

The Breakup of Israel's Strategic Puzzle

Ron Tira

The strategic environment in which Israel operates has recently been jolted, to the point that significant parts of the puzzle on which Israeli policy is based are in danger of collapse. One of the main conclusions to emerge from Israel's net assessment is that given the disappearance or the waning of a number of weighty actors in the Arab world, Saudi Arabia is possibly the last player that is both operating persistently to contain Iran and is also capable of serving as a counterweight to Turkey. The wave of Arab weakness has – surprisingly – become Israel's problem and increases the friction between Israel and the regional powers that lie beyond the Sykes-Picot zone, which are attempting to deepen their influence in the Levant. Against this background, Saudi Arabia has – also surprisingly – become the state closest to Israel in its reading of the regional map and in its strategic vector.

On the other side of the hill, Iran is reading the same map. Saudi Arabia is after all waging a struggle to halt Iran that extends from Yemen, through Iraq and Egypt, all the way to Lebanon. A defining moment that changed the nature of this struggle was Saudi Arabia's unusual direct intervention in Bahrain. In its relative effectiveness and its gradually emerging assertiveness, the House of Saud is turning itself into Iran's main target. Consequently, at the next stage Iran may focus on challenging the Saudi royal house, whose survival is of the utmost importance. If the House of Saud falls, the remaining Arab opposition to Iran may disintegrate as well.

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The unsettled strategic environment is also liable to create new difficulties in the attempt to reach an Israeli-Palestinian agreement. Indeed, most of the actors who in the past helped provide a supportive strategic environment for political settlements have disappeared or been weakened, or alternatively, their relations with the United States have cooled.

Breaking Up the Strategic Puzzle

A number of critical stabilizers in Israel's strategic puzzle have been undermined or are now in uncertain states of flux.

The end of the balance of power between Iran and Iraq: The years-long struggle between Iran and Iraq preoccupied these two states and limited the possibility that an effective front to Israel's east could emerge. The dismantling of the Sunni-Baathist regime and the American withdrawal from Iraq are creating the conditions for undermining this balance of power and for turning Iran into the dominant player in Iraq.¹ Iran is liable to reach Jordan's doorstep and create Shiite contiguity through Iraq and Syria to southern Lebanon. By both indirect and direct means, Iran is developing a strategic reach² to the Mediterranean.

Instability in Egypt: Egypt's formal removal from the cycle of warfare in the 1970s anchored Israel's strategic puzzle in stability, but the creation of a strategic partnership was a no less important development. Only in recent years did the partnership gradually come into existence, as evident during the wars in 2006 and 2008 and the struggle to contain Iran. It is still too early to assess where Egypt is headed, what the standing of the Islamist movements there will be, whether Saudi money will prevent an erosion of Egyptian policy, and whether Egypt will remain an active regional player or will withdraw into itself. But an uncertainty emerges on two levels: one, more distant, is the future of the formal peace treaty framework, and the second, more immediate, is the strategic partnership.

As a result of Mubarak's ouster, third parties have gained the ability to challenge Israeli-Egyptian relations. For example, in order to protect its relations with Egypt, Israel is compelled to restrain itself vis-à-vis Hamas. However, this increases Hamas' freedom of action, and Hamas in part also has a vote on the path to escalation on Israel's southern front. It is thus capable of fanning the flames to a point at which Israel, while recognizing the political trap, will find it difficult to avoid a military

operation in Gaza. This time such an operation might cause diplomatic friction between Jerusalem and Cairo; the evolution of such friction is difficult to predict.

A changing Turkey: Turkey was a partner in creating a balance of power vis-à-vis Syria, and to a certain extent, Iran and Iraq as well. But Turkey has changed its policy. Turkey has no significant strategic rivalry with Israel, but it now wishes to claim rivalry with Israel to advance its interests with third parties. This new policy has produced outcomes such as the flotilla to Gaza, the Turkish-Brazilian initiative on Iran's nuclearization, and the freezing of relations between the governments. Likewise, the Israeli-Cypriot agreement to develop gas fields in the eastern Mediterranean has the potential to spark friction. Given the new Turkish policy, the expansion of Turkey's strategic footprint in the region and among potential clients is liable to limit Israel's freedom of action. Indeed, Turkey now commands increased weight among Israel's set of strategic and even operational considerations. At the same time, and as discussed more below, Turkey's geopolitical position is too complex to label it simply as an adversary.

The undermined Alawite regime: The IDF enjoys an excellent ability to threaten the Alawite regime in Damascus, and this has allowed Israel to restrain Syria and enjoy nearly four relatively quiet decades along the shared border. Furthermore, in the years preceding Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon, Israel used the threat to Syria and to the Syrian political order in the Land of the Cedars as leverage. It did not pay for Syria to incur significant risks for Hizbollah, and as long as it controlled Lebanon, Syria made sure that Hizbollah was relatively restrained. Thus the effectiveness of the threat to the Alawite regime made it possible to enjoy relative stability in Israel's entire "Northern System of Fronts" (Israeli jargon describing Syria, Lebanon, and the non-governmental and foreign forces operating on or through Lebanese soil).

The withdrawal of the Syrian forces from Lebanon in 2005 decreased Damascus' influence in Beirut, which in turn decreased the effectiveness of Israel's indirect restraint vis-à-vis Hizbollah. To a large extent Lebanon drifted from being a Syrian satellite to being an Iranian satellite. Perhaps in part for this reason the Second Lebanon War was more prolonged and less effective than previous similar situations, such as Operation Accountability and Operation Grapes of Wrath. It is possible that Israel

did not internalize the significance of the Syrian withdrawal, and hence the difficulties in 2006 in applying the lines of operation that had been relatively successful in 1993 and 1996.

The current rebellion in Syria raises doubts as to the future of the Alawite regime. The familiar situation promised stability, with the Alawite regime vulnerable and Israel having good military access to it. On the other hand, if the regime falls, the immediate result will be uncertainty and the undermining of some of the leverage for restraining Syria. It appears that for Israel, having a coherent state opponent that can be pressured at well-known vulnerability nodes is preferable to the danger of Syria's Iraqization, i.e., breakup into a state on the verge of failure. Even a new Syrian government that is a satellite of Turkey would not necessarily be beneficial for Israel, since this would likely exacerbate the Israeli-Turkish friction and change its nature, while strengthening Syria. Therefore, the Alawites are liable to be an exceptional case in which Israel's interest in undermining Iran's affiliates differs from the Sunni interest.

The decline of American effectiveness: The United States is the main stabilizing element in the Middle East, but its status as the Archimedean point of regional geopolitics has been undermined. First, the United States is less effective in containing its adversaries; Iranian activity in Iraq against the United States, in proximity to US forces there, and its advance

on the nuclear program illustrate this. Moreover, for all practical purposes the current White House has removed from the spectrum of possibilities the potential use of force in new theaters, which also lessens US restraint over its adversaries.³

Second, America's allies are now forced to reexamine whether toeing the American line still assures reasonable protection of their interests.

By turning its back on Mubarak, the United States aroused concern among the pro-American Arab regimes. In tandem, the lack of American effectiveness toward Iran in Bahrain forced the Sunni monarchies to fill the strategic vacuum and take action themselves in ways that they had almost never been required to in the past.

Israel too should be troubled by the Obama administration's turning its back on the April 14, 2004 letter from President Bush, which was

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approved almost unanimously by Congress, and the implications for the strategic credibility of the United States. Yet the problem runs deeper than the Obama administration's diplomacy or the "raw" diplomacy of the Netanyahu government. With Nixon too relations were not warm, nor did Netanyahu have fans in the Clinton White House. The liberal Clinton administration had a different worldview from that of the conservative Reagan administration, for example, but still, most US administrations in recent decades (a) used a similar strategic map for geopolitical navigation, and (b) were relatively effective in realizing their policy, whatever it was.

The root problem is that it is not clear what map the Obama administration is using to navigate. It is not clear if it still interprets reality through the geopolitical paradigm of a front of allies that should be strengthened and an axis of adversaries that should be contained. For example, it is widely believed in Washington that there is such a thing as an Arab spring, which puts those who embrace this view at odds with most of their partners in the region. In reality, it is difficult to find this spring, and it is difficult to point to even a single Arab state in which liberal democratic forces have taken hold.⁴ Even in Cairo, the game is between the army and its proxy party on the one hand, and the Islamic movements on the other. In addition, it does not appear that the Obama administration is taking the slide by Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon toward Iran seriously enough. From its perspective, these trends are perhaps undesirable and justify nominal opposition but apparently do not justify drastic action or the taking of particular risks. The administration is also failing to act as decisively as required by the fact that the pro-American camp is disintegrating, such that it has only two significant and certain partners remaining in the Middle East: Israel and Saudi Arabia.

At the same time, the Obama administration finds it a challenge to realize its policy objectives, whatever its policy may be. From Afghanistan and Pakistan, through Iraq, and to Syria, America's will is not becoming a reality. Both rivals and partners (from Iran to Turkey to Saudi Arabia) have learned that they can ignore American will without facing any particular consequences. The United States, therefore, is also being excluded from key processes such as the formation of the new Lebanese government, the Turkish army's removal from politics and the change in its leadership, and the Palestinian reconciliation agreement. The decline

in the strategic effectiveness of the United States is causing a decline in its diplomatic effectiveness.

From an Israeli point of view, the exact content of US policy is less material. Israel knows how to live with both the cold shoulder of George H. W. Bush and the warm embrace of George W. Bush. What is critical for Israel's strategic puzzle is that the United States (a) considers itself as a player in the regional power game, and (b) is effective in realizing its chosen policy.

Toward the Final Battle: The Struggle for the Survival of the House of Saud

It may be that rather than talking about pro- and anti-American camps, it is more accurate today to talk about the camp of stability and the camp of change. Israel and Saudi Arabia are seeking to minimize the shockwaves to the status quo, as are less influential countries like Jordan and the Gulf monarchies. Iran aspires to upset the status quo. From this point of view at least Turkey is in the opposing camp, since it too aspires to reorganize the balance of power. As to the Obama administration's approach to the fabric of forces in the Middle East – time will tell.

But at least as far as the House of Saud is concerned, the picture is already becoming clear: Saudi Arabia remains almost alone. From the perspective of the Saudi royal house, the strategic deal with the United States, oil-for-security, is losing its validity.⁵ There are two reasons for this. First, in the Saudi view, the United States has changed its policy and has left the House of Saud to deal on its own with its internal and external challenges.⁶ This has generated a long list of differences between Saudi Arabia and the United States, starting with the American demand for democratic reforms in the Sunni monarchies, through the American dialogue with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the handling of the crisis in Bahrain, to the US withdrawal from Iraq in the manner of "après moi le déluge," which brings Iran directly to Saudi Arabia's doorstep.

Second, given what the Saudis consider to be lesser effectiveness of the United States, the Saudis have begun to think in terms of a post-American era.⁷ No doubt, in spite of the Saudi investment in drawing closer to China, India, and Pakistan, there is no alternative superpower that is more sympathetic and more effective. But Saudi Arabia understands that the need for self-reliance has increased, and that it must attempt to fill by

itself at least some of the vacuum that the United States is leaving behind. This insight has already produced arms deals with a cumulative value of \$70 billion, and it might lead to a Saudi assessment that the country must possess nuclear weapons.

As far as the Saudis are concerned, they have already lost their significant partners in the Sunni-Arab front. Mubarak was ousted and the future of Egypt is not clear, and after the American withdrawal from Iraq, Iran will become the dominant player there. This grave new situation has forced Saudi Arabia to change its strategy. A player that in the past preferred to operate behind closed doors and avoid risks has been pushed into overt and direct military intervention in Bahrain. In the same new spirit of boldness (and perhaps recklessness), Saudi Arabia has begun to undermine Iran's ally in Damascus, the Alawite regime.

The House of Saud has remained the chief – and perhaps the last – tenacious fighter in containing Iran. From the billions of dollars invested in Egypt, through the harnessed oil weapon and the struggles within OPEC, through the struggle over the channels to Pakistan and India, to the attempt to expand the Gulf Cooperation Council and turn it into a type of Sunni NATO, the House of Saud is attempting to draw the line where Iran is to be stopped. It is thus turning itself into Iran's prime target. In each of these arenas both sides are being put to the test, with the war taking place in the Arabian Peninsula as well. The Iran-inspired agitation is taking place not only in Yemen and Bahrain, but also among Shiites in eastern Saudi Arabia, and it has been reported that the Revolutionary Guards have begun to train the Mahdi Army for operations against the royal houses on the peninsula.⁸ Forecasting further escalating moves by Iran against the House of Saud is more than just an educated guess.

The undermining of the Saudi royal house, in a direct operation or through indirect means, may bring Iran within reach of the final collapse of the known regional order. In addition, there is a risk of strategic reversals stemming from a new generation taking over the House of Saud, or from

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a Saudi assessment that the struggle with Iran is too dangerous and the chances of success too low, and that therefore Saudi Arabia must seek a *modus vivendi* based on recognition of Tehran's seniority.

Consequently, the House of Saud is critically important to Israel. In light of the cultural gaps it is difficult to speak about an open Israeli-Saudi partnership. Nonetheless, the two countries are reading a similar strategic map and are moving along parallel strategic vectors, and therefore, it is appropriate to consider expanding the dialogue between them.

The Palestinians: Undermined Strategic Environment for an Agreement

The changes and the turmoil described above have created additional cracks in the strategic foundation that is supposed to serve Israel in its efforts to reach a settlement with the Palestinians. Even prior to the recent changes, the Palestinians have suffered from lack of coherence, partly because there are centrifugal forces operating among them such as the Palestinian Authority government, the Hamas government, and strong extra-governmental forces. It is difficult to create equilibrium with an entity that suffers from fragmentation and a multiplicity of vectors. But these problems are exacerbated by the deterioration of the strategic and political environment that is supposed to enable a lasting agreement. The Palestinians, certainly in light of domestic opposition, will find it difficult to sign an agreement without receiving significant inter-Arab backing. But the inter-Arab backing was provided in the past mainly by Mubarak, and Mubarak was the chief player working to weaken and contain Hamas within the Palestinian system. Mubarak's ouster and the increased political power of the Islamists in Egypt, who are closely connected to Hamas, have caused disruptions in the environment that is supposed to enable a future settlement.

The Roadmap, for example, received the blessing of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Bahrain. However, in light of the new trends in Egypt and the tensions between the United States and the Sunni monarchies, it is not clear whether the White House can mobilize a new supporting front. Since the United States has lost strategic credibility to a degree in the eyes of both sides, its ability to supply the strategic context required for an agreement, which it enjoyed in the past, can no longer be taken for granted.

A related question is whether Israel can assume that the United States will act effectively against actors that will attempt to challenge the reality created by an Israeli-Palestinian settlement. The conduct of the United States, from Iraq through Syria to Libya, suggests that Washington today is averse to risks or the payment of significant strategic prices. Nor is it just the memory of 1967 and 1970 that should dampen Israeli enthusiasm for international security guarantees; there is also the fresh experience whereby the international community failed to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and completely failed in the security arrangements on the Gaza-Egyptian border in 2005 following the Israeli disengagement from Gaza.

These concerns are intensifying in light of Iran's larger strategic footprint on the shores of the Mediterranean, including infiltration of the Palestinian system through Gaza. Iran's effectiveness and boldness are increasing, and it does not hesitate to challenge the existing American order, American clients, or the United States itself. The peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan, and any new agreements reached in the near future, are thus exposed to two forces that are liable to undermine them: Iran and pressure on the regimes from the Arab spring.

A clinical analysis reveals that there must be two overarching aspirations in any agreement with the Palestinians, no matter what its content. The first is that the agreement will be implemented in reality and not be a dead letter. The second, complementary goal is that the situation following implementation of the agreement be stable and be able to withstand attempts to challenge it over time. However, the empirical foundation for assessing that these aspirations are achievable is growing weaker.

Opportunities

The more Iran intervenes in additional theaters or deepens its involvement in existing theaters, the closer it gets to overstretching. Iran's GDP is lower than that of Argentina or South Africa, and Iran's extensive intervention in the region is taxing its economy. The Iranian method of operation, based on non-state proxies and local sympathizers, is highly cost-effective, but the adoption of a wise strategy by its adversaries could well draw Iran into overstretching.

Another opportunity lies in the renewal of the historic competition between the Persians and the Ottomans, which may become a main thrust of regional geopolitical dynamics. Given this potential, it is surprising that the Turkish vector sometimes aids more than frustrates Iranian ambitions, such as in the nuclear realm. In fact, Turkish and Iranian interests are likely to collide in central Asia, Iraq, and Syria. In recent years, Turkey has sought to draw closer to the Alawite regime, but the riots in Syria have endangered this regime and give rise to the possibility that Sunni forces will come to power. The Ottomans (Sunnis themselves) ruled Syria for hundreds of years through the local Sunni-Arab elite. Therefore, competition for control of Syria may develop between Iran and the Alawites on the one hand, and Turkey and Sunni-Syrian forces on the other.

Another possible theater of competition is Lebanon. First, Turkey is attempting to acquire influence in the Land of the Cedars. Second, while Syria has not defined its strategic situation as competition with Iran and Hizbollah for hegemony in Lebanon, the latter have taken advantage of the withdrawal of Syrian forces to replace Syria as the dominant player in Lebanon. If the Arab spring in Syria comes to an end, perhaps the Israeli diplomatic and military strategy should aim at Syria's return to Lebanon with Saudi backing (a second Taif Agreement). This would achieve three objectives: first, return to a situation that would allow events in Lebanon to be restrained through leverage over Syria; second, the generation of tensions on the Iran-Syria-Hizbollah axis; and third, preservation of a geopolitical zone of separation between Turkey and Israel. From an Israeli point of view, it is preferable that Syria and Lebanon have a Saudi orientation, not a Turkish or Iranian one. Israel's interest is a balance of power, not Arab, Iranian, or Turkish dominance, and Saudi Arabia has remained the last Arab player that is still capable of balancing Iran and Turkey.

The traditional Israeli view was that geopolitical conditions created a convergence of interests between Israel and Turkey, which began with containing pan-Arab regimes, developed into containing pro-Soviet Arab regimes, and of late has transformed to containing Iran. But it is not clear whether in his current calculations Erdoğan envisions an Islamic front against Israel, a front with Israel and Saudi Arabia against Iran, or a front

with Iran and Syria against the Kurds – or that he does not seek to commit himself to any front.

Furthermore, current Turkish policy appears crude and rudimentary, evident in its fickleness toward Syria; its inability to decide between cooperation with Iran (even militarily, against the Kurds) and its aversion to the spread of Iranian influence; its threat to break off relations with the European Union if Cyprus is given the EU's rotating presidency – even as it agreed to position on its soil NATO radar for the detection of Iranian missiles; and its threat to use military force against Cyprus and Israel. Nor is it clear to what extent Turkey is motivated by strategic, ideological, or economic considerations, such as the economic interest in gas fields in the eastern Mediterranean, whose significance for Turkey was perhaps not understood by Israel. This Turkish ambivalence is liable to continue to resonate in the coming years.

The bad news is that the Turkish vector is not clear and perhaps not cohesive; the good news is that much is still possible. Israel, therefore, must seek common ground with Turkey and find processes in which it can involve Turkey. At the same time, it must seek the partnerships necessary to balance Turkey's power.

Military Implications

The breakup of Israel's strategic puzzle has two seemingly opposing military meanings: on the one hand, the disappearance or the waning of critical stabilizers increases the chance of a military conflagration. On the other hand, the desire to protect the existing peace treaties and avoid unnecessary entanglements with uncertain repercussions limits Israel's military freedom of action. Under the current conditions, there is a developing asymmetry between the modest political-strategic gains that are possible in military campaigns, such as in Gaza, and their potential for substantive regional mischief. Therefore, there is a need to accelerate military buildup and develop appropriate capabilities suited to the new challenges, but there must also be increased restraint in the use of force.

Force buildup: Whether what is already known today is sufficient to provide Israel with a strategic warning of a possible future reversal in Egyptian policy or the future emergence of an eastern front composed of state actors remains to be assessed. At issue are years-long processes of force buildup, which center on long range scenario forecasts and

simulations. The IDF must not be surprised by the possibility of the return of the state actor adversary. There is also a need to refresh the logistics and capabilities that allow the IDF to take advantage of possibilities for operating on interior lines. In the first decades of the IDF, war fighting on interior lines was one of its main relative advantages, but in recent decades that need was perceived to have diminished.

In addition, Iran is developing a strategic reach to Israel, and in fact has already developed an indirect ability to wage an extensive campaign against it.⁹ Therefore, Israel must determine its countering strategic concept and what kind of force buildup will prevent a deficit in long range power projection capabilities. Israel's contemporary strategic tensions relate to non-bordering regional powers as much as to bordering states, and since the non-bordering regional powers are sometimes stronger than the bordering states, there is a need for both quantitative buildup and improved long range naval and air power projection.

Use of force: Relations with Egypt (and Jordan) are an Israeli asset of the utmost importance. Therefore, the regional processes require the IDF to plan future campaigns against third parties with different considerations than in the past. It is no longer possible to presume that

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Egypt will necessarily back Israel, as Mubarak did in 2006 and 2008. The working assumption should be that the future Egyptian government, no matter what its exact character, will find it difficult to remain aloof in the event of a prolonged IDF operation. Israel must thus prepare for a situation in which campaigns against third parties (if they are unavoidable) will be limited and not continue beyond the several days in which the Egyptian government can justify self-restraint. Collateral damage needs to be minimized even more than in the past and the alternative of defense should also be considered, in accordance with the circumstances. Such constraints are liable to develop from Turkey's growing footprint as well.

Finally, there is a growing fear that the United States aegis no longer assures sufficient protection of national security, as it did in the past. Therefore, the need for self-reliance is becoming

clearer, including on the Iranian nuclear issue. There may be differing opinions as to whether Israel should attack Iran,¹⁰ but it is very difficult to maintain the position that Israel does not need to attack because the Americans will deliver the goods in their own way. A more valid working assumption is that the White House simply will not deliver.

Israeli Policy: A Challenge in Three Parallel Spheres

One of Israel's complex challenges is the need to operate simultaneously in three parallel spheres, each operating according to different (and to some extent contradictory) laws of mechanics and based on different (presumed) facts. At one end is the sphere of the cold strategic reality. This is the rough sphere in which the spoken language is not infrequently that of the power struggle, and Israel tends to feel that it must have the upper hand in this sphere at all times. At the other end is the sphere of international public opinion. This is a universe of perceptions and images that are sometimes far from the tough reality on the ground, but they have taken hold in the media and among international organizations. These perceptions and images are to a large extent a source of international legitimacy, or lack thereof. The legitimacy also affects the boundaries of Israel's freedom of action and its staying power and ability to maintain its course in the strategic reality sphere. Between the two extremes is the inter-governmental sphere. Governments exhibit at least partial familiarity with the facts and mechanics of the strategic sphere, but their policies are to a large extent driven by public opinion.

The gap between the laws of mechanics and the perception of the facts in the three spheres is growing wider. In the universe of world public opinion, Israel is called on to set its affairs in order, mainly the Palestinian issue, without delay. There is minimal patience and willingness to listen to various arguments. The inter-governmental sphere is spread between the belief that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the root cause of instability in the Middle East on the one hand, and apathy behind closed doors – yet with public opinion taken into consideration when speaking to the media – on the other. But the situation in the strategic universe is much more complex.

The reality described in this article reveals a new map of instability, uncertainty, and threats that Israeli policy cannot ignore. In tandem, Israel must aspire to preserve channels of cooperation with Egypt,

Jordan, and Turkey; develop channels of cooperation with Saudi Arabia; and take advantage of opportunities to mitigate the regional shockwaves.

Notes

- 1 See also Ron Tira, "The United States in the Middle East: An Exercise in Self-Defeat," *Strategic Assessment* 14, no. 1 (2011): 41-54.
- 2 According to the US doctrine, "the distance across which the Nation can project decisive military power is its strategic reach." U.S. Army Field Manual FM 3-0, C1, February 22, 2011.
- 3 Libya is the exception that proves the rule, and from the outset the military involvement there was designed in a way that was intended chiefly to reduce risks and costs, and not to ensure that objectives were achieved. See Ron Tira, "The Uncommitted Commitment: U.S. Military Involvement in Libya," *Infinity Journal*, April 27, 2011.
- 4 Other than perhaps Tunisia, but there too the situation is very different from what is reported in the news.
- 5 Nawaf Obaid, "Amid the Arab Spring, a U.S.-Saudi Split," *Washington Post*, May 16, 2011.
- 6 Paul Richter and Neela Banerjee, "U.S.-Saudi Rivalry Intensifies," *Los Angeles Times*, June 19, 2011.
- 7 Ray Takeyh, "A Post-American Day Dawns in the Middle East," *New York Times*, June 8, 2011.
- 8 "Iran 'Grooms Mehdi Army for Gulf Ops,'" *UPI*, June 9, 2011.
- 9 Ron Tira, "Israel's Strategy (or Lack of) towards Iran's Forward Rocket Deployments in Lebanon and Gaza," *Infinity Journal* 1 (Winter 2010).
- 10 See also Ron Tira, "A Military Attack on Iran? Considerations for Israeli Decision Making," *Strategic Assessment* 13, no. 1 (2010): 45-60 and Ron Tira, "Can Iran Be Deterred?" *Policy Review* No. 169 (October 1, 2011).