

Unilateralism Revisited: An Agreement on a Palestinian State is Not at Hand

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The establishment of a Palestinian state through a political agreement negotiated with Israel is not at hand. External pressures or unilateral steps may lead in this direction, but even that would not produce an end of conflict, rather an unstable, hemorrhaging mutation of the national struggle, threatening to erupt, sooner or later, into a violent confrontation.

Under the current circumstances it is clearer than ever that whoever constructs his regional strategy on the assumption that a Palestinian state will stabilize the Middle East, blunt the edge of the hostility towards the United States, and facilitate “an alliance of the moderates” to oppose the region’s radical forces has little understanding of the regional powers and the dynamics of their interface. This strategic fancy does not withstand the test of scrutiny from any perspective – the Israeli-Palestinian, the intra-Palestinian, the regional, or the global – and certainly not when they all interact. The dramatic events of the Middle East of the last few months demonstrate more than ever the divide between this fancy and the regional reality.

The Israeli-Palestinian Context

The perception that Israel and the Palestinians are close to an agreement is superficial and misleading. The urban legend fashionable in the media and spouted commonly by international elements – “everyone knows the essence and contours of the settlement; what’s needed is merely a courageous political decision by the leaders” – presumes that on some

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issues of critical importance one can ignore the determined political commitment of the leaders to uphold their publicly stated positions, because “they know full well” that these positions are impossible to realize. For over a decade and a half, this presumption has defied the optimistic assessments of an imminent settlement. It is based on a dramatic underestimation of the Palestinian national commitment to the refugees’ “right of return” into the State of Israel and an overestimation of Palestinian willingness to accept severe limitations on the sovereignty of the Palestinian state as required by Israel’s vital security needs. The Palestinians prefer to feed the illusion that those commitments are a facade, because it is convenient to pretend to democratic Western and Israeli public opinion that the real impediment to the establishment of their state is Israel’s territorial greed – manifested in the settlements in the West Bank. They are not interested in exposing to this audience the fact that they do not enjoy a legitimate public mandate to end both the conflict and claims vis-à-vis Israel’s institutionalizing the Jewish nation-state at the expense of the 1948 refugees.

The assumption that Israel’s minimal strategic defense demands – control of the airspace and electromagnetic spheres and effective monitoring of demilitarization arrangements – can be institutionalized through agreement has no firm political foundation. Even if preliminary deliberations create a positive impression, and even when isolated, pinpoint agreements are reached, it is highly doubtful that these will withstand the political test at the moment of truth once the public cost of these demands – severe, visible restrictions on the sovereignty of the Palestinian state – becomes clear. Moreover, even in the best case scenario, possible agreements will be based on the involvement of external power, yet experience has demonstrated how these arrangements dissipate quickly and their security value is tenuous at best. The dramatic events in the Middle East of recent months, indicative of the inherent regional instability, the weakening of the United States, and the waxing strength of the radicals, require any responsible Israeli government to be extremely cautious regarding security, especially in response to the negative changes on the “eastern front” that is liable to reemerge between the Iranian-Iraqi border and the Jordan Valley. No government in Jerusalem can ignore the concern that a Palestinian state could turn into a strategic extension of these radical elements and threaten the stability of the

Hashemite Kingdom. This concern will grow more acute if and when “Hamastan” in the Gaza Strip hooks up with the West Bank to establish a joint Palestinian sovereignty, as envisioned by the Palestinians and their primary godparents – Europe and the Obama administration.

The success of the visionaries of the Palestinian state to repress in everybody’s consciousness, including their own, the dramatic impediment to realization of their political vision – the profound and growing split between the Gaza Strip and West Bank – is astounding. On the one hand, it is obviously impossible to establish by agreement with Israel a viable state for just over half of the Palestinians in the territories, when the other near-half have established their own entity. This is particularly true when the Gaza Strip is controlled by a movement whose socio-cultural essence and national policy contradict the fundamental concepts on whose basis the West Bank leadership is ostensibly conducting negotiations with Israel. On the other hand, should the leaders of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip hammer out a joint national strategy, this strategy would presumably be intolerable for Israel, even if it is cleverly formulated to allow the Europeans and the Obama administration to delude themselves. In short, *without the Gaza Strip it is impossible to establish a viable state; with Hamas, it is impossible to reach a lasting agreement with Israel*. Even those who toy with the hope that it is possible to reach an agreement with Abu Mazen and Fayyad that will neutralize the “right of return” and allow Israel to secure its minimal required level of security must abandon such hope when Khaled Mashal, Ismail Haniyeh, and Ahmad Jaabari join the circle of decision makers.

The Intra-Palestinian Context

The intra-Palestinian context presents the most intractable impediment to an agreement. Those who are negotiating with Israel (in practice, with the United States) are incapable of mobilizing a Palestinian consensus for an historic compromise. Salam Fayyad can, for the first time in Palestinian history, claim credit for an impressive focus on nation building rather than on a sterile, destructive confrontation with external elements. Abu Mazen has well understood the strategic error of Palestinian terrorism and is determined, under difficult conditions, to distance his society from another violent eruption. Both are pursuing constructive policies for the Palestinian people and are providing political backing for the

struggle against terrorism and violent radicals. Considering their shaky political status within their own society, however, it is extremely unlikely that their people will follow their leadership when historic concessions on the core of the Palestinian vision are at stake. That vision is built on negating the legitimacy of the Jewish nation state since its establishment, and on the demand of turning back the historic clock via the refugees' "right of return."

The Palestinian public can accept that as long as the conflict endures this vision will not be fulfilled, but it cannot accept abandonment of the vision as part of a conflict resolution process. It can temporarily stomach the objectionable existence of Israel, but not the institutionalization of the Jewish state alongside an Arab-Palestinian state as part of a "two-states-for-two-peoples" agreement. Fayyad and Abbas can, in the name of the Palestinian people, demand a state in the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital and even agree to limited land swaps, but not abandon the core of the matter. The Palestinian public supports them when they deliver billions of dollars, mobilize world sympathy, recruit pressure on Israel, and improve the Palestinians' standard of living and quality of life. However, Fayyad and Abbas are themselves aware of their political limitations even in the West Bank – let alone among the Palestinian population throughout the territories, not to mention the refugees and the Palestinians in the diaspora. When Abbas underestimates these limitations, even on simple tactical matters that are a long way from abandoning the "right of return" or institutionalizing the legitimacy of the Jewish state, the Palestinian political system provides him with an immediate and painful reminder. This is what happened when he tried to overlook the propaganda advantage of the Goldstone report in order to advance negotiations with Israel and the United States.

Aware of their limitations, Abbas, Fayyad, and their immediate supporters currently have no motivation to establish a Palestinian state through an agreement with Israel. Advanced negotiations that would allow this to happen would expose their political impotence even on the West Bank, not to mention in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian diaspora. This impotence would cause the failure of the national project at a point where the onus is on the Palestinians. They prefer the negotiations to reach a dead end at precisely the point they are at right now, where Israel is blamed and they enjoy the best of all worlds: the Palestinians have earned the sympathy of

the entire world and Israel is shoved into a strategic defensive, its basic legitimacy eroding, while they – Abbas and Fayyad – are not required to stand the ultimate test of national leadership. As long as they don't reach an agreement with Israel, neither they nor the people they represent have to take responsibility for administering day-to-day life in a wretched and embattled state. They would rather perpetuate their position as the ultimate victim and live at other people's expense.

Fortunately for them, the Palestinian leaders do not have to worry about exposure of this reality. President Obama has adopted a policy that exempts them from the need to negotiate directly with Israel. The Europeans have made the issue of a Palestinian state into a meta-political, almost theological article of faith, and are bringing intense pressure to bear on Israel. President Mubarak, who supported a settlement, is gone. Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has made it easier for the Palestinian leaders to avoid making hard decisions by adopting a shortsighted policy in the face of President Obama's peculiar strategy, in his own attempt to evade difficult decisions. The paradox is that the lack of progress towards the establishment of a negotiated Palestinian state puts far more pressure on Israel than it does on the Palestinians.

The Regional Arena

Even before the dramatic events of early 2011, regional conditions were not conducive to an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. Now such an agreement is even less plausible. There is a considerable gap between what the responsible regimes in the Arab states would have liked to see happen and what the Arab collective can approve. This gap was demonstrated in the various incarnations of the so-called "Saudi Initiative," which became the "Arab Initiative" at the Arab League's Beirut summit in 2002. It began as a Saudi Arabian proposal in a format that was designed to facilitate a settlement between Israel and the Palestinians; it then led to a dead end by Syria, when it assumed a format that ensured that such a settlement would have no chance of success. The Saudi format was designed to compensate Israel for its concessions to the Palestinians with recognition by the Arab

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states and normalized relations with them; its all-Arab format, inspired by Syria, was issued as a diktat that includes return of 1948 refugees within the Green Line, according to UN General Assembly Resolution 194, requiring Israel to sign the Arab formula *as a precondition* for any discussion of the initiative's details and its implementation.¹ The Saudis, Egyptians, Jordanians, and anyone else who wanted to promote the chances of a settlement did not dare to stand up to the Arab street and remove what a priori sealed the fate of the initiative: the format of the diktat and the "right of return." The Palestinians could not ask for less than what the consensus of the Arab League was demanding in their name. For the reasons presented above, Fayyad and Abu Mazen are the last ones who are capable of proposing to the Palestinians in the West Bank – not to mention the Gaza Strip and the diaspora – to concede the core of the Palestinian national ethos when the entire Arab world insists on its realization.

Were there even a faint possibility that important components of the regional system would back daring, taboo-breaking steps by the Palestinian leadership in order to bring about a settlement acceptable

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to those on the Israeli side seeking a compromise, this possibility would have been extinguished, at least for the foreseeable future, following the upheavals in the Arab world in recent months. This sort of backing requires the heads of state to close the gap between their strategic assessments and consideration of public sentiment. Even before the upheavals, the al-Jazeera documents demonstrated the political cost of leaking Palestinian willingness for even minor flexibility, a far cry from what is required to reach an agreement. Afterwards, the only regime (Mubarak's) that could have led to more extensive Arab support for such flexibility fell, and the Arab regimes are now more careful than ever not to challenge the sentiment of the people even on issues much more important and urgent for them than a settlement of the Palestinian

issue. Add to this reticence the strengthening of the radical elements, the weakness of the United States and its confused policies, and the volatile

nature of Arab public opinion, and what emerges are perhaps the least favorable circumstances imaginable for positive regional involvement in an Israeli-Palestinian settlement.

The Global Arena

The history of settlements between Israel and the Arab world demonstrates that global powers usually cannot initiate such settlements, but their involvement is necessary to conclude and implement them once the motivation of the parties has ripened. In almost every case that involvement has been American.

At the current stage of efforts to settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it seems that the Obama administration is more eager for a settlement than the parties themselves. With much initial momentum and deep conviction, this administration adopted a peculiar perception simplistically linking regional stability and containment of the radical elements (primarily Iran) with the negotiated establishment of a Palestinian state. Obama ignored the reluctance of both sides to reach an agreement under the prevailing circumstances and tried to induce them, willy-nilly, to establish a Palestinian state on an accelerated schedule as a necessary first step for containing the radical elements in this region and beyond. He identified the settlements in the West Bank as reflections of Israeli illegitimate territorial greed and the primary obstacle to negotiations and agreement, and focused his efforts on freezing their construction. Obama grossly underestimated the significance of the fact that Abbas chose not to embrace Olmert's 2008 proposals, based on the 1967 lines and division of Jerusalem, which anyway would have generated a massive evacuation of settlements and compensated the Palestinians with territory inside the Green Line equal in size to the settlement blocs that would be left in place.

Obama's policy was designed to corner Israel – and indeed, it succeeded as such – on the issue of the settlements, where it cannot enlist effective support even among its friends. His insistence on a complete construction freeze, pointedly including East Jerusalem neighborhoods that were agreed upon in principle to be incorporated into Israel, and the artificial crisis Obama created following an administrative announcement of building plans during Vice President Biden's visit to

Jerusalem, extinguished any remaining motivation on either side for seriously negotiating at that time.

Abu Mazen's lack of motivation to put his leadership to the ultimate test by trying to enlist public support for an historic compromise was complemented by Obama's policies, which also removed Palestinian motivation for direct negotiations. Israel's acceptance of a Palestinian state (the Bar-Ilan speech) was practically forced on Netanyahu by Obama without any reciprocal contribution by Abbas. During the ten-month freeze on settlement construction, designed to enable direct negotiations, no pressure was brought to bear on Abbas to hold such talks. By the end of that period, Abbas could not afford to engage in negotiations even if he had wanted to, because Obama himself was the one who had presented the sweeping freeze as a precondition, and the Palestinians could obviously not demand of Israel anything less than what the American president insisted on. It quickly became apparent to the Palestinians that *avoiding negotiations*, combined with harsh American criticism of Israel regarding the absence of negotiations, was the most effective catalyst for unprecedented pressure on Israel, its isolation on the European and international arenas, and unilateral recognition of their state, as well as diplomatic upgrades from Santiago to London.

At the same time, it became clear to Israel that any settlement reflecting this political reality would be strategically counterproductive

and devoid of what the Israeli mainstream deems vital. While Prime Minister Netanyahu's serious mistakes played a role in the creation of this reality, Obama's policy was anchored in such a coherent (and erroneous) worldview and regional and global strategy, that even smart conduct on the part of the Israeli prime minister could not have changed the balance of power now arrayed against Israel.

The paradigmatic question is whether the division of the land is a matter between Israel, the Palestinians, the Arab states, the United States, and Europe, or is rather a Zionist imperative.

The response of the United States to the dramatic events in the Middle East in early 2011 further weakened the motivation of either side to

reach a settlement. Again, under the current conditions the Palestinians will find it even more difficult than previously to enlist support for an historic compromise, even if Abbas were interested in making one. Abu

Mazen saw how the United States treated an Egyptian president who, for an entire generation, led the responsible elements that helped the United States stabilize the region. Israel too observed the United States' weakness and President Obama's feeble policies, and has learned the lesson of the abandonment of America's closest ally in the Middle East in his hour of supreme need. Israel has understood all too well that its own profound isolation on the international arena and the extensive campaign against Israel in Europe, even after the spurious link between the Palestinian issue and regional stability has been exposed,² are the result of Washington's inspiration and at times encouragement. Even if these elements were not an intentional attempt to undermine Israel's strategic position (the Obama administration has been careful not to detract from the security assistance to Israel, and has in fact strengthened it), they were perforce meant to bring Israel to a settlement of the Palestinian issue under conditions difficult even for Israeli compromise-seekers, without the Palestinians being required to make any profound historic compromise of their own.

Conclusions for Israel

The unpleasant reality presented here – regarding the Palestinian, the regional, and the global, especially American, arenas – obligates decision makers in Israel to face a paradigmatic question that goes far beyond the narrow confines of policy towards the Palestinians or the Obama administration: is the division of the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea a matter for Israel's relations with the Arabs, or does it involve a far greater and immeasurably more important context, touching on Israel's Zionist objectives, the nature of Israeli society, and Israel's ability to operate in the international arena to consolidate these objectives.

If the former, Israel may be interested in entrenching its positions, assuming a Palestinian state incorporating the Gaza Strip with the West Bank would be unfriendly, unstable, and irresponsible, and likely collude with enemies near and far to continue the struggle against Israel. It stands to reason that even after the state's establishment responsibility for its predicaments would be laid at Israel's doorstep, internationally, in Europe, in some no longer insignificant circles in the United States, and even within Israel itself. Consequently, digging in at this time is

only reasonable, both because of regional uncertainties and the Obama administration's detrimental policies. However, in the latter case, if the context is Zionist and goes far beyond the question of relations with the Palestinians, the Arabs, and President Obama, an entirely different policy is called for.

The Israeli mainstream, as well as Prime Minister Netanyahu, has long since internalized the understanding that what is at stake is the broader Zionist context. In every public opinion poll, the Jewish mainstream indicates that it has adopted the complex synthesis between distrust of the Arabs, deep suspicion towards the Palestinians, and a clear-eyed view of the "peace" delusions, on the one hand, and the willingness to divide the land and take security risks, including the establishment of a Palestinian state, on the other. Netanyahu is enthused by the Arab environment and relies on the peaceful intentions of the Palestinians even less than the Israeli mainstream. He knows that Palestinian demands for state sovereignty could endanger the foundations of Israel's security, and stipulates conditions designed to curb this danger. Even though because of the Zionist implications and in face of conditions on the international arena he has made intellectual peace with the need to divide the land, he finds it difficult to give operational expression to his strategic understanding. Netanyahu finds this hard in part due to his personality and his coalition, but primarily because it is clear to him that the Palestinians are not ready for an historic compromise, lacking both a public prepared to pay the price of such a compromise and a leadership capable of enlisting the public to effect it.

Since returning to office, Netanyahu has been pushed inadvertently onto a political course that in hindsight seems fairly coherent. Had he proposed this path of his own volition at the beginning of his term in office, he would have garnered far greater political assets while confronting the sophisticated maneuvers by the Palestinian leadership and the political caprices of President Obama.

Netanyahu could have proposed to Obama to maintain two simultaneous tracks – one track for good faith negotiations, even with questionable chances for success, and a second, gradual, unilateral track focused on transferring land to the Palestinians (the Americans could have called this "the dismantlement of the occupation").³ In this second track, Israel would transfer lands designated Area C, under its

complete control, to Area B, under Israeli security control and Palestinian civilian control, and lands designated Area B to Area A, under complete Palestinian control. The areas to undergo re-designation would be chosen by Israel at a pace it would determine, seeking to create relatively extensive and ever-growing Palestinian territorial contiguity, with initial emphasis on northern Samaria, surrounded by a full security fence and containing few Jewish settlements. While withdrawal was underway in the north, the security fence would be completed in all areas in direct contact with Israel, including around the various settlement blocs. Withdrawals would continue as long as the Palestinian “Dayton Forces” continued their successful struggle against terrorism in coordination with Israel. This program can be marketed as “coordinated,” “parallel,” or “complementary” steps, in tandem with Salam Fayyad’s unilateral institution building measures, in preparation for the state’s institutionalization in September 2011, rather than as pure unilateralism that conveys despair with the Palestinians.

Netanyahu could have asked for American backing against unfriendly initiatives by international and European bodies as long as the process continued; Obama would have found it difficult to refuse. Such a move would have averted Obama’s sweeping crusade against all settlements, making it easier for Israel to keep the major settlement blocs and the Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem. It would also have allowed evacuation of settlements in the heart of populated areas, based on Israel’s preferences and the differential political sensitivities of the particular sites slated for evacuation. A critical advantage of this unilateral strategy would have been the preservation of Israel’s vital security interests (e.g., control of the airspace and flexible deployment of IDF forces), as the entire move does not require Palestinian consent.

In hindsight it seems that Netanyahu is inadvertently being pushed into a format similar to what he could have proposed of his own initiative, without securing any of the aforementioned returns, at a very high cost to Israel’s international standing. He announced his willingness to establish a Palestinian state and accepted a ten-month freeze; he took steps to stimulate the economy and ease the movement of people and goods; in practice, he greatly expanded the de facto control of the PA throughout the West Bank. Now, his close circle is reporting that he is

also considering augmenting the same strategic logic with a territorial dimension.

A notion such as the one presented herein, perhaps less dramatic and more careful, is not unrealistic from the internal Israeli political perspective. It sits well with a bottom-up approach, which Netanyahu has already been preaching. It also does not contradict the approach of his senior coalition partner, Avigdor Lieberman, which accepts partition but holds that the Palestinians are not ready for a negotiated permanent settlement. Even the remnants of the Labor Party and the defense minister's Independence Party would view it positively; so too, the main opposition in Kadima would not disqualify it out of hand, would view it as a step in the right direction, and would conceivably help defend it in the Knesset against opponents from the right. While other considerations might prevail – Netanyahu would not want to dismantle the coalition with Shas, the remnants of the Labor Party would want to set themselves apart, Kadima would have no interest in helping a right wing coalition – the real question is what realistic alternatives Israel faces come September 2011.

The concluding question here brings the discussion full circle: what is the return? "Why make unilateral concessions in the heart of the Land of Israel and take major security risks, if it is clear that in return we will not achieve peace or end of conflict? Have we not learned the lessons of Lebanon and the Gaza Strip? We returned to the international border and received terrorism, Hizbollah, and Hamas." Here we come back to the paradigmatic question posed earlier: is the division of the land a matter between Israel, the Palestinians, the Arab states, the United States, and Europe, or is it a Zionist imperative? If it is a Zionist imperative, the prize is disengaging from cohabitation under one sovereign system with millions of Palestinians. The challenge is, on the one hand, to minimize the damages to Israel's values and political standing resulting from a permanent presence in the territories, and on the other hand, to minimize the security damages involved in handing land over to the Palestinians.

The traumatic experience of Hamas terrorism after the disengagement from the Gaza Strip deters many Israelis from further unilateral moves. What is required in order to put the policy proposed herein to the test of the lessons of this disengagement is twofold: a decisive *difference* concerning security, and a reference to the invaluable *contribution* to

national resilience. The *difference* is the IDF's presence on the ground, wherever and whenever necessary. In the Gaza Strip the army withdrew with the civilian settlements, and the war against terrorism was commensurately damaged. As part of a move in the West Bank, the IDF is meant to be deployed according to security needs – minimally, as long as the Palestinians work to combat terrorism and do not join up with radical forces, forcefully and extensively should they behave otherwise. Even a settlement, if and when reached, would be conditioned on the gradual, controlled withdrawal of the IDF from the outer envelope of the populated area and on a security arrangement that would allow it to operate effectively to foil major threats. The *contribution* is expressed in what the supporters-in-practice of the Zionist paradigm in Israel's mainstream consider as strengthening Israeli society, resulting from the termination of Israel's control of some million and a half Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Israel's primary asset in its historic struggle with the Arab surroundings is the fortitude and resilience of its society, which in recent generations has been steeled while maintaining ongoing willingness to make historic compromises even without the promise of peace. The underlying assumption is that an Israeli society that does not control Gaza is far stronger than one controlling the Strip's population.

This is not the place to debate the paradigmatic question itself. Suffice it to say that in the context discussed herein, the country's mainstream has already made its decision, and that this conviction has a firm grip even within Netanyahu's current right wing government. On the one hand, the political and ethical costs of the existing reality have accelerated in recent years and are at present snowballing towards a critical mass. On the other hand, under the current and foreseeable conditions, there is no way to reach a permanent, negotiated settlement with the Palestinians that would finally free Israel of the Palestinian albatross. If Israel can relieve itself of this burden by its own initiative in a controlled way, without having to rely on the goodwill of the Palestinians, this option should be thoroughly examined. If this can be done, with Israel not only unilaterally determining the evacuation moves but also adjusting the features of the security arrangements to the level of tolerable risk, it will be possible to reach a result almost as good for Israel as a permanent settlement of the type discussed herein, at an inestimably lower cost to the quality of the security arrangements and to the danger of an internal rift in Israel.

If peace and Palestinian repudiation of the conflict were within reach, in exchange for a Palestinian state alongside the Jewish nation state, there would be reason to disqualify the flawed unilateral alternative. However, all expectations of peace and an agreement are, at this stage, wishful thinking. The operative question on the table is: will Netanyahu be pushed into taking uncalculated emergency steps towards September, or will he, late but not entirely too late, take the initiative and reap the political benefits of the steps he will be forced to take later in any case, under pressure and in isolation.

Notes

- 1 Israeli proponents of the "Arab Initiative" latched on to the fact that the text mentions "a just solution to the problem of the Palestinian refugees *to be agreed upon* (emphasis added)." However this agreement is supposed to be reached *after* Israel signs the dictated Arab version, which also requires that the solution be "in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194," which sanctions the right of every refugee (in practice – the refugee's descendants) to choose, should s/he so desire, to "return" to the State of Israel. It was accompanied by a declaration of Arab leaders negating the re-settlement of refugees in their current places of residence in Arab countries. In total contradiction to the intentionally misleading impression of those who leaked and published the al-Jazeera documents, the documents that have so far been made public contain no evidence whatsoever supporting the headlines that attribute to the Palestinian negotiators the abandonment of the Palestinian demand for an all-inclusive right of any descendant of the 1948 refugees to "return" to Israel should s/he choose to do so.
- 2 The Palestinian question has a direct impact on several important issues in the region, foremost the stability of the Hashemite Kingdom (and, to a lesser degree, of Lebanon). It also serves as a convenient pretext for radical elements that seek popular support for provocative activity in other areas. What is patently fallacious is the notion, developed in Europe and by the Obama administration (especially by the President's first National Security Advisor, General James Jones), that makes regional stability and the chance of enlisting the Arab states against the radicalism of Iran and its allies dependent, to a large extent, on reaching an Israeli-Palestinian settlement.
- 3 The concept presented here has been proposed by the author of this essay since the deadlock, following Prime Minister Olmert's proposals made at the end of 2008. A concept including similar components was published in Shlomo Brom, Giora Eiland, and Oded Eran, "Partial Agreements with the Palestinians," *Strategic Assessment* 12, no. 3 (2009): 67-86. See <http://www.inss.org.il/publications.php?cat=68&incat=&read=839#12.3>.