However, the Charter is also very clear regarding *Hamas*' distinctive nature *vis-à-vis* the mainstream PLO. With reference to 'liberating Palestine', *Hamas* rejects the two-state solution and any negotiation with or recognition of the State of Israel.¹⁸ In fact, Article 13 states that 'as far as the ideology of the Islamic Resistance Movement is concerned, giving up any part of Palestine is like giving up part of its religion'. Furthermore, with specific reference to the PLO, Article 27 asserts that 'we cannot exchange the current and future of Islam in Palestine to adopt the secular ideology because the Islamic nature of the Palestinian issue is part and parcel of our *din* (ideology and way of life) and whosoever neglects part of his *din* is surely lost'.

By fundamentally opposing the PA over the nature of the future Palestinian state (secular or Islamic), the shape of that state (two-state or all of Palestine), and the means to the creation of that state (negotiation with Israel or *jihad*) (see Abu-Amr, 1994: 29–30), it is clear that the PLO and the Islamists are offering the Palestinian people two contrasting visions of the future. As a result, it is obvious that one of the principal aims sought in the declaration of its Charter was to allow *Hamas* to present itself as a clear alternative to the current hegemonic position of the PLO within Palestinian society, especially in terms of the continuing struggle against Israeli occupation (Abu-Amr, 1993: 13; see also Frisch, 1994: 52).

Throughout the early years of the Palestinian uprising, *Hamas* continued to emphasize the fundamental distinctions that existed in terms of its ideology, organization and strategy *vis-à-vis* the other participants in the *intifada*, especially *Fatah*¹⁹ and its dominant position within the PLO (Ahmad, 1994: 51; see Peretz, 1990: 15–16). One of these crucial differences involved *Hamas*' focus on building an independent social infrastructure (e.g. schools, hospitals, sports clubs) separate from the PLO's, and in aiding those segments of Palestinian society most detrimentally affected by the continuing Israeli occupation. This emphasis on its social policies was further accentuated when Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States transferred their financial support from the PLO to the Islamists as punishment for the PLO's decision to back Iraq in the 1990–91 Gulf War. In September 1992, *Hamas* crystallized its opposition to the PLO by fronting a ten-faction group of parties opposed to continued Palestinian participation in the Madrid peace talks. While parties both within the PLO umbrella organization – the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) – and outside – the Islamic *Jihad* – were represented, it was clear that *Hamas* was the dominant group within this newly formed 'rejectionist' coalition, as well as the largest of all the factions represented. As a result, by September 1992, *Hamas* was 'offering an alternative political program that rejected the peace process, and by expanding its organizational infrastructure in the territories at the expense of the PLO's network . . . emerged as the most serious challenge yet to the PLO's claim of exclusive representation of the Palestinian people' (Litvak, 1992: 267).

By presenting itself as a viable alternative to the entrenched position of the PLO, *Hamas* has continued to deny the PLO's self-appointed position as 'the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people' (Milton-Edwards, 1996: 208, see also Litvak, 1989: 23). In fact, *Hamas* has openly challenged the legitimacy of the PLO, while proclaiming itself as the 'sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people's holy war' (Litvak, 1992: 269; see also Litvak, 1990: 252). In reference to the rejectionist front it helped create in 1992, Litvak observes that *Hamas* was essentially 'advocating that the ten factions form an

alternative provisional leadership under its domination that would constitute the authentic representation of the Palestinian people' (1993: 194). Throughout this period, *Hamas* stressed its Islamic ideology as opposed to the secularism of the PLO, provided an efficient network of social institutions as a substitute for the PLO's bankrupt one, and escalated its armed struggle as opposed to the PLO's route of negotiation and moderation (Litvak, 1993: 194).

The uncompromising position assumed by *Hamas*, toward both Israel and the PLO moderates willing to negotiate with the Israelis, is clearly intended to gain adherents to *Hamas*' more 'revolutionary' approach to the Palestinian issue. In this sense, *Hamas*' entire existence is based on Palestinian discontent with the status quo (Ahmad, 1994: 106; Zahhar, 1995: 83). In addition, 'the abandonment by PLO factions of ideological and revolutionary discourse' (Abu-Amr, 1994: 86) remains a key factor in *Hamas*' appeal. According to Yezid Sayigh, *Hamas* continues to attract 'an increasing number of adherents, who support its call for armed resistance to the military occupation and rejection of compromise' (1993: 17).²⁰

Therefore, on the one hand, because of the colonial status of the Palestinians as an occupied people, *Hamas* has assumed an almost 'necessary' revolutionary function within the Palestinian political landscape as a force of national liberation against Israeli rule. Yet, on the other hand, *Hamas* is also viewed as a legitimate alternative to the PLO for those Palestinians who accept its declarations regarding the need to change the current political, economic and social structure within Palestinian society itself and, in the process, replace the current indigenous hegemon in the occupied territories, the PLO (Ahmad, 1994: 117).²¹

An additional factor in *Hamas*' ability to provide the only effective opposition to the PA's dominance in Palestinian life has been its conscious attempt to portray itself as both completely separate from and independent of the PLO. In fact, the Islamists, especially *Hamas*, have gone to great lengths to argue that only they – as opposed to other radical factions within the Palestinian movement such as the PFLP and the DFLP – have remained a truly independent Palestinian force (Kodmani-Darwish, 1996: 31). As Andoni comments in reference to Islamic groups, such as *Hamas* and Islamic Jihad: 'Neither [was] born out of the PLO womb and neither feels obliged, morally or politically, to adhere to policies that they had no part in formulating' (1994: 18). *Hamas* has maintained this independent stance by continually reasserting its intention to remain outside the PLO umbrella, in spite of the PLO's offer of seats on the Palestinian National Council (PNC). The importance of such assertions of independence cannot be overestimated when assessing its self-professed role as the only genuine counter-force to the PLO. As Kodmani-Darwish states: 'The movement does not want to bear responsibility for the PLO's collapse. But if the PLO did collapse on its own because of the wrong choices it made, the Islamist move-

ment would present itself as the only structured alternative with its own base within the population independent of the PLO and capable of relieving it' (1996: 29). In effect, this statement summarizes the belief held by many members of *Hamas* that only it can provide a truly separate and independent alternative to the PLO and its hegemonic position within Palestinian society.

While the signing of the Oslo Accords in September 1993 clearly forced *Hamas* to embark upon a decidedly more pragmatic approach, it has continued to follow a strategy that accentuates its fundamental nature as an alternative to the PLO. *Hamas* still refuses to recognize the sole representative status of the PLO (i.e. the PA), and now promotes itself primarily through its opposition to the Oslo peace process (see Milton-Edwards, 1996: 210).²² In that sense, the Oslo Accords have done little to alter *Hamas*' self-image as the only option to the PLO's route of negotiated settlement.

[T]he Oslo agreements do not seem to carry the promise of a near and real peace as much as they open the way for the Islamists to compete for power. It follows that the stake has become a struggle for power between two competing claims of legitimacy: that of the PLO, acquired through 25 years of armed struggle, and an Islamic movement that claims that same legitimacy in the name of its present resistance in the territories, the only means it sees (as opposed to peaceful settlement) to force Israel to evacuate the territories. (Kodmani-Darwish, 1996: 28)

In its contemporary context, it is this staunch rejection of the Oslo Accords and the entire peace process that best represents its current oppositional nature and its position as the only true alternative to the PA and its 'bankrupt' policies. In the view of most members of *Hamas*, the Oslo Accords offer little hope of a fair and just peace for the Palestinians and their national aspirations. In fact, to many within *Hamas*, Oslo is less a peace process than a security pact between the PA, Israel and the United States, with the ultimate aim of obliterating their movement.²³ While Oslo was presented by Arafat, and by others in the *Fatah* movement, as the first step towards satisfying Palestinian national aspirations for eventual statehood, *Hamas* argued that Oslo did little more than shift the burden for controlling Palestinian society and the security apparatus in the occupied territories from the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) onto the Palestinian Authority.

While fundamental divisions still exist within the leadership of *Hamas* over questions of strategy and ideology (see below), it is unequivocal in its damnation of the whole Oslo process. In March 1997, after a suicide bombing attack in Israel²⁴ *Hamas* spokesman Ibrahim Ghoshah argued for the need to bury once and for all 'Oslo, the PA, and the so-called peace process' (cited in *The Economist*, 9 August 1997: 8). Moreover, in April 1999 Yasin was urging the Palestinian leadership to 'extricate us all from this calamity called Oslo', stating that 'freedom from Oslo is essential for building national unity'. He added that the aim of *Hamas* remains to shed the 'crippling restrictions' imposed on the

Palestinians by the Oslo Accords, and 'to reaffirm our opposition to the Oslo Process'.²⁵ *Hamas'* strident rejection of the Oslo Accords has become the primary factor in unifying the very divergent factions that exist within the Islamic movement, and it remains the most discernible difference between the PA and a *Hamas* movement that continues to depict itself as the only legitimate alternative to that rule. It has also been this opposition to the Oslo Accords and its damnation of the entire process that has accounted for the core of *Hamas'* support.

Support

A definite trend has developed in *Hamas'* support base since its creation as a separate wing of the Muslim Brotherhood in January 1988. *Hamas'* popular support is most directly linked to the peace process and the willingness of the Palestinian people to back violent resistance to Israeli occupation. Public opinion surveys and various elections conducted for student unions, professional syndicates, and the chambers of commerce exhibit a clear pattern in growth for *Hamas*. At those times when the lack of significant progress in the peace negotiations has led to increased feeling of disenchantment and hopelessness among the Palestinian people, many Palestinians have demonstrated a greater readiness to back the Islamic cause.²⁶

Within two years of the outbreak of the *intifada*, *Hamas* achieved some spectacular gains in terms of its support within Palestinian society.²⁷ While backing for *Hamas* steadily rose during this period, no one event garnered *Hamas* as much sympathy and support as the Israeli deportation of 418 'suspected' Islamic activists in December 1992.²⁸ The media's depiction of the deportees stranded in 'no man's land' just inside the Lebanon border greatly enhanced the image of the Palestinians as victims of continuing Israeli repression. According to Litvak:

the deportations at the end of 1992 boosted *Hamas'* popularity in the territories and enhanced its image of being at the forefront of the struggle against Israel. Furthermore, the strike at the *Hamas* organisational infrastructure, mainly at welfare and religious institutions, was perceived in the territories as an attack upon Islam itself, rallying many around the Movement. (Litvak, 1993: 195)

To many Palestinians, not only did the deportations demonstrate the true futility in the PLO's misplaced hopes for a negotiated settlement,²⁹ but *Hamas*, not the PLO, was now perceived as the vanguard in the struggle against Israeli occupation (Litvak, 1992: 275).

According to actual public support received throughout this period (1988–1993), *Hamas* had come to represent a legitimate threat as a national alternative to the mainstream PLO. In terms of pure public opinion and by some

estimates, support for *Hamas* as much as tripled during this time. In one of the earliest measures of *Hamas*' backing in the occupied territories, polls placed *Hamas*' support at somewhere between 10 and 15 per cent of the Palestinian population.³⁰ Yet, by December 1992, in the wake of the large-scale deportations of Islamic activists, some experts claimed that as many as 40 per cent of Palestinians in the occupied territories were now supporting *Hamas*, while similarly rejecting the more moderate policies of the PLO (*The Economist*, 19 December 1992: 39). While this zenith of support may have just indicated an upsurge in sympathy for *Hamas* in the aftermath of the mass deportations, even by February 1993, *Hamas* was still estimated to be enjoying the backing of approximately 30–40 per cent of the population in the Gaza Strip and 20–5 per cent in the West Bank (*The Economist*, 20 February 1993: 39).

Public opinion surveys alone are not always an accurate indicator of a certain individual's actual voting intentions, but a number of elections held throughout the occupied territories during this period confirm the increased popular support for the 'Islamic Bloc', led by *Hamas*.³¹ According to Iyad Barghouti, 'in the 1992–93 elections, a systematic increase in *Hamas*' popularity was demonstrated, even in liberal institutions such as Bir Zeit University [in Nablus], with the group typically obtaining between 35 and 40 per cent of the vote' (Barghouti, 1996: 168). While the victory at the liberal-leaning Bir Zeit surprised many PLO officials, it was the startling success of the Islamists in the Chamber of Commerce election in Ramallah in March 1992 that 'sent a chill down nationalist spines' because Ramallah was a heavily Christian centre and had always been a nationalist stronghold (Kuttab, 1992: 6).

However, according to Elie Rekhess, the PLO defeat in Ramallah was not an aberration but instead represented a systematic pattern of increased Islamic support that had been occurring ever since the PLO had entered the Madrid peace talks. Prior to this defeat, other losses had occurred in the Hebron Chamber of Commerce, Hebron University, the Union of Electric Company's employees and the Employees' Union of the East Jerusalem Maqasid Hospital (Rekhess, 1992: 299).

To demonstrate the degree to which the Islamic Bloc was gaining in terms of its popular support, in the fall of 1992, Mahmoud al-Zahhar examined more than twenty election campaigns conducted in the territories during 1991–92. According to Al-Zahhar, 34,221 Palestinians voted in these elections, with the Islamist candidates winning 43 per cent of the overall votes.³² While it is evident that by the summer of 1993 *Hamas* represented a legitimate alternative to the PLO, according to Dilip Hiro, what is more remarkable is that 'within four years *Hamas* came to rival Fatah, which had been active for a generation' (Hiro, 1997: 17).

While *Hamas*' success over this period was based primarily on the inability of the PLO to achieve any significant results during the Madrid peace

negotiations in Washington, the surprise announcement and subsequent signing of the Oslo Accords in August and September 1993 had an equally dramatic impact on *Hamas*' growing support. Almost immediately after the Accords were signed a poll showed *Hamas*' support had plunged to 13 per cent (Al Jarbawi, 1994: 141).³³ Backing for *Hamas* remained at that level over the next few years, even in the face of its new strategy of suicide bombings from April 1994 to March 1996.³⁴ In December 1995, it was reported that *Hamas*' support was stuck at 15 per cent, after a high of nearly 40 per cent just before the Oslo Accords were signed (*The Economist*, 2 December 1995: 41; also see Mishal and Sela, 2000: 134 and 137). That figure further declined to 10 per cent in the former stronghold of Gaza after *Hamas* decided to boycott the Palestinian General Elections in January 1996.³⁵ Thus, there was a direct link between the ability of the Accords to exhibit tangible territorial and economic benefits on the ground and *Hamas*' declining support.

Conversely, it is not surprising that the corresponding support for both Yasser Arafat and the overall peace process continued to increase over the same period. From September 1995 to January 1996, support for Arafat climbed from 54 to 58 per cent while backing of the Israeli–Palestinian deal rose from 66 to 72 per cent (*The Economist*, 30 September 1995: 46 and 5 January 1996: 52). Furthermore, both Yasser Arafat's election as president and the sweeping to power of his *Fatah* party in the January 1996 elections were interpreted as an overwhelming endorsement of the PLO's platform of negotiation and moderation.

However, developments since the early 1990s demonstrate that it would be premature to discount *Hamas* and the influence it still exerts on the Palestinian political scene, especially regarding the peace process. At those times when the Oslo peace process seemed in jeopardy of self-destructing, *Hamas* had been able to make credible gains. In November 1993, when negotiations for the first stage of Israeli withdrawal from the territories were near collapse, student council elections at Bir Zeit produced a 'Rejectionist Front' coalition, with the PFLP, DFLP and *Hamas* acquiring a clear majority with 52 per cent of the vote (Kuttab, 1993: 5–6). Two years later at the same university, when negotiations for the second stage of Palestinian autonomy were stalled, the rejectionists won 27 out of a total of 51 seats – *Hamas* alone winning 18 seats.³⁶

Such gains for *Hamas* were even more notable during the three-year reign of Benjamin Netanyahu when not only did peace talks remain essentially dormant, but many Palestinians perceived the Likud Prime Minister's policies as inflammatory and provocative not just to the peace process, but to Israeli–Palestinian relations in general. In December of 1996, both in the wake of Netanyahu's ascension to power and in response to the large scale fighting in the territories in September 1996,³⁷ *Hamas* emerged as the leading party in student elections at the Najah University in Nablus, a traditional *Fatah*

stronghold (Amayreh, 1996: 4). In fact, by the end of 1997 – Netanyahu's first full year in power – the Islamic Bloc controlled the student unions at 6 of the 7 Palestinian universities (See Amayreh, 1997: 4; Hiro, 1997: 19). This public shift away from the negotiated option, proposed by Arafat and the PLO, was also exhibited in a January 1999 poll (i.e. Netanyahu's last year in power) conducted by the Nablus-based Centre for Palestine Research and Studies. According to the poll, the number of Palestinians who supported armed resistance had risen from 41 to 53 per cent in the previous two months, while the number who backed the peace process had dropped from 75 to 66 per cent (Hamzeh-Muhaisen, 1999: 7).

Since the outbreak of the second *intifada* in September 2000, the descent into open warfare between the Israelis and Palestinians – and the apparent death of the peace process – has been reflected in increased backing for violent resistance to Israeli occupation and growing support for *Hamas*. A recent poll conducted by Bir Zeit University showed that 74 per cent of Palestinians now support suicide operations inside Israel (*The Economist*, 16 June 2001: 46). In addition, a February poll demonstrated that the combined support for *Hamas* and Islamic *Jihad* now rivalled that of Arafat's *Fatah* party.³⁸ Clearly, Islamist movements continue to benefit the most from the growing insecurity and violence in the Middle East. Thus, while many Palestinians still support the peace process as the best option for achieving Palestinian national aspirations, armed attacks, and *Hamas*' utilization of such a strategy, remain a viable option to the policies of negotiation and moderation long advocated by the PA.

The future

Many factors demonstrate *Hamas*' future as a viable oppositional force to the PLO including those that are seemingly beyond *Hamas*' control. If final status talks produce a generally acceptable solution for the majority of Palestinians, *Hamas*' significance as a political force would come under scrutiny. In addition, continued joint repression at the hands of both Palestinian and Israeli security forces might disable the movement to such an extent that its future viability is negligible. Yet, in terms of its own internal position and those components *Hamas* can influence, it would seem that there are two areas *Hamas* must address if it wants to be considered a legitimate vehicle of political counter-protest on the Palestinian political landscape. The first is the necessity of healing the rifts and divisions that have become more pronounced within *Hamas* in the latter half of the 1990s, especially in terms of strategy. The second is the seeming necessity of working with the PA/PLO in some type of 'national unity' government, at least while the current violence continues unabated, or even to return to the type of strategy conducted so effectively by the Muslim Brotherhood throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Basically, this involves a strategy of

non-violent resistance and building support at the grassroots level to represent that segment of society opposed to the PLO's secular orientation, and general policies, in addition to any capitulation of Palestinian rights.

Although there have always been splits within the movement, divisions within *Hamas* have played a prominent role in undermining its efforts to provide an effective oppositional force. In fact, the very creation of *Hamas* as a separate wing of the Muslim Brotherhood was partially in response to the differences that existed between older, more moderate, members of the Brotherhood and the younger, more radical, Islamists. Thus, according to Abu-Amr, during the first month of the *intifada*,

the question debated [about actively joining the *intifada*] was whether it was incumbent upon the society to delay the *jihad* against the Israeli occupation until an Islamic society is founded or whether it was the Brotherhood's duty to enter into the confrontation immediately. Traditional Brotherhood leaders were not enthusiastic about an early participation in the *intifada*, but the young leaders were able to impose their will and vision in this regard. (1994: 83)

Deep-seated divisions have always existed within *Hamas* over fundamental questions of ideology, organization, and strategy.

In terms of ideology, it is evident that there is a fundamental division between those Palestinians who tend to support *Hamas* for its conservative and religious orientation, and those who are clearly drawn to *Hamas* because of its revolutionary appeal as a force of national liberation. In fact, these differences appear to have become even more pronounced in the new environment created by the Oslo Accords. According to Graham Usher, 'reconciling these strains of social conservatism and radical nationalism within the same movement is the dilemma *Hamas* faces on the changed terrain of autonomy' (1994: 9).

In addition to the ideological disputes, an organizational schism has developed between various branches of the movement over questions of strategy. With each department responsible for fundamentally different aspects of the organization's orientation – military, political, charitable³⁹ – splits between the various wings, or even within a specific branch, was a real possibility. Consequently, by 1996, it appeared that the organization's internal polarization had openly splintered between its hard-line military wing (i.e. the '*Iz al-Din al-Qassam* brigades) and the more moderate members of the movement (Al Jarbawi, 1996: 33; see also Webman, 1996: 129–30). The rash of suicide-bombings in the spring of 1996 was indicative of the fundamental nature of that split (*The Economist*, 9 March 1996: 15).

Moreover, the 1996 suicide-bombing campaign revealed a schism between *Hamas*' political leadership both within the occupied territories and between its internal and external leadership. In Gaza, the more moderate leaders of the movement opposed the bombings, while the military wing of the party in the

West Bank supported such a strategy (*The Economist*, 18 April 1998: 41). In addition, divisions have surfaced between the leadership *within* the territories (which has tended to advocate a more restrained strategy and is fearful of the cost of PA repression linked to the bombing campaign) and the leadership *outside* of the territories which has maintained that only an active military presence can ward off such repression (*The Economist*, 22 August 1998: 38). According to Webman, especially in the post-Oslo era, fundamental divisions within *Hamas* have become severe enough to threaten the very existence of the movement: 'the issues of handing over of arms, the continuation of a radical operations against Israel and the acceptance of the PA were controversial within Hamas, threatening to split it apart . . . Various reports referred to divisions between a moderate and a radical camp, between the political wing and the military wing, between activists inside and outside the territories, and even between activists in Gaza and the West Bank' (Webman, 1996: 129).

Hamas continues to allot primary importance to presenting a united front in the face of constant repression and PA attempts to sow disunity by ostracizing and delegitimizing its external leadership in Jordan, Iran and Syria (Amayreh, 1998: 10). However, such divisions must be addressed if *Hamas* is to once more threaten the position of the PLO/PA as the dominant force within the occupied territories.

Currently, there have been various attempts to transform *Hamas* into a legitimate political party (i.e. a loyal opposition), as demonstrated by the 'national unity' talks initiated by Arafat with *Hamas* on 7 August 2001 (*The Economist*, 18 August 2001: 33). A competing view is that *Hamas* would be better served by returning to the Muslim Brotherhood's grassroots strategies (i.e. 'Islamization') that helped the movement increase its support in the 1970s and 1980s.⁴⁰ Through its extensive network of social institutions such as Islamic charity associations, nursery schools, kindergartens, neighbourhood libraries and sports clubs (Abu-Amr, 1994: 14–15), the Muslim Brotherhood championed a strategy of evolutionary change. In doing so, it sought to transform Palestinian civil society from within, while bringing it into accordance with the principles of Islam and the rule of the *Sharia*. In this period, the Muslim Brothers assumed the view that the foundations of an Islamic society must first be created, primarily through Islamic education, before *jihad* could be legitimately and successfully undertaken.⁴¹

In the end, whatever future strategy *Hamas* decides to pursue, it will focus on a grassroots and incremental strategy to build opposition to the entire Oslo process and, in its opinion, allow it to 'crumble' under its own contradictions (Al Jarbawi, 1994: 148). According to Mahmud Zahhar, one of *Hamas'* principal spokesmen, 'Hamas is not in a hurry. We know that the PLO's practice will inevitably lead to its downfall . . . Communism had to be allowed to go to the end of its capacities, and it fell of its own weight' (1995: 83).⁴² Many members of

Hamas have realized that in the current environment, the PA – especially when it co-operates with Israel – is too powerful to overthrow militarily from its entrenched position as the dominant force in the occupied territories. Yet, as Khalil Shikaki cautions:

Hamas remains the sole credible alternative to Fatah and the mainstream nationalists. Those who have deserted the Islamists have not changed loyalties; most have simply sat on the sidelines. They could become a reservoir for an Islamist revival. One of the reasons that Yitzhak Rabin . . . went to Oslo was his fear that his choice was to deal either with the PLO today or Hamas tomorrow. [Israel still] faces the same choice (1998: 43).

Conclusion

In the Israeli–Palestinian dispute, unless the Oslo process can eventually produce the type of minimal territorial concessions and economic benefits sought by a significant segment of the Palestinian population, *Hamas* will continue to dictate and shape strategic calculations and security considerations in the region. By portraying the PLO–PA as a weak, corrupt and ineffective regime, and as little more than an extension of the Israeli security apparatus, *Hamas* remains a significant force. *Hamas* is strengthened particularly through its ability to most effectively articulate the grievances of those individuals marginalized and alienated by the current regime and its policies. In the climate of the recent violence and the re-emerging support for suicide bombings, *Hamas* has achieved prominence as the vanguard in the struggle to protect Palestinian interests and security in the occupied territories. *Hamas* can neither be completely destroyed nor simply wished away and, as the primary rejectionist power within the Palestinian Bloc, *Hamas* continues to constitute the most significant threat to both the Israeli–Palestinian peace process and to the general stability of the region.

NOTES

- 1 This latest round of violence, referred to as the *al-Aqsa intifada*, followed Ariel Sharon's visit to the *al-Aqsa* mosque on 28 September 2000 as a show of Israeli sovereignty over east Jerusalem.
- 2 Henceforth, the 'Palestine Liberation Organization' and 'Palestinian Authority' will be freely interchanged. While it is recognized that they constitute two fundamentally different entities, both are dominated by Yasir Arafat's *Fatah* movement and by Arafat himself.
- 3 As will be demonstrated, *Hamas* is a unique movement among political Islamist groups because its target is both external (i.e. the Israelis) as well as internal (i.e. the indigenous regime) in nature.
- 4 According to Dekmejian: 'In the absence of other institutional and ideological channels of opposition, fundamentalism has provided a religiously sanctioned means for the articulation of popular dissatisfaction' (1985: 176. Also see Mishal and Sela, 2000: 4).

- 5 The *Sharia*, or more specifically Islamic Law, is derived primarily from the *Quran*.
- 6 *Hamas* was not originally created for the purpose of providing an alternative to the PLO, but rather for the purpose of responding to the *intifada* and the continuing Israeli occupation. However, it has become clear that *Hamas* now sees the PLO's presence in Palestinian society as the main obstacle to increasing its own power. For an explanation of this change in *Hamas*' strategy, see Usher, 1995: 67–8.
- 7 Israeli officials have confiscated over 60 per cent of the land in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- 8 The PA is dependent on Israeli goodwill for much of its tax revenue while many Palestinians provide cheap migrant labour for the Israelis.
- 9 Several other authors take a similar position, arguing that *Hamas*' support tends to be over-represented among the more educated segments of Palestinian society (especially university students and professionals). For the best examples, see Mishal and Sela, 2000: 23 and 37; Shikaki, 1998: 31–2; Abu-Amr, 1994: 6, 18, 21; Hoffman, 1994: 19; and Satloff, 1989: 392.
- 10 In the post-Oslo period, a good historical example may be that of Egypt after the Second World War, when a retreating Britain transformed the Muslim Brotherhood from a force primarily concerned with fighting Western colonialism into a 'true' counter-hegemonic force desiring the overthrow of, first, the indigenous Royalist forces and, subsequently, the Nasser regime.
- 11 This domestic view of the PLO concurs with the international status it received as early as 1974, when it was given observer status at the United Nations (UN) and was recognized by the Arab governments of the Middle East as the Palestinian people's 'sole representative'.
- 12 Other authors who emphasize this pragmatic nature of *Hamas* include Legrain, 1997: 173; Abu-Amr, 1994: 133; Ahmad, 1994: 55, 73, 88 and 117; Al Jarbawi, 1994: 136, 145, and 153; and Barghouti, 1993: 11.
- 13 *Jihad* is, of course, a highly contested concept within Islam. While many have focused exclusively on its military character, others have interpreted *jihad* as more inclusive. According to Armstrong, 'the root *jhd* implies more than a "holy war". It signifies a physical, moral, spiritual, and intellectual effort' (1992: 168).
- 14 According to Litvak, Yasin defended this apparent change of position by arguing that it 'is lawful for Muslims . . . to accept such an armistice if the enemy is powerful while the Muslims are weak and need time to prepare and recover their strength' (1998: 160).
- 15 A number of authors examine this national–universal paradox in the context of *Hamas*. For examples, see Klein, 1997: 112–13; Frisch, 1994: 45; Litvak, 1989: 238.
- 16 When the *intifada*, or Palestinian uprising (literally, 'shaking off'), erupted in December 1987, the Muslim Brotherhood, though preaching the peaceful spread of Islam, feared that its failure to engage more actively in the *intifada* would adversely affect its support, and that consequently it would forfeit whatever gains it had achieved over the previous twenty years. Therefore, the decision was made by the Muslim Brotherhood to create an ostensibly separate organization (i.e. *Hamas*) to actively participate in the *intifada*. For the best explanation of these developments, see Abu-Amr, 1994: 63–8.
- 17 Frisch reaches a similar conclusion about *Hamas* when she states that 'the Palestinization of the movement is probably its [the Muslim Brotherhood's] most prominent innovation incorporated into the *Hamas* document' (1994: 52). See also Mishal and Sela, 2000: 41.
- 18 While earlier comments regarding *Hamas*' pragmatic nature and willingness to negotiate a two-state solution with Israel would appear to contradict this stance, it must be

- noted that even Yasin stated that any truce would be only a temporary armistice (*hudna*) and, thus, the first stage in the eventual reacquisition of all of Palestine. See Mishal and Sela, 2000: 108–9.
- 19 The PLO is basically an umbrella group comprised of various Palestinian groups. The *Fatah* wing, led by Arafat, is clearly the dominant group within this movement.
 - 20 In the spring and summer of 2001, in an atmosphere of escalating violence and growing insecurity, *Hamas'* endorsement of armed resistance remains the primary factor in increasing its support among Palestinians. See *The Economist* 18 August 2001, 33.
 - 21 According to Khalil Shikaki, many Palestinians support *Hamas* because of their general disillusionment with the PA over 'issues like corruption, mismanagement, and lack of democratisation' (1998: 32). For a similar explanation, see Mishal and Sela who argue that part of *Hamas'* success is based on its ability to project 'credibility, dedication, and integrity compared with the PLO's outdated and notoriously corrupt leadership' (2000: 89).
 - 22 See also *The Economist*, 22 April 1995, 46.
 - 23 *The Economist* 22 August 1998, 38. For example, *Hamas* spokesman Shaykh Naif Rajub dismissed the agreement as a 'total surrender' and described it as a 'security pact', saying 'the Israelis, Americans, and PA are all after *Hamas*' (quoted in Khaled Amayreh, 'Hopes But Mostly Fears', *Middle East International*, 30 October 1998, 7).
 - 24 In reaction to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's decision to build additional settlements in disputed lands on the outskirts of east Jerusalem, what the Palestinians refer to as *Jabal Abu Ghneim*, on 21 March a *Hamas* suicide bomber destroyed a café in Tel Aviv, killing three and injuring nearly fifty.
 - 25 Yasin as quoted in Khalid Amayreh, 'Arafat Evades the Issue', *Middle East International*, 23 April 1999, 6.
 - 26 According to Mishal and Sela, this support for *Hamas* is most apparent when 'Yasir Arafat and the Palestinian Authority fail to translate Israeli–Palestinian peace negotiations into tangible territorial achievements and economic benefits' (2000: ix).
 - 27 See *The Economist*, 2 December 1989, 47. In addition, this growth occurred in spite of the fact that in May 1989 Israel formally outlawed the *Hamas* movement and arrested its leader Shaykh Yasin, seven other senior leaders, and over 200 leading activists.
 - 28 For a more detailed examination of this event, see Barghouti, 1993: 11; Ahmad, 1994: 80–2; and Milton-Edwards, 1996: 203–4.
 - 29 The PLO at this time was involved in the doomed Madrid peace talks that had begun in October 1991.
 - 30 See *The Economist*, 22 December 1990, 49, and Steve Sherman, 'Gazans and the Intifada: United and Steadfast', *Middle East International*, 13 April 1990, 18.
 - 31 In terms of the 'Islamic Bloc', other Islamist organizations are included in this group, most notably, *Islamic Jihad*. *Hamas* represents by far the largest single group within this bloc.
 - 32 See Ahmad Rashad, *The Truth About Hamas*, available online: www.iap.org/politics/misc/truth.html (p. 5).
 - 33 The Oslo Accords had the impact on *Hamas* that the PLO had intended. Hiro establishes a link between *Hamas'* support and the Oslo Accords by arguing: 'In the absence of a fast-growing Islamist movement among Palestinians, it is doubtful that Rabin would have negotiated with Israel's sworn enemy, a point made publicly by Chaim Herzog, president of Israel from 1983 to [19]93' (Hiro, 1997: 17).
 - 34 According to a poll conducted by the Palestinian Research Centre in Nablus in May 1995, *Hamas* only had 12 per cent support among the Palestinian population. See Mishal and Sela 2000: 134.

- 35 *The Economist*, 5 January 1996, 52. In addition, decreased popular backing for *Hamas* was directly linked to a decline in support for armed attacks against Israel. According to Shikaki: 'Support for attacks against Israelis dropped from 57 per cent in November 1994, to 46 per cent in February 1995, to 33 per cent a month later, and to 21 per cent in March 1996' (1998: 35).
- 36 'West Bank Student Elections', *Middle East International*, 9 June 1995, 4.
- 37 In September 1996, Netanyahu opened an ancient tunnel that ran alongside the *Haram al-Sharif*, the site of the *al-Aqsa* mosque in Jerusalem. In the ensuing violence 73 people were killed, 58 of them Palestinians, and over 1,500 were injured.
- 38 According to Usher 2001: 13, the Bir Zeit poll gave the Islamists 22 per cent support compared to 26 per cent for *Fatah*. However, according to *The Economist*, a poll conducted in mid-2001 by Bir Zeit University showed that backing for the Islamists now outstripped support for Arafat's *Fatah* movement. See *The Economist*, 16 June 2001, 46.
- 39 For a more thorough examination of the structure of *Hamas*, some good sources include Mishal and Sela, 2000: 58–9; Abu-Amr, 1994: 63; Litvak, 1993: 194; Litvak, 1990: 237; and Rashad, *The Truth About Hamas*: 2–3.
- 40 See Tamar Hausman, 'Experts: Hamas Has Reasons to Refrain from Terror Attacks', *The Jerusalem Post*, 18 February 2000. Ely Karmon, 2000: 8, also examines the likelihood of *Hamas* returning to this type of strategy.
- 41 According to Robert Satloff, the Brotherhood sought 'evolutionary change over radical revolution' (1989: 396). Also see Legrain, 1997: 163; Ahmad, 1994: 15–17, for a more thorough explanation of the Brotherhood's strategy at this time. This idea of patience or forbearance (*sabr*) has gained many adherents within the Islamic movement over the past few years. Hamas spokesman Abu Marzuq argued that the key to the movement's survival was patience, while Ibrahim Ghoshah endorsed a 'wait and see' attitude and declared 'that the agreement's collapse was only a matter of time'. For an example of their views on this issue, see Mishal and Sela, 2000: 102 and 139.

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The effects of political liberalization on security

Brent E. Sasley

THE END OF bipolarity brought to light the difficulty inherent in using Cold War concepts of security to explain international relations in the developing world. As well, it has often been argued that international relations is basically an American (with some British input) enterprise (Azar and Moon, 1988b: 1; Hoffman, 1977), with the consequences that only threats that concerned American interests (i.e. military threats from the Soviet Union) were considered security threats.¹ In the contemporary international system, however, issues of security are now much more than superpower competition and interests, and these raise questions as to the nature and practice of security (Dalby, 1997: 4). As Brian Job notes, 'it is increasingly taken for granted that the world is a secure place for First World [i.e. developed] states and their citizens', while the same is not true for developing world countries (Job, 1992: 11).

This chapter's purpose is to broaden the definition of security by including regimes and societies as essential referent objects of security. Demands for social, economic and political rights across the Middle East have threatened the positions, indeed the very safety and perhaps even the survival, of regimes that have been in power for many years. Focusing on the Arab world, these demands are the result of declining socio-economic conditions within the region. Efforts to placate such appeals, previously effected by focusing attention on foreign policy agendas, through political reforms are perceived by these regimes as undermining their security. In response, regimes have engaged in repression, which in turn undermines the security of their societies not only through violence and ill-treatment, but by not allowing the requisite reforms to take place – thus ignoring the socio-economic plight of their citizens. As a vicious circle, this has the effect of angering populations even more, so that demands for change become more strident, more common and, perhaps eventually increasingly violent. This contributes to increased regime insecurity. Thus, the sense of threat that prevails in the developing world (within the state) is to and from the regime in power.

To that end, the chapter is set out in the following manner. The first part is a clarification of the difference between political liberalization and democratization, as the two processes, though related, are distinct. The second section formulates the theoretical arguments of this chapter, namely that regimes and societies are two important referent objects of security which, though neglected by traditional security studies literature, are consequential; and that the two are inextricably linked. This is followed by the chapter's empirical case study, the Palestinians and the Palestinian Authority. Finally, the conclusion offers some preliminary thoughts on the usefulness of this addition to security studies in the light of the Middle Eastern context.

Political liberalization versus democratization

It is necessary first to make a distinction between liberalization and democratization, since they are different processes. One important study on this topic differentiates between the two as follows: political *liberalization* 'involves the expansion of public space through the recognition and protection of civil and political liberties, particularly those bearing upon the ability of citizens to engage in free political discourse and to freely organize in pursuit of common interests'; whereas political *democratization* is defined as 'an expansion of political participation in such a way as to provide citizens with a degree of meaningful collective control over public policy' (Brynen, Korany and Noble, 1995: 3).

Many Middle Eastern states have engaged in some democratic forms, primarily focused around elections.² This is a Dahlian notion of democracy, however, that relies on procedural aspects to determine whether a state is democratic or not (Dahl, 1971). However, since these elections are not always regular or fair, and because in many cases their gains have been offset by other legal and political manoeuvrings by regimes to negate their effects, the term 'democratization' will not be used. Liberalization is a much more suitable term, since it implies political openings that can include a variety of forms and aspects, and can take place in some areas but not others. Augustus Richard Norton defines liberalization as 'reformist measures to open up outlets for the free expression of opinion, to place limits on the arbitrary exercise of power, and to permit political association' (Norton, 1995: 33). Efforts in this vein, he contends, have been made in the Middle East, while steps towards democratization have not. Other authors agree that liberalization can take place without democratization (Linz and Stepan, 1996: 16). Following these definitions, the term 'liberalization' will be used, as it corresponds to reality in the Middle East more so than 'democratization'.³

A caveat should be added here. There is inherent in any examination of political reform in non-Western countries a danger of ethnocentricity, especially concerning levels of democracy; or of 'reading processes deriving from one

specific set of historical and political circumstances into other, very different, contexts' (Brynen, Korany and Noble, 1995: 3). To overlay Western values of democracy onto a region such as the Middle East, which has experienced completely distinct economic, political, cultural, religious and geostrategic conditions, is to risk analysing levels of political liberalization according to Western standards. This simply should not be the case, as the conditions and time frame under which North American and European democracy evolved do not compare to Middle Eastern conditions.⁴ Despite this, and without wading into the debate on the ability of the Middle East to democratize, this chapter takes the values of political liberalization as 'good', insofar as such reforms contribute to the security of people. At least one Palestinian politician and scholar believes that democracy's Western origins should not be bothered with, since it has by now become a 'universal value in itself [and] many of its principles and attributes have assumed a global character and relevance' (Abu-Amr, 1996: 93).

Inside the black box: the necessity of other referent objects of security

In an effort to defend the more *realist* notions of security studies, Stephen Walt wrote that the main focus of security studies is the phenomenon of inter-state war (Walt, 1991: 212). Fred Halliday argued that international relations is about 'relations between states, war, power, the intersection of military and economic interests' (Halliday, 1995: 733). The question to be asked is whether such definitions of security account for international politics across the world – and the answer must be 'no'. Primarily, this is because the overwhelming number of violent conflicts that have occurred since the end of the Second World War has taken place in the developing world. Moreover, these conflicts have been mainly intra-state (Ayoob, 1997; Holsti, 1991). These very statistics call into question the utility of the rational, unitary, realist state focused on external military threats, and therefore indicate a need for a redefinition of security.

Simon Dalby points out that 'security as conventionally formulated is about the protection of a political community of some sort' (1997: 9). From this, the realists took the notion that political community referred only to states, since they were the most important actors in the international system and the primary referent objects of security.⁵ By designating states as 'black boxes', realism ignores the series of complex interactions within states, and the 'individual' nature of people, or citizens; instead, it constructs security around the notion that people are citizens of states – hence, their security is protected by, and tied into that of, the state itself, as represented by regimes (Krause and Williams, 1997: 43).

The *liberal* paradigm is generally also not helpful, since although it rejects the idea of a black box, it looks at domestic politics mainly as an explanation for

state behaviour. The overwhelming politics of security in the developing world is not, however, conditioned around inter-state relations: the politics of security concerns the internal contests for security *within* states.

As well, norms have arisen since the beginning of the 1990s that are becoming much more global in their acceptability and applicability than anything that appeared during the Cold War (although, perhaps predictably, these norms begin within the Western world as much as any of the more traditional security norms did) – namely, that repression of populations can no longer be justified in the name of ‘security’ (bipolar rivalry or any other). Thus, the populations that realism assumed were protected *by* the state are in fact facing insecurity *because of* the state. Because this occurs overwhelmingly in the developing world, ‘critical security studies cannot ignore the politics of security provision in differing political circumstances’ (Dalby, 1997: 23).

All this questions the claims of the state to realist types of sovereignty, from which flow their particular conceptions of security (Krause and Williams, 1997: 45). The disjuncture between state and society leads to Ken Booth’s question: how can states be the primary referent objects of security, when not all states are in the business of providing security – and in fact may provide the opposite, namely *insecurity*? (Booth, 1991: 320). Security, Barry Buzan points out, is not about power – as it had been primarily conceptualized during the Cold War – but rather is about actual security from threats (Buzan, 1991: 3). Quite simply, ‘overt violence and conflict aside, most developing countries have become insecure places to live’ (Azar and Moon, 1988b: 3). That is because of the insecurity faced by populations themselves, not by states. Since, in the developing world, states face far fewer threats than societies or regimes (from each other), the Cold War conception of security must be broadened to include these referent objects as well. We must therefore separate the various referent objects of security by asking whose security is affected – the state’s, the regime’s, or society’s, particularly since frequently certain types of security are affected while others are not (see Job, 1992: 15).

By redefining the object of security from the state to the individual or the regime, or to populations or communal groups *as themselves*, allows them to become important factors of consideration in a (necessarily) comprehensive analysis of security. An examination of regime–society relations in the developing world in general and the Middle East in particular highlights the inadequacies of traditional formulations of security.

Regime security

One of the most important referent objects of security in the developing world must be the regime that governs the state; yet, it is also one of the least studied elements of security in the critical studies literature, in comparison to security

studies on gender or intra-state communal group conflicts. In conventional security studies, where conceptions of security are formulated around inter-state relations, the state is understood in its Weberian sense, as an actor in the international system with a centralized authority controlling a recognized territory. In the developed world,⁶ this is appropriate, since there democratic modes of governance depend on the separation between governments and the state; that is, governments can change, but they all still use the same state institutions to conduct policy. Moreover, as these governments are dependent on electoral votes to remain in power, they must use these institutions to make policy to the electorate's satisfaction. Here, the 'rules of the game' delineate who takes power and when it is given up.

But this does not correlate with developments in non-Western areas. Instead, regimes that come to power do not leave power willingly, if they leave at all. In instances of power sharing, or power grabbing, the rules are not clear – if there even are rules – or the rules exclude various groups and ideologies (i.e. those who do not agree with the authoritarian nature or the policies of the regime in power).⁷ In the meantime, incumbent regimes construct and control state institutions for their own benefits more than for the benefits of their populations. These include both political and security institutions (such as secret policy and intelligence agencies; see Ayoob, 1997). This occurs to the extent that, when examining domestic circumstances, the regime becomes identical to the state, and the difference between state and regime becomes negligible (see Ayoob, 1997: 130).⁸ Thus, regime security is a concept more applicable to the developing world – as are most of the reformulations of security in the post-Cold War theoretical and practical arenas.

In the Middle East, most regimes are associated with the state – whether tied together through familial, tribal, ethnic or religious links, or through shared interests, they utilize the state's apparatuses, coercive and others, to protect their interests,⁹ to the point where regime and state become identical.¹⁰ Because of this, pressures for liberalization threaten to weaken the legal and political foundations that regimes base their positions of power (i.e. their security) on.¹¹

During the 1980s and early 1990s, many Arab governments initiated liberalization efforts, including Egypt, Yemen, Jordan and the Maghreb states (Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco), to varying degrees. Yet the reasons behind such reforms are as important as the reforms themselves, for what they tell us about security. Regime security has been defined as the 'maintenance of the core values of the regime, especially maintenance of its basic rules and institutions' (al-Sayyid, 1999: 48), without which the regime cannot survive. To this should also be added the safety and survival of the members of the regime.¹²

Regime security can be affected by society taking up arms against it, due to its inability to look after society's basic needs, or at least to provide effective channels through which citizens feel they can have their concerns heard and responded to. Even without resorting to armed confrontation, citizens might withdraw passive support from the regime, in the form of civil disobedience or non-voluntary co-operation, which might sap the regime of its resources, and certainly of its legitimacy.

Demands for economic liberalization are equally dangerous for regimes, because they can lead to demands for political change. As sectors of the economy benefit from its liberalization (through less state interference in the economy), groups become empowered through greater prosperity. This leads them to desire more freedoms, necessary for the free market and their own generation of wealth, such as access to information and the right to associate. As well, they will demand a greater say in policy-making.

The end result of these demands is that they increase perceptions of regime insecurity. To ameliorate such concerns, regimes can choose one of two options. First, they can adopt liberalization efforts, in what one scholar has termed self-preservation 'survival strategies'. Here, 'the goal of a political survival strategy is to open up the political arena to a degree of participation sufficient to attract support from groups with an interest in political reforms . . . without at the same time creating conditions that might give these groups a means to undermine the hegemony of the ruling elites' (Brumberg, 1995: 235; see also Norton, 1995: 3).¹³

The second option springs from the regime's belief that any liberalization efforts will only endanger it further. Never having been accountable to their citizens in the past, regimes fear what could happen if they do become accountable. Instead of finding out, they opt to use their control of state institutions to repress, if not crush outright, any agitation for change. This has been the case in Arab countries such as Syria and Iraq.

There are security problems with both of these options. In the first case, popular dissatisfaction with the regime has often been cited as one of the main reasons behind the liberalizations (Kazemi and Norton, 1999; Ibrahim, 1995; Brynen, 1992; Hudson, 1991: 424–425). Consequently, regimes that have liberalized do not hold any belief in the inherent value of reforms, and only view them as a strategy, or a means to an end – namely the furthering of their own security. Thus their commitment to these reforms is fragile, with the consequent possibility that once regimes perceive the threat to be effectively dealt with, they will roll back such reforms. Alternatively, if they perceive that reforms have only created the conditions for more demands for change, they will forego this option as too dangerous to their security.

At the same time, by utilizing the second option, regimes not only create insecurity for society (see below), they also harden opposition to the regime and may even force adversaries to use their own forms of violence against the regime. Many militant Islamic groups have followed this strategy.

Societal security

Societal security¹⁴ can be defined as the ‘protection of the core values of that society, namely, protecting the right to life of its citizens, safeguarding its national values, and ensuring its welfare, or at least satisfaction of the basic needs of its inhabitants’ (al-Sayyid, 1999: 48). National values, while important, are not relevant here because the focus is on society’s security from the regime, which itself normally formulates such national values.

This definition of societal security does not refer specifically to ethnicity or any other communal distinction (though it clearly does apply to such distinctions) and the effects it has on intra-state conflict. Such a locus takes up much of the critical security studies literature, which distinguishes this intra-state war from the conventional inter-state security dilemmas. But societal security is not just about intra-state war, though it is equally important and relevant. Rather, the idea here is that the security of societies, or segments of societies, or individuals, can be affected by the state/regime itself.¹⁵

The object of security must also be individuals *as* individuals, not only as parts of the whole (the state) – people are to be secured as individuals, or as societies. Realist or other systemic theories’ focus on the state simply preclude this type of conception, since the black box of the state need not be examined in order to determine why states behave as they do – which is the primary, if not only, focus of structural or systemic theories. According to this redefinition of security, the state cannot, or does not, provide security for its citizens, because it may be the source of that very insecurity.¹⁶ In such cases, the state itself, as wielder of the most effective forms of coercion and violence within its territory, provides the most serious threats to society.

In the Middle East, societies have long been in danger from their own governments. This is a direct result of the lack of control societies have over policy making in their countries, which in turn flows from the lack of accountability of Arab regimes to their citizens. A 1998 Middle East Report summary, for example, declared that despite several multiparty elections in the region, executive authority remained an uncontested position, that vote-rigging was common, and that political opposition had restrictions placed on it that seriously hampered its ability to freely compete. The report also pointed out that parliamentary elections in the Middle East are designed in such a way that usually guarantees the regime the most support (Middle East Report,

1998). Lack of effective opposition to the state means a lack of ability to influence policy.

The 'resurrection' of civil society in the Arab world – particularly since the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s – is a good indicator of the increasing demands being made on Arab regimes, and the efforts by society to have its needs met. Characterized as the autonomous space between state and society, and effective as a buffer against the state, civil society is considered vital for democracy, as it

protects the individual against possible hegemony by the state, creates channels of communication between rulers and ruled, contributes to the dissemination of views independent from those in power, fosters initiative and responsibility-taking, and provides avenues through which the population can make its voice heard, participate in public life, lobby the state, and force the government to account for its actions. (Denoeux, 1996: 32)

The ability of civil society to function properly and effectively within a given space is an integral aspect of political liberalization, both in terms of being allowed this space in which to flourish, and because a stronger civil society is better able to push for political reforms and thus increase societal security. The very growth of civil society highlights the need and desire for these changes.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the Arab states expanded in the name of modernization, at the expense of civil society. In the current conditions, as the state retreats, unable to fulfil its obligations to its citizens, civil society is filling the gap (though not necessarily all of it). Islamist movements have been particularly effective because of their social welfare problems and the tug on the emotional–psychological bond people have toward their religion, particularly during times of hardship.¹⁷

But increased social mobilization endangers regimes that have historically ignored societal security by relying instead on religious or historical symbols and emotions (Azar and Moon, 1988a: 81), or foreign policy distractions to deflect internal concerns. This crisis of legitimacy puts regimes in danger. Irregular political processes based, for example, on 'hereditary political succession, along with repressive and arbitrary political rule based on the personal whim of rulers, deepen the legitimacy crisis and reinforce the vicious cycle of societal insecurity' (Azar and Moon, 1988a: 82). Regime backlashes against militant Islamic groups, for example, affect all elements of civil society, as governments undertake to quash all pressures for change (Sivan, 1997).

There is a vibrant civil society in most, if not all, Arab countries in the Middle East, but it is constantly in danger from the regime. Its existence proves that populations in the region do want to play a role in determining domestic policy, and are not so content under authoritarian rule (Schwedler,

1995: 24). However this does not translate into government willingness to acquiesce in these desired changes; in fact, as noted above, regimes are more likely to either ignore these demands or respond harshly to them. Such conditions create the cycle of insecurity that characterizes much of the developing world.

The regime–societal insecurity loop

In the developing world, regime security and societal security are not often the same (al-Sayyid, 1999: 48). Regimes pursue their narrower interests at the expense of the majority of their populations. As Buzan, Waever and de Wilde point out, ‘only rarely are state and societal boundaries coterminous’ (1998: 119). The Middle East is a prime example of this, where the legacy of colonialism left various ethnic, linguistic or religious groups lumped together under a single authority in a single territory.

Yet the two are inextricably linked together. The growth of civil society and its ability to help pressure governments into initiating liberalizing reforms have placed increasing demands on the state, at the same time as the state is less able to effectively respond to these demands and needs. In turn, this creates a sense of insecurity for governments, who worry that such demands will undermine the foundations upon which they have built their regimes. Most often, they respond by repressing these pressures, thus creating insecurity for their societies. The result can be called the regime–societal insecurity loop – similar, in a sense, to the security dilemma realists note is present in the anarchic international system, though there are clear differences. Another way of putting it can be taken from Dalby’s idea that ‘in the process of providing various forms of security, *insecurities* are also reproduced, often in ways that either actually undermine the initial production of security or that merely perpetuate the problems to which they are supposedly providing solutions’ (Dalby, 1997: 12; emphasis added). Although he is not referring specifically to regime security, Dalby’s conception is relevant and appropriate.

An essential part of this loop is the perception that regimes have of their popular legitimacy, the loss of it, and the measures they take to rectify matters.¹⁸ In the developing world, the existence of a plurality of communal groups within the state means the regime usually lacks the support of some parts of society, perhaps even a majority, since it represents the interests of only specific groups or sectors. This automatically translates into a lack of widespread legitimacy (Job, 1992: 17).

Azar and Moon (1988a) refer to this as a ‘software’ factor. ‘Popular support and acceptance’, they contend, ‘facilitate the smooth mobilization and allocation of domestic resources’ (1988a: 81), which creates security for society, and this in turn creates security for regimes, since they do not need to fear being

toppled by a dissatisfied population demanding more. But since 'demands for economic redistribution and political participation perennially outrun state capacities and create major overloads on political systems', such anxieties are a regular facet of regime security considerations (Ayoob, 1997: 128).¹⁹

Such concerns have been manifested in the public riots that occurred in several Arab countries in the 1980s, reflecting widespread anger and frustration – as, for instance, in Jordan in 1989, Egypt in 1986 and Algeria and Tunisia in 1988. In fact, there is little doubt among analysts that continued lack of legitimacy remains a problem for many, if not most, Arab regimes (Ibrahim, 1995; Korany, 1994).

The reasons for the riots have both an economic and a political strand: in the first place, poor economic performance has led to declining standards of living across the region. Population growth²⁰ and urbanization, particularly in the non-oil states, in addition to placing heavy burdens on social welfare services, contribute to decline by forcing countries to significantly increase food imports (given that many Middle Eastern countries do not grow their own food), which results in higher foreign debts and an attendant loss of ability to fund domestic projects (see, for instance, Dessouki, 1993). The oil-rich states of the Persian Gulf have fared no better: here, economic mismanagement and declining gross national products and state revenues – while continuing military build-ups – have been the norm. At the same time those states have had to cope with greater expenditures because of regional conflicts – first by supporting Iraq against Iran in the 1980s, and then helping to finance the 1991 Gulf War against Iraq.

Politically, these have been manifested in a decreasing legitimacy accorded to the regime. Prior to these financial declines, the ability of states to secure exogenous geostrategic rents released governments from having to rely on domestic taxes for significant revenue, thus negating any domestic accountability (Anderson, 1995b: 32).²¹ This was accepted as a social contract of sorts, where, in return for quiescence in the political process, the government would provide for adequate socio-economic standards of living (al-Sayyid, 1999: 49).²² But beginning with the Arab defeat in the 1967 war with Israel, these trade-offs began to be seen by the population as unworkable, since the defeat called into question the capabilities of the regimes (Ibrahim, 1993: 293). The inability to effectively deal with other regional conflicts also contributed to a decrease in legitimacy (Ibrahim, 1995: 34).

Despite the widespread government inefficiency and corruption, and human and civil rights abuses, among both the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' of the Arab world, however, the existence of these hardships do not of themselves provide the basis for regime insecurity. It is important to note that it is once the government is seen as not responding adequately to them that they form the basis of threats to regime security (Kazemi and Norton, 1999: 80).

For a time, pressures for societal (and social) security and political rights were generally either ignored by Arab regimes or, more commonly, placated by focusing on external adventures or foreign policy goals, thus deflecting attention from the regimes' failures to achieve economic, social and political expectations. The Arab–Israeli conflict, in particular, was a 'stopgap, legitimacy-rich mechanism' (Sela, 1998: 27), but other inter-Arab and inter-Muslim disputes were also used in this manner (Sela, 1998; Tessler and Grobshmidt, 1995: 144). As one study asserts, 'all Arab states tend[ed] to ensure regime security by provoking national security concerns' (Azar and Moon, 1988a: 83).²³ The Palestine issue, for example, was often used to justify censorship and oppression to 'strengthen' Arab states against Israel (Brynen, 1991: 607–9).²⁴

This belligerence, it has been argued, is how regimes maintain their authority, and prove to their subjects that they are 'doing something', something worthwhile and deserving of resources and loyalty. It also means that they can use it as justification for repressing internal disagreement, in the name of the unity needed to face the external threat. Because of this, Lisa Anderson has argued, many regimes find foreign security threats easier to attend to than domestic threats engendered by inferior socio-economic conditions (Anderson, 1992: 166). However, such exercises in foreign policy sometimes lead to a serious depletion of state capacities. This in turn means there are less resources for citizens, which in turn leads to less legitimacy for the regime, as their policies are questioned and loyalty is declining (Azar and Moon, 1988a: 84. See also Lenore Martin's contribution to this volume.).

Some regimes opt, therefore, to enact political reforms, hoping that the illusion of effective political participation will satisfy pressures for change. As one observer has put it, 'political reforms following mass riots are often carried out with the intention of manipulating the public and defusing serious crises of legitimacy and challenges to the rulers' hold on power' (Sadiki, 2000: 89). The uprisings in Jordan, for instance, were widely seen as a sign of the monarchy's declining legitimacy, because the rioters were mostly 'East Bankers', non-Palestinian Jordanians who traditionally formed the core of the Hashemites' strongest support group. Thus, the liberalization efforts after the riots were motivated by a need to reproduce some of this crumbling legitimacy (Rath, 1994: 553). In Egypt, public anger at the reported fixing of the 1995 parliamentary elections forced President Hosni Mubarak to decree a cabinet shuffle in January 1996, bringing in a prime minister who reached out, for a time, to some of the alienated groups.

However, such liberalizations have since been effectively negated by most Arab regimes (though some do still exist, as in Jordan and Egypt). Much of the clampdown on the reform processes can be traced back to the popularity of Islamic groups and their increasing strength in civil society. They have become the most robust source of opposition to the Arab regimes; in response, these

regimes halted or slowed the liberalization process (Ghaddbian, 1997), and many adopted harsh measures against the Islamic movements, which has an oppressive effect on the rest of civil society as well (see Kienle, 1998).

Preoccupied with the short-term, regime security remains the overriding priority for most, if not all, of the Arab states in the region, with the result that society's insecurities are significantly increased beyond 'normal' levels. Tracing Syria's process of state-building and national security, Volker Perthes draws the conclusion that the state's 'prime function, if not its *raison d'être* for those who control it, has been to serve . . . regime security more than anything else', and that 'economic rationalities . . . have regularly been subordinated to the rationality of regime maintenance and control' (Perthes, 2000: 149); in other words, domestic socio-economic concerns are of secondary importance to regime security. In the case of Iraq, as another example, 'the sheer pervasiveness of coercion as an instrument of governance has . . . erased the boundary between external and internal threats' (al-Khafaji, 2000: 259). This is evident in the circumstances that occurred after the 1991 Gulf War, when various segments of society attempted to rise up against Saddam Hussein, but ended up facing a Republican Guard that effectively defended the regime.

Regime legitimacy for Arab governments remains elusive, and indeed is coming increasingly under fire, as socio-economic problems continue to crop up or worsen, the answers to which regimes seem unable to provide and are increasingly unable to handle. Entrenched government corruption and inefficiency is only part of this: increasing globalization, through growing trade, increased availability of international, especially Western, television, use of technology – such as the Internet – and ease of travel, have contributed to the spread of alternative ideas from other parts of the world – including more politically and economically liberal ones. Moreover, Arab governments face a younger population than ever before, as well as one that is much better educated, more open to alternative ideas and more determined to demand change and effect it. At bottom, societies desire change, and many regimes in the Middle East are unwilling to grant it.

The discussion now turns to the case of the Palestinians to illustrate the arguments presented above.

The Palestinians

Many observers contend that despite their lack of statehood the Palestinians have a vibrant sense – and set – of democratic values and institutions, built up over the years in spite of conditions that might be expected to prohibit such institutions (in particular the Israeli occupation: see, for example, Brynen, 1995: 185; Shain and Sussman, 1998). The beginning of Palestinian self-rule in the mid-1990s also seemed to presage a healthy liberal-style democracy.

Conditions have changed, however, since that period, and many analysts have pointed to a growing authoritarianism in the Palestinian areas that increasingly negates or ignores the political and civil rights of Palestinians under its rule.

Although the Palestinian Authority²⁵ has not conformed to Western standards of democracy, including the social and economic dimensions normally attributed to 'real' democracy, it has adopted some of the liberalization efforts on which democracies are based – elections to the legislature, for example. In January 1996, elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) took place; approximately 90 per cent of voters in the Gaza Strip and 70–80 per cent in the West Bank exercised their electoral rights, choosing an 88-member chamber whose power, it was believed, would be able to balance the PA's executive branch. These elections induced wide-ranging debate on a number of issues, a healthy sign of political liberalization (Abu-Amr, 1996: 83). The fact that Yasser Arafat did have a competitor in the presidential elections, despite his overwhelming victory, furthered this assessment.

Basing itself on authority through the people, the general view adopted by the PLC was that it would be in the vanguard of Palestinian democracy, and although it did not, or could not, always dissent from the PA's and Arafat's own policy decisions, it did qualify as an independent pole of opposition (Rubin, 1999: 27–44) – another hallmark of Western-style democracy.

Since then, however, political conditions have deteriorated into authoritarianism and suppression of efforts at political liberalization. There is no doubt that the Palestinian Authority has had, and will continue for the near future, to deal with very serious difficulties, any of which could easily hamper its continued development. These include: economic development; creating stable state and social structures and institutions; achieving unquestioned legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens; and, perhaps most importantly, genuine peace and normal relations with its historical enemy, the State of Israel. These are not easy tasks, but to succeed in them requires the PA to both maintain popular support and to build its state through progress in the peace process and by meeting its constituents' needs (see Rubin, 1999: 2 and chapter 1 generally for a fuller discussion on this). These tasks are difficult for any newly emerging state, but they are complicated in this instance by the fact that a state of Palestine does not yet exist: it does not have a territorially-defined mass, nor does it have the international recognition crucial for any new state to prosper in the international arena.

To succeed in these matters, some Palestinians have argued, the Palestinians would have to forgo some democratic aspects for the time being, in order to effectively mobilize its human and material resources to construct its state (see, for example, Rubin, 1999: 3; Brynen, 1995: 194). This seems to be the direction in which the PA is headed. Numerous examples support this. A restrictive Press and Publications Law was enacted by decree in 1995.²⁶ Opposition

and human rights activists and journalists have arbitrarily been arrested and detained without due process of law; newspapers have been shut down or heavily censored; and a High State Security Court impinges on a 'regular' judicial system. The PA has proposed a draft law that would constrain NGO independence and hamper their activities. In addition, several independent security agencies obstruct democratic practices. As well, the despotic tendencies of Arafat and the PA have hampered the effectiveness of Palestinian civil society. Women's groups, for instance, are very well organized in the Palestinian areas. Yet the PA has been ambivalent at best towards them, if not outright hostile, thus weakening them and their activities (Jamal, 2001). Some observers now believe that Palestinian politics is becoming increasingly authoritarian and despotic, as a result of the PA's attempts to consolidate its own power at the expense of political freedoms (Robinson, 1997).²⁷

Similar to the methods employed by Arab regimes in the past, Arafat has asserted executive control in the name of achieving national goals, particularly against Israel (Shain and Sussman, 1998). The effort to write a 'basic law' for the expected Palestinian state is a good example of the PA's, particularly Arafat's, attempts to deflect political liberalizations and keep control within the executive. Since the lack of any constitution or, in the meantime, a transitional/provisional document, frees the PA from any institutional constraints on its powers, Arafat and the PA have resisted attempts to write one.²⁸

An Amnesty International report contends that, since its very inception, the PA has 'progressively restricted the right to freedom of expression through a variety of means' (Amnesty International, 2000). Real or perceived criticism of the regime is often an excuse for harsh measures to be taken against the offending person or group. A November 1999 petition signed by twenty Palestinians, including members of the PLC and academics, for example, severely criticized the PA; as a result, eight of the signatories were detained, some for long periods of time, without any official reason (see Kershner, 2000: 26–8).

Faced with political stagnation and declining popular support, the PA has become less willing to support political liberalization and more willing to resort to authoritarian measures to enhance its position and implement its decisions (Brynen, 1995: 193–4). Such liberalization poses a threat to its decision-making capacity, and in response the PA (or, more appropriately, Arafat) has adopted a leadership style that has served to de-institutionalize Palestinian politics (Sayigh, 2001: 52).²⁹

Rule by decree is still the most common form of policy making, the PLC having been sidelined and its role in the decision-making process cut out.³⁰ It has, in effect, become 'a debating club whose resolutions are routinely ignored by the PA' (Robinson, 1997: 45).³¹ The PA has also lobbied to have international donors channel money through the PA itself, instead of through Palestinian

NGOs, which would have the effect of negating any transparency in financial matters.

Because Palestinian society does not provide the PA with its income, as empirical examples from the rest of the Arab world have shown, the opportunities for demands for political participation are lessened due to a lack of necessary accountability. This has helped lead to near-complete control for Arafat – as one Palestinian magazine wrote: ‘Arafat is the chairman of the PLO, the president of the PA; he holds all the reins, he controls all the money, he takes all the decisions . . . and he, by and large, is the only law, whose authority is respected, established and enforced’ (cited in Rubin, 1999: 4).³²

The relationship between regime and society is tempered by the experiences of the forerunner of the PA, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), because of the impact of war and external rents that allowed the Palestinian leadership to neglect ‘domestic’ societal needs; and also because the PLO’s particular system of political management until 1993 ‘means that a key struggle since 1994 has been over the definition (or restriction) of civil society and citizenship rights, leading to deepening schisms not only over constitutional arrangements but also over formal and informal mechanisms of social dispute resolution, gender and labor issues, and religion’ (Sayigh, 2000: 234).

Hillel Frisch argues that the Palestinian regime is unlikely to last, on the basis of the conditions just outlined allied to the experience of other developing world countries: the authoritarian nature of the PA, he asserts, will suffer a long-term decline because of conflicts between regime and society, predicated on the growing demands of civil society and the regime’s attempts to control or co-opt it (Frisch, 1998: 146).

This section was not intended as a judgement on the extent of liberalization achieved thus far in Palestinian politics; nor was its purpose to predict what a future Palestinian state would look like. This is too difficult a task, given the many and enormous undertakings faced by both society and polity in the years ahead and the constraints on their ability to perform these tasks. This includes a lack of finances, a lack of a contiguous territorial unit, an Israeli security presence in much of the West Bank, and ongoing (though at the time of writing, seemingly halted) peace negotiations with Israel on the very future of a Palestinian state. It can, however, be used as barometer for the theoretical arguments presented in the sections above.

Conclusion

This chapter does not intend to suggest that all authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, or the developing world as whole for that matter, will automatically take harsher repressive measures once demands for political liberalization

are made and acceded to. Such an assertion is far too deterministic and ethnocentric, and is reminiscent of the political culture arguments against democratization in the Arab world.³³ Rather, the purpose is to highlight the need to explain why some regimes act as they do (i.e. with repression), and why this is an important aspect for any understanding of security in the Middle East. Societies cannot be secure if their governments do not allow them to be. It is difficult to know in advance whether a regime that opens up the political arena will survive the process, for example, by being voted back into office. Some regimes might be; others might share some aspects of their current systems with newer, more liberalized, ones (for example, a monarchy in Jordan co-existing with a directly elected legislature with real powers to make laws and determine policy). Clearly, though, conditions cannot remain as they are if what this chapter argues is true: regimes will continue to feel insecure because of increasing demands by society, and, if they do not initiate political liberalizations to appease such demands or ease the political conditions within their countries, then they will respond with repression, which negates the security of societies.

As noted in the Introduction to this volume, many believe there is a danger of diluting the term 'security' so that it ceases to hold any analytical usefulness, and hence practical usefulness. Mohammed Ayoob points out that this danger can be somewhat avoided by arguing that issues only really become *security* issues when they 'demonstrate the capacity to immediately affect political outcomes' (Ayoob, 1997: 125). Although he does not specify what 'immediate' means, his argument can be taken to support the contention put forward here that societal and regime security, two factors that *do* affect political outcomes because of their linkage and their effects on the political process within states, should be considered part of the security lexicon.

The shift from a state-centric to individual- or group-centric analysis is not without its theoretical or practical problems.³⁴ However, the purpose of this chapter is not to resolve all issues arising from redefining security, but rather to highlight the necessity of doing so. As [chapter 1](#) argued, our purpose here is to act partly as a stepping-stone in the quest for epistemological and practical ends, and for others to build on such analyses to better understand security and contribute to resolving such complex conflicts as the Arab–Israeli conflict. In the end, despite the questions that some of the theoretical conceptions might raise in this chapter, and in the book as a whole, this is not an argument for retaining the traditional security studies concepts; it is, rather, an argument for more discussion and examination, in order to build better theories and understandings. As Kenneth Waltz (the most effective proponent of the realist paradigm – and the most criticized for it) said, 'a theory applies only so long as the conditions it contemplates endure in their essentials' (Waltz, 1986: 340). Given the changed circumstances of the international system, and the distinctive nature

of security in the developing world, a new theoretical understanding of security is necessary.

Two authors believe that Middle Eastern conflicts will now be primarily internal, pitting societies against their governments over social, economic and political empowerment (Norton and Wright, 1994–95: 7). At the same time, no study on Middle Eastern politics has concluded that regimes will give up their powers and positions in the near future, at least willingly; in fact, most observers believe the opposite.

Regime security is not usually thought to belong to the same class as other, more 'serious', security threats, such as the drug trade, global environmental problems, economic insecurity, and so on, because it refers to smaller groups of people, and generally applies to 'bad' objects, such as regimes that oppress or constrain their populations from actively participating in the full political, social and economic rights due them as citizens. But regime security is important, not only because it helps clarify the referent object of security, but also because regime *in*security leads to threats to societal security, in the form of oppression and violence against the populace, or at least certain segments of it (usually those individuals or groups demanding change or those communal groups different from the ruling clique).

As mentioned above, the difficulty in broadening a concept like security is recognized. In some cases, resistance to the inclusion of other referents and sources of security is justified, because of the inherent questions about what constitutes a security threat and how should it be responded to by policy makers.³⁵ But this does not automatically preclude the broadening or deepening of the concept, since the concept as it developed during the Cold War era has become straight-jacketed into a typology that cannot account for conditions in the developing world. Traditional conceptions of security cannot account for individual or group security, thus such theories cannot account for what has been happening in states in the developing world, what has been a major feature of international politics since the end of the Cold War, including the Balkans, Africa, and the Middle East – where in many cases the state is 'captured' by various groups for their own use, which often results in increased insecurity for societal members who are not part of the dominant group.³⁶ Realist attempts to explain these events often end up by describing such groups in state-like forms (see, for instance, Posen, 1993). Such analyses ignore not only the reasons behind such conflict (i.e. communal identity or societal insecurity), but even the effects of such security conceptions on society. Understanding how and why such shifts have taken place is part of redefining security. All this helps to provide different ways of looking at conflicts and how and why they begin, with the attendant hope that this will provide newer ideas for resolving such conflicts. Given the proliferation of intra-state security conflicts since the beginning of the 1990s, it is obvious that realist ideas have been sufficient neither to explain them

nor to resolve them. That should be reason enough for attempts to redefine 'security'.

NOTES

- 1 Barry Buzan adds that this type of conceptualization also served American ideological and foreign policy agendas (1991: 11).
- 2 Larbi Sadiki points out that democratization in the Arab world has 'almost invariably' meant 'electoralization', without the corresponding benefits that are meant to accrue to societies with democratic systems (2000: 71).
- 3 It is recognized here that the level of political rights, hence of political liberalization, in Israel is open to debate, particularly regarding the non-Jewish citizens of the country. However there can be no doubt that this level is still much higher than in the Arab world, and for that reason Israel is not the focus of this chapter.
- 4 Critical security studies literature emphasizes the importance of the difference in processes of state formation in the West and in the developing world. In the former, hundreds of years of war making culminated in the nation state, the core of all practical and theoretical analyses of political entities since then. In the latter, it is pointed out, states' existence can be measured only in decades, and were usually not the result of warfare, but rather had their territory and boundaries drawn by inter-European politics, European strategic necessities, or European economic considerations.
- 5 The 'security dilemma', the result of the anarchic nature of the international system, was how realists formulated the link between states and security. Conditions of anarchy prompt states to seek to enhance their own security *vis-à-vis* other states; this in turn creates insecurity for other states. For a fuller explanation, see Robert Jervis (1978), 'Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma', *World Politics*, 30:1 (January), 167–214.
- 6 By 'developed' is meant the advanced industrial democracies of the West – Canada, the United States, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand.
- 7 In Latin America, for instance, these circumstances are referred to as political pacts. See Frances Hagopian (1990), 'Democracy by Undemocratic Means? Elites, Political Pacts, and Regime Transition in Brazil', *Comparative Political Studies*, 23:2 (July), 147–70.
- 8 This is not to say that the state cannot be understood also as an actor in international relations; but it is to say that the sameness of regime and state is more important for understanding security in the developing world than in the developed areas.
- 9 For an argument about this concerning Africa, see Booth and Vale, 1997.
- 10 Although this formulation implies that peoples without states (such as the Palestinians, as yet) cannot ever be secure, this chapter does not focus on this particular, albeit very important, criticism.
- 11 Ayoob's definition of 'regime security' is somewhat different from that used here. For Ayoob, a security threat is so if it affects the regime's ability to carry out domestic or international politics (1997: 130). His focus is different from this project's: he reformulates the state and security to remain within a realist paradigm of security as threats that affect the state itself. Although his theoretical conceptions are precise, they do not conform to the understanding of security that this volume asserts, which is that there are various ways of understanding security, and all are important.
- 12 Most regime changes in the Middle East resulted in the deaths of former regime members; this is due to the nature of these changes, primarily by coups or revolutions.
- 13 For a good account of the types of economic and political liberalization methods regimes might employ, see Norton and Wright, 1994–95.

- 14 *Societal* security is different from *social* security. The latter connotes public welfare service, while the former refers more appropriately to the subject of this chapter. Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde also make this distinction (1998: 120).
- 15 See Ken Booth 1991 for a discussion on communal group security and a suggested solution – emancipation. Resolution of the insecurities examined here cannot be resolved as easily, since they are caught in a complex cycle of both the regime and the society.
- 16 Such arguments provide the basis for international humanitarian interventions. See, for example, Adam Roberts (1993), 'Humanitarian War: Military Intervention and Human Rights,' *International Affairs*, 69:3 (July), 429–49.
- 17 Numerous studies have used the Turkish example, in particular, in support of these arguments to explain the rise of political Islam and its successes. The conclusion is appropriate, however, for the entire region.
- 18 For an early account of these conditions, see Michael Hudson's seminal 1977 book *Arab Politics*, which argues that Arab politics is formed around growing societal demands and the inability of regimes to adequately respond to them, thus engendering a continual search for legitimacy.
- 19 Saad Eddin Ibrahim also points out that regional conflicts have also weakened the regime – not only by draining resources, but by exposing its impotence in handling these conflicts (1998: 377).
- 20 United Nations' estimates are that Egypt will almost double in population, to 120 million, by the middle of the century; Saudi Arabia will triple to 61 million in that time, and Syria and Iraq will hit 50 million. Cited in Maynes, 1998: 10.
- 21 For the Persian Gulf states, such rents came primarily from oil; for other Arab countries, these rents were procured mainly through dependence on one of the two superpowers or from other Arab states (primarily in return for being a 'front-line' state in the conflict with Israel).
- 22 This is basically an extension of 'rentier state' arguments that explain the lack of political participation as a result of the population's willingness (forced or otherwise) to forgo such participation because the government, through revenue (or rents) generated outside of the state, supplies its citizens with welfare services. Since the population does not produce the revenue that is used to implement state policy, it is assumed, it has no right to claim a role in determining policy. See, for example, Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani (eds) (1987), *The Rentier State* (London: Croom Helm).
- 23 Another study argues that more democratic governments in the Arab world would decrease the intensity of the Arab–Israeli conflict and contribute to its peaceful resolution – though at the same time, the authors do agree that this is not the only cause for the continuation of the conflict. The fault lies on both sides of the conflict, they contend, and there are numerous complex issues such an analysis ignores. But they do claim that increased liberalization would temper the hostility and create conditions for resolution. See Tessler and Grobshmidt, 1995.
- 24 For an account of Syrian strategies in this regard, see Perthes, 2000; for Iraq, see al-Khafaji, 2000.
- 25 When referring to the PA, this chapter points to the executive branch of the decision-making polity, for two reasons: one, it has usurped most of the powers granted originally to the Palestinian Legislative Council and makes most of the decisions that take place in Palestinian society, polity and economy; and, two, since the PA is the government of the (as-yet-undefined) Palestinian state, as is traditional in political science usage when discussing decisions of a political entity, the executive branch is the one mainly referred to.

- 26 The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights has sharply criticized this law. See www.pchrgaza.org
- 27 Robinson reconfirmed this analysis a few years later, predicting that ‘continued and strengthened authoritarianism is the most likely result in Palestine’ (2000: 89).
- 28 For a good account of this, see Brown 2000. At the time of writing, no such document had yet been approved and ratified.
- 29 Palestinians themselves are aware of these constraints: A poll found that 60 per cent of Palestinians who had dealt with the PA believed it to be governed by ‘favoritism, connection, bribery and other forms of corruption’ (Robinson, 1997: 43; see also Shikaki, 1998: 39).
- 30 It does not, for example, have any control over the budget – traditionally a staple of legislative power.
- 31 For more examples of the struggle between Arafat and the PLC, and Arafat’s repeated triumphs over the PLC’s own proposed policies, see Rubin, 1999: chapter 2.
- 32 This is not the result of Arafat’s tyrannical tendencies, Rubin goes on to write, but rather is due to his indecisive, yet impulsive, anti-institutional decision-making style (1999: 4). See also Sayigh, 2001; Abu-Amr, 1996: 91; and Rubinstein, 1995.
- 33 See Anderson, 1995a.
- 34 See Krause and Williams 1997: 46–7 for more explanation of some of these issues.
- 35 The literature on environmental security is a case in point, since ‘environment’ can include numerous sources of concern that might not be security threats, and the difficulty sometimes lies in where to delineate the two. For an account of these theoretical and practical problems (and a proposed solution), see Marc Levy (1995), ‘Is the Environment a National Security Issue?’, *International Security*, 20:2 (Autumn), 35–62.
- 36 See, for example, Douglas Chalmers, 1977. Although Chalmers was discussing Latin America, his idea of the politicized state can also be applied to the Middle East, where royal families or other groups tied together for various reasons have seized control of the state and held on to power with no intention of giving it up willingly.

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