THIS ESSAY ATTEMPTS TO survey the Israeli experience in countering and coping with terrorism. The challenge Israel faces vis-à-vis Arab-Palestinian terrorism is not a new one. It dates back some eighty years to the time when Jews began settling in Israel in the early part of the last century, three decades before the establishment of the state in 1948. We will deal here with the conclusions and lessons that Israel has drawn in more than three decades—the period following the Six Day War of June 1967 between Israel and the rest of the Arab world. At the end of the war, Israel found itself controlling the entire territory of the former British Mandate period (1922–48) in Palestine and administering military rule over a large Arab-Palestinian population.

NATURE OF THE TERRORIST THREAT AGAINST ISRAEL

The source of the main (and almost only) terrorist threat against Israel is Palestinian elements (which are occasionally joined by other
Arab and radical Islamic elements, primarily Iranians) that refuse to recognize and come to terms with the existence of an independent Jewish political entity in the heart of “their” Middle East. This terrorism operates against Israeli targets with a clear, dual purpose: on the one hand, the desire to harm, hurt, and wear down Israel as much as possible; and, on the other hand, the desire to achieve a strategic Palestinian objective—the advancement of an escalation process intended to bring about an open and direct all-Arab war that will defeat Israel militarily and enable the establishment of a Palestinian state in place of the Jewish entity. This is political terrorism. Under existing conditions, even if the losses in Israeli lives and property are relatively limited, Israel regards this terrorism as a dangerous strategic threat, particularly because of the painful psychological ramifications that impact on the Israeli public.

This Arab terrorist activity is focused on Israel in the area of the pre-1967 borders; in the territories Israel occupied during the war of June 1967; against Israeli targets outside of Israel such as political and economic missions; upon the various forms of civil transportation to and from Israel; upon Israeli citizens abroad; against Jewish targets in various locales around the world; and, in exceptional cases, even against third-party targets such as international aviation, embassies, and political figures (as in the assassination of Robert Kennedy).

The great advantage of Palestinian terrorist activity is the extensive support it enjoys from Arab and Muslim countries either bordering or near Israel. This support finds expression in the physical refuge given to terrorists, both before and after their attacks, and in the freedom furnished to terrorists to organize themselves, draft operatives, and train for their missions. It extends to supplying arms and materials, financing, diplomatic immunity, and documentation, enabling terrorists to transfer arms and supplies from country to country without fear.

THE CHALLENGE OF PALESTINIAN TERRORISM

Israel is coping, almost simultaneously, with three different sources of Arab-Palestinian terrorism: private individuals, organizations, and militias.
Private Individuals

The first type is the most primitive and least dangerous from the standpoint of its military and political ramifications: individual acts of terrorism. It involves an individual Arab-Palestinian setting out on his or her own initiative and attacking the first Israeli(s) to come along.

Typically, the first characteristic of this type of terrorist is that the individual neither operates for nor is controlled by any organized terrorism movement. He or she simply acts on the basis of feelings of hatred and/or retribution against Israel. The second characteristic is the type of weapon used, “cold” ones that can easily be obtained: knives, hatchets, iron pipes, and sometimes simply a can of gasoline and box of matches for setting fire to Israeli forests and fields. The only weapons that resemble “hot” arms (e.g., guns, bombs, and hand grenades) are Molotov cocktails, which are easily prepared at home in the most primitive manner. The third characteristic is the absence of the ability to obtain advance intelligence about such actions. And the fourth and last characteristic is the willingness of the terrorist to refuse to plan a getaway. In most cases, if the individual terrorist is not killed on the spot Israeli citizens in the vicinity will catch him or her.

Organizations

The second type of terrorism against Israel consists of acts of organized terrorism. This type of action most often involves several people backed by an existing operations system. Typically, organized Arab-Palestinian terrorism is hardly ever planned and carried out in the manner of a military operation, which is characterized by the following.

Defining the objective of the attack
Establishing the date and time for executing it
Planning the action and obtaining approval from a superior and central command
Aggregating special weapons and employing them for the training of the operations team in advance of the action
Planning media coverage of the action
Another characteristic of organized terrorism is the potential for Israeli intelligence to penetrate these organizations, leading to possible forewarning about impending planned operations. Nonetheless, advance intelligence is rarely so detailed or precise as to enable Israelis to foil the planned actions. Organized terrorist actions include shooting at civilians and/or Israeli forces, planting mines and bombs, attacking vehicles in Israeli territory, and penetrating Israeli population centers with booby-trapped cars.

In recent years, organized Palestinian terrorism has been almost exclusively initiated by organizations identifying with the extremist Islamic fundamentalist movement (primarily Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad). These organizations have introduced a new form of organized terrorist attacks, including suicide bombers on passenger-filled buses or in any other place filled with Israeli civilians.

Such attacks are particularly troubling for two reasons: The first derives from the fact that it is almost impossible to deter the fanatical suicide bomber from carrying out his or her mission. The second is the inadequacy of our security inspection systems for pinpointing such a bomber before that individual reaches a target. Between April 1993 and January 2000, about forty fanatical suicide bombers carried out thirty-six such attacks. The 147 Israelis killed by them accounted for more than half of all Israeli terrorism victims during this period.

A fairly large and complex organization stands behind and supports even a single suicide bomber, and it follows the operation every step of the way. This organization commences its actions by first seeking out young men who are open to being influenced into undertaking a suicide mission. Once such an individual agrees, there is a need to escort the suicide bomber through the complex process of preparing him and his mission. First comes the intensive psychological, ideological, and religious preparation and brainwashing. Then it must provide the explosives and move them to a hiding place near the target, where they will be fitted into a “living bomb.” After these measures have been taken, the bomber is brought to the targeted vicinity and videotaped by his commanders prior to embarking upon his mission. Last, but not least, media coverage of the terrorist act is planned, including the broadcast and
distribution of the tape, which shows the extreme devotion of the suicide bomber and gives credit to the organization.

Such terrorist actions are also executed outside the borders of Israel. These include attacks against air transportation to Israel, official and commercial Israeli representations around the world, Israelis traveling abroad, and even Jewish institutions. The most extreme example of such an attack was the killing of eleven Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in September 1972.

Militias

The third form of terrorism involves armed and organized militias located across Israel's borders. Since no country with a strong central government willingly permits the existence, let alone the activities, of hostile armed militias within its borders, the only such threat currently is from Lebanese territory. From the 1970s through the early 1980s, these militias in Lebanon consisted of Palestinians who were equipped with heavy ordnance, including artillery and Katyusha rockets. Their activities across the border led to serious military confrontations, the height of which was the Lebanon War of 1982 in which Israel invaded and occupied southern Lebanon and forced the Palestinian forces to leave the country. Over the past decade, almost all Lebanese militias have been comprised of Shi'ite Muslim Hizbullah forces.

Such militias and other terrorist organizations have the following features in common.

The objectives of their actions involve a total lack of distinction between harming military/defense forces and innocent civilians.

Even when living and operating in a friendly country, the vast majority of these militias do not maintain a standard military framework of units, camps, installations, uniforms, and the like. Quite the contrary, they choose to mingle with the civilian population because of the concealment this provides and the refuge they can find among civilians.

Almost without exception, these organizations operate simultaneously in a military fashion and a framework that allows them to initiate regular terrorist actions. The “expertise” of Hizbullah in this context is to penetrate Israel for terrorist actions using
individuals who appear to be innocent tourists and to attack Jewish institutions around the world.

Unlike the Palestinian militias, whose goal is to establish a Palestinian state, the common denominator among members of Hizbullah is religious extremism. This feature is what makes it particularly difficult for Israeli intelligence operatives to penetrate the Hizbullah.

The key weakness of these terrorist units derives from their dependence on the goodwill of the host country that permits their operations. The moment the government changes its policy, the militia loses its right to exist, leaving it with the difficult choice of either embarking on a life and death military confrontation with the state’s authorities (and, in the case of Lebanon, also with Syrian military forces) or accepting the verdict and ceasing its terrorist activities or even closing down its organization. Indeed, the Israeli withdrawal from its security zone in South Lebanon (May 2000) has forced Lebanon, Hizbullah, and Syria to reassess their strategy of attacking Israeli military targets there as well as along the border.

PRINCIPLES OF ISRAELI STRATEGY

Comparisons between the terrorist threats extant in Israel and those in any other country are often deceptive. It is important to understand and remember that terrorism in all other countries is usually directed only against the governing authority. Such terrorism does not aspire to destroy both the state and its people. This is not the case in Israel, where the objective of terrorism is the physical eradication of the Jewish state, country, and people. At the same time, in many respects, Israel cannot make a distinction between the comprehensive struggle for its right to exist in the Middle East—a struggle conducted with the neighboring Arab states that surround it—and the struggle against terrorism.

Palestinian terrorism derives from the specific conditions in which the Palestinians and Israelis find themselves, and the proper response to it is to be sought in the immediate environs. As long as the Israeli-Arab conflict continues, and as long as this conflict is sufficiently severe, there will be terrorist actions. Without ignoring the
importance of the external support from Arab states that Palestinian terrorism enjoys, that support has no influence on the basic fact of the continuation of the terrorist phenomenon. Support for terrorist actions by the Arab states or any other third party simply contributes to the intensity of these actions and, to some degree, to the capacity for terrorists to achieve their objectives.

There is no doubt that a political solution between Israel and the Arab elements with which it is in conflict is inescapable. Such a political agreement, once achieved and implemented, will also lead to the gradual decline and ultimate disappearance of such terrorism.

At the same time, this fundamental assumption about the relationship between a political agreement and the reduction or disappearance of terrorism should not be taken to mean that Israel has in any way surrendered to the inevitability of peace or is passive about potential terrorist threats. On the contrary: Israel maintains that it will not be possible to reach a political agreement unless the leadership of the Arab terrorist organizations comes to recognize and acknowledge that Israel cannot be defeated and the organizations cannot achieve their goals without negotiations and the appropriate political compromises.

The unequivocal conclusion is that Israel must intensify its struggle against terror, using every means at its disposal. Only such a consistent, energetic, and uncompromising struggle will accomplish this objective. In the framework of this effort, Israel aspires to achieve three goals.

1. Maintain its position of strength. Precisely because Israel has revealed that its ultimate objective is a political solution, under no circumstances must it allow itself to be dragged to the negotiating table and a peace agreement in a state of defeat, failure, weakness, or battle fatigue.

2. Maintain pressure vis-à-vis the terrorist organizations and limit the freedom of action of terrorists and their potential for success. In fact, Israel aspires to maneuver the Palestinian terrorist organizations into a position of defensiveness and in so doing extinguish any hope that they might achieve a resounding victory.

3. Not only come to the negotiating table from a position of strength but cause the terrorist organizations to do so in a weakened state. It must be borne in mind that sooner or later military confrontation will be replaced with negotiations and yesterday’s enemy will become
tomorrow’s neighbor and perhaps even a future ally. Thus, it is extremely important to avoid taking steps that might serve as future obstacles to the ultimate process of making peace.

Israel’s strategy is aimed at depriving Palestinian terrorists of the natural solidarity and support of the local population for the Palestinian struggle against Israel. The Arab-Palestinian population is a “sea” on which the terrorist depends for both shelter and survival, just like a fish depends on water. Israeli policy has tried to walk a tightrope in this area, balancing between fighting the terrorists and not wishing to stir up the population or create a natural incubator from which new terrorists can be drafted. Similarly, Israel has sought to discourage the Palestinian population from identifying with its own “freedom fighters” in any field.

Moshe Dayan, the Israeli minister of defense from 1967 to 1974, was responsible for formulating and implementing Israeli policy in the occupied territories during the seven years following the Six Day War. Based on his assumption that no people wants to live under the regime of a conquering army, Dayan took care to shape a policy geared toward easing and limiting, insofar as possible, the unavoidable implications of foreign rule. This policy prevailed for the seven years that Dayan served as minister, and a certain momentum carried it through the next five years, albeit with less attentiveness to its letter and spirit.

Starting in the late 1970s, after the Likud Party rose to power in Israel, this policy was turned almost upside down. Dayan’s policy of minimizing the visibility of the Israeli presence was replaced with a policy of high exposure in all conceivable areas of public life. The attention paid to fair treatment and demonstrating respect for the residents of the territories disappeared. Worse than that, the opposite behavior quickly became prevalent, with demonstrations of domination, patronization, and humiliation for their own sake. What’s more, in the course of time all of the characteristics that typify military occupation came to be evidenced by the Israeli army, including acts of corruption.

Added to this mix, of course, was the new Israeli settlement policy in Judaea and Samaria (the West Bank) and the Gaza Strip. This policy necessitated expropriating uncultivated Arab-owned land. Irrespective of whether this land was privately or state owned, it was
the only reserve of land remaining to the Palestinian residents for future expansion and development. The settlement process (*hitvashvut*, a special word in Hebrew pertaining to settling in the biblical land of Israel, as promised according to the Old Testament by God to Abraham) had forced Israel to take control of local water sources, to pave wide roads, and to establish communities that stood out in the landscape for miles around, amplifying the resentment of the indigenous population.

In December 1987, the spontaneous popular uprising of the Arab population, which came to be known as the *intifada*, erupted. This was an explosion that occurred without warning. Although the handwriting on the wall had been clear for many years and many had warned that the situation on the ground was on the verge of eruption, there was no major figure within the Israeli political system to stand up and say that the extant policy was flawed. No one dared suggest the “preventive medicine” of drastically and meaningfully altering it.

**ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATIONS**

The primary responsibility for the war against terrorism is placed on one of the three branches of Israeli intelligence: the General Security Service (GSS, also known by its Hebrew acronym, SHABAK); the Israeli Defense Forces Intelligence Branch; and the Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency. The GSS came to have primary responsibility for fighting terrorism via a gradual process, which started immediately following the Six Day War. The GSS was assigned the task of establishing a HUMINT (human intelligence) network of agents in the West Bank and Gaza covering both the political mood of Palestinians and possible efforts aimed at organizing terrorist actions. When the commands of the terrorist organizations moved across the borders into various Arab countries, the GSS began operating outside of Israel as well in its effort to recruit operatives. At a later stage, when Israel began developing a widespread defense network (primarily in connection with air transport security) both within its borders and around the world, the mission was assigned to the GSS, whose professional staff was responsible for implementation and supervision. The other two intelligence agencies...
also continued to deal with terrorism, each in its respective areas of responsibility.

Subsequent to the murder of the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972, a new position was created: the prime minister’s adviser on terrorism. This adviser has no operational responsibility (and does not supplant the authority of the three intelligence organizations); rather, the adviser’s primary role is to recommend policy and coordinate the activities of the various elements that have operative responsibility for dealing with terrorism.

**ARAB HOST COUNTRY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM**

Immediately after the first Palestinian attempts to organize for terrorism were quashed in the occupied territories, the terrorists moved their headquarters and bases across the border—mostly into Jordan and its East Bank. Israeli policy on this point has been uniform: it is inconceivable that an adjacent Arab country should permit terrorists to operate freely within and across its borders against Israel and expect to enjoy “immunity” from Israeli responses. If terrorists are permitted to cross such a border into Israeli territory, then Israeli forces will do the same in the opposite direction.

This policy eventually, if not immediately, bore fruit. It took Jordan three years to understand the grim options it faced: either take action to rein in and put an end to the activities of Palestinian organizations within its territory or risk losing both control and sovereignty. When a confrontation between Jordan and the Palestinian organizations finally took place during “Black September” in 1970, the terrorists were both repressed and expelled.³

Syria was the next in line, since it permitted the activities of almost all of the Palestinian organizations within its territory, including offices and training facilities. The strong and centralized government in Damascus was quick, however, to establish that these terrorist organizations were not to operate directly against Israel from within Syrian borders or the Golan Heights and that any action undertaken was to be fully coordinated with and supervised by Damascus.

The transfer of the Palestinian headquarters from Jordan to
Beirut in 1971 created a new problem. The Lebanese government was in tatters because of conflicts derived from the delicate balance between the country’s various ethnic communities. It was incapable of taking vigorous action against the Palestinian organizations in Beirut, which launched operations against Israel in every possible manner. With the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon in 1975, the authorities had far more serious problems than restraining the Palestinians. Palestinian operations emanating from Lebanon led, however, to Israel’s decision to enter Lebanese territory in 1982 in an effort to accomplish this mission itself.

By 1993, the PLO was clearly in a weakened state. Adding to its failures along the length of Israel’s borders and the expulsion of its operatives to Tunis in 1982, the stand that the PLO had taken as the only supporter of the policies of Iraq’s leader Saddam Hussein in Kuwait and during the Gulf War (1991) served to isolate it from the permanent support it had enjoyed from the other Arab states. This crisis deprived it of both political and financial support, and it even lost the freedom to use the territories of those countries for concealment or sanctuary, let alone for offices, training, or staging grounds for operations.

From Israel’s standpoint, this was the ideal time to embark on negotiations with the organization, which was at the nadir of its weakness. The negotiations, which were conducted in parallel in Washington and Oslo in 1993, led to a Declaration of Principles (DOP) in Oslo, including an agreement that assigned administrative authority for the lives of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories to an elected Palestinian Authority (PA).

Thus were created the conditions that, to the greatest possible extent, eased the war against terrorism within Israel’s borders and in the territories under its control. The PA not only became a partner in suppressing terror without being hated by its own people but it succeeded in persuading the majority of its people that terrorist activity does not serve their best interests—it only postpones the attainment of a final and comprehensive settlement with Israel. Indeed, during the seven years following the DOP we witnessed the dramatic results of the PA’s intervention in the territories under its control. The number of Palestinian terrorist attacks within Israel and the Palestinian territories dropped from 3,143 in 1993 to 242 in 1999 (see table 1).

Further, since Oslo, the Islamic organizations have regulated
their own activities on the basis of the prevailing political mood. As progress has been evidenced in the peace process and the local population shows relative satisfaction with it, the Islamic organizations have stopped—or at least limited—their terrorist activities. When either a crisis in relations occurs between Palestinians and Israelis or an atmosphere of economic distress appears in Palestinian areas, the organizations use the opportunity to renew attacks, knowing that they can count on popular support from their members.

THE ISRAELI MODUS OPERANDI

In its war against terrorism, Israel has defined four strategic objectives.

1. A comprehensive strategic concept presenting a multidimensional front for the ongoing battle rather than an ad hoc operation comprising only tactical and fragmented actions. Israel has not always been consistent in hewing to this objective, having been dragged more than once into responding to terrorist attacks that had been carried out more to influence Israeli public opinion than to challenge Israel’s long-range ability to cope with terrorism.

2. Combining offensive and defensive operations and psychological and political elements. While the claim that there is no strictly military solution to the problem of terrorism is valid, it is important to note Israel’s unequivocal policy, which claims that there is no strictly political solution. What’s more, it is imperative to initiate operations, which will debilitate the terrorist organizations in every possible manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Hot Weapons</th>
<th>Cold Weapons</th>
<th>Total Attacks</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1,257</td>
<td>1,886</td>
<td>3,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>1,693</td>
<td>2,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>560</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>216</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>79</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Data provided by Israeli Ministry of Defense.*

*Hot weapons include gunfire, explosives, and hand grenades.*

*Cold weapons include Molotov cocktails, arson, and stabbing.*
3. The most important weapons in this long war are patience, determination, and cunning and not necessarily firepower, military prowess, or operational and tactical daring. Within this strategic objective, Israel should also have included restraint and the ability to absorb blows. In this regard, there is a complex reciprocal relationship in Israel between the security leadership responsible for implementation and the political leadership responsible for decision making and approvals. More than once, the security leadership has pressured for immediate military reprisal, fearing that if it is not approved by the government while the memory of a given terrorist outrage is still tangible there will be no response at all. Of Israel's various leaders, one who is fondly remembered as being exceptional is Levi Eshkol, who served as prime minister during the 1960s. In response to proposals for a military response to a terrorist incident, he coined the phrase: “The ledger is open, and the hand is writing!” What a pity that Levi Eshkol was the only leader with this attitude.

4. Finally, cooperation among all the “players” is imperative in this complex war. First among these is, of course, cooperation among the defense forces, the political system, the general public, and—on a special level of importance—the mass media.4

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

It is highly doubtful whether there is any other form of warfare wherein Israel finds that the ratio between the energy invested in offense is so clearly favorable compared to the investment in defensive action. The more Israel invested in defense and security the more it served the terrorists’ interests and objectives. This was typical in cases of terrorist acts launched from across the Jordanian, and later the Lebanese, borders. In some extreme cases, the terrorists were able to achieve their goals without doing a thing.5 On the other hand, based on the clear assumption that the terrorists’ resources are always quite limited, the more the Palestinian terrorists were pursued, finding themselves fleeing in search of hiding places and sanctuary, the more their operational capability was affected. This was due to the fact that they consequently found it difficult to recruit new members to their ranks, properly organize them, train their people, and find new resources.

The first pillar supporting Israel’s war against Palestinian terrorism is intelligence. While it plays an important role in any form of
warfare, it is in the war against terrorism that this role is unique and distinctive.

1. Intelligence in the service of the war against terrorism is very much like that needed by the police in their dealings with criminals. Intelligence has to be extremely specific (providing names, addresses, vehicles, routines, modus operandi, and so on). It has to be perfectly accurate, detailed, and up-to-date. Israel has learned time and again that the shelf life of any piece of information dealing with terrorist activities is extremely short lived.

2. We have learned that, in order to serve an operational purpose, intelligence has to be almost exclusively of a tactical nature. While it has always been of interest to learn about the political goals of the various Palestinian terrorist organizations, their ideological differences, and their ties to and cooperation with neighboring Arab countries, such information has served only very limited immediate operational needs, if any.

3. Israel’s most important intelligence source has always been HUMINT. Because of strict compartmentalization among terrorists, and particularly because of the strict ideological and fanatic character of the Islamic extremist organizations, we have found it extremely difficult to penetrate each and every terrorist cell and recruit their members as our sources. What’s more, the data gleaned from such sources have always been extremely limited in scope.

   It is widely known that the life expectancy of any intelligence source is quite short. In the case of a HUMINT source, it is extremely short. In most instances, the source completes its life expectancy after it has provided its first piece of operational information.

4. A rich source of intelligence, based on the long and ongoing Israeli experience, is the apprehended terrorist. We have learned that it is extremely important to capture terrorists alive. We have had constant conflict between our intelligence agencies—which wanted the terrorist alive, considering him or her to be one of our best potential sources of information—and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) commanders and troops or the police who, motivated by strong feelings of hatred and vengeance, only wish to see him or her dead.

   Experience has taught us that such an interrogation should be
conducted as soon as possible in order to deal with two urgent matters. The first is, of course, the compelling need to learn of a pending terrorist act that might be prevented through timely action. The second, and no less important, is the information that might be gleaned and assist in the arrest of members of the group before they have the time to disperse.

One cannot expect terrorists to volunteer crucial information. Our experience has shown, however, that they may be more cooperative under the following circumstances.

a. If they are interrogated immediately, while still in shock over having been apprehended (in some cases, perhaps also in pain from injuries sustained).

b. If they are interrogated before it becomes known that they have been taken alive. On the other hand, if they know they do not face a death sentence, they see no reason to “play the hero.”

c. In some cases, mild physical pressure may be extremely effective, especially when there is an element of urgency, such as looking for a “ticking bomb.”

5. While we normally extract intelligence from live terrorists, those killed in action are no less important. Identifying the dead, their families, and their villages has, in many cases, led us to the arrest of other members of the same terrorist group.

Israeli intelligence failed in one important area: coping with the infrastructure that raises funds to finance the activities of the Palestinian terrorism organizations. We knew very well of the monies being transferred from around the world and being deposited in various accounts in the banking system. Although Israel knew this routine, however, it did not have the tools for legally accessing these accounts and monies, something that a democratic country such as Israel could not assail.

Another area in which Israel was somewhat lax was in its efforts against the Islamic extremist Palestinian Hamas movement. This organization exploited the permission given to it to establish and operate a legitimate system of educational, health, and welfare institutions (mosques, clinics, preschools, and the like) by turning them into an infrastructure for terrorist activity.
Pinpoint defense—the use of precise protective measures—is meant to provide a response to intelligence about a specific potential attack. Such information should give us all, or at least some, of the following elements about the expected attack: the location selected for the attack (the precise point or at least the general area), the staging point from which the terrorists will depart, their route to the target, the means of transportation between points, the type of ordnance, and the plan of action. Whenever we have had such specific information, the investment in taking defensive measures, in spite of the heavy burden involved, was always worthwhile in terms of the successful results it yielded.

Israel’s greatest and most impressive achievement has been the thwarting of Palestinian terrorism against air traffic to and from Israel. Though large in scale, it falls under the rubric of pinpoint defense. The first terrorist incident of this nature took place in July 1968, when an El Al flight from Rome to Israel was hijacked. The plane was diverted to Algeria, where both the passengers and the airliner were held as hostages for sixteen Palestinian terrorist prisoners.

In the wake of this incident, the Israeli defense establishment quickly devised and deployed a comprehensive security system. This included placing experienced security agents on every El Al flight and instituting meticulous security checks of all passengers and their luggage at every terminal from which the airline departed. This vigilant system has foiled every hijacking attempt from the day it was implemented.

The other side of this coin is the heavy burden these measures place on the country’s budget, the traveling public, and the security apparatus. Coldly weighing the financial burden against the horrible price of a passenger plane blown up in midair with all its passengers, the balance was objectively and justifiably tipped for the institution of these security precautions. Still, after more than thirty years of taking such precautions, and with terrorist attempts against Israel’s air transport having entirely disappeared, it is appropriate to consider whether the time hasn’t come to significantly reduce Israel’s huge investment in such defense and prevention.
General Protection

In contrast to situations wherein specific intelligence has facilitated pinpoint defense, Israel has found itself more than once with information that was insufficient to inhibit attacks or take the necessary protective measures. In such cases, it has had to take general and comprehensive precautionary steps.

Information of a general nature might be about the intention to kidnap a soldier or civilian as a hostage for bargaining, to conduct a suicide bombing mission on a passenger bus, or to plant a bomb where there are throngs of people. Such warnings have been very general for the most part, with no information about when the attempts might take place except something to the effect of “around the holiday period.” Similarly, they generally are not specific about the location. In the best case, we have to be satisfied with knowing that the targeted area might be in “the center of the country” or “the Sharon area.”

In such cases, Israel has taken four types of steps.

1. The intelligence and security services of the Palestinian Authority are alerted immediately in the hope that it will act in every possible way to inhibit or short-circuit the potential attack. Indeed, for better than five years we have been seeing close coordination between the two sides on the operations level. Both have been working together to prevent heavy and painful incidents that might undermine relations between Israel and the PA and the prospects for advancing the peace process (table 1).

2. A proactive step is taken, in almost all cases of a generalized warning of this nature, in imposing either a general closure or a limited one controlling movements to a specific area (if the information available enables and justifies this step). Such a closure prevents free entry of Palestinians from the administered territories into Israeli territory. In parallel, large military and police forces are immediately deployed to establish roadblocks for monitoring vehicular traffic from the territories into Israel. If slightly more detailed information is available, defense forces are deployed at bus stations and even on the buses themselves, at soldiers’ transportation stations, or at the entrances to busy shopping centers.

3. Most important, the general public is asked to be particularly alert and contact the police immediately about any instance that raises suspicion. The special system that has been established in Israel for such circumstances has earned the highest level of appreciation
from the public. This appreciation is in dramatic contrast to the severe criticism the public otherwise levels at the ways in which the police deal with “regular” civilian crimes.

4. Inspections are conducted at the entrances to public buildings. In contrast to the effective precautions detailed previously, note should be taken of a procedure whose benefits are highly dubious. After a terrorist attempt at a Jerusalem movie theater thirty-two years ago, Israel established a huge system of “security wardens” at the entrance to every place of entertainment in Israel. Then, following an attack at a Jerusalem grocery store, another layer of inspectors was posted at the entrances of all the malls and shopping centers in the country.

Thus, for more than thirty years we have had what has become a multibranched system operating with a “small army” of perhaps forty thousand men and women employed daily in this security activity. Throughout these years, there hasn’t been a single case in which this army has succeeded in preventing a terrorist act. During this time, however, no one has so much as raised a question as to their effectiveness and the continued need for them at a level established decades ago and at a time when there was a critical threat that demanded an immediate response to a new challenge. Today, looking at the situation soberly and knowing, as we do, how these security checks are conducted in practice, there is great doubt as to whether they might be effective in exposing even the most primitive attempt at a terrorist attack.9

What is most worrisome about this deployment of guards or wardens—which now encompasses even preschools and all other schools, colleges, and universities—is the absence of a mechanism for regularly examining and assessing the existing security systems and procedures and taking decisions to modify them in any way (whether reducing, expanding, or eliminating them). The basic responsibility for such assessments rests with the prime minister’s adviser on antiterrorism. Under the present circumstances, it would be more appropriate to assign the responsibility to those on the decision-making, rather than advisory, level.

The weakness of Israel’s political system is to blame for this. There is no single person responsible for the establishment of security systems nor for their ongoing functioning. This array of security systems developed over the course of years, not by virtue of a one-
time decision but as the result of a series of “small decisions” based on situational exigencies. What’s more, their applied operations and even their budgets are scattered among different government offices. The Ministry of Transport is responsible for operating security systems at airports, train stations, and on airplanes; the Ministry of Education for security at educational institutions and places of entertainment; the Ministry of Health for security at the entrances to medical centers; the Ministry of Industry and Trade for selecting which large businesses will be guarded; and so on, and so forth. And each and every one of them annually fights the Ministry of the Treasury for its appropriate share of the national budget.

Almost without exception, all of these security measures, together with the huge army of “security wardens,” were initiated in response to a painful terrorist act. Their purpose had been twofold: first and foremost, to minimize the threat of a similar terrorist act in the future; and, second, to convince the Israeli public that the “authorities” have reacted properly with the introduction of effective security measures.

While these measures have no doubt served as a deterrent to the potential terrorist (save, of course, the “suicide bomber”), the real cost effectiveness has been very limited. With the exception of high-security installations, where there are both the conditions and the time to perform a comprehensive check (including with metal detectors), in all other places the inspections have been far from satisfying. There is a need to allow masses of people to enter the sites, and because the wardens are not trained or qualified for their task their inspections are very superficial. Furthermore, little flexibility has been shown in the operation of this “army” of wardens, which could increase deterrence by means of random checks.

PREVENTIVE AND OFFENSIVE ACTIVITY

I have indicated the great importance that Israel assigns to its offense strategy in countering Arab terrorism. These offensive actions are meant to put pressure on the terrorist organization to compartmentalize its activities, to hide and frequently change bases of operations, to constantly reequip itself with new weapons and equipment to replace those destroyed by Israeli actions, and—
perhaps most severe of all—to create an ongoing concern and sus-
picin of traitors and informers who might be cooperating with Is-
rael’s security services.

The key to these preventive and offensive activities depends, of
course, on the availability of precise and updated intelligence.
There is no practical difference between a standard offensive oper-
ation against terrorists and an attempt to intercept and foil a spe-
cific terrorist act based on advance intelligence. One should bear in
mind that any offensive operation against terrorists is always also
serving the preventive goal. In the past, and continuing through the
present, Israel has had to carry out such actions in four different
areas.

1. Activities in the areas exclusively under Israel’s legal and military re-
ponsibility (i.e., in Israel proper and in the occupied territories
wholly under the control of the Israeli military administration or
where Israel has ultimate responsibility for security). As is to be ex-
pected, terrorist activity is compartmentalized, necessitating that Is-
rael take the following steps.
   a. Preventive detentions, including the arrest and interrogation of
      suspicious individuals
   b. Seizing weapons, storage facilities, and laboratories for the pro-
duction of explosives and weapons or counterfeiting documents
   c. Exercising extreme caution not to harm innocent Arab citizens in
      the vicinity of the target
   d. Taking the appropriate steps to protect the identities of the intel-
ligence sources that facilitated the offensive action

2. Attacking and inhibiting terrorist activity in areas controlled by the
Palestinian Authority. The dominant Israeli consideration, with re-
gard to such actions, is political—that is, Israel’s relations with the
PA political leadership and those heading the Palestinian intelli-
gence and security efforts.10

3. Cross-border attacks against terrorist targets in neighboring Arab
countries. Again, in consideration of political sensitivity, Israel con-
strains itself from carrying out direct military operations in these
neighboring countries since such open acts could lead to escalation
and even outright war.11

4. In addition to vigorous and extensive diplomatic activities, whereby
Israel tries to engage various elements to persuade the authorities
in those Arab countries to prevent terrorist organizations from op-
erating freely, Israel occasionally initiates direct covert actions. Clearly, in carrying out such attacks care is taken not to leave “an Israeli calling card.” And, even when all evidence suggests that Israel was behind an action of this sort, it will never make pronouncements or acknowledge its responsibility. Nonetheless, intentions are one thing and reality another.¹²

5. Attacks against individuals and terrorist infrastructures in neutral countries. In these cases as well, almost no one doubts the Israeli responsibility for such actions, but compartmentalization and secrecy make it difficult to unequivocally lay direct blame on Israel.¹³

Targeting Terrorist Leaders

Israeli offensive operations against terrorists have placed particular emphasis on creating the impression that nothing escapes the attention of Israeli intelligence and no terrorist can successfully hide or escape punishment. This is the essence of Israel’s psychological warfare. We work hard to intimate that:

1. There have been numerous traitors among the Palestinian terrorists.
2. The loyalty and credibility of key terrorist figures is to be doubted, and these individuals are directly responsible for many failures.
3. Numerous terrorist groups have sought dialogue with Israel for the sake of negotiated agreement and compromise.

Israel has to cope with a serious question, however, as to the degree to which it is worth attempting to eliminate senior Arab terrorism leaders. The starting assumption for examining this issue is that Israel will not be able to conceal its involvement in and responsibility for any given operation. The implications of this fact demand that Israel examine and weigh the following questions before taking a decision for such action.

1. What the chances are for a “clean” operation, with little risk of complications during its execution?
2. What is the status of the leader or commander targeted for elimination? What are the assessments of the potential outcome in terms of the effect his absence would have on the operational capability of the organization he heads?
3. What is the intelligence assessment as to the nature, timing, and place of potential retaliatory attacks in the wake of a successful Israeli operation?

4. Finally, and not insignificantly, what might the effect be on Israeli public opinion?

The Israeli security services are almost exclusively responsible for making the first three of these determinations. Although the ultimate decision (and responsibility, of course) falls to the decision-making level of government—be it the prime minister alone or a ministerial committee appointed to grant such approvals—it does not have its own tools for assessing and judging these three elements, whether pro or con. Consequently, the functional decision is in the hands of the security system, for assessment of the chances of a “clean” operation is exclusively the domain of the service that would carry it out—the head of the Mossad, the head of the GSS, or the IDF chief of staff. All three, however, usually excuse themselves from weighing the political considerations involved in any given operation based on the claim (unquestionably justified from a formal standpoint) that it is not their business or responsibility to do so. Thus, in making their presentations they will knowingly tend to diminish the likelihood of the failure of an operation and what types of complications Israel and those carrying out the operation might encounter.14

Whenever a terrorism commander targeted for elimination belongs to a large organization, it is less likely that his elimination will meaningfully affect the operational capacity of that group. Moreover, there would be no effect whatsoever if the individual’s functional status is political rather than operational. In such a case, there is a clear gap between the political-psychological repercussions of the liquidation and the functional benefits.15

Such is not the case with regard to the leader of a small and intimate terrorism organization. In such a case, the elimination of a senior operational figure can paralyze the organization’s ability to function for a relatively long time and sometimes even cause it to disappear entirely. A successful example of such an experience was the killing in Malta in October 1995 of Fat’hi Shkaki, head of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. In the more than five years that have passed since then, the organization has been unable to recover from the blow it suffered.
Both military and political Israeli decision makers prefer the “elimination” of top (political) leaders of Palestinian terrorist organizations. Their expectation is that once these well-known figures are killed in a spectacular operation it may serve Israel by deterring other terrorists as well as having a positive impact on Israeli public opinion.

On the other hand, there is hardly any chance of concealing Israel’s responsibility and direct involvement in such acts. This often generates painful terrorist reprisals, and furthermore, as the operational benefit of the assassination is negligible, the terrorists have no difficulty in finding a replacement.

We have learned, however, that the elimination of terrorist leaders on the lower (operational) level is more effective in most cases. It is easier to hide Israel’s involvement in the act; thus, there are good reasons not to expect terrorist vengeance and reprisals and the immediate operational results are better guaranteed.

It is up to the security services (the shared responsibility of the heads of the Mossad, GSS, and IDF intelligence branch) to present this dilemma to the appropriate leaders who have to take such decisions in advance of the decision-making process. This consideration has to do with the third factor, which calls for examination of the likelihood of retaliation and the type of political reactions—especially the terrorist factor—that can be expected in the wake of an operation of this nature. Such an assessment does not, of course, have a foundation in solid facts, but the heads of Israel’s security services can present the decision maker with realistic assessments of what can be expected. Israel has experienced painful attacks directed against Jewish institutions around the world. In these attacks, terrorist organizations chose the easiest targets for retaliation—targets that would cause distress to Israel while entailing almost no operational risks for the terrorists carrying out the attack.

An example of a particularly painful retaliation of a different nature was the attacks by Palestinian suicide bombers in February through March 1996. They dealt Israel an extremely hard blow, which forced the government to halt all scheduled steps according to the Oslo agreement, essentially tipping the political balance and ultimately causing the failure of the Labor Party in general and the personal failure of Shimon Peres in particular, several months later.
The fourth issue, as noted, is entirely within the realm of the judgment of the government. In this area, it is hard to imagine that a politician would willingly forgo the chance to garner a fairly easy prestigious achievement in an area that troubles the public as much as the war against terrorism. And the more complex the military operation the more it lends—whether directly or via reflected glory—a can-do, creative air to the leader who took the decision and authorized the operation, thereby handing him a political achievement. Only rarely will public opinion blame the resulting fallout or political repercussions on the decision maker who approved the operation.

Many—if not most—Israelis have found it difficult to reconcile the vast difference between the political, legal, and moral limitations placed on a country founded on the rule of law, with a society and state that see themselves as part of the civilized and developed world, and the almost total lack of restraint or limitations of a terrorist organization, which is unaccountable to anyone.

If one is to summarize the Israeli experience in this area, the greater portion of these actions—even when they were spectacular from an operations standpoint—have contributed only marginally to Israel’s efforts against terrorism. The political fallout from operations that failed (such as the killing of Busheiki in Lillehammer and the attempt against Mashal in Amman) and the painful repercussions that ensued cast a heavy shadow on Israel’s judgment in this area. And, as noted, these clearly were the products of the different considerations employed by the operations and security level versus the governmental level.

**ISRAELI PUNITIVE MEASURES**

In spite of the fact that Israeli law permits death sentences for terrorism, Israel took the conscious decision, from the first day of its military administration over the Arab-Palestinian populace in the territories occupied in the 1967 war, not to invoke this option. The fundamental assumption underlying this decision was that the harm that would result from carrying out death sentences would be greater than any benefits that would accrue to the struggle against terrorism. This policy had been adopted in spite of the fact that a
large portion of the Israeli public continually calls for retaliatory punishment. This policy takes into account the following.

The terrorist who embarks on an attack (and all the more so in the case of a suicide attack) is not deterred by the threat of a death sentence.

Carrying out death sentences would trigger severe reactions in the international political sphere, severe and painful retaliations by the terrorists themselves, and upheaval in the domestic moral arena within Israel itself.\(^\text{17}\)

The death sentence would deprive Israel of an important future negotiating tool in the give-and-take framework of expected agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

An executed terrorist would be regarded as a *shahid*—an Islamic martyr whose reward is his or her place in paradise—encouraging other young Palestinians to do the same.

Finally, although we do not have direct proof of this supposition, it is likely that a terrorist who knows he faces a possible death sentence in any event will be more determined not to be taken alive. If captured and imprisoned, he or she would likely be inclined to take a rigid stance during interrogation and imprisonment, not revealing the intelligence that is so vital to us.

The assortment of punitive measures at the disposal of the Israeli authorities is rich and varied and based on the emergency security regulations established by the British Mandatory Government in 1945.

- Administrative detention of a suspect whom, for various reasons, cannot be put on trial by Israel.
- Imprisonment of terrorists per sentences imposed by an Israeli military tribunal. Such sentences are the most severe, with the majority being life terms (or even multiple life sentences).
- Demolition of homes or dwellings of terrorists either caught or killed during the course of a terrorist action. The main function of this punishment is to serve as a deterrent to other residents of the territories from offering any form of shelter or assistance to terrorists.
- Initially, Israel expelled key political figures, primarily those who were active on the national level or actively inciting on the local level for various acts of resistance. For a long period, such expulsions served as the most severe punishment and greatest
deterrence of all those in the repertoire of punishments that Israel could mete out.

- Such expulsions could be carried out only if they came as a surprise in order to preclude Jordanian and Lebanese authorities from blocking entry of the deportees into their territories. With the passage of time, the terrorist organizations began to turn immediately to Israel’s High Court of Justice, which, without exception, would allow the potential deportee to present his or her case before a special appeals committee. In turn, this gave Jordan and Lebanon sufficient time to prevent the entry of such individuals to their territories. Later, after Israel signed a peace treaty with Jordan, only the Lebanese option remained.18

Following a severe terrorist action, Israel would initiate a number of security measures. Although the purpose of these measures was related to security—they were intended to facilitate the search for terrorists or to foil additional attacks—their by-product also proved to be a certain level of punishment from which the collective Palestinian public suffered. The steps usually taken included the following.

- A curfew is immediately imposed in the vicinity of the attack. This is for the sake of two security interests: to immediately calm emotions in the vicinity of the attack and to limit the escape routes of the perpetrator(s).

- A “closure” is usually imposed on the occupied territories in the wake of a severe attack within Israeli territory for the purpose of preventing the entry of residents of the Arab territories into Israel. The punishment imposed by a curfew or closure has proven itself, over the years, to be of very limited operational efficiency. The main purpose of this measure has been to mollify Israeli public opinion, which has had difficulty in coming to terms with the fact that neither the government nor the security services have any effective means of dealing with the terrorist threat.

- Various tactical security measures are frequently taken for the sake of hampering the ability of terrorists to initiate sundry actions and in order to consolidate Israeli control and command on the ground.

**TERRORISM AND THE MEDIA**

The ways in which the modern communications media operate; the presence of journalists, cameras, and television crews in almost
every potential hot spot; and their ability to report from the scene in real time, using both words and pictures, have made the media the natural allies of the Arab terrorist organizations operating against Israel.

The Palestinians quickly learned how to exploit the media for their purposes, as follows.

1. Immediate reporting from the site of a terrorist attack brings the horrors of the act into the living rooms of every home and family in Israel.
2. The international media broadcast and distribute pictures from the site of the incident, thus supplying a platform, resonance, and free propaganda to the terrorist cause against Israel.
3. The media also convey a picture of the heavy hand Israel’s defense forces employ. These pictures have a negative impact on Israel’s political efforts in the neutral and international arena.
4. Finally, the Palestinian media assist in building the myth of the courage of the Palestinian “freedom fighters,” the Islamic martyrs who sacrifice their lives for the Palestinian homeland.

At the same time, the media also have a negative role that harms the terrorist organizations and their activities. Foremost among these is the fact that the extensive coverage engenders greater public discussion of the threat and pushes the authorities to accelerate the search for solutions. Perhaps most important of all, media coverage arouses international public opinion against terrorism and this impels governments to take direct action against terrorism and to cooperate with other governments in their war against it.

The negative reactions among the world media to certain types of attacks have had the effect of causing the Palestinian terrorist organizations to stop conducting them. Notable among these is the cessation of airplane hijackings and attacks against Israeli passengers at air terminals around the world. Nor is it by chance that no attempts have been made to take over cruise ships and hold their passengers hostage since the time Palestinian terrorists overran the Achille Lauro in October 1985.

On balance, Israel’s achievements in this area are far from ideal. The following are three recommendations made by a top Israeli journalist with rich experience in issues relating to security.
1. First, the media must exercise self-restraint in their reporting. Stop the endless recycling of pictures of the horror and attendant headlines, cease the hysterical style of writing and reporting so as to avoid exacerbating the trauma, and avoid the creation of myths with regard to Palestinian heroism.

2. Politicians must not exploit the terrorist attacks to advance their political and personal interests.

3. An objective and focused discussion should be initiated—perhaps together with academic and legal authorities—about the concepts of “freedom of expression” and “the public’s right to know” in dealing with terrorism and terrorist attacks.19

More than four years have passed since these suggestions were made. To date, nothing has been done in Israel to advance any of these recommendations. On the contrary, Israel finds itself mired in the incremental and methodical process of growing irresponsibility that prevails in this area. One of the reasons for this is the absolute lassitude of Israel’s military censorship, which has progressively lost its teeth over the years.

SUMMING UP THE ISRAELI EXPERIENCE

Palestinian terrorism does not comprise a threat to Israel’s existence. Moreover, the strategic goals vis-à-vis Israel that the Palestinian-Arab entities have established as a national objective negate in advance any likelihood that Israel will ever surrender to terrorist pressure. Such a capitulation, in Israel’s case, would be tantamount to agreeing that the country and nation should cease to exist. Nonetheless, Israel made a mistake when it assumed that it could address terrorism strictly as a tactical problem. It has been shown, and continues to be evidenced, that it also has strategic ramifications.

The summary of Israel’s war against Arab terrorism since the Six Day War, when Israel occupied the territories densely populated with Arab-Palestinians hostile to both it and its rule, is quite encouraging. Notwithstanding Israel’s tremendous efforts and investments, the achievements in four particular areas are worthy of special note.
Israel's economy has developed and flourished, and terrorism has had no affect on it.\textsuperscript{20}

Israel's population not only grew but doubled during this period, thanks to the massive immigration of Jews who were not deterred by terrorism.

The success of Israel's struggle against the terrorist organizations (along with other developments in the international and regional spheres) is what motivated the main Palestinian terrorist organizations—the PLO and Fatah—to first abandon terrorist activities in the international arena and then—for seven years, now—to abandon it entirely.

The greatest failure of the Palestinians has been their inability to stop Israel's settlement efforts in the Palestinian territories.

These successes were achieved despite the fact that Israel refrained from instituting repressive measures or draconian punishments, which might have discouraged the vast majority of the Palestinian populace from supporting terrorism. Internal Israeli moral and political-international considerations prevented this. These successes also accrued in spite of the failure (which could have been foreseen) of the policy of the Israeli military administration, which was not sufficiently positive and attractive to obtain the genuine cooperation of the Palestinian residents.

The Israeli experience in its war against terrorism has unique characteristics that prevent most other countries from copying and applying it. At the same time, in the post–World War II period of modern political and military history, it is doubtful whether any other country has acquired such rich experience and myriad lessons—both good and bad—in this grim and difficult war. In this regard, the Israeli experience serves as an important primer for every country and society that is called upon to fight the threat of terrorism.

\textbf{POSTSCRIPT}

\textit{This essay, which describes} Israel’s experience in its war against terrorism, was written about a year and a half before the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada. The problems Israel faces today are radically different from the threat that
confronted it prior to that date. The new terrorist reality more closely resembles a war between two states and two peoples, a war in which political and moral considerations restrict Israel's military freedom of action.

The threat of Palestinian terrorism has changed in almost every way. It is no longer carried out by individual terrorists forced to operate in isolation and hiding. Today Israel faces tens of thousands of Palestinian fighters: police and soldiers whose salaries are paid by the Palestinian Authority as well as militias linked politically to the authority or radical Islamic groups. They use firearms without constraint: various kinds of light weaponry, light mortars and rockets, and large amounts of explosives.

The characteristics of this new terrorism, in addition to those previously familiar, are:

Frequent gunfire attacks and explosives aimed at Israeli civilian vehicles
Unbridled gunfire attacks in dense Israeli population centers
Terrorist incursions into Israeli army bases and civilian settlements to carry out indiscriminate killings
Lately, specific attempts to kill high-ranking Israeli politicians and security officials

The goal of Palestinian terrorism has remained the same. Only its scope, its intensity, the nature of its operations, and the number of casualties have changed. For internal political reasons, Israel has failed to reassess its position in the face of this new security challenge and maintains a completely inflexible approach: absolute refusal to withdraw from isolated settlements or military facilities, which could significantly ease the burden of defense.

The increased scope of terrorist operations has obliged Israel to develop, and especially to expand, its modes of warfare. As a chief priority, bowing to Israeli public opinion, civilian security efforts have been greatly expanded. This includes the following steps.

Forming a large-scale defensive security system, manned by military personnel, in all small, isolated settlements in the occupied territories, including both defense of transportation routes in these areas and on the spot defense of Israeli vehicles at all times.
Constructing a system of defensive fences, both normal and electronic, and other fortifications around settlements at risk.

Shielding civilian vehicles on these routes to withstand gunfire.

Distributing personal protection equipment (such as bulletproof vests) to soldiers and civilians at risk.

Deploying large numbers of security guards in public areas inside Israel (bus stations, markets, malls, entertainment venues, and so on). This security force is financed partly by the Ministry of Defense and partly by other relevant government offices and private employers.

Since most terrorist activity originates in areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority, Israel attaches great importance to steps aimed at protecting its territory from infiltration. To prevent uncontrolled entry, Israel has imposed a total closure between its area and Palestinian territories. This closure has been extremely damaging to the local Palestinian population (barring them from working in Israel, severely harming trade, and creating an acute sense of siege in the territories). In the offensive field, Israel has adopted a policy of incursion into PA areas. The claim, which Israel repeats whenever the Israel Defense Force penetrates PA territory to carry out arrests and other punitive actions, is that “since the Palestinian Authority fails to prevent terrorists from operating against Israel, we are left with no choice but to take this task upon ourselves.”

Israel has provided the Palestinians with lists of operatives involved in instigating, organizing, and carrying out terrorist activities. Because the PA does not hinder or detain these wanted terrorists, Israel undertakes focused operations with the aim of arresting or killing key operatives. This depends on the possession of reliable, precise, and up-to-date intelligence, which enables Israel to carry out helicopter attacks against houses and vehicles belonging to such persons or to rig their vehicles with explosives.

In the first months of the intifada, Israel carried out punitive actions from the air against Palestinian government and military facilities. In order to avoid Palestinian civilian casualties, either the targets chosen were isolated, unoccupied facilities or the attacks took place at times when such casualties would not ensue. It was soon realized that these operations were futile and very damaging to public relations, and they ceased.
Indeed, another aspect of this new type of conflict is dealing with the media and public relations. Beyond the desire to cause Israel maximum damage and casualties, the Palestinian leadership has two goals. One is to undermine the morale of the Israeli people so that they will tire of the constant war of attrition and pressure their leaders to adopt a more flexible position vis-à-vis the Palestinians. The other goal is to enlist the support of world opinion and neutral governments in the hope that they will compel Israel to accept an international peacekeeping force or observers to “protect Palestinians” or adopt other anti-Israeli decisions.

In terms of the country’s goals vis-à-vis the Palestinians, Israel hopes that severe economic pressure and the large number of casualties will break the Palestinian fighting spirit and cause the leadership to effect a cease-fire and return to the negotiation table. Israel is conducting a considerably successful global public relations campaign to prevent massive international support for the Palestinian position.

The terrorist attacks by Islamic extremists in New York and Washington last September had a political effect on the Israeli struggle against Arab terrorism. The United States, wishing to assemble a coalition that would include most of the world’s Muslim and Arab states, lacked the freedom of action to classify groups acting against Israel as “terrorist organizations” and states supporting such groups as “states that support terrorism”—designations that can, and should, be used to cast those states out of the international community.

The chairman of the PA, Yasser Arafat, has learned the lesson of his mistake in 1991, when he supported Iraqi president Saddam Hussein in the Gulf War. This time he immediately declared his support for the United States, though making very clear the damage he could cause to the coalition by stirring crowds in Arab capitals into demonstrating in favor of Osama bin Laden. Similar considerations prevented the United States from condemning Iran, Syria, and Lebanon as states that support terrorism (despite their backing of fanatical Islamic groups such as Hamas, Hizbullah, and the Islamic Jihad).

At the time of writing, we do not yet know the outcome of the campaign in Afghanistan against bin Laden. We do not know where and to what end the coalition will next direct its antiterrorist ef-
forts. In any case, as long as Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and the PA are not declared to be states that support terrorism, and as long as Israel is asked to refrain from excessive actions that would force Arafat into making good his threat to break up the coalition, one can expect no significant change in the Israeli struggle against terrorism.