Deterrence – Current American and Israeli Perspectives

Seminar Report of the Deterrence Task Force

of the Second Herzliya Conference

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Preface

The seminar on American and Israeli perspectives on deterrence was part of the preparatory work of the Herzliya Conference Task Force on Deterrence, chaired by Lt. Gen. (Res.) Amnon Lipkin-Shahak. What follows is a report of the two-day seminar that was held in Herzliya on October 25-26, 2001. This report summarizes the major points of the intensive exchange. While attempting to portray the flow of the debate, it is divided along the three major themes the seminar addressed: the conceptual foundations of deterrence; the historical experience of deterrence; and the current role and missions of deterrence in both global and regional arenas.

Members of the task force were joined by three American experts: George Quester from the University of Maryland, and Eliot Cohen and Steven David, both from the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. Given that a number of Israeli participants were governmental officials and military officers who attended the seminar in their private capacity, the deliberations were conducted on a non-attributable basis in order to maintain a frank and open exchange of ideas and opinions. Hence, this report does not attribute suggestions and ideas to individuals.

Conceptual Foundations of Deterrence

One of the American experts opened the discussion by highlighting four basic practical problems with deterrence, and in particular nuclear deterrence, these being: stability, responsibility, extendability, and morality. Strategic stability is founded upon a shared understanding of mutual retaliation and vulnerability, allowing for each side to retaliate regardless of the first strike. Command responsibility raises the issue of restraint and questions whether each side will be capable of holding back retaliation where reason to retaliate has not yet emerged. Extendability points to the somewhat limited gambit of nuclear deterrence and to the uncertainty attributed to the ability of a nuclear retaliation threat to deter non-nuclear attacks. Finally, yet another basic problem of deterrence and nuclear deterrence is that massive retaliation involving civilians (counter-value targets) could be viewed as offending traditional Western morality.

Further into his opening comments, the American expert referred to the *de facto* role of deterrence in maintaining stability. The expert argued that the inherent inability to prove the role deterrence does not diminish its value.

The other two American experts examined the pitfalls of deterrence and emphasized the necessity to place deterrence in a political and cultural context. Both argued that applying deterrence requires: (a) a profound understanding of the adversary's values and forms of cost/benefit calculations; and (b) an ability to assess the adversary's perceptions of the deterring actor's actions and determination in both past and present.

The second American speaker sought to examine in detail the sources of deterrence failures. "The key point in deterrence is that your adversary has the capability to do what you do not want him to do, and you are trying to persuade him not to do it, by making the costs greater than the benefits. The problem is that history abounds with examples where one's adversary believes that challenging deterrence will in fact provoke a response, and that response is likely to be -- in terms of costs -- greater than the benefits, and yet the adversary acts anyway. So again, you convince your adversary: 'hey,

if you do this we're going to punish you, and this punishment will exceed the benefits' - and still deterrence fails."

The second speaker then went on to outline the three factors that may each lead to deterrence failure. He noted a host of psychological factors related to: (a) the inability to make effective cost/benefit analyses; (b) misperception – prevalent especially in cross-cultural exchanges; and (c) cognitive limitations on information processing. Consequently, the mutual understanding of adversaries is low. While employed threats might provoke action instead of deter, threats that would deter are not employed. Additionally, actors tend to overestimate the potency of threats and underestimate the utility of rewards and reassurances. Studies have shown that actors that "challenge deterrence often distort information about the expected cost of military action, the probability of winning, and the probability that the defender will retaliate - the three variables most critical to deterrence theory. You can convince yourself that you're going to win, even if objectively it looks like you're not going to win."

In addition to psychological factors, political factors are also central to understanding deterrence failure. The unacceptability of the status quo could lead an actor to challenge deterrence. Similarly, an actor may come to believe that the status quo will deteriorate and consequently seek to preempt deterioration by launching war. While deterrence literature has attributed deterrence challenging to "risk-prone gain maximizers," the American expert argued that such practice is also common among "risk-prone" actors that are most concerned about loss and are driven less by opportunity than by vulnerabilities and needs. Deterrent threats have no effect on their calculations. At this point, one of the Israeli participants noted that according to a recent study, dictatorial regimes were prone to initiate war preempting a deteriorating status quo.

Following on this remark and his previous comments, the American expert argued that deterrence theory and common wisdom on deterrence fail to appreciate domestic politics and internal decision-making processes. This, according to him, is especially important in regards to developing countries.

Traditional models of foreign policy making do not apply to such countries. In the developing world, leaders make decisions based not on the national interests, but on their own personal interests. In developing countries there is no overriding national interest or identity. Moreover, the regimes in these countries are usually not under external existential challenge. Domestic challenges in the form of assassinations, coups, insurgencies, rebellions, and revolutions are far more common.

This has important implications for deterrence. Deterrence will fail if the deterring actor falls short of understanding the domestic political context in which the potential contesters of the status quo operate, namely: "What are their domestic pressures to act? Who threatens the leadership position of the potential initiator? What policies can be brought about which can either reassure or undermine the power of the initiator?" These questions are vital for preventing challenges to the status quo by targeting adversaries with deterring threats aimed at their particular domestic sources of vulnerability.

The third American expert's main thesis was "that one of the great difficulties in thinking about deterrence has to do with the way in which peoples and countries, analysts and decision-makers tend to misread other societies, cultures, and polities. The tendency is always to reach for a cliché in describing somebody else, and this can happen even when you share the same cultural circle." He also argued that this could also lead to adopting contradictory images of the opponent, which may co-exist or shift rapidly. Moreover, he also pointed out that "there are large parts of the world where the dominant form of discourse at the top -- where it really counts -- is different." This, he argued, must be taken into account.

Alongside the speaker's emphasis on sensitivity to different cultures and polities, he went on to argue that leaders have a crucial role. Even in the Western world the personality of the leader can make a difference. Consequently, official positions can change rapidly at times. This aspect, he concluded, is often ignored in discussions about deterrence. Consequently, the American expert argued that the necessity to place deterrence in a

political and cultural context compels the intelligence community to face two major challenges.

The first challenge is to discover and monitor the perceptions attributed to the deterring power and to its actions. The second challenge is to "understand how the other side processes history … If one wants to understand how other people are likely to be deterred, I think one has to know something about how they process history -- their own history above all … I think it is important to know what it is about their own history that gives them the prism from which they see things, and how they understand your history."

An Israeli expert responding to the American suggestions pointed out that one could detect a sharp decline in the enthusiasm with deterrence among American academic circles. He made the case that one should clearly distinguish between instances in which deterrence is pursued explicitly and those instances in which actors rely on an implicit deterrent value.

An American participant argued that it is important not to view deterrence as quantitative matter, but rather a specific relationship. He suggested not to "speak about deterrence not working; you can talk about a particular deterrence relationship not deterring."

Given the experience of deterrence in regional settings in recent years (further discussed in the following section), one of the Israeli participants argued "that deterrence, threats and all that, at least for countries that are not superpowers, is part of the whole world of international politics -- rules of conduct and rules of the game -- which are quite complex and place all kinds of inhibitions in addition to the unforeseen situation of a conflict in another area."

In a rather extensive presentation an Israeli participant reviewed the international political and cultural context of deterrence, focusing on the problems of applying deterrence in conflicts in which different cultures are involved. His main argument was that both Western and Third World societies assume that democracies cannot deter effectively Third World countries. "I think both sides overestimate what totalitarian societies can do, and they

underestimate what democratic societies can do. If you look at democratic societies, they very often think that deterrence is not possible because: (a) of what we are; and (b) of what they are. [Democracies believe] that there are certain things we can not do; that there are certain things we cannot stand for a long period of time; that there is a certain punishment we cannot take for a long period of time; and there is the assumption that they, namely those societies that are different than us, can take anything." On the other hand, members of totalitarian systems tend to view the weaknesses of democracies and find it difficult to understand the mechanism through which democracies develop resolve. To tackle this, the speaker argued that Western countries should engage in a more effective information policy that would focus on the unique characteristics of democratic societies. In the meantime, democracies "need to demonstrate [resolve] in their actions."

One of the Israeli experts warned his colleagues that there is a sense of 'fuzziness' in the deterrence debate. The loosest form of referring to deterrence, i.e., any cost/benefit calculation an adversary makes, dilutes the concept of deterrence because situations of that kind are rather common. Such references could lead to erroneous calculations. Deterrence is a product of "a doctrine pursued explicitly -- both in its declaratory components and its capabilities." Challenged by deterrence, the opponent is being faced with an explicit threat of disproportionate punishment should it take a pre-defined action. The force structure and the conduct of leaders should reflect the explicit deterrence policy in an evident manner. In explicit deterrence, supported by the threat of disproportional threat, thresholds, also known as 'red lines', become an important component of the conducted doctrine.

An American participant argued that disproportionality is a problematic concept -- it lacks clarity, and misuse could easily lead to loss of credibility. To this, the Israeli participant said that while perhaps disproportionality is conceptually problematic, the basic equation of deterrence should be that an adversary has to face a situation in which the costs that would be incurred by punishment would significantly -- and not marginally -- outweigh the benefits

of action. Given the problematic nature of deterrence it is employed as a fallback solution when a credible defensive option does not exist.

Another Israeli participant contended that denial of success is doubtful and unreliable because the perpetrator could hope for surprise. Moreover, when deterrence by way of success denial is applied solely, the confrontation is limited to the resources the challenger commits to the conflict. Said otherwise, the challenger is in the position to limit for its own benefit the potential punishment he might incur.

The Historical Experience of Deterrence

Global Arena

An American expert discussed in detail the role of nuclear deterrence and strategic stability during the Cold War. In his discussion, he placed emphasis on reinforcing mutually assured retaliation and vulnerability in order to sustain stability. Referring to the debate among Western strategists on the validity of deterrence during the Cold War, the American expert discussed the problematic perception of opponents' motives. While he concurred with the proposition that the potential retaliation must expose the opponent's self-perceived vulnerability, he questioned assessments offered by certain Western strategists that the Soviets practiced irrational behavior, or that they perceived the expected retaliation as such that would not expose their potential vulnerability.

Middle East Regional Arena

Conventional and Nuclear deterrence: An American expert argued that Nasser's actions in June 1967 leading to the Six-Day War exemplified the role of psychological factors that could develop deterrence failure. Up till April-May 1967 "Nasser was convinced that going to war with Israel would be suicidal and therefore he was successfully deterred. But many accounts argue that over several weeks Nasser was overwhelmed with information and became persuaded that he could defeat Israel. But the situation on the ground had not changed; the objective situation had not changed - Israel's military ability hadn't changed, but Nasser convinced himself that: hey, you know, if war comes we're going to win. And as a result deterrence failed, and the 1967 War ensued."

To that an Israeli participant later responded that the sources of Nasser's decision to start a confrontation with Israel in 1967 were domestic and regional pressures to prove that "he has not forsaken Palestine." He went

on to argue that Israeli deterrence failed in 1973 "only if you look at it in a very narrow sense" as Sadat chose to launch "a very limited war."

Another Israeli participant argued that Israel at the time "did not practice a pure form of deterrence strategy." Between 1967 and 1973, "Israel's policy at the time was basically defensive, predicated on the deterrent value that is inherent in the ability to deny the opponent the accomplishments of its objective, which is a very limited form of deterrence; nor is it always persuasive, because you have to present a cost which significantly outweighs the benefits, and not only marginally so. Also, given that there was no declaratory component to the Israeli policy, there was no explicit strategy of deterrence. Therefore to the extent that it did not work, it should not be described of a failure of deterrence *per se*."

An American participant argued that while Nasser was forced to take steps that eventually led the region to war, Israel still had two options. First, Israel could have attempted to deter those who were pushing Nasser to confrontation. Second, Israel could have perhaps tried to raise the level of threats in its deterrent posture - "to deter him even more so that he would have chosen not to go to war."

One of the Israeli participants raised two recent instances in which conventional and nuclear deterrence did not work on the regional level. First he raised the case of the Indian-Pakistan conflict escalation in the late 1990s. According to classical theory the fear of escalation to unacceptable levels of damage because both sides possess nuclear weapons will deter even low-scale conventional conflicts and perhaps even any armed conflict, according to the parallel of the antecedent of the superpowers. This did not happen between India and Pakistan. Moreover, one of the worst conflicts that erupted between them took place after both of them carried out their nuclear tests. The Israeli suggested that one reason is that somehow the importance and relevance of nuclear weapons has greatly abated since the demise of the Soviet Union. Even though both regional powers possess nuclear weapons, this weaponry became less relevant to their waging of warfare at various

intensity levels. The Israeli argued that further study on this conflict is required.

The other case in which deterrence failed or did not meet early expectations was the Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon. One of the considerations was that the withdrawal would greatly enhance deterrence against Syria and Lebanon. Israel, by pulling out of Lebanon and accepting the internationally agreed border, would gain legitimacy and consequently much more credence both to its threats to retaliate and to actual retaliation, if necessary. Therefore, Israel assumed that it would be much easier to guarantee that the border would remain quiet even though the pullout was unilateral. "This did not quite happen the way it was envisaged even though the intensity of the cross-border aggression is much, much lower today. This idea of having much more freedom as far as retaliation goes did not work out eventually" despite a certain change in the 'rules of game'.

Later, these observations generated several comments. One of the Israeli participants attributed the Israeli failure to enhance its deterrent posture to what he defined as the almost complete erosion of Israel's overall deterrent posture since the 1970s (this is further discussed in the third section). Another Israeli participant responded to the South Asian situation arguing that it was not a failure of deterrence, but rather a "failure to think about deterrence."

The Israeli expert that emphasized the necessity to focus upon instances of explicit deterrence (see above in the previous section) argued that Israel practiced such a policy very rarely. The most recent example of such a classical form of deterrence was the pronounced doctrine of Israel regarding Lebanon following the 2000 unilateral withdrawal from south Lebanon. The second notable example is Israel's non-conventional deterrence policy. Despite the ambiguity of the policy it is a "very well calibrated policy tailor-made to the situation with great exactitude -- there is an exactitude in ambiguity."

Israel's Experience with Deterrence Linkage: An Israeli military official presented a discussion on the Israeli experience of employing different types of deterrence, their interrelationship, and effect on Israel's deterrent posture. The officer discussed the use of conventional and non-conventional deterrence, limited deterrence (i.e., deterring an adversary from using certain weaponry and/or crossing pre-determined 'red lines' or thresholds), and deterrence in LICs (Low Intensity Conflicts).

The officer discussed previous successful cases of limited deterrence, those being Saddam Hussein's decision not to use non-conventional warheads in missile attacks on Israel during the Gulf War and the limited goals of Egypt's 1973 campaign. In both cases, the officer argued, the myth of Israel's non-conventional capacities proved decisive.

The interesting question the officer raised was the interrelationship between various types of deterrence and their impact on Israel's general deterrence posture. The problematic application of deterrence to forms of LIC violence and combat might affect the deterrent posture of Israel negatively. Generally speaking, the officer contended that Israel has successfully established non-conventional deterrence in its region. Its successful conventional deterrence with non-conventional deterrence have forced Israel's adversaries to develop other forms of combat and confrontation which would side-step those forms of deterrence, hence the effort placed on low intensity forms of confrontation, i.e., guerrilla warfare and terrorism.

Since Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon, and given the continuing albeit limited confrontation with the Hezbollah, Israel has sought to 'upgrade' the level of deterrence by applying measures of deterrence in a sphere in which it is able to maintain a deterrent posture. That is to say that instead of engaging the Hezbollah in terms of deterrence, Israel has engaged Syria on these terms and has attempted to build up a deterrent posture on its Northern front with use of superior conventional force (specifically - air attacks on Syrian military locations in Lebanon). The officer also pointed to yet another lesson of Israel's experience in Lebanon, that being establishing

clear limits for adversaries' actions, beyond which punitive retaliation will be severe.

Current Roles and Missions of Deterrence

Global Arena

Nuclear and Conventional Deterrence: An American expert underlined the central role of mutual assurance of retaliation and vulnerability in maintaining nuclear deterrence and strategic stability. That being said, post Cold War thinking is less focused on nuclear powers, while rogue states have captured the most attention. Based on the Cold War experience, he suggested prudence in attributing a sense of invulnerability to possible American retaliation attributed to rogue states and China. At the same time he also rejected the view that arms reduction would provide stability, because it reduces the sense of mutual assurance of retaliation and vulnerability. He also cautioned that the belief in the US that the issue of extendability is no longer important from the American standpoint seems to be misplaced. While agreeing that Soviet, or for that matter Russian, conventional forces are no longer a potent threat as in the heydays of the Cold War, the US should examine the extendability question in relation to the ability to deter chemical and biological warfare and in certain regional 'hotspots' such as the Korean peninsula.

Another American expert questioned the utility of deterrence theory to contemporary international power relations. The formal literature "is predominantly American and it is predominantly post-1945. In fact, a lot of what is laid out in that theory, even though it is put in abstract, even universal, terms, reflects a very particular kind of situation – and that is the US-Soviet standoff."

Deterrence and International Terror: Further developing the problem of command responsibility, an American participant argued that adversaries with less of a vested interest in avoiding escalation lead to what he coined a "super deterrence problem." Namely, it seems that Osama Bin-Laden is adopting guerrilla tactics of popular mobilization – baiting governments into launching a major conventional attack or even a nuclear attack. Doing so, Bin

Laden is hoping to increase the resentment and hostility of the Moslem world against the West. Given this, the expert suggested resort to "the old deterrence by defense," seeking to minimize the effectiveness of potential terrorist attacks, rendering the terrorist effort useless. The expert argued that there is a widespread belief that suicidal terrorists "are fundamentally undeterrable." The question he left open was: "The worry about how to deter is what do they care about that you can confront them with and say: 'if you attack, you will lose in terms of what you care about'. In the meantime, it seems that the most viable option is to seek deterrence through massive punishment."

One of the American experts noted that currently the US is experiencing substantial difficulties in sustaining and utilizing a deterrent image vis-à-vis non-Western actors. The source of these difficulties is the cross-cultural barrier and it is evident in the two completely contradictory though co-existing images of the US. One attributes weakness and lack of commitment, while the other views the US as an "extraordinarily capable superpower that can do anything."

An American expert also pointed out that the American mobilization process has always been slow. But, he argued, there is a big difference between current mobilization efforts responding to international terrorism and previous ones such as the Gulf War and World War II. Much of the American mobilization effort will be defensive, based on the premise that "successful defense is very important in deterrence."

One of the American speakers argued, in fact, that the impact of the events of September 11th and their aftermath cannot be exaggerated. "The great battles, won or lost, change the entire course of events; create new standards of values, new moods, and new atmospheres in armies and in nations to which all of us conform. It seems to me that September 11th actually is a very good example of that. It has created new values, new moods, and new atmospheres. It should be understood in that sense as a battle, even though one of the arguments which continues to go on in the

United States actually is whether 'battle' is the right way to think about it, and whether 'war' is the right term to be using."

The American speaker further argued that these events have exposed significant American vulnerabilities and questioned American deterrent capabilities. The perception of American determination to extract substantial punitive actions is rather low, though the US is still regarded as a massive power with enormous resources at its disposal. He claimed that non-state actors such as Bin Laden cannot be deterred, only punished. Accordingly, efforts should be focused on prevention and on destruction and killing the leadership. He noted that another area of action was against states sponsoring non-state terrorist activity. Future deterrence in this respect will depend to a large extent on the unfolding events in Afghanistan and the future of the Taliban regime.

The expert also pointed out that the media environment has an important role in applying deterrence. Both American and Israeli information policies are lacking and seem to fail to consider the way messages, deterrent messages included, are conveyed to the other side. Policymakers should appreciate that the messages conveyed are not only those that appear in presidential addresses or in diplomatic notes.

Another American speaker suggested that in addition to these efforts, there should also be a worldwide effort of mobilizing moderate Islam against fundamentalist Islam.

An Israeli expert pointed out that a neglected aspect of 'Al-Qaida' and Islamic extremists is that their actions appeal to a deeply embedded sentiment in the Arab world. "Arabs feel that they live in a situation that is unacceptable as a civilization. They failed again and again in any major attempt through which they have sought to find the place they believe they deserve in the world. If an Arab leader comes to them and says: 'I will give it to you', then he has tremendous support in the Arab world." The expert also contended that the wider repercussions are ignored. "I am not afraid of more terrorist actions, but from people coming to the conclusion that they finally found a way to change the balance of power in the world [whether or not

such a conclusion would be sound]." He went on to argue that suggestions that the West should "deal with the underlying features of terrorism [reflect] a very dangerous misconception in my view." Instead, the only way to maintain some stability is to demonstrate that the events of September 11th do "not bear political fruits."

One of the Israeli participants argued that despite the lack of enthusiasm within the American establishment with regard to the concept of deterrence, it is still important to look into it and to carefully examine its current potential contribution. The reason for this necessity was that there is a "lack of alternative postures … however limited, problematic and difficult is the concept of deterrence in both theory and practice." For that purpose the Israeli speaker urged his colleagues around the table to examine potential sources of vulnerability that would threaten 'Al-Qaida' and Islamic fundamentalist terrorists. He spoke of "unthinkable contingencies" that would not differ much in terms of morality from the nuclear strategy of mutually assured destruction. The speaker suggested as a counterfactual exercise to examine the option to harm symbols of Islam, e.g., to contaminate the holy sites of pilgrimage for a limited period of time.

Two of the American experts questioned the utility of such an approach. The first argued that Bin Laden's terrorist network, unlike state actors, cannot be denied value, as previously suggested. The second expert argued that such a response might act as a rallying point for mobilizing even further the Arab world against the West.

The third expert argued that the line of examining potential threats is the "right way of thinking because we want to find something that these people value that we can threaten so they will not do things that they are capable of doing." But he too agreed that targeting holy Muslim sites could be counterproductive and ignite widespread anti-Western mobilization across the Arab world that would threaten their moderate regimes. He argued that a major effort should be directed towards preemption and defense.

One of the Israeli participants argued that the debate focusing on vulnerabilities of terrorist networks is not helpful. However, "when we connect

terror to a country, we can be much more effective in deterrence."
Nevertheless, the speaker doubted whether the international sanctions on
countries hosting terrorists would be effective.

Another Israeli speaker pointed out that the conflict is asymmetrical
and the applied deterrence is not mutual. Exploration of options to deal with
the religious extremism is vital. The Israeli argued that the source of the
conflict is the substantial socio-economic divide between the Western and
developing worlds. Given that the Western world is too small in number to
change the socio-economic reality considerably in the developing world, a
strategy of appeasement would fail. Similarly, protection or direct defensive
measures are also an unsatisfactory strategy. The most viable option is
punishment -- and to an extent -- punishment is deterrence.

The speaker pointed out that from his point of view deterrence and
punishment in an asymmetrical conflict of this sort could raise an ethical and
moral problem. For deterrence to be credible and effective, punishment
should be unproportional, thus giving credence to the currently questionable
willingness of the West to make full use of its force. The Western sensitivity
towards casualties on both sides -- especially among "innocent people" is
misplaced, according to him. In the Middle East, tribes and the larger families
share traditionally a wide responsibility for the deeds of its members, even if
conducted individually. While this might seem to run against Western ethic, it
is part of the code of behavior in the Arab world.

Another American speaker raised the issue of confidence in applying a
deterrent posture vis-à-vis the non-Western world. "Our deterrent position
and our whole ability to act with respect across the Third World depends on
our self-understanding and self-respect. It is hard to deter if you feel full of
guilt -- unnecessary or wrongful guilt. A large part of the deterrence is
deterrence by character."

One of the Israeli participants argued that insufficient thought has
been allocated to trying to identify targets and value structures of al-Qaida.
He went on to say that the network is a "structured organization which
probably has a lot more at stake in terms of what could be threatened" than

many assume. An American responded to this by saying that the Administration is not trying to identify value structures, but rather "go after" the members of the terrorist network also by deploying CIA covert operations.

The presentation concerning cross-cultural deterrence between Western and non-Western countries opened an intensive exchange on the sources of different political cultures and their possible malleability. The reason for discussing this topic was an attempt to evaluate the sources of the cultural divide and to assess the prospects of change. The participant identified that a major determinant of the cross-cultural relationship between Western and non-Western societies were deep grievances in the less developed societies, which also serve as a fertile source of terrorism. One of the Israeli participants argued that the possibility of effecting domestic political change in the Arab developing countries is rather slim. Another Israeli participant pointed to the socio-economic predicament that stems from the demographic situation. Other participants pointed to prevalent corruption and the absence of the rule of law. Yet others also pointed to the absence of leaders' accountability.

The basic question this debate raised was whether efforts of Western societies to change the domestic situation would be effective. One of the Israeli participants objected and developed several points to deal with the confrontation between Western and non-Western societies. These points were aimed at both the global level of confronting international terrorism and at the regional level in which Israel is dealing with Palestinian violence.

First, the Israeli speaker pointed out that the efforts of terrorist groups are directed at the internal cohesiveness of Western societies. The current response in the US and in Israel seems to be opposite. "The fact that this challenge cements these societies is a very good deterrent element."

Second, Western societies should commit themselves not to grant the political objectives of the perpetrators of violence. Rather, following violence Western societies should make it a point to grant them less than they intended prior to the outbreak of violence. Otherwise, the Israeli speaker argued, violence will continue to be regarded as an effective tool for obtaining

political objectives. Moreover, it will prove to Arab societies that their sacrifice was futile. Third, Western societies should demonstrate that democratic and liberal values will not shield the non-Western societies from effective Western response.

The Israeli speaker argued that the Western response should target the decision-makers and individual terrorists and not the mass public. Deterrent threats and punishment should aim at what decision-makers personally value: their life, dignity, and property. Finally, the Israeli expert warned that effective Western responses would increase the propensity of terrorists to produce more and larger-scale violence. Consequently, the Western leadership should prepare the public in their countries for a prolonged effort that will incur substantial violence and casualties.

One of the American participants argued that despite his predisposition to support most of the suggestions the Israeli participant made, he argued that it would be wrong to dismiss the possibility of an international effort to deal with the 'root causes'. One of the Israeli participants argued that unlike international aid programs in Africa and in Asia, the Americans do not require from Middle Eastern countries that they apply measures to enhance domestic civil rights and the rule of law. Another American participant pointed out the danger of not presenting explicitly possible rewards for cooperative behavior alongside deterring threats. The American warned against viewing the confrontation and relationship between Western and non-Western societies and between Israel and the Palestinians as inherently a zero-sum game. To this, the Israeli speaker that introduced the above points argued that demonstrating the futility of violence and the consequent suffering would induce cooperative behavior that would be rewarded, even if that would not meet the expectations and stated political objectives of the Arab societies. The Israeli pointed out that following the outbreak of violence Israel was inclined initially to grant more concessions, but that willingness was countered by further and intensified violence.

There was wide support for the notion that deterring suicidal terrorists would seem to be impossible and therefore effort should be placed on

deterring state-sponsored terrorism and states that grant shelter and assistance to terrorist networks. Some of the participants expressed optimism and argued that such practice could be eliminated. One of the Israeli participants discussed the difficulties Israel has experienced in its attempts to profile suicidal terrorists. He put forward the possibility that there is a way to convince potential suicidal attackers not to go through with their plans. He suggested targeting the families of suicidal attackers in ways that might deter potential terrorists from carrying out their plans.

Based on a presentation of Israel's use of conventional and non-conventional deterrence in LICs, an Israeli military official suggested that deterrence should be applied not necessarily directly at the source of terrorism or guerrilla warfare but rather on other actors and arenas in which the deterring power can apply conventional or non-conventional deterrence.

The Israeli participant that argued that there is a necessity to understand deterrence, conceptually and practically, as an explicit threat of disproportionate punishment, pointed out that the low intensity situation attributed to terrorism also reduces the scope of acceptable retaliatory capability, ergo the possibility to deter terrorism is substantially limited.

Another Israeli participant contended that such an understanding of deterrence, particularly -- though not exclusively -- in the context of international terrorism is too narrow. Rather, he suggested considering the denial of legitimacy as a potential lever deterring terrorism.

One of the American participants argued at this point that the distinction between deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment is relevant for the debate on deterring international terrorism. He also argued that the idea of graduated deterrence involving multiple thresholds applies to international terrorism as well -- a result of international public opinion pressure to utilize proportionate responses. To this an Israeli participant pointed out that such an approach is dangerous as it could create confusion and be viewed by terrorist actors particularly as a manifestation of low credibility. He also claimed that deterrence by denial in the case of

determined suicidal individuals is unreliable because of the inadequacy of defenses. Therefore, deterrence by punishment is especially important.

Another participant maintained that in the current effort to deter states from hosting and assisting international terrorism, applying political and economic measures to create disproportionate response is more relevant than military measures. Following a short discussion, most participants agreed that long-term activity of international terrorist networks requires the voluntary support of a host country. While sporadic terrorist attacks could be launched without the support of a host country, sustained terrorist activity does require a host country. Thus, the international community should direct its efforts to deterring potential countries from lending support and ground bases to international terrorist networks. Moreover, the general belief was that a successful effort vis-à-vis host countries would reduce substantially, if not minimize, the capabilities of international terrorist networks.

One of the Israeli participants suggested considering possible actions that might deter future suicidal terrorists by threatening to harm their families. The participant acknowledged the morality problem of such a proposal but argued that "from utilitarian and ethical points of view, it seems to be less harmful to hit the families than causing one million people to emigrate from their own country to somewhere they will perhaps die during the winter."

One of the Israeli participants warned that the American effort should not be channeled to retribution but also toward restoring its deterrent and powerful image. At the moment, the participant argued, the US is struggling with a problematic deterrent image due to the contempt commonly held in the Arab world towards the US. One of the American participants conceded that over the last decade the US has squandered its deterrent capability following Desert Storm and agreed that one of the most important efforts in the current campaign should be to bolster the American deterrent image. Another Israeli maintained that a one-time effort would not suffice.

An American participant stated that the current position of the American Administration is to deal with international terrorism incrementally

and that the campaign in Afghanistan is the first stage. He also pointed out that further steps have yet to be determined. He predicted that it might take a few years for the US to re-establish its deterrent image.

The participants also debated the effects of the American international coalition-building efforts on the Israel-American relationship and on the deterrent image of each. One of the Israeli participants argued that the US seems to be sacrificing its strategic alliance with Israel in return for operational convenience and that has a detrimental effect upon both countries' deterrent image.

Another Israeli participant made the case that the US in the current campaign against the Al-Qaida network and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan is, in fact, rewriting international rules-of-game in respect to international terrorism. This campaign reflects a major change in the attitude of the US. He also argued that the campaign might send a broader message concerning the effectiveness of terrorism as a political instrument. Deterring individual terrorists might be unlikely. Nevertheless, an effort to have the perpetrators and facilitators incur high costs and minimal benefit could serve as a major deterrent from using terror as a political instrument.

Regional Arena

One of the Israeli participants argued that Israel has almost irrevocably eroded its deterrent position since the 1970s. "One of the most important things in deterrence is credibility … Ever since the 1970s, Israel has proved that it has no resolve whatsoever… Every time an Israeli politician or leader has categorically stated: "This is a red line and we will not budge from it," it has eventually turned out that if the Arabs are resolute enough, the line changes from red to pink and eventually disappears. So in a situation like that, it is very difficult to maintain the credibility component of the deterrence." The participant suggested "that perhaps the only way to restore Israeli deterrence now is through massive military action, and this does not

seem to be feasible at the moment, at least not given the present situation." The only possible course of action, according to the Israeli participant, would be to launch a diplomatic offensive that would focus on seeking more freedom of action for Israel. Such an offensive would increase the credibility of Israel's deterrent posture.

Another Israeli participant rejected the above argument saying: "In some sense, a posture which is not sustainable, either politically or militarily, and an attempt to maintain that posture when the conditions change have a greater effect on deterrence than other things."

Deterrence and the Israel-Palestinian Conflict: One of the American experts argued that in terms of extendability and its application to LICs, there was not very much new thinking on deterrence in the US. He argued that while as of the 1960s the alleged Israeli nuclear capabilities deterred and limited Arab conventional warfare, the common wisdom is that a LIC cannot be deterred by use of a nuclear strategy.

One of the American experts argued that appreciating domestic Palestinian power relations is vital for effective Israeli deterrence. Israel should ask itself: Does it want Arafat to survive in power? If not, Israel should take actions to neutralize him. But if Israel believes that the situation necessitates Arafat remaining in power, Israel would have to manipulate threats and inducements to make it clear to Arafat that Israel holds his survival in its own hands. It would require rewarding him and groups that support him when he acts well, and punishing him, and enhancing the power of the groups who oppose him, when he behaves badly. But the key rallying point, the key motivating area, according to the American expert, would be Arafat's hold on power. In so far as Israel can affect that hold on power, either by undermining it, or strengthening it, Israel would be in the best position to either deter or persuade him, to act in ways that Israel thinks best.

Another American speaker pointed out that Israel should manipulate deterring action in order to influence the domestic Palestinian debate in ways that would support Israeli interests.

One of the American experts raised the issue of Israel's practice of deterrence vis-à-vis the Palestinians and its use of 'carrots' and 'sticks'. "My sense is that Israeli policy is very good on the 'stick' side, not as good on the 'carrot' side, and not at all good on the disaggregation side. More, it seems to me, has to be done recognizing those Palestinian towns, groups, sectors which are not participating in terror by showing them that there are real tangible benefits to [peaceful conduct]. At the same time, Israel should punish those who do engage in terror. It is a difficult, nuanced policy, and it is much harder than simply closing off the West Bank and Gaza. Later, one of the Israeli participants questioned the possibility of such disaggregation.

One of the Israeli participants conceded that over the past years there has been a gradual erosion of Israel's deterrence posture vis-à-vis the Palestinians, arguing that much of it was the result of Israel's domestic political scene. Given the low level of Israeli self-confidence, Israel found it difficult to project effective deterrence, resolve, and credibility "and there was nothing that could be done to change it" because of the domestic political situation.

An Israeli participant argued that the lesson of the American action against the al-Qaida network is the importance of assembling a wide international coalition. Israel should place a higher emphasis on shoring-up international support for its anti-terrorist activities. Moreover, terrorist activities that do not face worldwide opposition enjoy more freedom of action, and those are harder to deter.

As noted in the previous sub-section, the question of the 'root causes' of the Western-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts were of particular interest among the participants (presented in the previous section in more detail). One of the Israeli participants argued that the suggestions made earlier to respond to the cross-cultural conflict are important but they will not solve the situation. He argued that Israeli deterrence hardly exists, though recent events have strengthened somewhat the Israeli deterrent posture. Another Israeli participant argued that dealing with the 'root causes' of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is futile. "Perhaps the root causes are not a lack of

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Palestinian self-determination but the existence of Jewish self-determination. In such a case, there is inherently really no solution and only struggle."

An American participant pointed out that it would be wrong to de-legitimize overwhelmingly the Palestinian use of violence. Israel should maintain a clear and narrow definition of what counts as terrorism, namely the random killing of civilians, in order to shore up international support for its actions against Palestinian terror.

An Israeli military official pointed out that a basic difference in terms of deterrence between the Israeli-Lebanese-Syrian relationship with regard to Hezbollah's actions and the Israeli-Palestinian relationship is the question of international legitimacy and support. The Palestinians assume that Israel enjoys less maneuverability in the confrontation because of a lack of international support, while the Syrians assume that Israel has more international legitimacy to act against them in case of extreme actions carried out by Hezbollah.

The officer went on to argue that unlike non-conventional and classical conventional deterrence, denial of success is not effective in deterring terrorism. While defensive measures aimed to deny success are important for the purpose of minimizing potential casualties of terrorism, denial of success will not deter terrorist acts and especially not suicidal attacks. Deterring terrorism might be achieved, he argued, should the deterring actor be able to identify values, interests, or connections that might be prone to threat.

These remarks opened up a brief debate among the other participants on whether denial of success is futile in the case of deterring terrorism. The officer argued that the perpetrator of terrorism accepts the apparent asymmetry of power relations, and thus is motivated to act even in the face of almost certain failure. Contrarily, state actors are more likely to be deterred by denial of success because the asymmetry is less substantial.

Picking up on the argument concerning the importance of establishing clear limits or thresholds for adversaries' actions, beyond which punitive retaliation will be severe, as Israel did in Lebanon, the officer argued that Israel did not do the same in the case of the Palestinian confrontation. The

other participants noted that such an attempt that would limit terrorist and guerrilla actions to the territories would be unacceptable from the Israeli point of view. The officer contended that even had Arafat assumed that such a limit existed, Israel made no attempt in its responses to outline such limits.

One of the Israeli participants argued that thresholds should be reduced - reflecting 'zero tolerance'. To that, the Israeli officer responded by pointing out that such a policy would invite the opponent to test the credibility of the deterring party. Moreover, it ignores the role of a delicate balance of interests between the deterring party and the potential aggressor. Accordingly, 'zero tolerance' would be unacceptable on behalf of the aggressor and would induce challenges despite the high cost. Credible thresholds should thus reflect an accommodation of both parties' interests and costs and avoid an unacceptable situation for both parties. An American participant pointed out that an indefensible threshold would have a severe negative effect upon one's deterrent posture.

The officer was questioned by one of the American participants about the Arab image of the resilience of Israeli and American societies. The officer responded that in the case of Israel's image it had suffered a blow following the withdrawal from Lebanon that probably led the Palestinians to assume that a similar scenario was possible in Judea and Samaria. The Palestinians, therefore, were extremely surprised to encounter significant resilience coming from Israel. The reason for this surprise was the fundamental misreading of democratic societies prevalent in the non-Western world. One of the Israeli participants pointed out that while Israel's conventional deterrent posture is intact and was even bolstered during and after the Gulf War in which Israel could afford not to respond, its deterrent posture vis-à-vis terrorism has deteriorated since the 1980s. The current Israeli response, however, may lead to a stronger deterrent posture vis-à-vis terror especially because it could be perceived to run against American protest.

One of the Israeli participants argued that the importance of employing supporting unproportional threats for an effective deterrence doctrine reveals

the limits of applying deterrence to waves of terrorism. LICs reduce the retaliatory capacities.

One of the Israeli participants contended that undermining the legitimacy of Palestinian and Arab actions and claims by way of a massive diplomatic offensive would be the most effective tool for building up Israeli deterrence. The delegitimization of the Palestinian position would increase Israel's freedom of action to at least credibly threaten the use of force. Currently, real or imagined political and moral limitations curtail Israel's freedom of action and in turn Israeli deterrence.

Israel's Nuclear and Conventional Deterrence: The military officer argued that there is a widely accepted assumption in Israel that successful military actions against terrorism and guerrilla warfare strengthen Israel's deterrent posture at the classical conventional level, though such a relationship is hard to measure or prove, the officer conceded. However, the opposite -- a negative impression of Israel's endurance in the face of guerrilla warfare and terror -- would clearly reduce Israel's general deterrent posture. The officer noted that currently there is no immediate threat of classical war against Israel. He warned that Israel should maintain its conventional and non-conventional posture in the future and that it should not be taken for granted. Moreover, a strong conventional force is important also in regard to terrorist threats from a point that exceeds acceptable levels to which Israel could only respond using a strong conventional force. In addition, strong conventional capacities are not less important for non-conventional deterrence. The officer argued that powerful conventional weaponry would also deter Syria from using chemical warfare.

The debate went on to cover in brief the possible impact of an Iranian nuclear umbrella for Syria upon Israel's deterrent posture. The officer argued that such an umbrella would change entirely the balance of deterrence on all levels -- conventional, non-conventional, and in LICs. An Israeli participant argued that the repercussions of such a development would be more limited. He argued that all sides will have to practice restraint but he doubted whether

Israel would be deterred from action as a result because Israel could challenge Iranian assets. Questioned by the officer whether such a situation might not lead the Syrians to miscalculate based on the assumption that an Iranian umbrella would deter Israel, and consequently launch a low-level attack, the Israeli participant conceded that such an eventuality could happen. He also agreed that Israel should do everything in order to avoid Iran acquiring nuclear capabilities, but argued that its potential effect should not be exaggerated. The Israeli participant pointed out that in the 1970s many people were concerned about the development of Pakistan's nuclear capacity, which eventually did not alter the nuclear balance in the Middle East. The officer responded that the Pakistani case is different -- Iran, unlike Pakistan, has invested time, effort and resources into supporting guerrilla and terrorist attacks against Israel. "I agree that we do not have to exaggerate, that at the end of the day it is us and the Syrians, and the Iranians are very far away. But under such an umbrella I am not sure that many leaders would not change their minds and will take higher risks than today. And that is enough to change many things in the Middle East – not everything, but many things."

One of the Israeli participants pointed out that the emerging multipolar nuclear region, and with it the necessity to establish stable deterrence in the region on a state-to-state basis, is most important. The participant argued that Israel has wrongly tended to assume that some of the Arab leaders demonstrate irrational behavior. "Leaderships in other countries, as radical as they may seem from our perspective, are not suicidal and do not want to get into situations in which they may get caught up in an escalation process that they can neither control nor predict, ending up in a conflict that would be catastrophic for them."