

Note from the Editor

This issue is my 28th, and last, as editor of *Strategic Assessment*. Since October 2012, it has been my mission to coordinate the editorial team responsible for a significant part of the in-depth policy-oriented research produced by the Institute for National Security Studies. After this issue, the responsibility for the journal passes to Kobi Michael and Omer Einav, and I wish them every success.

Over the past seven years as editor of this publication, I have had two major objectives in mind. The first has been to ensure that the journal reflects the changing nature of the challenges to Israeli security. The second has been to maintain as much as possible a commitment to the kind of high level analysis that looks beyond the daily headlines in order to identify underlying trends and present possible policy responses or initiatives in ways intended to pluralize and energize the public debate.

Regarding the first objective, regular readers of *Strategic Assessment* will probably note a subtle but perceptible transformation in the kind of issues the journal and, we believe, the government of Israel need to address. This transformation is a function of an evolving understanding of what the term “national security” implies. Traditionally, this issue-area dealt with threats posed by other political entities to the physical wellbeing of a state and its citizens and, by extension, of other states, especially allies, whose wellbeing constitutes a security asset. Threats and security capabilities have instinctively been understood, first, in the military sense. That is why *Strategic Assessment* has continued to address familiar security issues like the threats and/or opportunities posed by the Palestinians, Iran, other Middle Eastern actors, and major outside powers, as well as generic military issues like kinetic and cybernetic capabilities, intelligence, terrorism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Beyond this, it was logical to extend the understanding of security to the economic realm, because broad economic trends along with specific access to resources and markets are essential factors in wellbeing, as well as the foundation of military capabilities; they provide the “sinews of war” along with other forms of persuasion or coercion. Hence, the growing importance of the Gulf countries.

All of this normally comes under the rubric of “hard security.” In recent decades, however, there has been a growing appreciation, even among

major military powers, of the importance of “soft security” threats, that is, of non-military threats – not necessarily arising from the conscious policies of other political entities – to the wellbeing of a state and its citizens. Major examples include organized crime and drugs, infectious disease, environment decay, and climate change, and – for Israel – the spread of potentially disruptive or dangerous ideas. Hence, the analyses devoted to the “Arab Spring” and ISIS (as long as those phenomena dominated regional and global consciousness). These developments originate or grow outside national borders and cannot be seriously addressed without cross-border cooperative action. In other words, they should also rightly be on a state’s foreign and security policy agenda.

There is, however, a third set of issues that don’t fit into either the “hard” or “soft” security category, because they are not formally on the foreign/defense policy agenda at all. These are ostensibly domestic issues, but issues whose development could potentially have serious implications for a state’s international standing and reputation, for the quality of its foreign and defense relations with other countries, and therefore, ultimately, for its military and economic wellbeing. Perhaps the most appropriate adjective to describe such issues is “intermestic,” because they breach the traditional distinction between foreign and domestic policy. The reference here is not to the more familiar breach once attributed to Henry Kissinger – “Israel has no foreign policy, only domestic politics.” It is, rather, to the unconscious or unintended ramifications for foreign and security policy of decisions made on seemingly pure domestic issues.

For almost all countries, good military, political, and economic relations with some other leading countries are important in an interdependent world. That is true even for major global powers like the United States, Russia, and China, which at least ostensibly are able to pursue an autarkical existence but still invest so much time, treasure, and intellectual capital in an effort to burnish their international image. But it is particularly true for countries like Israel, which are small, live in hostile neighborhoods, contain sizable minorities with primordial ties to forces beyond their borders, and very much depend on stable supportive policies, sustained by stable supportive public attitudes of some major world powers. Notwithstanding the formidable military and economic power developed by Israel itself over the decades, what was recognized by David Ben-Gurion over seventy years ago – that Israel needs the support of at least one superpower at any point in time – remains relevant in the 21st century. However, Israel is most likely

to find durable supportive public opinion to sustain durable supportive policies in a democratic superpower with a significant and influential Jewish community. In other words, Israel still needs bipartisan support from the United States. However, the permanence of that support depends on an ongoing complementarity of social values and political systems. In brief, domestic Israeli politics do affect national security; what's done at home doesn't stay at home.

That is why a journal devoted to Israel's national security needs should pay greater attention to "intermestic" issues like the character of its political system, the quality of its democracy (including the separation of powers and checks and balances), media freedoms, majority-minority relations, and religion-state relations – as we have tried to do.

We are not as certain that we have fulfilled the second commitment: to rigorous, high quality research that distinguishes itself from the "rapid response" that so dominates public discourse in the age of social networks. There cannot, of course, be a definitive answer to this question, since judgments about "quality" are inherently subjective. What we can say with confidence is that this objective consistently topped our order of priorities. If we have come close to upholding the standard, the result is due to the members of the editorial board, all of whom brought their time, rigorous thought, intellectual insight, knowledge, and experience to the collective process of deciding what to publish and what not to publish. And without wishing to slight any other editorial board members – since all played an invaluable role in editorial decision making (which produced the added benefit of some stimulating and enjoyable discussions) – I would like to acknowledge, in particular, the input of Moshe Grundman, the Managing Editor (and INSS Director of Publications), and Judith Rosen, the Associate Editor (and INSS Editor). Beyond their essential technical expertise, without which publication would not have been possible, Moshe and Judy consistently provided prized substantive input and perspectives that the rest of us sometimes missed. All of us together have produced a journal that has enhanced the product of the Institute for National Security Studies and elevated the intellectual and policy debate in and about Israel.

Mark A. Heller
July 2019

From the Director of INSS

After seven years as editor of *Strategic Assessment*, Dr. Mark Heller, a veteran senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), will end his term at the helm of the Institute's flagship intellectual publication.

It is a pleasure to take this opportunity to thank Mark for his contribution – specifically, his academic leadership, his vast knowledge, and his impressive expertise in the vicissitudes of history and international relations, all of which were reflected in his sound guidance in selecting the articles to be published in *Strategic Assessment*. Mark's familiarity with the enigmas of the disciplines addressed at INSS added a critical and essential layer to his careful quality control over the journal's contents.

The praise that Mark deserves likewise pertains to his management of a diverse editorial board, his professional integrity, and his impressive attentiveness and openness, as well as his full cooperation with authors and staff members, and his response to the constraints that *Strategic Assessment* faced as it rose to the highly respected position that it has earned both in Israel and in the international academic community.

For all this and much more – our sincere acknowledgment, high esteem, and tremendous gratitude.

Dr. Heller will maintain his position at INSS as a principal research associate.

Maj. Gen. (ret.) Amos Yadlin
Executive Director of INSS
July 2019