



Shall the People Dwell Alone? Israel between Unprecedented Isolation and Precedent-Setting Partnerships

Jonathan Nevo-Abitbol

The Swords of Iron War has exposed a duality in Israel's relations with the international community. While it has been subject to severe criticism and mounting political isolation in its first multi-arena war against Iran and its partners, it has also received unprecedented cooperative support against threats. Israel can and must overcome its internal systemic limitations to identify opportunities for partnerships and ensure success in its efforts to form a coalition against Iran.

Introduction

The Swords of Iron War has been characterized by significant ambivalence in the treatment of Israel by the international community and the region.¹ On the one hand, Israel received remarkable sympathy and political and military support, but at the same time, severe and unprecedented displays of hostility and pressure. This detailed article, which examines the character of this duality, presents the processes that created opportunities for cooperation, the risks involved in increasing the cooperative efforts, and several suggestions for intensifying cooperative efforts as an instrument of national security. It considers the defensive framework led by the United States, in which Arab armies also participated, but goes beyond this—outside the Middle East and beyond the narrow realm of the security sphere.

Israel has a host of opportunities for cooperation to contend with its security and strategic challenges, particularly vis-à-vis Iran and its partners in the region. Some of these opportunities are missed due to obstructions related to the nature of the Israeli system and its conception of self-reliance. Despite the limits of

cooperation, Israel must actively pursue it, even if some efforts will only bear fruit in the future.

The Complexity of International Treatment of Israel

The nature of the beginning of the war—a surprise attack involving the mass slaughter of civilians—resulted in exceptional international support, including protests of support for Israel and visits of support by heads of state. Particularly prominent was American support for Israel's goals during the initial days of the war, which included the deployment of an aircraft carrier to the region as deterrence against Iran and Hezbollah, logistical assistance, and a speedy declaration of the intention to increase defense aid. In the context of the American presence, the following months saw clear signaling of red lines to Iran and its proxies, through attacks in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen against groups that attacked US forces or harmed US interests.

In addition, the war had a deep impact on the internal political environment in several countries, as it sparked a wave of antisemitism and anti-Israeli and anti-Western protests, but

also an opposing wave of solidarity against what was perceived as an extremist ideological threat. During the initial days of the war, the president of France even proposed the formation of a coalition of support for Israel.² In addition, one must consider the results of the cooperative effort between the IDF, the US military, and other armies, the most visible expression of which was its repelling of the attack against Israel launched by Iran and its proxies on the night of April 13-14, with the assistance of European and Arab armies.

The war has set a precedent in the level of international pressure on Israel combined with security challenges, and marks the end of the [country's security "golden age"](#)—a period characterized by a limited, single-arena threat; American hegemony in the Middle East and broad American support; and an internal ethos that facilitated social mobilization and cohesion. In contrast, the war featured intermittent attacks in seven arenas: Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Iran, and cyberspace. This is all in addition to the continuation of terrorism from Judea and Samaria.

In the political realm, following initial support in the early days of the war, pressure increased to end the campaign without achieving its goals, due to resulting humanitarian hardships and a number of incidents that led to the killing of journalists and international aid workers. During the war, sanctions were instituted against Israeli extreme settlers for the first time, based on the claim that Israel was not preventing violence against Palestinians. The suit lodged by South Africa and other countries before the International Court of Justice in the Hague, arrest warrants against Israel's prime minister and defense minister, and accusations that Israel has committed genocide, together dealt a severe blow to Israel's reputation, which has also impacted the realms of culture, tourism, and academia. All this has been in addition to the political support of Iran provided by Russia, China, North Korea, and other countries, due, inter alia, to a conception of the war as part

of the struggle between the major powers. Russia and China have also strived to intensify their role in the Palestinian arena, adopting a narrative similar to that of Hamas. Israel's [political isolation](#) was impacted by its bitter public disagreements with the United States at various stages of the fighting and by friction with other traditional partners. This, in addition to the deep American involvement (signified by a meeting with the war cabinet at the IDF's high command post), also demonstrates the intensification of America's leverage with Israel. The combination of these factors (a multi-arena threat, political pressure, economic pressure, and clear exercise of American leverage) has had a psychological effect, which finds expression in the public discourse that portrays Israel as an isolated pariah state in a more vulnerable situation than ever.

The Israeli ethos stresses the principle of self-reliance, even at the cost of political isolation. Leaders in recent years have also confirmed this principle, in explicit reference to the Iranian challenge.³ The current war illustrates the increasing complexity of actualizing this ethos, in addition to the opportunities presented by cooperation in the face of mutual threats. Based on this ethos, Israel has in the past adopted strategies that incorporated cooperative efforts (including a willingness to consider the concerns of the major powers, in order to acquire backing and support)⁴, cooperation with local actors to create a buffer zone,⁵ and assistance to minorities challenging states from within or through wars of intervention.⁶ In the more distant past, Israel also strived to establish regional alliances. One example was the concept of the ["Alliance of the Periphery,"](#) which included cooperative efforts with Türkiye, Ethiopia, and Iran and was born of the need to contend with the mutual threat of Egypt's Nasser.

The ethos of self-reliance played a role in mobilizing Israeli society on October 7, 2023. It was reflected in the speed of response, the scale of the reserve enlistment, and civil society's contribution to the war effort and to

national resilience, particularly at the outset of the war.⁷ The scope of external pressure on Israel and the conflicting interests of some of her allies, requires that Israel maintain a strong army and a capacity for strong, ongoing, and independent action. At the same time, Iran presents Israel with a challenge on a different scale, particularly the more the encounter becomes one of attrition, in which the need for external support grows. An asymmetry in size and scale exists between Iran and its proxies on the one hand, and Israel on the other, and the challenge is only growing due to the large range of arenas and the absence of Israeli strategic depth. Therefore, despite the desire for independence and the advantage of the ethos of self-reliance that facilitates popular mobilization, the challenge that Iran and the Iranian axis poses requires Israel to improve its capacity to engage in cooperative efforts on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis, to the point of forming or establishing a coalition.

How Did the Opportunities for Cooperative Efforts Against Iran Arise?

The end of the Trump administration in 2020 saw two events that enabled cooperative efforts between the IDF and Arab armies. The Abraham Accords resulted in normalization between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Morocco, which was followed by a decision by the US administration to move the IDF from the responsibility of the United States' European Command (EUUCOM) to its Central Command (CENTCOM). This created an incentive for the Arab armies to intensify their cooperation with the IDF as part of the Middle Eastern security architecture, an incentive for the IDF to expand its cooperative efforts with the aim of improving its strategic depth, and an incentive for CENTCOM to lead the process of seeking stability for the United States in the region as part of an integrated response to the threats. In a Congressional hearing held in March 2023, CENTCOM commander Michael

Kurilla portrayed the “race” to further integrate militarily with its partners in the Middle East [as a response to the Iranian challenge and to strategic competition with China](#).

Whereas the United States is essential for the advancement of cooperation between the IDF and the armies of the region, it appears that the fear that the Americans will ultimately “abandon the region” is also pushing some Arab countries to join Israel. This stems from the perception of Iran as a mutual threat and the assessment that the United States will not ultimately be willing to take care of it.

The discovery of natural gas deposits in the Mediterranean Sea and Israel's emergence as an exporter of natural gas had enhanced its regional status. This process increased Israel's independence in the realm of energy and intensified its strategic importance for Jordan, Egypt, Cyprus, and Greece, resulting in the establishment of a regional forum.

Prior to this, the discovery of natural gas deposits in the Mediterranean Sea and Israel's emergence as an exporter of natural gas had enhanced its regional status. This process increased Israel's independence in the realm of energy and intensified its strategic importance for Jordan, Egypt, Cyprus, and Greece, resulting in the establishment of a regional forum: the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF). Although this cooperative effort is civic in essence, it is easy to imagine how it will also impact security aspects, as its implementation will require the safeguarding of the freedom of shipping and the defense of critical facilities.

Two wars have further increased the status of Israel and its value as a military and political partner outside of the Middle East. Russia's invasion of Ukraine led to a rebirth of NATO and a shrinking of the gap between Israel and the positions of some European countries on Iran. This was due to Iran's military aid to Russia in the war that highlighted the mutual challenge

facing Israel and the countries of Europe. For many countries, the war increased political interest in security and heightened the focus on national military investment. Several of the threats during the war (missiles and UVAs, in particular) prompted special interest in Israeli weapon systems and cooperative work with the IDF. However, the deeper change stemmed from the manner in which the war changed strategic perceptions. Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz demonstrated this dynamic when he discussed the watershed that developed in German thinking⁸ and similar processes of change of view also occurred in other countries, such as [Japan](#), [France](#), and Italy.⁹ These approaches reflect concepts that are closer to that of Israel—such as deterrence, defense, and military alliances, as opposed to past concepts of collective security by means of cooperation and trade.¹⁰

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Another development that strengthened Israel, even if it drew limited international attention, is the Second and Third Nagorno-Karabakh Wars. These wars changed the balance of power in the Caucasus,¹¹ that had been achieved with the help of security relations with Israel. The wars accelerated the public component of Israel-Azerbaijan relations and created an interest on the part of central Asian countries in relations with Israel. Azerbaijan holds importance from Israel's perspective due to its role as an oil provider, as a customer of the defense industries, and the fact that it is a secular Shiite country competing with the ideological model of the Islamic Republic. Azerbaijan may have the potential to impact

the Azeri minority in Iran.¹² Although the crises in Iran-Azerbaijan relations in 2022-2023—which included public military exercises, terrorist attacks, and belligerent declarations—remain isolated incidents, they also demonstrated the possible damage to Iran should relations with Azerbaijan deteriorate.¹³

Another contributing factor in the security cooperation against Iran, was the development of the Biden Administration's approach to national security. This regarded cooperative efforts and alliances as an asymmetric American advantage over the powers competing with the US, which also enabled it to reduce its involvement in regional clashes.¹⁴

The Opposing Process: Development of the Iranian Threat Against Israel

Even prior to this process, the strategic threat that Iran and its partners posed to Israel was on the rise. This threat includes the development of the Iranian nuclear program, intensification of Iran's missile and UVA capabilities, the dissemination of these capabilities to terrorist organizations, and continued efforts to carry out attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets around the world. Over the past two decades, the threat posed by Iran increased due to the mounting instability in the Middle East following the toppling of the regime of Saddam Hussein (2003), the upheaval in the Arab world and the civil war in Syria (2011), and the rise of ISIS (2014). The Western and Israeli response—whether in the form of sanctions, diplomatic agreements, or kinetic action against Iran and its forces—succeeded only in limiting and delaying the increased threat.

We cannot assume that the threat will remain in the already existing arenas (Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, and Iran itself). Iran is intensifying its presence elsewhere, using various models of intervention and expanding its influence. While the level of Iranian influence in Iraq and Lebanon is unparalleled in other countries, changes can occur quickly and threaten additional Israeli interests, although this may not necessarily

lead to an additional arena of military action. From an Israeli perspective, it is prudent to consider Iran's support for the Polisario Front in Algeria and its effect on stability in Morocco; its closer relations with the Burhan faction in Sudan, which could lead to improved smuggling capabilities into the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip; and the efforts to undermine stability within the Hashemite Kingdom in Jordan and their impact on Judea and Samaria. All of this continues as Iran persists in its slow, systematic efforts to increase its influence in the Shiite populations in Africa and Latin America.

The Iranian threat leaves Israel with a security deficit. Such an imbalance, in a rivalry with a nation whose population is ten times the size of that of Israel, combined with the expanded threat of Iran's proxies and partners across the region, leaves Israel in an inferior position in terms of population numbers, space, and the economic and social ability to support a military campaign over time. Although China and Russia have refrained from direct involvement, their diplomatic and economic support for Iran has allowed it to avoid international isolation, which in the past was critical to restrain its behavior. If the relations between Iran, China, and Russia improve, they could act as sources of military supplies and support a major qualitative leap in the building of Iranian power.

Contending with a state of military inferiority is reminiscent of the State of Israel's first thirty years under the constant threat of Arab armies. The Israeli response to this challenge was based on developing a qualitative advantage, on defeating each enemy separately as quickly as possible on their own territory, and on creating deterrence that allowed extended periods of calm in order to absorb immigrants and develop the economy, society, and the state. In the face of today's threats, it is not obvious that this strategy is still the most appropriate. The idea of achieving a quick victory in the enemy's territory is considered to be impossible to implement even in Lebanon, in light of the [development of military methods](#) facilitating the use of low-

cost, precision fire, and then "vanishing" of the enemy into the civilian surroundings.¹⁵

In this light, another possible response includes cooperation with other countries against some of the threats emanating from Iran and its partners in the region. Various ideas for creating a security framework, alliances, coalitions, and cooperative systems have been discussed in Israeli and Western discourse for some time now, in [Israeli and international institutes](#), and in the writings of [IDF officers dealing with Iran](#). The interception of the Iranian missile attack of April 14 illustrated the advantages and the disadvantages of this approach. The discourse tends to concentrate on the system of cooperative efforts between the United States, the Arab states, and Israel, with a focus on the gaps in the goals and the margins of security of each of the parties in the process, and on ways to bridge these gaps.

The success in defending against the Iranian attack demonstrated the direct operational benefits of cooperative efforts against Iran, including the formation of a coalition, which provided strategic depth, defensive assistance, and access to regions located far from Israel. These factors in themselves result in closer foreign relations and strengthens Israel's perceived power. Some also see this as a model for creating deterrence, based on the understanding that it is harder to harm an Israel protected by an alliance led by the United States. The delay in Iran's retaliation for the assassination, on its soil, of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, which was attributed to Israel, supports this approach. In a broader perspective, events of this type have the potential to increase cooperative security efforts to build strength, to strengthen the leadership of the American defense establishment, and to intensify the dilemma faced by Iran, which will need to take into consideration increased friction with the world powers and the countries of the region when using force against Israel.

In the long-term, a network of partnerships also offers the additional advantage of reducing

the resources required for contending with long-term threats by supporting Israeli defense industries and expanding the scope of resources used for research and development.

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However, although a coalition did indeed act on the night of April 14, it is still unclear whether this was a specific cooperative-defensive effort or part of broader political, intelligence, and security (military or technological) foundation that will be able to be built upon in the future. If a coalition is taking form, its limitations are easy to identify. The effort of April 14 was limited to a defensive goal, and no other country joined Israel in its military retaliation against Iran. In addition, every coalition depends on political agreement, which can be fragile, as reflected in the internal criticism in Jordan regarding its alleged participation in the defense of Israel. Moreover, participation in the coalition may have costs, such as harming Israeli freedom of operation. It is difficult to determine what the political price tag will be for forming a coalition against Iran. The broad cooperation on April 14, without concessions on the Palestinian issue, reflects that this was not a necessary condition for any cooperation; and flexibility in the Palestinian arena may have facilitated the formation of a broader framework and perhaps even deterred Iran. The depth of the American commitment and the ability to forge effective operational connections between the IDF, the Arab armies, and the United States play a central role in producing such deterrence.¹⁶

One weighty dilemma faced by Israel in encouraging the formation of a regional security partnership is the extent of its willingness to leverage its technological

and security advantages. Israel has always aspired to maintain a qualitative military edge (QME), and this goal has been grounded in agreements with the United States and in Congressional legislation. Today, however, with many countries in the region capable of contributing to security, strengthening these countries may actually promote Israeli interests. If Arab militaries assisted in intercepting the Iranian attack and may do so in the future, would it not be preferable for them to be equipped with the best defensive capabilities possible? On the other hand, the decision to allow other countries in the region to engage in military buildup, including technology from an Israeli source, will also expand weapons sales by the United States, impede Israeli superiority, and lead to the sharing of sensitive information. No one can promise that secrets will not fall into enemy hands, or that a country that is currently cooperating with Israel will not change its policy in the future.¹⁷

The greatest danger stems from the erosion of the ethos of self-defense (“defending ourselves by ourselves”). The willingness of civilians to mobilize for the war effort (whether by paying high taxes for security, or by actually enlisting in the military) is an important element of how Israel contends with the threats it faces. If erosion occurs, it will be difficult to re-create this level of civic commitment. This is illustrated by the reality of many Western countries in which it is politically difficult to increase investment in security and to draft civilians into the army, despite the growing and concrete threat from Russia. Assistance from a coalition also presents other challenges, such as a reduction in Israel’s political freedom of action and potential limitations on independent action against Iran, Israel’s ability to receive aid and build up forces etc.

Despite its international isolation and the external pressures exerted on it, Israel has never been assisted by others in meeting its defense needs in such an extensive manner as it was during this war. As a result, and due

to the asymmetry of the struggle against Iran, it is imperative that Israel try to develop ways of expanding the role of cooperative efforts in Israeli national security.

How and With Which Countries Can Israel Increase Cooperation in a Manner That Will Enable it to Contend with Iran?

Strengthening Security Architecture with the United States and the Arab Countries

In addition to the example of the air-defense capabilities, other areas of cooperation should be considered, such as cyber defense and border security. The Abraham Accords have thus far remained a strategic choice of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, and some regard them as a [cooperative effort for advancing deradicalization in Palestinian society](#), as suggested in [Israel's proposals](#).

Cooperative Effort with Alliances and Western Organizations

Initial steps regarding this issue were taken before the Swords of Iron War in conjunction with the European Union and [NATO](#), with increased recognition of Israel's strategic importance for European countries in the fields of energy, security, climate, and technology, and in light of the link between these fields. Therefore, cooperative efforts that focus on distinctly civic aspects can influence Israel's security relations with these organizations, or at least with their major member states. In addition, closer Iran-Russia relations will also help secure the commitment of these organizations (civic or military) to action against Iran, even if it is limited to softer measures such as sanctions, denunciations, and international isolation. However, every cooperative effort between Israel and Western countries will be impacted by criticism in the realms of human rights and international law, which frequently deviates from the standards applied to other countries. In most of these organizations,

decisions are taken through consensus, which makes it easier for Israel to evade punishment (given the support of countries like Germany, the Czech Republic, and Hungary—all European Union member states), but makes it harder for it to strengthen cooperative efforts (given Turkey's reluctance within NATO).

In the face of Turkey's call for cooperation with Iran to consolidate Muslim unity against Israel, strengthening Israel's enduring relations with Greece and Cyprus could create a counterbalance

Freedom of Shipping

During the Swords of Iron War, a coalition was formed to maintain the freedom of shipping in the Red Sea, as well as a coalition against the Houthis in Yemen, who pose a major threat to the Bab al-Mandab Straits. In the future, Israel can play an unofficial role in these coalitions or create a similar framework in the Mediterranean, which would also promote the interests of countries in North Africa and in Europe. In the face of Turkey's call for cooperation with Iran to consolidate Muslim unity against Israel, strengthening Israel's enduring relations with Greece and Cyprus could create a counterbalance. This "Hellenic Bloc" also has the potential to influence the Middle East: Greece and Cyprus host bases for Western military activity, own a large commercial fleet that is negatively impacted by Iran's activity, and already engage in important cooperation with the Gulf states, including the provision of mutual military assistance.

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Central Asia and the Caucasus

Instead of focusing only on the Middle East, it's also worth considering whether it would be

preferable to expand influence in geographical proximity to Iran.¹⁸ These areas, which were once part of a region of Soviet influence, are increasingly playing an important role in the great power contest, in part through competition over influence and infrastructure for the transmission of energy and minerals. From an Israeli perspective, Azerbaijan stands out in that its relationship with Israel has become strategic. Meaningful advancement in the region is limited by the fact that most countries are not interested in a rivalry with Iran, and some have considerations that will limit Israeli involvement, such as Turkish pressure. In any event, progress in specific contexts, even non-security related, will create dilemmas for Iran, who will lose from an Israeli role in that region.

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The Indo-Pacific Region

Countries in this region are choosing to gradually increase their expenditure on security to strengthen deterrence. Some have extensive defense industries, which are at the focus of the competition between the United States and China. Israel can establish closer security relations in the region by sharing the experience of the IDF and the Israeli security establishment, or, alternatively, by joining forces with other countries, as the [I2U2 framework](#) attempts to do in the civic realm. Iran's relations with North Korea and China may play an accelerating role in producing this cooperative effort. In the security dimension, these partnerships could assist in Israel's force buildup; in the economic-commercial dimension, they are critical to creating an alternative to the geopolitical role of Iran in various halls of commerce.

The scope of opportunities for action against the Iranian challenge is not static and will not necessarily be as broad if Israel does not act to maximize them. These measures will also require adaptations, first and foremost in strengthening the ability to conduct cooperative efforts, including within multilateral frameworks. Calls in a similar direction have been [issued in the past](#) and have led to organizational changes in the IDF in recent years, particularly in its [foreign relations array](#).

An important asset that Israel can leverage is its abilities in the realm of intelligence gathering, access to extensive intelligence regarding Israel's warfare against Hamas and Hezbollah, training, and other relevant knowledge.¹⁹ Another layer in the building of partnerships against Iran will be the ability to assist in the buildup of armies and other security bodies—the sale of weapons, joint exercises, as well as training and funding. Israel enjoys a technological, industrial, security, and military advantage that—if directed towards changing the military balance against Iran and its partners and not only building up the local industry—could support a broader strategy based on cooperation. If Israel chooses to proceed down this path, it may find opportunities for the deployment of forces in partner countries located in close proximity to Iran or its proxies. Possibilities include various models, such as building bases, the joint use of Israeli capabilities, and the use of force from within a partner country. A forward deployment would improve Israel's monitoring, offensive, and defensive abilities and increase its strategic depth.

Factors Delaying Change

Although there are certain limitations to the development of cooperative efforts (gaps in interests, the need for American leadership, for example), the most important obstruction to the establishment and reinforcement of cooperative efforts is conceptual and is rooted in the blessing (or curse) of the biblical Balaam, which has become in modern times a political philosophy:

“Behold, the people [of Israel] shall dwell alone and will not be reckoned among the nations.” There are also other constraints: building partnerships requires time, and the benefit is not always immediate. Whereas it is easier to point out the advantage stemming from the acquisition of a software platform or the training of troops, strengthening relationships with another country or army can be viewed as a luxury.

A second delaying factor, which is particularly relevant to the bold ideas regarding the sharing of capabilities or their deployment outside the country’s borders, stems from the risks to security and to information security. Leaving Israeli territory would expose any force to threats of harm, as well as to limitations imposed by the hosting party on IDF activity on its soil.²⁰ Another delaying factor that is technical in nature is the absence of military and security interoperability with other countries, meaning adaptation in communications and weaponry, a common operational language, and mechanisms for coordination and deconfliction. This challenge is not unique to Israel, but it may intensify due to limited Israeli experience participating in coalitions. Perhaps a way of contending with it will be found through cooperation via CENTCOM, for which enhancing interoperability with its partners and between the partners themselves, is a high priority.

Israel does not have a tradition of relying on coalitions and lacks national synchronization mechanisms to connect cooperative civic, political, technological, economic, and security efforts. Throughout this article, we discussed opportunities regarding different aspects of the foreign relations arena, but creating a connection between these cooperative initiatives in practice could encounter bureaucratic difficulties, as well as differences in priorities and in the allocation of resources.

Finally, we note the capacity limits of the IDF, the security establishment, and the intelligence community—it simply does not have infinite ability to engage in strengthening

partnerships, including building up partners’ forces, concurrent with fighting and preparing for war. Investing in cooperative initiatives to create coalitions will require an altogether different approach from Israel: one of expanding departments and processes dealing with cooperative efforts in the security establishment, strengthening the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, strengthening the connection between security and civic cooperative efforts and the willingness to make certain compromises regarding principles that were defined in the past, such as creative solutions regarding the sharing of knowledge and technology. These changes do not come at the expense of Israel’s ability to operate independently, but rather create a force-multiplier for independent efforts and will provide Israel with an opportunity to contend with Iran in a more successful manner in the long-term.

Conclusion

The Iron Swords War has intensified the calls for security independence in the spirit of the ethos of self-reliance. Israel, however, is dealing with a major challenge for which cooperative efforts will be essential to success. Several processes occurring in recent years have led Israel into a situation in which it possesses substantial assets that could be leveraged to mobilize countries into cooperative efforts against Iran. But capitalizing on the opportunities will require an element of development in the approach of Israeli’s national security, as well as that of the IDF and Israel’s defense establishment. If Israel rises to the challenge, it will be able to decide whether Balaam’s “blessing” regarding “a People that dwells alone” is eternal fate or a curse that Israel can overcome.

Major Jonathan Nevo-Abitbol holds a BA in Middle East Studies and International relations from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and an MA in Security and Diplomacy Studies from Tel Aviv University. nevo.jonathan@gmail.com

Notes

- 1 As we will see below, some of this duality found expression in processes that began prior to the war, but to which the war gave visible and meaningful expression.
- 2 Macron compared it to the American-led coalition against ISIS (“Inherent Resolve”), and France also initiated several political moves to increase the economic and political pressure on Hamas in support of Israel’s war goals.
- 3 See the [remarks of the Prime Minister](#) from the last Holocaust Commemoration Day, “If We Must Stand Alone – We Will Stand Alone.”
- 4 The Sinai Campaign of 1956 (“Operation Kadesh”) demonstrated this vis-à-vis Britain and France. In the decision-making process of the “waiting period” that preceded the Six-Day War and during the Yom Kippur War, Israel gave great consideration to American interests, including a willingness to pay a high price to maintain American support (a restriction on violating the terms of the agreement that ended the War of Attrition and refraining from preventative strikes in the Yom Kippur War). In single-arena, limited campaigns, Israel considered American concerns: in suppressing the Second Intifada, Israel conducted a stubborn political struggle to accrue legitimacy; and in the Second Lebanon War, Israel agreed to a 48-hour ceasefire following the Kafra Qana incident.
- 5 This idea can be seen in Lebanon, in the establishment of the South Lebanese Army after Israel’s withdrawal to the security strip; in the Syrian civil war, where providing aid to wounded Syrians also justified a security presence on the border; and in Judea and Samaria, with the maintenance of security coordination with the Palestinian Authority.
- 6 Examples of this include the aid to the Kurds in Iraq against the regime of Saddam Hussein, the assistance to monarchs in Yemen against Nasser’s Egyptian army, and aid to the rebels in Syria, which was attributed to Israel, during the civil war.
- 7 It should be noted that the scope of the mobilization deviated substantially from the “mobilization around the flag” effect, as during the initial weeks of the war, civil society assumed distinct roles of government institutions. These included determining the status of the missing, providing logistical assistance to the forces, and providing assistance to evacuees.
- 8 Scholz used the term *Zeitenwende*, which can be translated literally as “the changing of times,” in his [speech](#) of February 27, 2022. Since then, this expression has received many interpretations and continues to play a role in the German and the global public discourse. See Scholz’s [follow-up article](#) from early 2023.
- 9 Based on a personal conversation with counterparts who were involved in the development of a national strategy of defense in the Italian army.
- 10 The change developing in European thinking can be demonstrated through comparison of the concept articulated by Scholz with the older concepts that prevailed in Germany regarding the Russian threat, also during the Cold War, and particularly ideas regarding “change via closer relations” (*Wandel durch Annäherung*), and the like.
- 11 Some regard the changes in the Caucasus as also constituting an opening for greater change in the regional balance of power, due to the importance of the region in the “big game” between Turkey, Russia, Iran, and China in the region.
- 12 This finds some expression in the demonstrations of support in Azerbaijan during the Nagorno-Karabakh War and in the participation of many Azeris in the 2022 protests in Iran. Nonetheless, the Azeris are well-integrated in Iran (the Supreme Leader himself is half-Azeri), and despite the existence of a separatist ethos that sometimes elicits public sympathy, they should not be regarded as a group with irredentist aspirations.
- 13 The crisis included attacks on the Azeri embassy and the attempted assassination of a parliament member, mutually threatening statements, and military exercises in the border area, including Turkish intervention on the side of Azerbaijan. Today, the two countries are in a process of re-establishing closer relations, due in part to an Iranian effort to ensure that a change in the balance of power does not harm Iranian interests.
- 14 This insight is a second thread running through the national security conception of the Biden Administration (October 2022): “Our alliances and partnerships around the world are our most important strategic asset and an indispensable element contributing to international peace and stability.” It should be noted that whereas the Trump Administration did not necessarily operate in this manner, the national security strategy that his administration developed placed alliances and cooperative efforts front and center (they were mentioned approximately 75 times in the document).
- 15 In the absence of a quick defeat, we must also reexamine the other components of the approach, which, from an Israeli perspective, no longer addresses the problem of asymmetry vis-à-vis the enemy.
- 16 A different perspective is offered by the possibility of forming a [formal defensive alliance](#) with the United States, or a limited security alliance that includes additional countries.
- 17 For more on this, see the report composed by Congress when the United States intended to sell advanced planes to the United Arab Emirates. [Israel’s Qualitative Military Edge and Possible U.S. Arms Sales to the United Arab Emirates](#)
- 18 Another potential idea that will not be expanded upon here is Israel’s relations with minorities in the Middle East, particularly in the Kurdish region of Iraq, and with the Druze minority in Syria. Iran contains a variety

of ethnic groups and groups that may view ties with Israel as part of a struggle against the regime where they live.

- 19 The phenomenon of synthetic drugs, especially Fenethylline, has gone from being a social nuisance to a genuine threat to stability in the region. Syrian and Lebanese involvement in the smuggling of Fenethylline

may help solidify cooperative efforts to defend the borders between the countries.

- 20 This can be compared to a mirror-image of the risks that Iran took upon itself when it tried to establish itself near Israel and suffered ongoing losses in the Syrian arena.