מכון ראות

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The Gaza Flotilla:
A Collapse of Israel's Political Firewall
Case Study

Initiated and Commissioned By the
Julis Foundation for Multi-Disciplinary Thinking

Version A

Elul 5770
August 2010

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Introduction

**"The next confrontation in the efforts to break the siege on Gaza
will be directly with the Zionist enemy on the high seas."**
Mohammed Sawalha, interview on Hezbollah Web site Al-Intiqad, January 2010

This case-study deals with a strategic political strike against the State of Israel that was planned without interruption since February 2009 and materialized on May 31, 2010. Known as the Gaza Flotilla, this effort exceeded the expectations of its organizers in causing tangible and significant damage to Israel.

Planning of the Gaza Flotilla was carried out over the internet and in public conferences by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) primarily operating from major cities of countries friendly to Israel, including London, Dublin or San Francisco.

In the broader context, the Gaza Flotilla was just the tip of the iceberg. It is one incident out of many in a campaign entitled 'Lifeline to Gaza' designed to break the 'siege' of Gaza. The campaign itself is one of several being waged against Israel. Others include the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Movement, the 'lawfare' strategy, and the Durban conferences.

Together, these campaigns and others form a global systematic and systemic attack against Israel and its political-economic model. Their form continually shifts and adapts and their momentum is gaining. Their ultimate aim is to delegitimize Israel in order to precipitate its implosion, inspired by the collapses of countries such as the Soviet Union and apartheid South Africa.

This attack is executed by two forces, acting in parallel and with cooperation. The first is the Resistance Network, led by Iran, Hamas, and Hezbollah, that rejects Israel's right to exist based on Arab and Islamist nationalist-religious ideology. The second is the Delegitimization Network, which is primarily concentrated in a few major cities such as London, Brussels or the San Francisco Bay Area, and denies Israel's right of existence based on political, philosophical or historical arguments.

Israel has been subject to evident strategic inferiority in facing this threat, experiencing recurring fundamental surprises and setbacks. While the challenge is global, systemic, systematic and predominantly political, Israel's response has been remarkably local, situational, reactive, and often dominated by military thinking and practices.

It is indeed possible that the change in Israel's policy towards Gaza regarding the movement of civilian goods has taken the sting out of the 'Lifeline to Gaza' Campaign and, therefore, the flotilla strategy may have run its course. Focus on preventing the next flotilla may thus be tantamount to preparing for yesterday's wars.

Meanwhile, the delegitimization offensive against Israel is constantly adapting, and the network that produced the flotillas will find a new logic and battle cry. Thus, Israel's response to future flotillas, as well as to the entire campaign being waged against it, requires a comprehensive systemic treatment of the delegitimization challenge.

Executive Summary

Background and Introduction

1. **On the morning of Monday, May 31, 2010, Israeli naval commandos took over six ships en route to Gaza**. These ships comprised an international flotilla **whose aim, according to its organizers, was to break the 'Israeli siege' of Gaza** (the Gaza Flotilla).

2. **This was the fourth flotilla in the framework of what is known as the 'Lifeline to Gaza' Campaign.** Israel had previously succeeded in preventing a military confrontation with ships attempting to dock in Gaza, either towing the vessels into the port of Ashdod, coordinating with Egypt to divert the ships to El-Arish, or allowing their entry into Gaza. Indeed, Israel managed to take over five of the six vessels in the aforementioned flotilla without violence.

3. **A grave incident developed during the takeover of the Mavi Marmara, the sixth vessel of the Gaza Flotilla**. Members of the Turkish IHH organization attacked Israeli forces with knives and metal bars, and in some cases, with live fire. In the ensuing confrontation, nine Israeli soldiers were injured and nine Turkish IHH activists killed. Dozens of activists were wounded as well.

4. **The Gaza Flotilla had tangible consequences in terms of Israel's security and foreign affairs.** These included: anti-Israel demonstrations across the world; a change in Israeli policies regarding Gaza, perceived to constitute a capitulation to violence; increased attempts to boycott Israel and a wave of cancellations of concerts by leading international artists; the establishment of a number of international investigation commissions challenging Israel's judicial system; and stronger perception of cooperation between Israel's Arab citizens and the Resistance and Delegitimization Networks. In addition, the event was exploited by the Turkish government in order to exacerbate the crisis with Israel.

5. **Following the Gaza Flotilla, the Government of Israel decided to establish two commissions of inquiry.** The first, under the leadership of Major General (Res.) Giora Eiland, received a mandate to investigate the decisions taken by the military echelon, has already concluded its report and published some of its conclusions. The second, headed by retired Supreme Court Judge Jacob Turkel is a National Commission of Inquiry, and is due to investigate international legal aspects related to the flotilla, as well as to the legality of the Gaza blockade. The State Comptroller has also announced his intentions to investigate the affair.

6. **The Reut Institute believes the mandates of both commissions to reflect the mindset that mistakes surrounding the Gaza Flotilla were technical-operational or tactical-political in nature. The commissions are thus focused on the reasonableness of the actions taken by decision-makers based on existing laws, regulations, and accepted practices**.

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7. **Hence, Reut decided to conduct its own inquiry, based on a methodology of systemic policy analysis and on its conceptual framework for confronting the delegitimization challenge,** entitled, '[Israel's Delegitimization Challenge: Creating a Political Firewall](#).' The aim of Reut's inquiry is to contribute to the understanding the strategic significance of the event and to suggest principles for preventing similar occurrences in the future.

8. **Reut views this case study as a starting point of a longer 'open-source' process of knowledge development in partnership with the public**, regarding the significance of the Gaza Flotilla, as well as the relevant conclusions and recommendations. It is therefore our intention to other organizations and the general public to offer their insights as well.

The Delegitimization Challenge

9. In recent years, Israel has been facing a new challenge based on the ripening of two processes:

   - **The increased sophistication and efficiency of Hamas and the Resistance Network's 'Logic of Implosion.'** This logic aims to precipitate Israel's internal collapse through 'overstretch,' by preventing an end to its control over the Palestinian population; by advancing its delegitimization; and by developing a doctrine for a-symmetric warfare on the battlefield and against Israel's civilian population. The inspiration for this logic lies in the collapse of the Soviet Union and apartheid South Africa;

   - **The evolution of the Delegitimization Network.** This network aims to turn Israel into a pariah state so it will ultimately cease to exist**. It is based in a number of metropolitan cities, within which a relatively small number of individuals and organizations mobilize the assault on Israel's legitimacy. The Delegitimization Network's success lies in its ability to harness the Western liberal and progressive elite.** It does so by employing a variety of means aimed at blurring its true intentions;

   Both sets of ideas are increasingly sophisticated, ripe and coherent, even if there is no evidence that they represent an explicit strategy with operational objectives, timelines, or milestones.

10. **In recent years, the Resistance Network and the Delegitimization Network have begun to collaborate** creating a feed-back loop that accelerates the following dynamics:

    - **Promoting the one-state paradigm** – While the Resistance Network undermines any attempt to separate Israel and the Palestinians based on the Two-State Solution, the Delegitimization Network frames Israel as a pariah state and advances the One-State paradigm;

    - **Tying Israel's hands in contending with Hamas in Gaza (or Hezbollahstan in Lebanon)** – While the Resistance Network works towards strengthening the 'Hamastan' or Hezbollahstan models as a front for

its ideological and military struggle against Israel, the Delegitimization Network ties Israel's hands by constraining its political and military maneuverability and by granting legitimacy to Hamas or Hezbollah.

11. **These groups are leading a systemic and systematic attack against Israel's political and economic model, which has already had strategic consequences and may become existential if ignored or inadequately addressed.**

12. **Moreover, Israel suffers from strategic conceptual inferiority in contending with this threat**. In other words, Israel has no effective response to the challenge it faces. **This inferiority has caused Israel to repeatedly suffer from political and diplomatic disappointments, despite evident quantitative and qualitative military, technological, and economic superiority**. For example, Israel's ability to defend itself militarily has been compromised; its sovereignty has been challenged by increased international involvement in its domestic issues and the leveraging of universal jurisdiction against it; and it faces the risk of boycotts.

Hamas' Agility; Israel's Rigidity

13. **Following Hamas' victory in the Palestinian Authority (PA) elections (01/06), both the Delegitimization Network and Resistance Network mobilized to legitimize and strengthen its government**. Hamas' declaration of the hitherto existing agreements between the PLO and Israel null and void was in line with their underlying ideology.

14. **Israel's policy during this period** – stopping the transfer of funds to the PA until the Quartet's three conditions were met – **was ineffective in changing Hamas positions or in precipitating its demise**.

15. **On the contrary, Hamas went from strength to strength, while Israel's logic persisted**. In June 2007 Hamas carried out a coup d'état in Gaza and seized full control from the PA and Fatah. Shortly thereafter, following the abduction of Gilad Shalit by Hamas from Israeli territory, Israel imposed a blockade on Gaza.

16. **Ever since, a range of issues have been on the agenda of Israel and Hamas**: fixing a ceasefire across the Gaza-Israel border and the responsibility of the Hamas government for controlling armed groups; release of Palestinian prisoners and of Gilad Shalit; Gaza's access to Israel, Egypt and the world; Palestinian national unity; and the smuggling of weapons into Gaza from the sea or Egypt.

17. **Operation Cast Lead (01/09) epitomized Israel's conundrum in Gaza**: Israel has no wish to control Gaza and prefers the current Hamas government to chaos. In addition, it is more comfortable with the present split between the West Bank and Gaza than with a Hamas-Fatah national unity government.

18. **Nonetheless, Israel's policies did not significantly change**, in spite of the dramatic changes in the political and diplomatic reality since January 06', and despite the policy's failure to achieve expected results.

19. **Meanwhile, Hamas was able to continually adapt to the new reality**. It has remained loyal to its radical ideology, demonstrated a relatively clear strategic

logic in different phases of the confrontation, and managed to strengthen its domestic and international status, despite clear economic, military, and political inferiority.

20. **Since Operation Cast Lead, the main change in Hamas' policy has been its emphasis on the international arena for the struggle against Israel**, effectively leveraging the delegitimization campaign. Following this logic**, Hamas transformed elements of its brand and policy, as well as diverted resources of its support networks in Europe.**

Main Conclusions

21. **The Gaza Flotilla should be viewed as the latest manifestation of a systemic and systematic attack on Israel's political-economic model, designed to undermine Israel's legitimacy.** Other prominent manifestations include, for example, the BDS campaign against Israel; the legal war against senior Israeli leaders ('lawfare'); or the use of the Goldstone Report to bash Israel.

22. **As such, the Gaza Flotilla should be understood primarily as a continuation of a fundamental surprise that has been taking place since the Second Lebanon War (07/06) and exposed a relevancy gap in Israel's mindset as well as its security and foreign affairs doctrine.** It is an outcome of a 'situational surprise', originating in a failure of information and intelligence-collection. Therefore, notwithstanding the importance of investigating many technical aspects of the event by commissions of inquiry, Israel should establish strategic teams that can provide a systemic response to this challenge that will end the fundamental surprises and restore Israel's conceptual edge.

23. **There were two groups on the flotilla: 'delegitimizers' and 'critics'.** The former, who seem to have been the minority, seek to delegitimize Israel's very existence in order to see it disappear. They were the organizers of the Gaza Flotilla, which represents one project in their campaign. The latter group, which appears to have been a large majority, was motivated by opposition to what they saw as Israel's unjust and inhumane policy in Gaza.

24. **The Gaza Flotilla represented a new level of collaboration between Hamas and the Resistance Network, on the one hand, and the Western-based Delegitimization Network, on the other hand.** As mentioned, it was openly and uninterruptedly organized over a fourteen month period by NGOs in large cities – including London, Dublin, San Francisco, and Istanbul – primarily in countries friendly to Israel. Hamas viewed the flotilla as a strategic opportunity and effectively mobilized its network of supporters and activists in this direction.

25. **Turkish involvement 'made the difference'** – Turkey acted as a 'meeting point' between the Resistance Network and the Delegitimization Network: the Turkish Government adopted the position of the Resistance Network regarding the Hamas Government in Gaza, endorsing it over the PA; Turkey turned the issue of Gaza and the blockade into a major flashpoint with Israel, and used it to challenge Egypt, its strategic rival. It also provided tangible support to the IHH.

26. **However it was the ability of its organizers to mobilize leading figures among the liberal progressive elite in the West that bolstered the Gaza Flotilla and turned it into a global and politically explosive event. The big-tent approach of 'everyone is invited'** resulted in the participation of both extreme Islamists and European intellectuals; Jews, Christians, and Muslims; Arab citizens of Israel; and others. In all likelihood, the vast majority of those present *did not* aim to promote the delegitimization of the State of Israel.

27. **The violent confrontation on the high seas represented a 'clash of brands' in which Israel was defeated –** The ability to delegitimize Israel is rooted in successful efforts to brand it as an occupying and aggressive entity that ignores and undermines human rights and international law. Meanwhile, the flotillas were branded in the context of resistance to 'occupation' and 'oppression', the promotion of peace and human rights, a moral response to Gaza's 'humanitarian crisis', and in the spirit of international law. With the confrontation framed in such a context, Israel's public relations defeat was assured.

28. **The broader context of the Israel-Palestinian political process is critical as well**. For a variety of reasons – some of which it holds responsibility for – **Israel is not considered to be genuinely striving for peace, consistently and honestly committed to ending control over the Palestinians, or concerned with alleviating the humanitarian situation in Gaza**. This perception of Israel erodes Israel's political firewall.

29. **The delegitimization campaign has already become a strategic concern of potentially existential implications**, and should be treated as such.

What Could Israel Have Done Differently?

30. **In general, Israel has not understood the gravity of the threat posed by the campaign of delegitimization against it. Accordingly, Israel has failed to allocate sufficient resources to collecting relevant intelligence, designing an action plan, and working assiduously to implement it**.

31. Israel may have been able to undermine the flotilla at an early stage had it adopted a relevant strategic approach, which would entail:

    - **Formulating a clear policy towards Gaza** – Israel's policies towards Gaza lacked clarity and internal consistency. Therefore, effective communication of its policy proved an impossible task;

    - **Collecting intelligence on the organizers of the flotilla** who are well-known delegitimizers. In this context, IHH had a record of violence;

    - **Foiling the flotilla should have been primarily carried out by NGOs and individuals in the hubs of delegitimization,** and in this specific case in London, Ireland, Sweden, and the Bay Area. Israel and its local allies failed to comprehend the need to do this work;

- **Carrying out a branding campaign against the flotilla organizers** may have driven a wedge between them and other left-wing European organizations that took part in it. Failure to do so enhanced the perception that flotilla participants were 'peaceniks' merely opposed to Israeli policy towards Gaza and aiming to deliver humanitarian aid to Gazans;

- **Managing Israel's brand in the lead-up to the Gaza Flotilla, primarily focusing on the Gaza situation.** While Israel neglected the issue of its international image, the Delegitimization Network focused systematically on negatively branding it;

- **Engaging key flotilla participants** through personal relationships may have convinced them not to take part in the flotilla.

32. **Failure to undermine the flotilla practically and politically or to negatively brand its organizers before the event significantly reduced Israel's room to maneuver.** Once the flotilla set sail, Israel was left with a choice between taking over the vessel or allowing it to break the blockade of Gaza.

Principles and Guidelines for Addressing Israel's Delegitimization

33. **The logic of the 'Lifeline to Gaza' Campaign may have run its course** following Israel's decision to eliminate all remaining restrictions on movement of civilian goods into Gaza,

34. **Nonetheless, the network that produced the Gaza Flotilla will orchestrate the next campaign against Israel. While the specific nature of their future effort is currently unknown, it is clear that its logic will continue to aim at attacking Israel's legitimacy, exploiting a timely 'outstanding issue'.**

35. **Focusing on preventing future flotillas is akin to planning for yesterday's war. The challenge is to tackle the network that produced the Flotilla**.

36. **Delegitimization has turned into a strategic concern that requires an appropriate response**. Israel should systematically collect intelligence on delegitimization activities and identify key catalysts promoting them. On that basis, Israel should formulate and implement an action plan to contend with catalysts of delegitimization.

37. **Consistent and honest Israeli commitment to end its control over the Palestinians, advance human rights, and promote greater integration and equality for its Arab citizens is essential in fighting delegitimization.** Such commitment must be reflected in a coherent and comprehensive strategy towards Gaza and the political process with the Palestinians.

38. **Israel should improve its ability to achieve 'synchronized victories' in the military, political, media, legal, and domestic arenas.** This will require an overhaul of Israel security and foreign affairs doctrine and related action plans.

39. **Israel should consolidate a comprehensive strategy to contend with Turkey's evolving role**, exemplified in its serving as an axis between the Resistance

Network and the Delegitimization Network in the context of the Gaza Flotilla. In addition, Turkey is continually strengthening its ties with Iran and Syria while simultaneously enjoying close security and economic ties with Israel, and a strategic alliance with the U.S. and European Union.

40. **It takes a network to fight a network –** The delegitimization campaign against Israel is carried out by a network of NGOs based in a number of international metropolitan cities. Disrupting this network should become the main anti-delegitimization focus. This should be done by:

    - **Training Israeli diplomats to work in hubs** – Israel should identify hubs of delegitimization around the world and divert significant resources to them. It should focus on undermining catalyst activities and splitting up the network's different components, primarily by making the essential distinction between critics of Israeli policy and delegitimizers;

    - **Cultivating Israel's own network** on the basis of the diplomatic establishment and a network of 'informal ambassadors' comprising of individuals and NGOs.

41. **'Re-branding' Israel is critical for the battle against delegitimization**, as well as for Israel's ability to communicate its messages effectively and for disrupting the Delegitimization Network's ability to fulfill its goals.

42. **Engaging the liberal progressive elite –** Western forces promoting Israel's delegitimization possess marginal political power. However, they 'punch above their weight' due to their ability to mobilize an array of liberal and progressive elite groups and activists into adopting anti-Israel positions and lending their support to anti-Israel movements. Therefore, Israel and its allies should focus their efforts on engaging this key sector by:

    - **Creating a set of personal relationships** with the local elite through official channels and through private organizations and individuals;

    - **Substantively engaging with criticism of Israeli policy, primarily by human-rights organizations** by ensuring accessibility and providing factual and relevant responses. Israel often gives critics the cold shoulder, thus pushing them into the outstretched arms of the delegitimizers;

    - **'Naming and shaming' delegitimizers** and exposing their activities in order to isolate and marginalize them;

    - **Delegitimizing the BDS Movement**, which is orchestrated by delegitimizers and stands behind many of the attempts to isolate Israel.

The Reut Institute's Political Security Team

Since the Second Lebanon War, the Reut Institute has dealt with different aspects of the national security challenges facing Israel, specifically the challenge posed by the Resistance Network led by Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas.

In this context, the team led by Eran Shayshon has published a number of documents, the largest of which is the conceptual framework entitled "The Delegitimization Challenge: Creating a Political Firewall", which was presented at the Tenth Herzliya Conference in January 2010. Since then, this framework has guided our work on the issue of delegitimization.

The Reut Institute team includes the following people

- **Gidi Grinstein** (40) founded the Reut Institute and serves as its President. Prior to founding Reut, he served in the Office and then in the Bureau of PM Barak as the Secretary and Coordinator of the Government of Israel's Negotiation Team to the Permanent Status negotiations between Israel and the PLO (1999-2001). Gidi is a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government (2002) and Tel Aviv University Schools of Law (1999) and Economics (1991).

- **Eran Shayshon** (36) leads Reut's team in the political and security spheres. He has been with the institute since 2004, and is also responsible for our training program. Eran holds an M.A. in Middle East Studies (with honors) and a B.A. in International Relations (with honors), both from the Hebrew University.

- **Calev Ben-Dor** (30) holds an M.Sc. in History of International Relations from the London School of Economics and a B.A. in International History and Politics from Leeds University. Prior to joining Reut, he served in the Public Affairs and Press Department of the Israeli Embassy in London for two years. Calev made *Aliya* from England in December 2005.

- **Gil Murciano** (30) holds a B.A. in International Relations and Communications (with honors) from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and is currently completing his M.A. in Conflict Research, Management, and Resolution. Prior to joining Reut, Gil served in the Prime Minister's Office and is currently a Legacy Heritage Fellow, an international Jewish leadership program (2009-2010).

- **Daphna Kaufman** (32) holds an M.A. (with honors) in Media and Public Affairs from The George Washington University in Washington D.C. Prior to joining Reut, she worked at the Washington, D.C. headquarters of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Daphna is currently a Legacy Heritage Fellow, an international Jewish leadership program (2009-2010).

Glossary / Concepts

Technical Problem

A situation in which the challenge is clearly defined, as is the response, within the framework of existing expertise and knowledge.[1]

Adaptive Problem

A challenge requiring a change in mindset, values, or models of behavior. Existing experience and routine procedures are insufficient and a process of learning and adaptation is essential.[2]

Situational Surprise

A surprise deriving from a result of gaps in intelligence or information. In most cases, situational surprises create 'technical problems' (see above)

Fundamental Surprise

An event that exposes a mindset that has lost relevancy. In most cases, a fundamental surprise reflects an adaptive challenge and requires adaptive learning.

Use-of-Military-Force Doctrine[3]

Operating principles for the optimization of military resources in the service of military defense or offense.

Diplomacy and Foreign Policy Doctrine

Cluster of operating principles for the optimization of political and diplomatic resources to ensure Israel's basic legitimacy and advance its international status in the political, economic, trade, and academic arenas.

Security and Foreign Policy Doctrine

Cluster of military, security, political, and diplomatic principles to ensure Israel's existence, the personal safety of its citizens and residents, and its identity.

National Security Doctrine

Cluster of principles relating to the preservation and development of the state's overall security and well being. This doctrine comprises security and foreign policy principles, as well as strategic issues such as demography and human capital, environment, technology, or infrastructure.

Conceptual Superiority / Inferiority

A situation in which one side's conceptual system and operating principles prove more relevant and effective than that of the other. This enables the former to achieve greater operational success and often overcome quantitative inferiority.

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[1] Ronald Heifetz, **Leadership without Easy Answers** (Harvard University Press 2003), p. 74

[2] Heifetz, **ibid,** p. 35

[3] By 'doctrine' we mean a body of principles or strategies established explicitly by a statement of fundamental government policy or through past decisions. For further reference, see: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/doctrine.

Resistance Network	Network of countries, organizations, movements, and individuals – which includes, *inter alia*, Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas – that reject the Jewish people's right to self-determination and Israel's existence. These groups operate with the political or military logic of 'resistance' in order to precipitate Israel's destruction and replace it with a Palestinian / Islamic state.
Israel's Fundamental Delegitimization / Anti-Zionism	Negation of Israel's right to exist or of the right of the Jewish people to self-determination based on philosophical or political arguments (for a list of the arguments, see chapter 4).
	When certain conditions are met – such as when demonization or blatant double standards (see below) are employed – fundamental delegitimization represents a form of anti-Semitism.
Double Standards / Singling Out	Applying a unique standard to Israel, which is harsher than the common international practice as a basis for expressing frequent and disproportional criticism which deviates in scope and character from criticism of other countries; applying a general principle of international law or human rights to Israel, while ignoring similar or worse violations by other countries.
Demonization	Presenting Israel as being systematically, purposefully, and extensively cruel and inhumane, thus denying the moral legitimacy of its existence. Examples include association with Nazism or apartheid or accusations of blatant acts of evil.
Convergence Phenomenon ('Shebaa Farms Syndrome')	The coalescence of unaffiliated movements and organizations around an outstanding issue relating to Israel in order to delegitimize it.
Israel's Foreign Affairs Establishment	Cluster of Israeli government offices and agencies entrusted with formal international relationships, including: the Bureau of the Prime Minister; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; units within the Ministry of Defense; Foreign Trade Administration of the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Labor; International Department of the Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Tourism; and intelligence agencies.

Case Study of the Gaza Flotilla:
The Collapse of Israel's Political Firewall

Acknowledgements

Guidelines for quick reading

This document can be skimmed by reading the bolded phrases. Each paragraph contains only one idea, captured in the bolded sentences. Footnotes do *not* contain new ideas, but examples, sources and references.

The case study was written in Hebrew and then translated to English. **Certain adjustments were made based on input that we have received and taking into account differences between Israeli and non-Israeli readerships**.

Introduction and background

43. **On May 30, 2010, a flotilla of six ships set sail from near Cyprus in order to 'break' the Israeli naval blockade on Gaza**.[4] Three of these six ships, the Mavi Marmara, Gazze 1, and Defne 1, were purchased by the Turkish organization IHH. Another two, Eleftheri Mesogios and Sfendoni, were Greek, while the sixth ship, Challenger, flew an American flag.[5] In total, approximately 700 people[6] were aboard this flotilla, including journalists, European parliamentarians,

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[4] Nine ships were supposed to take part in the flotilla, but due to technical difficulties, two of them did not sail. An additional ship, 'Linda', also known as 'Rachel Corrie', sailed from Ireland a couple of days later, and was stopped by the IDF without any resistance on 5/6. See **News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

[5] **IHH Summary Report** ,p.12.

[6] Roni Sofer, **YNET**, 06/01/10.

European and Middle Eastern volunteers, Israeli-Arab communal leaders,[7] and a number of Islamic political activists, among them several dozen IHH members.

44. **On the following morning, May 31, Israeli naval forces commandeered the ships.** The forces experienced no difficulty in taking over of five of the ships. On the sixth ship, the Mavi Marmara, IHH activists with knives, metal bars, and in some cases, even live fire attacked the Israeli soldiers.[8] In the ensuing clash, **nine Turkish activists were killed** and nine Israeli soldiers injured, three seriously. [9]

45. **The events surrounding and following the May 31 flotilla (hereinafter, the Gaza Flotilla) had tangible consequences relating to Israel's security and foreign affairs**:

   ■ **A wave of anti-Israel protests took place around the world**, and Israel experienced strong criticism even from leaders generally considered its friends;

   ■ **Further constraint of Israel's ability to use force against Hamas and Hezbollah;**

   ■ **Turkey exploited the Gaza Flotilla in order to deepen the current crisis with Israel,** which had until recently been its strategic partner;

   ■ **NGOs around the world increased their attempts to advance sanctions and boycotts against Israel and isolate it.** The Gaza Flotilla also caused several international artists to cancel planned appearances in Israel;

   ■ **A number of international commissions of inquiry were established, implicitly or explicitly challenging Israel's judicial system,** and further eroding its stature;[10]

   ■ **Another notable collaboration among senior representatives of Israel's Arab citizens and Israel's delegitimizers** that may have caused an eruption of violence had Sheikh Ra'ad Salah been seriously hurt.

Official Commissions of Inquiry

46. **Following the Gaza Flotilla, Israel established several forums of inquiry:**

   ■ **The Internal Navy (*Shayetet 13*) Inquiry,** which has already finished its report, and which emphasized mistakes in the planning of the mission, specifically in intelligence aspects, as well as mistakes in the use of force;

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7   Such as Muhammed Zeidan, the head of the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab citizens of Israel, Sheikh Raad Salah, leader of the northern faction of the Islamic Movement, Hamad Abu-Daabas, the head of the Islamic Movement in the Negev, and Israeli Knesset member from the Balad party, Hanin Zoubi. See **The Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center Report** (MALAM), 05/26/10.

8   See **News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**, 06/2-8/10.

9   See **MFA**, 05/31/10

10 UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon's established an international commission of inquiry with Israeli participation. In addition, the UN Commission on Human Rights established a commission, which is banned by Israel.

■ **The Eiland Commission,** which was appointed by the Chief of Staff to and headed by Maj. General (Res) Giora Eiland. This commission pointed to a series of mistakes in collecting intelligence, in inter-agency intelligence cooperation, and in preparing an operational plan to take over the ships. While the commission did not deal with the decision-making process within the political echelons, it did criticize the lack of alternative options provided for taking over the ship;[11]

■ **The Turkel Commission,** headed by retired Supreme Court Judge Jacob Turkel and including five members and two foreign observers from Canada and Northern Ireland. This commission is due to investigate the Gaza Flotilla by focusing on the legality of the naval blockade and of commandeering the ships according to international law, as well as the security circumstances leading to the blockade on Gaza;

■ **The State Comptroller Michael Lindenstrauss** has also declared his intention to investigate the intelligence and public diplomacy (*Hasbara*) aspects related to the Gaza Flotilla.[12]

47. **The mandate of both commissions, as well as the statements by the State Comptroller, reflect a perception that mistakes surrounding the Gaza Flotilla were primarily 'technical,'** in the sense that they stemmed from the way in which authority was assigned to different people – soldiers, clerks, or politicians – and how they carried out their respective assignments. Eiland himself hinted that his mandate was too narrow and lacked important focuses of policies and diplomacy.[13]

48. **The commissions are legal forums whose starting point is the existing laws, regulations, and accepted practices**. Moreover, the questions they deal with focus on the actions and decisions of specific people, in terms of what they knew, or were supposed to know, and how they acted, or were supposed to act. **According to this logic, there are specific individuals who deserve praise or censure based on how their decisions and actions**.[14]

The Reut Institute's Inquiry

49. **In light of these aforementioned mandates, the Reut Institute decided to carry out its own inquiry into the Gaza Flotilla,** with the aim of furthering the understanding of conceptual failures regarding Israel's preparation for the flotilla, and in order to suggest principles for preventing similar future occurrences.

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[11] See Harel & Pfeffer, Haaretz, 07/13/10 (Hebrew), and an interview with Giora Eiland, which was published in the weekend edition of Yediot Aharonot, 07/23/10 (Hebrew).

[12] See **Haaretz**, 06/15/10 (Hebrew).

[13] See **Walla website**, 07/23/10 (Hebrew), and an interview with Giora Eiland, which was published in the weekend edition of Yediot Aharonot, 07/23/10 (Hebrew).

[14] See Amir Oren, **Haaretz**, 07/13/10.

50. **Reut views this document as a starting point of a process of knowledge-development in partnership with the general public**, regarding the significance of the Gaza Flotilla, as well as of the relevant conclusions and recommendations**.** It is therefore our intention to invite additional organizations and the public to engage with us on this document. We believe that this will not only facilitate greater understanding of the Gaza Flotilla, but will also help harness different forces within Israeli civil society and the Jewish world into the struggle against delegitimization.

51. **The aim of Reut's inquiry – this case study and future deliberations – is to contribute to the systemic understanding of the Gaza Flotilla in a broader context,**[15] in order to complement the aforementioned inquiries.

52. **Reut's analysis contends that the Gaza Flotilla should be viewed as the latest manifestation of a systemic and systematic attack on Israel's political and economic model, rooted in undermining Israel's legitimacy.** Other prominent manifestations include the Durban Conferences; the international response to Operation Cast Lead (01/09); the BDS campaign against Israel; the legal war against senior Israeli leaders ('lawfare'); and events following the publication of the Goldstone Report.

53. **In this context, the Gaza Flotilla may be an additional event in the fundamental surprise that emerged during the Second Lebanon War (07/06) and exposed a crisis in the relevancy of its security and foreign affairs doctrine.** In relation to the Gaza Flotilla, the crisis was manifest in the fact that Hamas and the Delegitimization Network openly and uninterruptedly acted for nearly a year and a half throughout Europe and the world to produce this political-strategic attack against Israel.

54. **Hence, their success emanates from their conceptual superiority** vis-à-vis Israel, whose principles of action fail to provide an effective response to the challenge it faces. **Consequently, Israel's reaction to a global and systemic offensive of a predominantly political logic has been primarily local and reactive, often based on military logic and practices**.

55. **The basis of this Reut inquiry is our conceptual framework for dealing with Israel's delegitimization challenge, entitled, [Israel's Delegitimization Challenge: Creating a Political Firewall](#)'** (hereinafter, Political Firewall Document). This document represented the pinnacle of Reut's effort in the national security area, which began following the Second Lebanon War. The Firewall Document was first presented at the Tenth Herzliya Conference (1/10). Its main points are presented in Chapter 1.

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[15] The main operational concept of the Reut Institute is based on a package of theory, methodology and software tools created by Praxis, headed by Dr. Zvi Lanir (see www.praxis.co.il). The uniqueness of this conceptual package is its focus on exposing Relevancy Gaps that may cause Fundamental Surprises. The entire theoretical content in this chapter is based on the Relevancy Gap chapter on [Praxis's website](#).

56. In this context, it is essential to emphasize the difference between delegitimization of Israel and criticism of its policies.

   ■ **Criticism of Israeli policy** challenges the considerations and values underlying the formulation and implementation of Israeli actions. **Such criticism should be viewed as legitimate, even when harsh and unfair**;

   ■ **Fundamental delegitimization challenges Israel's right to exist** as an embodiment of the Jewish people's right to self-determination. often, this phenomenon represents anti-Semitism manifested as anti-Zionism;

   The line between criticism of Israeli policies and the delegitimization of its existence is often unclear. **Such criticism may cross the line into delegitimization** when it falls into one or more of the following categories: Fundamentally challenging Israel's right to exist as an embodiment of the Jewish people's right to self-determination; employing blatant double standards;[16] exclusively singling out Israel for criticism; using criticism over a specific policy to promote outright rejection of the State of Israel; or demonizing the state, often by evoking Nazism and apartheid.[17]

Summary Table: Reut Case Study Vs. Commissions of Inquiry

57. Below is a summary of the differences between this Reut document and the commissions of inquiry appointed by the government:

	National Inquiry Commissions	**Reut Institute**
The main issue	The Gaza Flotilla in all its aspects (military, media, public diplomacy) and the naval blockade on Gaza.	The Gaza Flotilla as an event in the global campaign of delegitimization and the regional context of the struggle between Israel and Hamas.
The professional tools	Judicial tools proceedings: questions regarding authority, legality, and reasoned judgment. Procedures such as witnesses, legal opinions, and affidavits. Military and operational tools that focus on intelligence, operational planning, forces and missions,	Systemic political analysis: Analyzing the Gaza Flotilla in the wider political-strategic context that focuses the relevance of Israel's security and foreign affairs doctrine in light of the challenges it faces.

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16 Reut has no ambition to determine to what extent the phenomenon of Double Standards is unique to Israel. However, the document's working assumption is that at the very least, Israel suffers from some unique features of Double Standards, which is often expressed in biased focus on Israeli policies towards the Palestinians and its Arab minority.

17 More on these definitions and on the distinctions see: Denis McShane et. al. **The All Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism**, (the Stationary Office 2006); Natan Sharansky, **3D Test of Anti-Semitism: Demonization, Double Standards, Delegitimization**, Jerusalem Political Studies Review, Fall 2004; Irwin Cotler, **Identifying the New Anti-Semitism** Jewish People Policy Planning Institute. Rivka Shapak Lisk, **The New Anti-Semitism in European Intellectual Circles**, e-mago, 06/24/09.

	command and control, logistics, rules of engagement, inquiries, etc.	
Who is being judged?	People in positions of authority such as the naval commandos, air force pilots, and their commanders; the head of navy, head of intelligence, the IDF spokesperson and Chief of Staff; the Defense Minister, Minister for Strategic Affairs, and the Prime Minister.	The system: its mindset, guiding assumptions, values, priorities, and structure of the official establishment.
The point of reference	Existing laws, regulations, and accepted practices that determine the level of authority assigned each individual.	The mindset of Israel's security and foreign affairs doctrine – both implicit and explicit – regarding the delegitimization challenge. The existing rules and regulations were formulated in the past, with a relevance to a challenge that has changed.
Source of information	Wisdom of Authority: Primarily those in positions of authority, first and foremost in Israel, who testify before the commission.	Wisdom of Crowds: Anyone in position of authority, leadership, or influence that is relevant to the issue.
Open / Closed Proceedings	A large part of the proceedings will be confidential and take place behind closed doors.	Open. Anyone who wishes can contribute.
The target audience	The Government of Israel as a closed system that requires fixing. The international community (the UN), which needs convincing that Israel is investigating itself.	The network that fights Israel's delegitimization around the world, within which the Government of Israel is only one (though important) player.

Document Structure

58. The structure of the document is as follows:

- **Chapter 1 presents the main conclusions of the Firewall Document, which is the basis for this Reut inquiry into the Gaza Flotilla;**

- **Chapter 2 surveys the struggle in recent years between Israel and Hamas. It argues that Israel's policies towards Hamas and Gaza have stagnated since 2006**, in spite of dramatic changes in the political-security reality, and despite the policy's failure to achieve expected results. **In fact, it is Hamas that has continuously adapted itself to the changing reality**, despite its clear economic, military, and political inferiority.

- **Chapter 3 investigates how the flotilla was planned as a political-strategic attack in major cities around the world for months in advance without disruption.** It also touches on how Hamas successfully identified its latent potential and took a leading role in it.

- **Chapter 4 uses a theoretical framework from Dr. Zvi Lanir of Praxis in order to show how Israel suffered from a relevancy gap relating to delegitimization, and how the Gaza Flotilla represented a fundamental surprise.**

- **Chapter 5 suggests policy options and investigates what components weaken or strengthen Israel's political firewall.**

Chapter 1:
The Delegitimization Challenge:
An Attack on Israel's Political-Economic Model and Zionism

> This chapter summarizes the primary characteristics of the delegitimization challenge, based on the Reut Institute's conceptual framework, **Building a Political Firewall against Israel's Delegitimization** (henceforth, 'Political Firewall document'), pages 31- 48, points 66 -105.

Introduction: Ripening of the Resistance Network & the Delegitimization Network

59. **Israel is dealing with the parallel ripening of two processes:**

   ■ **The successes accumulated by the Delegitimization Network**, which opposes Israel's existence based on a variety of political, ideological, and philosophical principles. Western-based radical leftist elements shape and lead the Delegitimization Network, with the aim of turning Israel into a pariah state. To this end, they purposefully advance the association of the state with the South African apartheid regime in order to undermine the legitimacy of Israel's existence;

   ■ **The efficacy of the 'Strategy of Implosion' advanced by the Resistance Network** – led by Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas – which rejects Israel's existence based on Islamist and Arab-nationalist ideology. The Resistance Network aspires to precipitate Israel's implosion by means of 'overstretch': sabotaging processes aimed at ending Israel's control over Palestinians, advancing Israel's delegitimization, and developing means of asymmetric warfare deployed against Israel's military and civilian population.

60. **The Reut Institute contends that combined, these forces represent a political-diplomatic strategic threat that may become existential.** Resistance Network leaders repeatedly and publicly declare their goal of causing Israel's implosion inspired by precedents set by the Soviet Union, South Africa, and other countries.[18] This logic is ripening into a strategy that is yielding tangible gains.[19]

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[18] See Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's statement: "Israel is about to crash… everyone must know that just as the USSR disappeared, this will also be the fate of the Zionist regime…" Dudi Cohen, **YNET,** 12/12/06; or Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah's 'spider-web theory,' which focuses on internal politics precipitating Israel's implosion (05/26/00) (Barel, **Haaretz**, 07/17/06, (Hebrew).

[19] See Reut documents: 'Logic of Implosion: The Resistance Network's Political Rationale' and Iran's Terminology against Israel'

61. **Israel's 'Iron Wall' concept**[20] **fails to address the new challenge it faces** – The 'Iron Wall' concept posited that the Arab world would only recognize Israel's existence when it internalized its inability to eliminate it. This concept led to the development of several assumptions underlying Israel's security doctrine: The only existential threat facing Israel is military; the fight for Israel's existence will be waged on the battlefield; and, as such, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and security establishment are responsible for securing Israel's existence.

62. **Therefore, Israel needs to build a 'Political Firewall' to address the evolving strategic threat in the political-diplomatic arena** – The attack on Israel's legitimacy is one of the main challenges facing the country in the seventh decade of its existence. **The collaboration and feedback loop between the Resistance Network and its Strategy of Implosion, on the one hand, and the Delegitimization Network and its effort to turn Israel into a pariah state, on the other hand, has been effectively eroding Israel's international standing, Israel's own contribution notwithstanding. As this report will elaborate, it is this collaboration that led to the Gaza Flotilla and its aftermath.**

The Resistance Network, Hamas, and the Strategy of Implosion

63. **Reut's Political Firewall document describes the ripening process of the Resistance Network's strategic conceptual framework in the context of its campaign against Zionism.** This campaign is motivated by an ambition, which originated in the beginning of the 20th century, to precipitate the elimination of first the *Yishuv* during the pre-state days, and later the State of Israel and to replace it with an Arab-Palestinian-Islamist entity.

64. **The current phase in this struggle began following Israel's success in building a defense establishment that secured its existence,** to the point that the Arab states abandoned their attempts to build an offensive military force capable of conquering Israel. The Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty, and Oslo Process between Israel and the Palestinians are significant milestones in this context.

65. **Given these developments, the desire for Israel to disappear was translated into a new set of ideas advanced and led by Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas. Its underlying assumption is that a direct confrontation with the IDF would not result in Israel's annihilation** and there is thus no reason to build armies capable of defeating Israel. Furthermore, a direct military attack aimed at destroying Israel would mobilize domestic and international support for the country.

66. **An inversion in the Resistance Network's logic has been evolving over the past two decades: Israeli control over the Palestinian population has become**

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[20] The concept of Iron Wall originated in a 1923 article by Ze'ev Jabotinsky, in which he contends that there is no chance that Arabs living in the Land of Israel will come to terms with Zionism and the *Yishuv* should thus create an iron wall until the Arab side realizes it will be unable to defeat Zionism. See: The Iron Wall (published 04/11/23 in a Russian newspaper).

an asset, rather than a burden. Until the 1990s, the essence of resistance was, as expressed in the Phased Plan of 1974, to continually push Israel out of territories.

67. **In recent years, the essence of the Resistance Network has changed. It now aims to keep Israel in the West Bank and pull it back into Gaza.**[21] This evolution is based on an understanding that Zionism faces a state of 'overstretch' resulting from its control over the Palestinian population, and that Israel's deepening control of, and responsibility for, the Palestinian population represents a growing strategic liability for Israel.[22] Although internal debates persist on this point, **this represents a strategic revolution whose significance cannot be overstated.**

68. **It is difficult to identify the current state of the Logic of Implosion** – On the one hand, it is clear that a conceptual framework with sophistication, ripeness, and internal consistency has formed, even if this framework encompasses areas of disagreement and a certain diversity of opinion. On the other hand, there is no evidence of a clear strategy that guides the activities of Resistance Network actors, and which has been translated into goals, deadlines, and milestones.

69. Reut's Political Firewall document identifies **three primary and mutually reinforcing pillars of the Logic of Implosion:**[23] (1) 'Overstretching' Israel,[24] (2) fundamental delegitimization, (3) asymmetric warfare focusing on the battlefield and Israel's civilian population.

70. **Overstretch is the main factor causing the collapse of states.** Collapse occurs in the event of an unbridgeable imbalance between resources, on the one hand, and commitments and needs, on the other hand,[25] or between the ruling ideology and the given reality.

71. **The Resistance Network perceives Israel to have been in a state of overstretch since the 1967 Six-Day War, and it aims to deepen this vulnerability in any way possible.**

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[21] Hamas has debated adopting **a 'Phased Plan'** – which would be based on the PLO's historic 'Phased Plan' – and **would aim at pushing Israel out of territories** in phases and conclude in Palestine's liberation of entire Palestine. Seemingly, this approach enables the establishment of a Palestinian state on parts of 'historic Palestine,' as well as an extended ceasefire ('hudna'), but only when the June 6, 1967 border lines are recognized as temporary, serving only as ceasefire lines. **Our analysis holds that this approach is gradually losing support within Hamas.**

[22] See several issues of Reut ReViews: "The 'Tipping Point' of Palestinian Inversion towards the Two State Solution?", "The Trend of Palestinian and Arab Inversion towards the Two State Solution," and "Hamas Reveals its True Colors."

[23] See Reut documents: "Logic of Implosion: The Resistance Network's Political Rationale" and "Iran's Terminology against Israel."

[24] See Reut documents: "Failure of the Political Process: The Danger of Dissolution of the PA," "The 'Tipping Point' of Palestinian Inversion towards the Two State Solution?, "The Trend of Palestinian and Arab Inversion towards the Two State Solution," and "Hamas Reveals Its True Colors."

[25] See: Paul Kennedy, **The Rise and Fall of Great Powers** (Vintage; 1989).

72. Based on this analysis, **Reut identifies a number of clear and consistent patterns of conduct of the Resistance Network:**[26]

- **Presenting political solutions that do not contradict the idea of resistance** to Israel. Examples include a willingness to recognize the reality of Israel's existence without recognizing its right to exist or any element of its Jewish character;[27] an openness to interim or long-term agreements,[28] while negating a Permanent Status Agreement, permanent borders, Finality of Claims and End of Conflict resolutions,[29] or acceptance of the Two-State Solution based on the principle of two-states-for-two-peoples;[30]

- **Undermining the separation between Israel and the Palestinians / intensifying the burden of the 'occupation' on Israel** by means of sabotaging the political process that advances the Two-State Solution, by creating fertile ground for the dissolution of the PA and for the transfer of full responsibility for the Palestinian population to Israel.[31] This logic also calls for undermining unilateral steps taken by Israel to end control over Palestinians in order to improve its political situation;

- **Limiting Israel's ability to exploit its military superiority on the battlefield** by deploying several key strategies. These include preventing decisive Israeli military victory**,** in which continuing resistance – rather than defeating the IDF militarily – has come to represent success; using civilians as human shields; and systematically targeting the Israeli civilian population. Additionally, elements of the Resistance Network adopt the 'Hamastan' / 'Hezbollahstan' models in Gaza or Lebanon respectively, which centralizes powers, authorities, and many characteristics of statehood without the responsibility carried by a state. Such a reality that creates fundamental asymmetry between Israel and the Resistance Network.[32]

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[26] See Reut documents: "Memo to Winograd: Updating Israel's National Security Strategy," "Logic of Implosion: The Resistance Network's Political Rationale," "Battle for Control by the Resistance Network"; see also: Ehud Yaari, **Jerusalem Report**, 13/11/06 and Michael Milstein, The Growing Challenge of Resistance and its Influence in Israel's Security Doctrine, Memorandum 102, INSS.

[27] In this context, see Reut documents: "Hamas and the Political Process" and "The Hamas Movement Following the Elections."

[28] When Hamas debated the establishment of a Palestinian state with provisional borders, its spokesmen clarified that the state would be used as a platform for a continuation of the struggle against Israel, in line with the PLO's Phased Plan and the ethos of the Palestinian struggle. See Reut document: "Hamas and the Political Process."

[29] Finality of Claims refers to the Israeli demand that within the framework of a Permanent-Status Agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, all outstanding issues that have arisen from the historic conflict between the two sides will be addressed. Following the signing of such an agreement, it will become the only point of reference for the resolution of the historic conflict. End of Conflict refers to an end to the state of conflict, which formally exists between the sides, and the launch of a new era such as of 'peace', 'permanent status', or 'transitional period'.

[30] In this context, see Reut ReViews: "Hamas and the Political Process."

[31] See also Reut document, "Failure of the Political Process: The Danger of Dissolution of the PA"

[32] Based on this model, the political entity in Gaza enjoys power, authority, and many characteristics of statehood – such as control over territory and populations, management of an independent

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Finally, the Resistance Network employs 'lawfare,' waging legal campaigns against Israel and Israelis in international forums;[33]

- **Systematically assaulting the Israeli civilian population** in order to balance Israel's military success;[34]

- **Converging around new 'outstanding issues'** – The Resistance Network continues the struggle against Israel by focusing on a small number of issues that can be exploited as causes to justify the continuation of the struggle.[35] For example, the Shebaa Farms issue serves this function for Hezbollah;

- **Turning Israel's Arab citizens into a 'bridgehead' for further struggle against Israel** by mobilizing them for armed struggle or for promoting delegitimization by challenging Israel's identity and its institutions.[36] While these attempts to harness Israel's Arab citizens for the armed struggle have been relatively unsuccessful, **some factions and voices have come to represent the ideology of the Resistance Network's**. For example, the Northern Branch of the Islamic Movement led by Ra'ad Salah opposes Israel's right to exist and boycotts national elections, the Future Vision documents challenge Israel's Jewish character, and a growing chorus of voices actively promote the One-State paradigm;[37]

- **Advancing the fundamental delegitimization of Israel**[38] – The delegitimization advanced by the Resistance Network is saturated with Islamic anti-Semitic motifs, as manifested in the Holocaust-denial

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foreign policy, and deployment of an armed force with military characteristics – without assuming the responsibilities carried by states.

[33] The Intelligence & Information Center exposed the role played by a Hamas "ministry of justice" committee called Al-Tawthiq (Documentation), in orchestrating the arrest warrant issued in Britain for former Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni. The initiative was part of the Hamas campaign to prosecute Israelis in Europe in the name of the victims of Operation Cast Lead. The report concludes that "the broad scope of the committee's activities clearly indicates the magnitude of the resources the de‑facto Hamas administration has invested in its efforts to slander Israel after Operation Cast Lead and exploit the findings of the Goldstone Report." See: **The Intelligence & Information Center**, 12/17/09; see also **NRG**, 20/12/09 (Hebrew).

[34] The first Intifada (1987-91), the first Gulf War (1991), the wave of terror (1996), the Second Intifada (2001-2005), the Second Lebanon War (2006), and the rockets and mortars launched from Gaza in the years preceding Operation Cast Lead.

[35] Following Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon (5/2000), Hezbollah vowed to perpetuate its struggle against Israel using the pretext of the Shebaa Farms and Seven Villages issues. (See: Rubinstein, **Haaretz**, 8/5/06 (Hebrew) and Stern, **Haaretz**, 7/3/05 (Hebrew). Recently, Hezbollah marked the gas fields found off Israel's coast as an arena for future confrontation.

[36] Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Islamic Jihad fanned the flames of the confrontations that erupted in Acre in 2008 by calling for the Arab population to continue to confront the "Zionists." See: **Haaretz.** There are also reported attempts to mobilize agents with the Arab Israeli population. See: Aharon Newmark, **Omedia**, 05/27/08 (Hebrew).

[37] See The Trend of Palestinian and Arab Inversion towards the Two State Solution. In 2008, Adalah published a proposal for a new constitution, which called for establishing a transnational regime in historic Palestine and entitling Palestinian refugees to fulfill the 'Right of Return.'

[38] This is the context for the Iranian logic leading to the 2006 Holocaust-denial conference in Tehran. See Reut document: Basic Delegitimization of Israel. Also: Gidi Grinstein, **Haaretz**, 01/15/10.

conference in Tehran (11/06) and in rhetoric comparing Jews to apes and pigs.[39] While this type of delegitimization is grossly ineffective in the West, it must be viewed to be effective by its propagators.

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73. **Based on the above strategies, the Resistance Network has achieved conceptual superiority over Israel. It is able to contain Israel's technological, military, and economic advantages by transferring the struggle to other arenas in where Israel is weak.** It achieves this through employing simultaneous and intense military, economic, political, diplomatic and demographic pressures on Israel. As mentioned, dozens of citations of the Iranian, Hamas, and Hezbollah leadership explicate this logic. **Israel's conceptual inferiority increases the likelihood of repeated Israeli political and military disappointments** in efforts to secure its existence.

74. **The main source of inspiration of the Resistance Network is the fact that several countries have disappeared due to collapse of their political and economic models.**[40] Prominent examples include the South African apartheid regime, the Soviet Union, and East Germany. In fact, in recent decades, the number of states that collapsed is greater than those that were conquered.

75. **These developments signify the closing of a historic circle in the struggle against Zionism** – Until the establishment of the State of Israel, the core of the Arab struggle against it focused on opposition to Zionism. The Arab states were guided by the assumption that effectively defeating Zionism would prevent the state's formation. After Israel's establishment, resources were diverted to militarily confronting Israel, guided by the assumption that the Israel's elimination would effectively end Zionism. Currently, resources are once again directed toward battling the Zionist model, with the aspiration that effectively confronting Zionism will precipitate Israel's collapse.

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[39] See **MALAM**, Saudi Arabia/Arab Antisemitism Documentation Project, February 2004.

[40] There is no uniform definition of the term 'collapse' in relation to states. One example comes from Robert Rotberg, who claims that states collapse when governments lose the ability to assert their authority as a result of a lack of legitimacy or a loss of ability to govern. Robert Rotberg, **When States Fail**, (Princeton UP 2004). See also an online chapter at the Brookings Institute. Jared Diamond describes societies or populations that disappeared and or completely collapsed, as in the case of Rwanda. Diamond lists five historical factors leading to societal collapse: climate change, anthropogenic environmental change, hostility from neighboring entities, loss of superpower support, and an inability to adapt to a changing reality. Jared Diamond, **Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed**, (Viking Press, 2005). James Crawford discusses the extinction of states as a phenomenon precipitated by one of three reasons: voluntary collapse (as in the case of Czechoslovakia), voluntary union with one or more states (as in the East German case), or involuntary collapse (as in the case of Yugoslavia). James Crawford: **The Creation of States in International Law,** (Oxford University Press, 2006).

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Table: Israeli mindset and the challenge of Delegitimization

	Israel's Mindset	**The Resistance Network**
Principle Threat & Response	The principle threat to Israel's physical existence is by Arab military conventional forces. The core response is thus by the IDF. The foreign affairs establishment is secondary in importance to Israel's security.	The principle attack is on Israel's political-economic model, primarily using 'soft' tools. There is no military means of achieving Israel's physical destruction.
Objective	Victory and peace: in military confrontation, decisive victory and in the political process, 'end of conflict,' 'finality of claims,' peace, or Permanent Status Agreement.	Resistance: in military confrontation, steadfastness and in the political process, no 'end of conflict' or 'finality of claims.' There will always be an outstanding issue.
The Enemy	Organized to fight and operate vis-à-vis countries. As Hezbollah is not a country, responsibility is placed on Lebanon. Attempts to force Hamas to operate like a state.	Hamastan and Hezbollahstan: authority and political power without the responsibilities of states.
Nature of the Enemy	Hezbollah and Hamas are terror organizations that forcefully assert their authority over populations.	Hamas and Hezbollah enjoy popular support, demonstrated by successes in elections.
Logic of Use-of-Force-Doctrine	Aim toward high-intensity direct confrontations that lead to seizing of territory, which favor size and firepower. Also, causing massive collateral damage to create deterrence.	Aim toward protracted low-intensity conflict, while avoiding direct confrontation. Willingness to forfeit territory, especially when heavily populated, in order to wage a guerilla campaign. Collateral damage serves the logic of delegitimizing Israel.
Israel's Arab Citizens	An Israeli domestic issue.	A strategic platform to be leveraged for undermining Israel's legitimacy from within and in the international arena.
Decisive Arena	The struggle will be determined through military confrontation on the battlefield.	The struggle will be determined in the international arena (through delegitimization and overstretch), and in Israel's home front among its civilian population.
Attitude to Citizens	Sensitivity to Israeli civilian casualties, and attempt to avoid civilian casualties on the other side.	Systematic use of citizens as human shields and targeting of Israel's civilian population.
Israel's	Security requirement existing in	Strategic asset. Israel's control over

Control over Palestinians	tension with Zionism's aspiration to end control over the Palestinian population and the accompanying responsibility for it.	the Palestinians increases its overstretch and accelerates its implosion.
Relative Advantage	Technological, economic, and military superiority.	Conceptual superiority, willingness to cause and absorb civilian casualties, and palatable narrative in the international arena.

The Delegitimization Network Against Israel

76. **In parallel to the maturation of the Resistance Network's Logic of Implosion, a ripening of a global network mobilized to delegitimize Israel has also occurred.** The following paragraphs focus on this network.

77. **In the Political Firewall document, Reut describes Israel's delegitimization as being advanced by a global network** that share most generic characteristics of networks. Among other elements, the Delegitimization Network is a flat, global web of individuals and organizations with no operative command-and-control center. The common denominator shared by its members is ideological and based on an opposition to Israel's existence. The network is dominated by a number of 'hubs' and driven by an estimated several dozen prominent 'catalysts.'

78. **Three prominent groups comprise the Delegitimization Network:** Individuals and organizations belonging to the Western radical left; Arab and Islamist individuals and organizations that have adopted Western discourse on this issue; and Israeli and Jewish post-Zionists, who are significant despite their small number due to the credibility they bestow upon the Delegitimization Network.

79. **Hubs of delegitimization are global urban centers** with a concentration of international media, legal and judicial institutions, leading academic centers, and international NGOs and human rights organizations **and include London, Madrid, Brussels, Toronto, California's Bay Area, Sydney, and Johannesburg.** (Reut's analysis of the hubs in which the 'Lifeline to Gaza' campaign was organized appears further on in the document.)

80. **Catalysts drive the network from within hubs –** Each hub contains a few 'catalysts', which are organizations or individuals with the ability, resources, and commitment to lead the struggle against Israel's legitimacy. These catalysts act by collecting information, turning it into relevant knowledge, and disseminating it; developing the ideology of the network; preserving a sense of urgency; mapping existing nodes and mobilizing new ones, strengthening and connecting them; developing action plans; educating, training and debriefing; connecting with other catalysts; protecting, branding and publicizing the network.

81. **Hence, the Delegitimization Network against Israel is driven by a few dozen catalysts operating from within less than ten hubs** with a few catalysts operating in each hub.

82. **The organizations and forces belonging to the Delegitimization Network possess marginal political support** in the countries in which they operate. **Still, as mentioned, they have succeeded in achieving significant successes globally**.

83. **The key to their success has rested on a blurring of the lines between criticism of Israel and its delegitimization, as well as on an appeal to the core values of the European and North American liberal progressive elite** based on the following guidelines:

- **Branding: Israel = South African Apartheid.** A concerted strategy of equating the foundations of the Israeli political system with those of white South Africa has been in place since the Durban Conference (2001). This comparison justifies similar conduct in terms of exclusion, boycott, and condemnation, and entails a solution in accordance with the 'one man, one vote' principle. Moreover, branding Israel in this way, facilitates the believability of rumors as false as starvation in Gaza or organ harvesting in Haiti, justifies aggressive action against Israel or Israelis, and helps define Israel's political-economic model as immoral;

- **Israel does not want peace**, but rather seeks to perpetuate 'occupation' of Palestinian lands and people. The settlement enterprise serves as incontrovertible evidence of this assertion. In fact, every event is interpreted in light of this image. For example: The Gaza Disengagement (08/05) actually enabled Gaza's 'occupation' by new means, the IDF hospital established in Haiti was intended to distract the world from Israel's action in the Palestinian territories, or Israel's offers in negotiations with the Palestinians are not serious;

- **Re-branding the Resistance Network: organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah are branded as social movements that stand up against oppression; Israel's delegitimizers are branded as representing justice, respect for international law or human rights** – This is the basis for the mobilization of liberal and progressive elites. In this context, Israeli policies such as the Gaza blockade – which is intended to undermine Hamas' strategy by pressurizing the civilian population – plays directly into the hands of the Resistance Network;

- **Messaging: The need to pressurize Israel** – Because Israel is committed to perpetuating 'occupation,' the Delegitimization Network argue that employing soft tools of persuasion and dialogue are pointless. Furthermore, because Israel is a small country and dependent on its relations with the world, it is highly vulnerable to effective use of pressure tactics;

- **Making pro-Palestinian activity and criticism of Israel 'trendy';**

- **Focusing on criticizing Israel's policies; camouflaging an underlying agenda aimed at its elimination**. **Acting against Israel *now*; no need to agree on an end-goal** – As previously discussed, an agenda seeking Israel's elimination enjoys a narrow base of support in the West. However, criticism of Israel is widespread. Hence, the Delegitimization Network would willingly cooperate with anyone opposed to Israeli policies, even with Israelis and Zionists. It does not expect ideological consent or agreement on the end-game for collaboration;

- **Harnessing civil society because the Jews control the political sphere** – The Delegitimization Network argues that Jewish political and financial power, particularly in the United States, defends Israel against harsh steps by governments. Hence, the only way to correct Israel's ways is by harnessing and mobilizing civil society;

- **Shifting from national-rights discourse to human-rights discourse** – Delegitimization catalysts promote a human-rights based discourse that emphasizes individual rights, such as the right of return, over a discourse that emphasizes national-rights such as the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in an independent state. This allows the movement to present itself as a-political, while advancing the One-State paradigm;

- **Focusing on human-rights violations to undermine the moral basis of Israel's existence.** The Delegitimization Network creates provocations in order to maintain a steady stream of criticism against Israel,[41] and uses criticism of or opposition to elements of Israel's policy to challenge Israel's entire right of existence;

- **Turning Israel's Arab citizens into a 'bridgehead' in the struggle against Israel** by striving to harness them to participate in violent confrontation or to further Israel's fundamental delegitimization by challenging the identity and institutions of the state. While there have been relatively few cases of active subversion, Israel is witnessing a growing number of challenges to its legitimacy by its Arab citizens. The Gaza Flotilla prominently featured Israeli-Arab public figures, among them Member of Knesset Hanin Zuabi and Head of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement Ra'ad Salah.[42]

- **Selective use of international law. Initiating legal action against IDF officers and Israeli politicians** – The Delegitimization Network brands Israel as disregarding international law, and uses it against Israel selectively, while rejecting any attempt for a comparative analysis of Israel's actions. In the UK, the Netherlands, Spain, Belgium, and Norway, a network of lawyers have compiled a list of 'wanted' IDF officers in order to issue arrest

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[41] See, for example, the activities of the Viva Palestina organization, which orchestrated a 'humanitarian' mission from Europe to Gaza, led by British Member of Parliament George Galloway. See in this context: Amiram Barkat, **Haaretz,** 7/10/07**.**

[42] See Reut document: "Between Adalah's 'New Constitution' and Annapolis."

warrants against them, based on universal jurisdiction clauses, for committing war crimes.

84. **Ideological roots of delegitimization negate Israel's Jewishness** – According to their perspective, a state premised on ethnic or religious identity is unacceptable. An Israeli-Palestinian agreement on the Two-State Solution, which is based on the principle of two-states-for-two-peoples, will thus not address these basic objections towards Israel, as it would leave an Arab minority within Israel.

85. **This ideology is the basis for the comparison between Israel and South Africa** – The comparison is based on a contention that both cases feature a foreign minority – in both cases white, rich, and powerful – that dispossessed, an indigenous population, and forcefully exploited it for cheap labor. In recent years, the Delegitimization Network has systematically branded Israel as an apartheid state. Effective tactics in doing so include taking over the agendas of organizations such as student unions and trade unions.

86. **Israel and South Africa: similar problem, similar solution** – According to the Delegitimization Network's logic, the South Africa model is applicable to Israel: eliminating preferential rights afforded the white minority and establishing a regime based on the principle of 'one person, one vote.' Hence, only a One-State solution including Israel, the West Bank and Gaza will resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Furthermore, this paradigm reflects an idea that, on the surface, adheres to the liberal post-national European worldview.

87. **The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel embodies the majority of these principles** – The BDS Movement is a civil society movement predicated on the notion that Israel only responds to pressure. Many of its leaders are evident delegitimizers, who implicitly advance their agenda through supporting the 'right of return,' associating Israel with apartheid, singling out Israel for criticism, rejecting the Two-State Solution, and sabotaging cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians.[43]

88. **Recent years have witnessed the growing and significant influence of the European radical left on the Palestinian position towards the one-state paradigm and the voluntary dissolution of the PA.** This paradigm is gradually seeping into the consciousness of the centrist secular-nationalist Palestinian political camp.[44]

The Feedback Loop Between the Delegitimization and Resistance Networks

89. **In recent years, the Delegitimization Network and the Resistance Network have 'engaged' each other** – The ripening of the Delegitimization Network in the West and the coalescence of the Resistance Network's Strategy of Implosion

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[43] See Reut ReViews: "The BDS Movement Promotes Delegitimization against Israel."

[44] See Reut documents: "The Trend of Inversion towards the Two State Solution," "Failure of the Political Process: The Danger of PA Dissolution," and "Dismantling the PA: An Emerging Trend."

occurred independently and against a backdrop of different contexts and factors. However, in recent years both networks have begun to engage each other. Their links are expanding and intensifying on the basis of the common denominator: opposition to Israel's existence. **In the framework of this cooperation, the Resistance Network instigates events on-the-ground and the Delegitimization Network leverages them to serve its needs, while legitimizing its actors, particularly Hezbollah and Hamas.**

90. **Pressure on the Palestinians to radicalize** – Moderate Palestinian positions and collaboration with Israel undermine the delegitimization campaign. Therefore, delegitimizers exert pressure on moderate Palestinians to break contact with Israel, adopt the one-state paradigm and to voluntarily dissolve the PA.

91. **The ripening of the connection between the Resistance Network and the Delegitimization Network is based on, and nourished by, Israel's conundrum vis-à-vis the Palestinians:**

    - **The political process:** The Resistance Network undermines every attempt to separate between Israel and the Palestinians or to progress toward a Two-State Solution. Simultaneously, the Delegitimization Network tarnishes Israel's reputation by branding it as 'occupier', a pariah state and advancing the one-state paradigm. These efforts feed off each other: as the popularity of the one-state paradigm rises, it becomes harder to achieve the Two-State Solution, and vice versa;

    - **The Gaza Strip:** The Resistance Network cultivates the 'Hamastan' model and Gaza as a military and ideological base for the Resistance Network, and creates the provocations that nourish the Delegitimization Network. Meanwhile, the Delegitimization Network legitimizes Hamas and its control over Gaza, depicts Israel as actively occupying Gaza and collectively punishing its citizens, and effectively reduces Israel's military room to maneuver against Hamas.

92. **The Resistance Network and the Delegitimization Network use the Palestinian issue as a pretext –** Their actions are not motivated by a desire to end Israeli control over the Palestinian population or to achieve peace, but to eventually escalate the conflict toward Israel's elimination.

93. **Therefore, the establishment of a Palestinian state, and even a formal end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, would not put an end to delegitimization.** If, despite the best efforts of the Resistance Network, a historic End of Conflict is achieved, it would certainly weaken the delegitimization campaign, at least temporarily.[45] However, this network will coalesce around new issues to serve as their battle cry against Israel. **The most likely up-and-coming outstanding issue would be the status of Israel's Arab citizens in Israel**.

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[45]   Shalom Lappin, Therapist to the Jews: Psychologizing the 'Jewish Question,' **Normblog** and Howard Jacobson, Let's see criticism of Israel for what it really is, **The Independent**.

Chapter 2:
The Struggle Against Hamas: Stagnation Vs. Adaptation

Israel's Muddling Through Against Hamas

94. **Israel's policy has not significantly changed since Hamas won the Palestinian elections (1/06)**, in spite of dramatic changes in the political-security arena and despite the policy's failure to achieve expected results. In the meantime, **Hamas has repeatedly adapted its policies, while strengthening its domestic and international standing, in spite of the military blow it received during Operation Cast Lead (1/09)**.

95. **Israel's political stagnation regarding Hamas is a result of its Palestinian conundrum between its political and military logics** – Maintaining the required balance among the values of Zionism requires ending Israel's control over the Palestinian population. Attempting to advance this logic, however, presents Israel with a conundrum:

   ■ **Israel's security logic: To stay** – This logic is rooted in the concern that any territory Israel withdraws from will be used as a platform for hostile military activities against it. This threat will increase if the Palestinian state controls its own airspace and borders. According to this logic, Israel must retain control in the West Bank, and potentially renew its control over Gaza.

   The problem: This logic serves the Resistance Network's Implosion Strategy, which seeks to increase Israel's overstretch by perpetuating its control of the West Bank and drawing it back into Gaza;

   ■ **Israel's political logic**: **To leave –** This logic is rooted in the concern that if Israel fails to end its responsibility for the Palestinian population in the West Bank or reoccupies Gaza, demographic trends will erode Israel's fundamental legitimacy, and ultimately render it a pariah state. According to this logic, Israel must urgently end its control in the West Bank.

   The problem: This logic creates a new platform for a-symmetrical warfare, and from bases of terror that will be built along its borders.

96. **Israel has swung between these logics –** Over the past 15 years, every attempt by Israel to contend with one of these threats has intensified the other, and vice versa.[46] Recently, Israel's attempt to end its responsibility for Gaza during the 2005 Disengagement and to address the subsequent security threat by blockading

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[46] For example: Following the Oslo process, which was designed to end Israeli control over the Palestinians, the Palestinian Intifada led Israel to recapture the West Bank in Operation Defensive Shield; the political nadir Israel found itself entrapped in thereafter was among the major factors leading to the Roadmap and the Gaza Disengagement. Following the Disengagement, weapons smuggling and the firing of rockets and mortars towards Israel precipitated Operation Cast Lead, which in turn led to the strengthening of delegitimization efforts. This could lead to further action in the West Bank based on the logic of ending Israeli control over Palestinian populations.

Gaza, culminated in the Gaza Flotilla, which forced Israel to acknowledge its responsibility for the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

97. **Moreover, Hamas presents Israel with dilemmas that impede its ability to design consistent policy.** Some of these crystallized around the flotilla events:

   ■ **Who is responsible for Gaza?** – Israel wishes to disengage from Gaza and put pressure on the Hamas government. Accordingly, it claims it is no longer responsible for Gaza, prevents the opening of its border crossings with Gaza and blocks all maritime traffic through the port of Ashdod. Yet, paradoxically, the closure of the borders seems to have placed greater responsibility on Israel for Gaza;

   ■ **Ruling Gaza: Hamas, Israel, or anarchy**? – Israel would have liked to have seen the Hamas government collapse. However, in the absence of a moderate alternative, it prefers Hamas to the anarchy that may emerge in case of a power vacuum. Moreover, Israel does not want to renew its responsibility for the population in Gaza and sees many benefits in the current split between Gaza and the West Bank;

   ■ **Gilad Shalit: a tactical prisoner exchange or a strategic issue** – Should the issue of Gilad Shalit be seen in the context of a 'tactical' prisoner swap or in a context of a broader 'strategic' package of issues such as cessation of violence, the border regime, and movement of goods into Gaza? Before the Gaza Flotilla Israel took the latter approach, tying the continuation of the blockade with Shalit's release. Following it however, Israel ostensibly lifted the restrictions on civilian goods;

   ■ **Hamas' role in the political process** – A Palestinian unity government that includes Hamas would enjoy legitimacy to negotiate and conclude an agreement with Israel, but would not have the ideological foundations that allow such an agreement to be reached;

   ■ **Hamas or the PA?** – Any explicit or implied recognition of Hamas as a the de-facto or de-jure government of Gaza, not to mention as a representative of the PA or the Palestinian people, undermines the PA and the PLO, who are Israel's current political partners;

   ■ **One territorial unit or two?** – According to the Oslo Accords, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip constitute a single territorial unit. In practice however, they constitute two separate political and ideological entities, whose split is reinforced by their geographic isolation from each other.

The Gaza Flotilla As a Milestone in the Confrontation With Hamas

98. **Israel vs. Hamas: stagnation vs. adaptation** – Israel failed to provide a relevant response to these dilemmas, and its policy towards Hamas has remained almost unchanged since January 2006. Hamas meanwhile has changed its strategy several times:

- **Act One (01/06-06/07): Israel stops transferring funds to the PA in order to topple the Hamas government; the Quartet asks Hamas to comply with the Three Demands; Hamas refuses and retains power –** Following Hamas' electoral victory (1/06) and the establishment of its government (3/06) – an act that constituted a clear violation of the Oslo Accords – Israel announced that it would stop transferring funds to the PA, in order to topple the recently elected government. This policy had U.S. support. **Subsequently, Israel and the Quartet required Hamas to comply with three conditions in order to achieve recognition of its rule:** recognizing previous agreements between the PLO and Israel, recognizing the State of Israel, and denouncing terrorism and violence.

  Hamas stood its ground, while the Delegitimization Network and the Resistance Network came together in order to consolidate its victory against attempts to jeopardize it. Tensions between Fatah and Hamas rose as attempts of reconciliation within a national unity government failed.

- **Act Two: (06/07-01/09): Hamas takeover of Gaza, Israel's blockade, Qassam rockets, Israel's response** – Hamas' takeover of Gaza caused international condemnation including from the Arab League, the collapse of the Agreement on Movement and Access between Israel and the PA (Rafah Agreement), and an Israeli-Egyptian blockade of Gaza. The international coalition against Hamas seemed stable and united around the Three Demands policy.

  However, Hamas succeeded in consolidating its rule of Gaza, by unifying control of arms and use of force, by developing the underground tunnels from Egypt, which undermined the Egyptian blockade, and by monopolizing the humanitarian assistance that came mostly through Israel. Hamas also received implicit recognition from the Arab League and even from some European countries.

  At the same time, **Hamas led a military struggle against Israel designed to end the blockade on Gaza**. It repeatedly fired rockets on Israeli settlements around Gaza, primarily on the city of Sderot, and withstood the ensuing Israeli military response. Meanwhile, Israel targeted Hamas targets, as well as its leaders, primarily of the military wing. For a few months during this period, Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire *(tahadiyeh)*, which did not affect the basic parameters of the confrontation.

  Furthermore, **Hamas' takeover of Gaza was perceived by many**, both in the movement and from the Resistance Network, **as a milestone toward Hamas' leadership of the entire Palestinian national movement** through its seizing of control of the PLO. Hence, **radical left wing and human rights activists in the West began to explicitly or implicitly support Hamas, and provide legitimacy for its government in Gaza. Hamas encouraged this trend and began paying more attention to its image in the West** by nurturing its own perception as the victim, sometimes going as

far as targeting the border crossings with Israel that were gateways to the humanitarian assistance.

- **Act Three: Operation Cast Led (01/09)** – This Israeli military operation, which started following the collapse of the ceasefire and the resumption of hostilities, epitomized Israel's conundrum vis-à-vis Gaza. First, when the IDF reached the entrance to Gaza City, it declined to topple Hamas government and take Gaza over. Second, Hamas avoided direct military confrontation with the IDF, focused exclusively on civilian targets in Israel, while leveraging civilian suffering in Gaza for sympathy and support around the Arab world and in the West. The Operation ended in a cease fire, but also with growing recognition of Hamas government in Gaza and condemnation of Israel's policies;

- **Act Four: From Operation Cast Lead through the Gaza Flotilla (01/09-?)** – Operation Cast Lead, and Egypt's action against the tunnels to Gaza, put Hamas under unprecedented pressure: some of its top political and military personnel were killed, the blockade persisted, a ceasefire was ushered in, there was significant devastation in Gaza, and economic conditions worsened.

  Then, **Hamas turned its focus to public diplomacy against Israel**. It cooperated with Judge Goldstone, who is a Jew and even a Zionist, and his team toward the publication of their report, which was later used for Israel's criticism and delegitimization. Furthermore, the Three Demands policy, which had previously enjoyed wide international support, began to crumble, and certain elements within the Quartet began to directly or indirectly deal with the Hamas leadership. Hamas used this trend to foster greater understanding, coordination, and cooperation efforts with the Delegitimization Network and left-wing activists in the West (see below).

99. **Hence, Israel failed to provide effective context to its blockade on Gaza that could justify its actions against the Gaza Flotilla –** Israel's failure to crystallize and effectively communicate its logic regarding Gaza and Hamas within the wider context of the Israeli-Palestinian political process left it vulnerable to mishaps such as the Gaza Flotilla. For example, while the international community accepted the logic of preventing transfer of weapons into Gaza, it rejected Israel's logic of setting quotas on civilian products or their linkage to the case of Gilad Shalit. **Indeed, during the first hours following the event, many around the world acted as if there was no context whatsoever that could justify Israel's actions. This caused the collapse of Israel's firewall**.

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Chapter 3:
The Flotilla as a Strategic Political Strike in the Delegitimization Effort

'Lifeline to Gaza' Campaign and the 'Flotilla Intifada'

100. **The 'Lifeline to Gaza' Campaign is a systematic effort aimed at breaking the Gaza blockade** – It is orchestrated and carried out by different non-governmental organizations that have been attempting to transfer funds, aid and civilian equipment to Hamas in Gaza by means of flotillas and convoys. The four groups advancing this campaign, and that stood behind the Gaza Flotilla, include:

   ■ **Delegitimizers, who view the blockade on Gaza as an 'outstanding issue'** – As mentioned, a guiding strategy of Israel's delegitimizers is to galvanize support around a few 'outstanding issues'.[47] For them, the current outstanding issue is the blockade on Gaza, whose removal is only a milestone within the broader context of achieving Israel's disappearance;

   ■ **Activists that are critical of Israel's policies** the apparent implications of the humanitarian conditions in Gaza. These people are often trapped between the 'rock' of Israel and the 'hard place' of Hamas in Gaza;

   ■ **Turkey, whose government turned Gaza into a platform for confrontation with Israel** due to a number of reasons beyond the scope of this document.

   ■ **Hamas, who framed this campaign as a strategic opportunity** and adapted its conduct and allocation of resources accordingly.

101. **Several milestones over the past two years reflect the evolution of the 'Flotilla Intifada' strategy:**

   ■ **The Istanbul Declaration (02/09)**, the summary document of a conference that took place in Istanbul with close to 200 Sunni Islamic activists from around the world, including members of Hamas, and which pledged to continue Jihad against Israel.[48] The Declaration refers to the need to fight

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[47]   Following Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon (5/00), Hezbollah committed itself to continuing the struggle by using the Shebaa Farms or the Seven Villages disputes. See Nasrallah's Next Claim, Rubinstein **Haaretz**, 08/05/06 or Shebaa Farms Isn't the Only Excuse, Stern, **Haaretz,** 3/7/05. Recently, Nasrallah claimed gas fields that are within Israel's territorial waters.

[48]   Ninety leaders and activists of various Islamist organizations from the Middle East and Europe signed the document. It is the product of a convention, held 14-15/2/09 headlined: "The Gaza triumph." Jonathan Fighel, The Jihad "Istanbul declaration" and the Gaza Flotilla, **ICT**, 6/26/10.

against the Israeli blockade of Gaza.[49] Declaration signatories include flotilla organizers, such as Hamas activist Muhammad Sawalha (see picture),[50] known as a senior military operative who escaped to the UK from the West Bank in 1990, and has since been involved in widespread anti-Israel activity in London. [51]

■ **The Arab International Forum for the Support of the Resistance (01/10) –** This conference took place in Beirut on January 17, 2010**,** with the goal of supporting the Palestinian right to resist by any means in order "to prevent aggression and occupation, and to end colonialism and racism." Conference participants included Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, Head of the Hamas Political Bureau, Khaled Mashal, and Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi,[52] Alongside these Islamists were a group of left-wing European and North American activists who also joined the conference.[53]

During this conference, which took place six months before the launch of the flotilla, **Sawalha publicly outlined the flotilla action plan, including ports of departure, number of ships, and the intention of directly confronting the Israeli navy at open sea.** [54]

Who Produced the Gaza Flotilla?

102. **The 'Lifeline to Gaza' Campaign involved dozens of non-governmental organizations, among which were a few leading ones** as follows:[55]

■ **IHH** (*'Insani Yardim Vakfi*' **–** Humanitarian Relief Fund) **–** A Turkish organization with an Islamic orientation that works to assist Muslim

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[49]   As such, it emphasizes the obligation of "the Islamic Nation to regard the sending of foreign warships into Muslim waters, claiming to control the borders and prevent the smuggling of arms to Gaza, as a declaration of war, a new occupation, sinful aggression, and a clear violation of the sovereignty of the Nation…This must be rejected and fought by all means and ways." Ibid.

[50]   The picture features Sawalha in an anti-Israeli demonstration in London during Operation Cast Lead (01/09). The photo was published in the **Harry's Place** blog.

[51]   In addition to Muhamad Sawalha (see above), two other prominent participants include Walid Al-tabtabi, radical activist from Kuwait, who personally took part in the flotilla, and Sheikh Muhamad Al-Hazimi, a Yemenite Member of Parliament, who was photographed holding a dagger aboard the "Mavi Marmara". Ibid.

[52]   The event was organized by the Arab Center for Communication and Solidarity. **PFLP Web site.**

[53]   See Lasse Wilhelmson, **Information Clearing House**, 2/2/10. Another example is the participation of an American lawyer, Stanley Cohen, who delivered a lecture about 'lawfare' during one of the Forum's workshops. More details can be found in a **Hezbollah-affiliated Web site**.

[54]   **MALAM Report**, 1/31/10.

[55]   The list presented in this document does not overlap with the list of organizations put forward by the flotilla initiators as the "formal coalition". We estimate that the importance of some of those coalition organizations was over-emphasized by the organizers, while the role of others, such as Hamas, was deliberately blurred. The formal coalition behind the flotilla included the IHH, ECESG, Free Gaza Movement, The International Committee to End/Lift the Siege of Gaza, Greek Ship to Gaza, Ship to Gaza – Sweden. See **IHH Summary Report**, p 12.

populations in areas of distress and prevent human rights violations. The IHH has been associated with funding of global Jihad organizations, but seems to be more closely associated with the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which is the ideological parent of Hamas. IHH belongs to the 'Union of Good,' which funds Hamas activity, and its leaders have strong ties to Hamas leaders in Gaza, where the organization has an office in addition to a number of offices in Europe. The IHH played a central role in the Gaza Flotilla, owning half of vessels;[56]

■ **The European Campaign to End the Siege of Gaza (ECESG)** – An umbrella organization comprising more than 30 European, pro-Palestinian, non-governmental organizations. ECESG is headquartered in Brussels and **its founders include radical Islamic bodies,[57] who have strong ties with Hamas.[58]** Its declared purpose is promoting the rights of Gaza citizens and breaking Israel's blockade;

■ **Free Gaza Movement –** A coalition of solidarity organizations that has been active since 2008. It is listed as a charitable foundation in Cyprus and was involved in all Gaza flotillas and convoys. It provides the overarching framework for dozens of organizations from more than 20 countries, and maintains close ties with and receives aid and funding from the global **International Solidarity Movement (ISM);[59]**

■ **Viva Palestina –** An organization founded by former British Parliament Member George Galloway, a known anti-Zionist and Hamas supporter. This is one of the most prominent organizations in the 'Lifeline to Gaza' campaign, that played a central role in previous Gaza flotillas and convoys, although its role in the May 31 flotilla was minor. In December 2009, Galloway was deported from Egypt and declared a persona-non-grata following violent clashes between "Lifeline 3" activists under his leadership and Egyptian forces in El-Arish; [60]

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[56] See MALAM Publications from 5/27/10 and 5/31/10.

[57] On the connection between the organization and various elements of the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe, see The Global Muslim Brotherhood Daily Report, 4/23/08.

[58] For example: the **ECESG** Web site mentions the London-based Palestine Return Centre (PRC) as the first in the list of founding NGOs. Also, the PRC was founded and is managed by former Hamas members and is linked to the "Union of Good" network of the Hamas in the UK. ECESG Chairman Arafat Madi also served as the executive director of the PRC as of 2005. In addition, one of the chief activists of the ECESG who was also deeply involved in the flotilla's organization, Anwar Gharbi, was known as a "Union of Good" activist working in the network's branch in Switzerland. See Global Muslim Brotherhood Heavily Represented on Gaza Flotilla **Family Security Matters Blog**. 02/06/10 and Roi Nachmias, **YNET**, 06/01/10 (Hebrew). Additional evidence of the close link between the PRC and ECESG can be found in unverified source that mentioned that, until recently, the office address of the ECESG offices was the same as the PRC's address in London.

[59] Scott Wilson, **The Washington Post**. 1/6/10.

[60] See the **MALAM Report**: Britain as a Focus for Hamas' Political, Propaganda and Legal Activities in Europe, 2/21/10.

- In addition, flotilla organizers emphasized the participation of two smaller organizations: **Greek Ship to Gaza**[61] and **Swedish Ship to Gaza.** [62]

Hamas and Muslim Brotherhood Participation in the Flotilla

103. **Hamas has been active in Europe for years –** As the European Union listed Hamas as a terrorist organization, its activity in Europe is unofficial and utilizes an infrastructure of non-governmental organizations that are informally identified with the Muslim Brotherhood Movement.[63] The center of operation is located in London primarily focuses on fundraising, as well as political, propaganda and legal activities. **The most active members in London are Muhammad Salwalha, Dr. Azzam Tamimi, and Zaher Birawi.**[64]

104. **Hamas has allocated resources towards the delegitimization of Israel –** In recent years, with the growing understanding of the significance of the international arena and public diplomacy, Hamas appears to redirect parts of its network toward activities aimed at delegitimizing Israel and sabotaging its image. **In the Lifeline Campaign and in the May 31 flotilla Hamas' fingerprints were identifiable in a few mechanisms and organizations, namely:**

- **The International Committee to Lift the Siege of Gaza –** An organization belonging to the official coalition responsible for planning the May 31 flotilla. Little is known about this organization, whose name appears in different variations,[65] but **appears to be a front organization of Hamas in London**[66] founded by its Vice President Muhammad Sawalha, who is the most prominent planner and organizer of the flotilla;[67]

- **The Palestinian Return Center (PRC) –** Located in London[68] and headed by Zaher Birawi, a well-known former Hamas member with strong ties to the 'Union of Good' in Europe. While Birawi presented himself as the

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[61] A Greek group of pro-Palestinian activists who apparently sailed in two separate ships.

[62] A Swedish solidarity organization established in order to transfer humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza. Its activists and the supplies they purchased were on-board the flotilla. The organization is connected to a variety of far-left and local Muslim organizations in Sweden.

[63] Reut would like to extend its gratitude to Dr. Reuven Paz for his contribution to this part of the document. However, Reut is solely responsible for all the information presented in this chapter.

[64] See the **MALAM Report**: Britain as a Focus for Hamas' Political, Propaganda and Legal Activities in Europe, 2/21/10 and Gil Murciano, **Haaretz**, 6/21/10 (Hebrew).

[65] In some publications, the words 'break' or 'end' are mentioned instead of the word 'lift.'

[66] See the **MALAM Report**: Britain as a Focus for Hamas' Political, Propaganda and Legal Activities in Europe, 2/21/10; Aljazeera Web site, 5/23/10 and The Ezzedeen Al-Qassam brigades.

[67] See Aljazeera Web site, 05/23/10. For further details about Sawalha's central role in organizing the flotilla and coordinating its activity with different elements in Europe, see Dave Rich, **Standpoint**, July/August 2010 and IHH website. In an Interview to the Hezbollah's website, conducted in January 2010, Sawalha was quoted saying: "The next time the confrontation will be directly with the Zionist enemy itself on the high seas." See **MALAM Report**, 1/31/10.

[68] For more details about PRC's involvement in the foundation of the ECESG, see above

flotilla's official spokesperson,[69] he is often referred to as the spokesperson for the organization Viva Palestina (see below); [70]

- ■ **The Gaza-based Popular Committee Against the Siege of Gaza,** headed by former Hamas Minister and Parliament Member Jamal al-Khudari**,** helped with security and logistical preparations for the flotilla,[71] coordinating flotilla-related efforts with various international entities. [72]

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105. **For Hamas, the flotilla was intended to break the siege and to attack Israel's fundamental legitimacy –** According to Head of the Hamas Political Bureau Khaled Mashal, Hamas and other Islamic organizations tried to use the flotilla in order to tarnish Israel's image so as to undermine the legitimacy of its existence. According to Mashal, mobilizing additional flotillas, pursuing legal prosecutions against Israelis, imposing boycotts on Israel, and convening rallies and protests may present Israel as a burden on the Western powers, therefore serving the goal of its delegitimization.[73]

Where Was the Gaza Flotilla Planned?

106. The Reut Institute identifies a number of **key geographic areas** (hubs[74]) in which the flotilla plan was concocted:

- ■ **London –** The home base of several flotilla planners and organizers, including Islamist activists and organizations with ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas. For example, senior PRC staff in London worked to join forces with left-wing solidarity organizations to support flotilla activities; Muhammad Sawalha resides and operates in London and the city serves as the headquarters for organizations that took an active part in the flotilla, such as Viva Palestina[75] and Friends of Al Aqsa;[76] in addition,

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[69]   Roi Nachmias, **YNET**, 6/1/10 (Hebrew).

[70]   **Humanityvoice.net**, 5/20/10.

[71]   **MALAM Report**, 05/30/10.

[72]   For an example, see **News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**, 6/2/10.

[73]   "…we have to focus in the way be will be able to lift off the fabricated legitimacy the world has provided the Zionist entity…the clash with Israel, either throughout war, resistance and battle, or by means of mass activity – a flotilla, the activity of those expressing solidarity against the [separation] fence and the settlements…the means used to carry the fight in Jerusalem…we are challenging Israel in the region, and the world started to be furious with her, therefore I'm saying that Israel has initiated the countdown leading for its end, with the help of Allah." See **MALAM** publications, **7**/11/10.

[74]   For a more detailed discussion about the concept of Delegitimization Hubs, see Reut document: The Delegitimization Challenge: Creating a Political Firewall

[75]   See **Humanityvoice.net**, 5/20/10 and **Harry's Place**, 5/24/10. For more on its involvement in financing the flotilla, see Emerson, Family Security Matters, 5/28/10. Kevin Ovenden, the head of the Viva Palestina delegation, sailed aboard the Mavi Marmara. See **Harry's Place**, 6/18/10.

[76]   The head of the organization, Ismail Patel, took part in the flotilla. See **Friends of Al Aqsa Web site**, 7/8/10.

representatives from British trade unions identified with one of the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign (PSC) – a key anti-Israeli organization – were on board the flotilla.[77]

■ **Ireland -** The 'Linda' ship, re-named Rachel Corrie by flotilla participants, set sail from the Dundalk Port in Ireland and approached Gaza several days after the May 31 Flotilla.[78] Many Irish politicians and political activists played an active part in organizing the flotilla. [79]

■ **San Francisco Bay Area –** The Bay Area is one of the central locations in which the 'Lifeline to Gaza' campaign was consolidated. The International Solidarity Movement, Free Gaza Movement, and Free Palestine Movement, which organized the previous Gaza flotilla in August 2008, all have their central offices in this area. A number of campaigners from the Bay Area – including Paul Larudee, one of the most extreme anti-Israeli activists – were on board the flotilla.

■ **Istanbul -** During the Gaza Flotilla, Turkey led the anti-Israeli line. As previously mentioned, the Istanbul Declaration was a cornerstone in consolidating the coalition that planned the flotilla. The formal coalition behind the May 31 flotilla was established in Istanbul (04/10).[80] Three flotilla vessels purchased by the Turkish IHH, including the Mavi Marmara, sailed from Istanbul. The embarkation ceremony took place at the Istanbul port on May 22 and included top officials from Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood and other global radical Islamic organizations (see photo[81]).

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[77] **PSC Web site**, 5/27/10.

[78] **MALAM Report**,5/26/10. It should be noted that the 'Rachel Corrie' sailed under Cambodian flag.

[79] Such as the spokesperson for the Irish Green Party supervised the loading of the 'Rachel Corrie' Aengus Snodaigh, an Irish Sinn Fein MP and the party's spokesperson hold seats on the advisory board of the Free Gaza Movement. One of two Free Gaza coordinators with Hamas in Gaza is an Irish human rights activist called Caoimhe Butterly. The naval logistics coordinator of movement is an Irish seaman named Derek Graham, who also serves as a member of the Irish Palestinian Solidarity Campaign. See **Free Gaza Movement Web site** and **MALAM Report**, 5/26/10.

[80] See The **MALAM Report**, 5/27/10.

[81] The photo was published on **Harry's Place**. Sawalha can be seen in the front row, fourth from the right, wearing a grey suit. Seated to his right is a Hamas activist in London, Zuhir Al-Birawy. Second from the right in the first row is Raed Salah, head of the northern branch of Islamic Movement in Israel.

- **Beirut –** Beirut hosted the 'Arab International Forum for the Support of the Resistance.' In recent years, Beirut has become the preferred meeting place for individuals from the Resistance Network and the European left. A prominent example is the 'International Campaign against Zionist and American Occupation,' also known as the 'Cairo Conferences' (where the forum previously convened), an annual event that has taken place since 2002. Each year, this event assembles representatives from the European left (mainly Britain[82]), and radical Islamist activists from organizations such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Islamic Jihad.

  At this time, it remains unclear whether two Lebanese ships aimed at breaking the blockade on Gaza will embark from Lebanon as previously declared. The organizer of this effort is an exiled Palestinian and Hamas member named Yasser Kashlak, who has well-known ties to Hezbollah.

Turkish Delight: The Difference That Made A Difference

107. **Erdogan's revolution: Turkey becomes a meeting point between the Resistance Network and the Delegitimization Network[83] –** The last few years have seen a clear shift in Turkey's policy towards Israel, though a full exploration of this topic is beyond the scope of this inquiry. In the context of the Gaza Flotilla and the struggle against Israel's delegitimization, the following factors should be noted:

    - **Harsh anti-Semitic expressions**, commonly expressed in the Arab world and by the Resistance Network, have been disseminated within the Turkish public sphere;

    - Turkey's **economic, security, and political relationship with Iran and Syria continues to tighten and strengthen**;

    - **PM Erdogan is a former member of the Muslim Brotherhood movement and views himself as such.** Giora Eiland also referenced Erdogan's personal connection to the **IHH organization**, which became an **unofficial arm of the Turkish government** for the purpose of the Gaza Flotilla;

    - **Turkey supports Hamas over the PA,** while ignoring Quartet demands;

    - **Turkey has framed Gaza as a flash point with Israel –** Turkey's strategic decision to focus on Gaza and on the blockade appears to have been made during Operation Cast Lead or immediately thereafter. It was initially

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[82] Among these, the following organizations participated: Respect, SWP, and STWC; along with British trade unionists.

[83] Reut would like to extend its thanks to Dr. Nimrod Gorn for his contribution to the 'Turkish part' of the document. However, Reut is solely responsible for all the data in this chapter and in the document in its entirety.

> manifest during a public confrontation that took place between President Shimon Peres and PM Erdogan at the Davos Conference (01/09). The Istanbul Conference, in which the Istanbul Declaration was released (02/09), was convened the following month.

108. **Meanwhile, Turkey is protected by its strategic importance and close relations with Israel, the U.S., and the European Union –** Turkey is a vital strategic ally for the U.S., which is currently in the midst of conflicts and wars with Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Turkey's relationship with Israel is extensive, with significant economic and security dimensions. Additionally. Turkey is critically important to the European Union, both politically and due to the widespread Turkish Diaspora interspersed throughout Europe. In other words, it is difficult for Israel to directly confront the Erdogan government, even when it takes direct action against Israel.

Israel's Brand Got Knocked Out on the Open Seas

109. **The Gaza Flotilla clash on the open seas was a clash of brands** – Three brands were involved in this event: the aforementioned Israeli brand, which was effectively associated with belligerence, arrogance, a disregard for progressive and liberal values such as human rights and international law; the Hamas brand, identified with social activism, resistance to the occupation, and the like; the Delegitimization Network brand, associated with the concern for a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, protection of human rights, respect for international law, and an aspiration for peace and justice .

110. **When the brands clashed at sea, the Israeli brand was defeated –** Israel's effective negative branding by the Delegitimization Network, compounded by its failure to provide context for its policies toward Gaza and Hamas, led to the collapse of Israel's firewall and to the defeat of its brand. As mentioned, during the first hours following the event it seemed that there was no context, not even the violent assault on Israeli soldiers, that would justify Israel's actions. Indeed, the initial wave of reaction was intense and bleak from Israel's perspective, even among friends.

A Leap in the Collaboration Among Resistance and Delegitimization Networks

111. **The 'Red-Green Alliance' has been tightening –** Prior to the Gaza Flotilla there was a significant escalation in understanding, coordination, and cooperation among the Delegitimization and Resistance Networks. On the 'Red' side, the network includes radical-left solidarity organizations in the West. On the 'green' side of the Resistance Network there are fundamentalist Muslim-Arab-Palestinian individuals and organizations in the Middle East and in Western countries.

112. **The Flotilla manifested the different ways in which this collaboration takes place. The aim of legitimizing Hamas' rule of Gaza, its demand for leadership of the Palestinian national movement and its struggle against Israel**. For example:

- **Hamas is 'branded' as a social, humanitarian and victimized organization** – Hamas invests in building its image in the West, taking action that are aligned with its brand identity such as initiating and inviting the solidarity convoys and flotillas or hosting the Goldstone Commission, despite Goldstone being Jewish and Zionist. Meanwhile, its European allies build this image, while ignoring other characteristics of Hamas that contradict this brand;

- **Hamas is embracing the discourse of international law and human rights, which is also that of the Delegitimization Network** – The thrust of Hamas's attack on Israel's legitimacy is transitioning from the traditional Arab-Islamist blatant Anti-Semitism to the legal, social, and human rights discourse, which is echoed by its partners in the West;

- **Hamas is mobilizing 'lawfare' – the legal war – against Israel** – The mission of the Gaza Flotilla was framed in the context of Israel's alleged breach of international law. It is part of a wider campaign aimed at slandering Israel and prosecuting its leaders and military commanders as 'war criminals';

- **Mobilizing Israeli Arab citizens** – Flotilla organizers invited prominent Arab-Israeli public officials, including Knesset Member Hanin Zuabi and head of the Northern Branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel, Ra'ad Salah, to take part in the campaign. This is done as part of the logic to leverage their presence toward delegitimizing Israel's political model;

- **Hamas is connecting to European civil society** – The Gaza Flotilla demonstrated a significant leap in the ability of Hamas and Muslim Brotherhood members in Europe to mobilize leftist European organizations for their cause and benefit.

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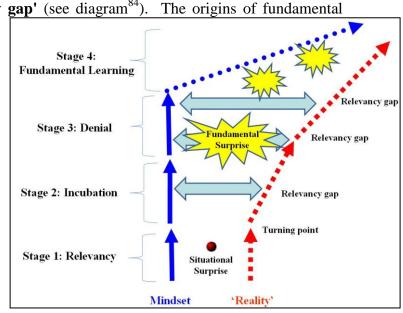# Chapter 4:
Israel's Fundamental Surprise

Theoretical Introduction: Fundamental Surprises and Relevancy Gaps

The theoretical framework for this chapter, including the concepts of fundamental surprise and relevancy gap, is based on the work of Dr. Zvi Lanir, Founder and President of the PRAXIS Institute.

113. **A Fundamental Surprise is a major event, which exposes a gap between a mindset (an 'interpretive conceptual system') and a divergent reality. Such a gap is termed a 'relevancy gap'** (see diagram[84]). The origins of fundamental surprises incubate for a long time before the crisis itself when working assumptions, patterns of conduct, habits, or institutions are rendered irrelevant by the changing reality.

114. **Even after fundamental surprises have occurred, there is a tendency to deny the existence of relevancy gaps, and to view the crisis as situational.** For a variety of reasons – personal, psychological, political and organizational – people have difficulty in recognizing these fundamental changes and the ensuing loss of relevancy of the accepted mindset or strategy. They thus frame the crisis as an outcome of technical-tactical problems (situational surprise), which do not point to any substantial changes in the current reality.

115. Therefore, **there is often a tendency to respond to the crisis by providing technical responses from *within* the current model, even when the model has lost relevancy.** This type of response can manifest itself in several ways such as firing people, organizational reforms, expanding existing research institutions, or establishing coordinating bodies.

116. **This creates the illusion of closing the relevancy gap, when, in fact, it is widening.** The continued dominance of the former mindset and the perception that the crisis was caused by technical-situational problems creates repeated

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[84] Diagram presenting the process of Fundamental Surprise (PRAXIS©2006)

fundamental surprises. Each of these surprises reflects the widening relevancy gap between the increasingly irrelevant mindset and the divergent reality.

117. **Closing a relevancy gap requires 'fundamental learning' –** Contending with a changing reality requires creating a new and relevant set of concepts or updating the existing one, and adapting institutions, priorities and patterns of conduct accordingly. Denial of relevancy gaps hinders fundamental learning, which is a lengthy process that requires reiterative experimentation and learning. **Proper diagnosis of relevancy gaps followed by effective response allows the 'surprised' side to regain the initiative and to maintain its conceptual superiority in light of a changing reality.**

118. **The Reut Institute contends that the Second Lebanon War (7-8/2006) constituted a Fundamental Surprise for Israel, which revealed a relevancy gap in its security and foreign affairs doctrine.** Israel's Government framed this crisis as primarily 'situational' and thus initiated a process of situational learning through 63 different commissions of inquiry, the Winograd Commission being the best known. As Israel's 'fundamental learning' was limited in scope, Israel continued to suffer fundamental surprises originating from this relevancy gap. The latest of these surprises was the Gaza Flotilla.

The Flotilla Was An Effective Strike that Brought Down Israel's Political Firewall

119. **The Gaza Flotilla affected Israel in several ways** some of which constituted milestones in the campaign of delegitimization against Israel:

- **The consolidation of the Hamastan model.** The status of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza constitute the central points of confrontation between Israel, on the one hand, and the Resistance Network and Delegitimization Network, on the other hand. The Gaza Flotilla strengthened Hamas and its political model, granting it greater legitimacy and compromising Israel's room to maneuver against it;

- **Internationalization of the issue of Israel's Arab citizens.** As mentioned, the status of Israel's Arab citizens in Israel is a major outstanding issue for the Delegitimization Network. Recent years have seen growing focus and increasing international criticism of Israel's policies towards its Arab minority.[85] The Gaza Flotilla, as well as the Goldstone Report, further highlighted this issue.[86]

- **The explicit challenge to the legitimacy of Israel's judicial system and the application of the principle of universal jurisdiction against Israelis.** One necessary condition for advancing delegitimization against Israel is attacking its judicial system. The Goldstone Report was an important step in this campaign. Following the Gaza Flotilla, the Delegitimization Network

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[85] See Reut's Document: Internationalization of the Issue of Israeli Arabs

[86] For more on the issue of Israel's Arab citizens see the Or Committee report (Hebrew).

challenged Israel's judicial system as unfit to investigate the event, thus calling for international commissions of inquiry.[87]

- ■ **The branding of Israel as a violent, rogue state forcing the country onto the diplomatic defensive**;

- ■ **A boost for the BDS Movement** by cancellations of several performances by international artists in Israel;

- ■ **A further setback to the strategic alliance with Turkey**;

- ■ **Increasing the social price for supporting Israel. Attack on the Israel Lobby.** In the absence of context and brand that could effectively justify Israel's conduct in the event, Israel's supporters faced personal criticism for their views in the aftermath of the Flotilla.[88]

Relevancy Gaps of Israel's Security Doctrine as reflected by the Gaza Flotilla

120. **Turkey's surprise conceals the fundamental surprise.** Israel failed to comprehend the explosive potential of Turkey's involvement in the flotilla. Yet focusing on this aspect of the crisis may divert attention from the core reasons underlying the fundamental surprise Israel experienced.

121. **Below is a list of underlying assumptions (mindsets) regarding Israel's security and foreign affairs which are relevant to the Gaza Flotilla** (for a fuller exploration of the relevancy gaps in Israel's security and foreign affairs doctrine, see Chapter 5 of the Political Firewall Document):

- ■ **The challenge of the Gaza Flotilla was primarily local, tactical and military. The diplomatic arena is of secondary importance.** Israel's response to the flotilla exposed the centrality of the military-security mindset in the decision making process, and more generally in its security doctrine. For instance, the response to the Gaza Flotilla was managed almost entirely by the IDF and by the Minister of Defense, and subsequent inquires have focused on military and public relations aspects, rather than on the global scene in the years and months preceding the flotilla;

- ■ **The main point of conflict is Gaza.** Since Israel is fighting Hamas, the main issue is Hamas' rule of Gaza and the legitimacy of Israel's policies;

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[87] Last March, the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), which is well known for its anti-Israeli bias, formed a special committee aimed at investigating the Israeli judicial system. This effort was carried out as part of a follow-up to the Goldstone Report. The committee was established in order to investigate the credibility, independence and seriousness of the judicial authorities in Israel and their ability to perform in accordance with international standards. The mere fact that such a committee was established, even before the publication of the report summarizing the Gaza Flotilla (expected in October), constitutes external interference in Israel's judicial sovereignty and undermines international trust towards it. Furthermore, in parallel to UN General Secretary's attempts to establish an international inquiry team for the Gaza Flotilla, an additional committee has already been established by the UNHRC in Geneva in order to investigate the Gaza Flotilla. See Ravid, **Haaretz,** 07/13/10, (Hebrew).

[88] For more on these trends, see Mick Davis, Defending Israel in the Diaspora, **Jewish Chronicle** 6/17/10.

■ **The partial removal of the blockade will undermine the "Flotilla intifada" strategy.** This approach assumes that what motivated the parties behind the flotilla was the Gaza blockade and that removing it will prevent similar flotillas from having any significant affect;

■ **The battle is one of public diplomacy, often termed *hasbara*.** Israel's PR efforts following the Flotilla seem to represent conceptual progress and technical improvement in the handling of the media. Nonetheless, widespread criticism focused on the delayed broadcast of materials, the treatment of foreign journalists, and on other PR aspects;

■ **The fight is primarily Israel's. It relies on support of Jewish world.** Based on this assumption, Israel's foreign affairs establishment should 'manage' these campaigns counting on the support of Jewish communities around the world;

122. **Divergent Reality:** In reality, some trends challenge the relevancy of these assumptions:

■ **The logic of the flotilla's organizers was strategic political-diplomatic.** Both the Delegitimization Network and the Resistance Network employ a logic, which aims to bring about Israel's implosion similar to the case of South Africa and the Soviet Union due to external international political-economic pressures;

■ **The main point of conflict is Israel's legitimacy.** Despite the genuine concern toward Gaza among delegitimizers and Israel's critics, for the former group it is just another pretext to challenge Israel's legitimacy;

■ **The lifeline campaign is just one of several campaigns** orchestrated and by Israel's delegitimizers. These groups will find new causes to continue their struggle; [89]

■ **The strength of Israel's brand relative to its adversaries determines the outcome of the public diplomacy war.** The weakness of Israel's brand undermines Israel's PR efforts;

■ **Growing criticism among Jewish communities on Israel**. Even before the Gaza Flotilla, and especially after it, Israel experienced growing disinterest and even alienation among many Jews and Jewish communities, especially among the non-orthodox denominations;[90]

■ **Jewish communities around the world, especially those that support Israel, are under direct attack.** The rejection of the Jewish people's right to self-definition and the involvement of anti-Semitic groups in the delegitimization of Israel place Jewish communities around the world at the

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[89] See "Nassralla Next Claim" and or "For Nasralla, Shebaa Farms Isn't the Only Excuse."

[90] See Reut's Document: A New Covenant between Israel and the Jewish World: A Conceptual Framework.

frontier of this challenge. Furthermore, being an inseparable part of the local societal fabric, they are usually much better positioned to lead the charge against the delegitimizers, with Israel's foreign affairs establishment acting more as a resource.

Summary table: Gaps In Israel's Mindset Vis-à-vis the Gaza Flotilla

	Israel's Mindset Re the Gaza Flotilla	**The Divergent Reality**
What was the Primary Threat?	The Gaza Flotilla represents a tactical primarily military and PR challenge that can be managed by IDF, the Minister of Defense.	The Gaza Flotilla was the tip of the iceberg: A local phenomenon of a global systemic challenge that has a predominantly political-diplomatic aims
What was the Context of the Flotilla?	The May 31 flotilla was another event in a series of flotillas organized by *Lifeline to Gaza* whose purpose is to end the blockade	*Lifeline to Gaza* is just one of a few campaigns sponsored by a network that aims to delegitimize Israel.
Who is in Charge?	The people on the ships	The leaders of the Delegitimization Network in Turkey, London, Sweden, Beirut, and Ireland.
Logic of future encounters	Preventing the launch of another flotilla and delegitimizing them as provocations.	Attack the network that produced the flotilla, i.e. the 'catalysts' in the 'hubs' and try to isolate them from their supporters among the liberal and progressive circles.
Whose fight is it?	Primarily Israel, because the Flotillas are about challenging Israel's policies. Therefore it is Israel that should prevent the sail of the Flotillas or intercept them at sea. Jewish communities abroad are a resource.	Primarily the Jewish world especially in the hubs, because the Flotillas are really a means of delegitimization of Israel. The real challenge is to cripple the Delegitimization Network and this effort should be led by locals. Israel must view itself as a resource to the Jewish world.
Why does Israel have such a bad image?	Media and *hasbara* (delay in release of materials, treatment of journalists, etc.)	The brand and the values it implies, as well as failure to communicate the logic of Israel's policy towards Gaza and the peace process in order to effectively create context for Israel's actions.
What is the importance of policy?	The partial removal of the blockade undermines the "Flotilla intifada"	Ditto. Opening of Gaza to civilian goods takes the sting out of the Lifeline Campaign. But, the blockade was just an outstanding issue. There will be others.

How would fundamental learning have helped prepare for the flotilla?

123. In general and as shown by the above table, Fundamental Learning before the flotilla could have created a more relevant mindset and therefore generated a more effective response. Such a mindset would have allowed Israel to more accurately diagnose the challenge at hand, better identify its unique characteristics and respond accordingly. It would also have helped it adapt in a series of additional parameters such as:

- **Israel's Security and Foreign Affairs Doctrine: Delegitimization has become a strategic concern that may become existential if not addressed effectively.** Therefore, Israel's intelligence community should follow it, and it should become a priority for the highest branches of the government including, for example, the National Security Council or the Prime Minister's Office Office. Currently, the mandate of the committees of inquiry focuses on the absence of information and lack of cooperation among the various intelligence gathering agencies. However, most of the information regarding the flotilla was readily available in public domains and over the internet. For example, the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (MALAM)[91] published a report comparing IHH violence towards the IDF during the Gaza Flotilla to the violence of Lifeline to Gaza 3 towards Egyptian Security Forces in January 2010 (See photo);[92]

- **Public Diplomacy: Disrupting catalysts and focusing on hubs.** Fundamental learning could have produced an on-the-ground operational model that focuses on the 'hubs' of delegitimization (London, Madrid, Bay

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[91] See **MALAM Report**, which compares the use of violence during the Lifeline 3 campaign and the Gaza Flotilla, 07/19/10.

[92] The photo shows the leader of the Turkish IHH organization, Bulent Yildirim, alongside the Hamas Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyah, after Yildirim's arrival in Gaza during the Lifeline 3 campaign. Source: **Harry's Place** Blog.

The aftermath of the Lifeline 3 Campaign was similar to that of the flotilla: The Turkish Government provided the organizers with support, a number of IHH activists were injured during a clash in El-Arish (Egypt) and seven Egyptian policemen were temporarily held by the organization's activists who refused to obey the Egyptian authorities.

A **MALAM report** on the characteristics of Lifeline 3 was published only after the Gaza Flotilla, but could easily have been written beforehand, based on open sources. Due to the absence of a conceptual framework, the significance of the El-Arish clash was overlooked and was only perceived as a local event with limited significance.

Area, etc.) and strives to disrupt the mode-of-operation of the flotilla's catalysts.[93] For example, this could have included Israeli diplomats or pro-Israel activists reaching out to potential flotilla participants – such as Nobel Peace Prize recipient Mairead Corrigan-Maguire or Swedish author Henning Mankell – in order to expose the organizers' true intentions and identity;

- **Coherent Strategy and Policy to Provide Context** – Fundamental Learning could have shown that the delegitimizers always seek outstanding issues where Israel's policy can be framed as inconsistent with or even contradictory to Western values. Hence, Israel could have focused its policy on the security logic of its blockade, which may have led to the opening of the border for movement of civilian goods before the fact, thus taking the sting out of the Lifeline Campaign. Naturally, this would have required painful political decisions such as disassociating the Gilad Shalit issue from the blockade policy;

- **Strategy towards Turkey and other potentially supportive countries** – Turkey has been swinging between its declared sympathy and practical support for Hamas and its commitment to embarrass Israel by fighting the Gaza blockade on the one hand, and its commitment to be a leading member of the international community, abiding by international law and committed to bolstering regional security and stability on the other. Therefore in the months preceding the flotilla, fundamental learning may have led Israel to revise its policy towards Turkey in order to make it harder for the country to act freely in support of Hamas and against Israel. For example, as Giora Eiland proposed, Turkey could have been included in the supervising mechanism for preventing arms smuggling to Gaza. At the same time, Israel should have repeated its willingness to completely end the blockade if Hamas accepted the Quartet's demands.

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[93] See Barabasi, **Linked: How Everything Is Connected to Everything Else and What It Means** 153-155, 287, and Joshua Cooper Ramo, **The Age of the Unthinkable** p. 236.

Chapter 5:
Policy Options: What Strengthens Israel's Political Firewall?

Planning for Future Flotillas: Yesterday's War?

124. **The 'Lifeline to Gaza' Campaign may have run its course.** The effectiveness of the Gaza Flotilla stemmed from a unique combination of the significant presence of European critics on board, disregard to the true nature of the IHH, the absence of understanding within the West as to the logic of Israel's policy in Gaza, and the use of force by the IDF and its dire consequences. This combination may not repeat itself, and flotillas arriving from enemy states, such as Libya, Iran, or Lebanon, will be considered provocative and give Israel justification to act.

   Furthermore, the Flotillas achievements were plentiful: not only has the civil blockade against Gaza been effectively lifted and Hamas received a good dose of international recognition, but Israel's image suffered a serous blow that further eroded its legitimacy. Hence, the flotilla logic may have lost its sting and attractiveness, especially following the EU's position that all humanitarian aid to Gaza should be transferred via Ashdod.

125. **However, the network that *produced* the flotillas will be mobilized within another campaign against Israel's fundamental legitimacy**. This is a global network of people and organizations that are harnessed towards the struggle against Israel's legitimacy. They work to promote a number of global campaigns simultaneously, all the while changing their mode of operation and activities.

126. **As such, focusing on how to stop future flotillas is like preparing for yesterday's war. Although the next campaign may not be known, the network that organizes and manages it *is very well known*. Israel should thus focus its response strategy on the battle against this network.**

The Synchronized Victories Concept

127. **Israel's security doctrine reflects a mindset that emphasizes the importance of military and technological superiority** and developing decisive force in order to achieve clear victory on the battlefield, which is considered the primary arena of confrontation with its enemies. The political-diplomatic arena, meanwhile, has been neglected, recent statements and even additional budgets notwithstanding.

128. In contrast, **the organizing logic of the Resistance Network is political-diplomatic.** It aims to cause Israel's implosion by outflanking its military superiority. In recent years, this logic has evolved to the extent that the Resistance Network now possesses conceptual superiority over Israel. This was initially exposed in the Second Lebanon War and has persisted ever since.

129. **In light of this change in the main arena of confrontation, Israel needs to develop a strategy that can achieve synchronized victories in a number of**

arenas – military, political-diplomatic, media and public diplomacy, internal, and judicial. The absence of such a strategy was readily apparent during the Gaza Flotilla.

Delegitimization Is a Strategic Concern and Must Be Treated Accordingly

130. **The attack on Israel's legitimacy poses a strategic threat that may ultimately develop into an existential one.** It is imperative to treat it accordingly**:**

   - **Including delegitimization as a distinct topic in the annual National Security Assessment** presented to the government;

   - **Designating a specific existing or new unit to integrate the systemic response to delegitimization** among all relevant bodies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Security Council, intelligence agencies, and other relevant ministries;

   - **Collecting information, analyzing it, and turning it into knowledge** – Delegitimization should rank among the collection and analysis priorities of the intelligence community. There should be greater and better information identifying delegitimizers, catalysts, and their modes-of-operation. **Much of this information can and should be made public**;

   - **Developing a 'mode-of-operation'** to preempt and respond to delegitimization, focusing on the catalysts and the hubs of the Delegitimization Network.

Politics: Israel Must Be Perceived As Demonstrating Commitment to Peace

131. In the struggle against delegitimization, **it is essential that Israel adopts clear and consistent policies towards Hamas and the political process, which effectively reflect a sincere commitment to ending Israel's control over the Palestinian population and achieving peace**. Having said this, there will always be voices for whom Israel can do no right and who will constantly challenge its sincere commitment to peace and blame it for its shortcomings and failures. Nonetheless, **when such a commitment is perceived to exist by a critical mass of public opinion, Israel strengthens its political-diplomatic firewall. Its absence meanwhile makes Israel vulnerable and erodes its firewall**.

Reut has previously written about the dilemmas facing the Government of Israel in these arenas. In this context, Reut recommended designing a new strategy for the political process that would include systematically upgrading the powers and capacities of the PA in the West Bank towards statehood.[94]

132. **However, ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will not terminate delegitimization** – Israel's delegitimization in the West is orchestrated by a

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[94] See Reut document: [Reassessment of the Israeli Palestinian Political Process: Build a Palestinian State in the West Bank](#).

number of radical left and Islamist elements who oppose Israel's very existence, rather than its specific policies. In fact, these red-green groups include few Palestinians in leading positions. Therefore, even if an Israeli-Palestinian agreement is reached, these groups are likely to continue in their attempts to undermine the State of Israel's legitimacy, by refocusing their energy and message on new flashpoints.

It Takes a Network to Fight a Network

133. **Networks are resilient structures** due to their dispersal and diversity. It is impossible to paralyze a decentralized network by removing only a small number of nodes. In fact, experiments show that a network that has lost 80 percent of the connections between its nodes can still survive.[95] This renders the battle against the Delegitimization Network a formidable challenge for Israel and its supporters. In order to fight the network of the other side, Israel must build its own network, aimed at:

- ■ **Identifying and focusing attention and resources on hubs** – As previously described, the power of a network is concentrated in and generates from its hubs. Therefore, Israel must identify the hubs of delegitimization, and significantly increase its diplomatic and public efforts there.

  > **The metrics for identifying hubs should be concentrations of international NGOs, media, corporations, academia, and cultural influence. Such cities probably include London, Madrid, Brussels, Toronto, Paris, the San Francisco Bay Area, Sydney, and Johannesburg.**
  >
  > **Contending with each hub requires a tailor-made approach based on unique constellations of hundreds of relationships with local elites in political, business, media, and security spheres;**

- ■ **Disrupting the catalysts of the Delegitimization Network** – These catalysts must be identified, studied, and to the extent possible, undermined by legal, media, political, and diplomatic means. In the context of the Gaza Flotilla, Israel and its supporters should have sought to expose the true colors of organizations such as the Free Gaza Movement and Viva Palestina, and shed light on their activities in order to drive a wedge between them and critics of Israeli policy.

134. **Cultivating Israel's own network** – There is a need to enhance the network that can respond to delegitimization around the world by providing it with sufficient resources for their activities. This entails:

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[95]   Barabasi & Eric, "Scale Free Networks," **Scientific American**, May 2003.

- ■ **Strengthening Israeli diplomatic presence in hubs** by significantly expanding human resources to a size relevant to the challenge, and allocating sufficient resources to activities in the field. For example, at present the San Francisco and Atlanta Consulates are roughly similar in size and resources. However, according to the logic of fighting delegitimization, the former should be much bigger;

- ■ **Activating 'catalysts'** that gather, analyze, and distribute information; organize events; mobilize others; and respond to the other side's activities. These catalysts could be non-governmental organizations in Israel and abroad;

- ■ **Rebuilding and strengthening the International Department of the** *Histadrut* **(Israel's national labor union) -** One of the main arenas for Israel's delegitimization is among trade unions, whose activists are heavily involved in organizing and taking part in the Lifeline to Gaza campaign. However, this arena has practically been abandoned by Israel, and the Histadrut's International Department has been reduced to only two employees. **If mobilized effectively, the Histadrut could be very effective in fighting delegitimization among labor unions and beyond**;

- ■ **Harnessing informal ambassadors** such as businesspeople, academics, Israelis living abroad, artists, etc., particularly those who live in the hubs of delegitimization. In addition, existing organizations of Israelis and Jews, as well as non-Jewish or pro-Israel organizations that share common values, should also be mobilized.[96]

Clash of Brands / Values

135. **A central aspect of the delegitimization campaign involves branding Israel as a violent, occupying country that abuses human rights and violates international law.** This brand associates Israel with excessive and repetitive use of force, aggression, arrogance, and disruption of regional and world peace and security. In this way, Israel becomes a nuisance to broad populations in leading countries who care about global issues such as the environment, poverty or climate change.

136. **In addition, the values connected to the negative branding of Israel stand in direct contrast to those at the heart of Western, liberal societies.** The focus on Israel and its negative branding yields the absurd outcome that its legitimacy is effectively challenged by fundamentalist entities such as Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah and their accomplices.

137. **Delegitimizers brand themselves as representing justice, human rights, and international law –** In contrast, those attacking Israel's legitimacy have succeeded in adopting the discourse of human rights and respect for international

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[96] On harnessing Diaspora populations for diplomatic proposes, see the concept of Diaspora Politics in Gilboa, 72-73; For examples of maintaining strong relations with Diasporas in Europe, Asia, and Latin America, see: Nir Cohen and Israel Popko, **Haaretz** 1/11/09.

law. Hamas has also managed to adapt to this discourse. The combined result brands the ensemble of critics of Israel – delegitimizers and policy critics as one – as representing values of justice, peace, and preservation of international law. Israel's attempts to pressure the civilian population in Gaza plays into the hands of the Resistance Network.

138. **Hence, re-branding Israel and changing the values associated with it is critically important to fighting delegitimization –** In this context, the success of the Brand Israel project, which was launched in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is of paramount importance for Israel's ability to convey its messages as well as on the delegitimizers' ability to advance their goals. It goes without saying that **Israel excels in many areas that support a different brand value,** exemplified in its humanitarian activity in the developing world, its dynamic civil society, its advances in technology and contribution in the fields of science and the arts.[97]

139. In this context, it is important to state the **difference between branding and hasbara**: While *hasbara* is a tactical tool used to manage crises and communicate messages using campaign methodologies, branding is a strategic tool for long-term and 'personality'-based positioning. Furthermore, branding impacts, and sometimes even determines, the ability of *hasbara* to succeed: If Israel's brand remains unchanged, even the most talented spokespeople will have difficulty convincing their audiences.

The Focus Should Be the Liberal and Progressive Constituencies

140. **The hearts and minds of liberal progressives are the main arena of the struggle between Israel and the Delegitimization Network** – The secret of success of the Delegitimization Network's lies in its ability to blur the differences between delegitimization and criticism of Israel and to co-opt critics of Israeli policy. As a result, those who should be Israel's natural allies in the battle against Islamic fundamentalism – including many Jews – stand against it. One example of this is the annual 'Queers against Israeli apartheid' in Toronto, which takes place against a backdrop of Tel-Aviv being a leading candidate to host the annual international Gay Pride Parade in 2012, and homosexuals being publicly hanged in Iran, or choosing to flee from Gaza to Israel.

141. **Israel and its supporters should drive a wedge between delegitimizers and the liberal progressive constituencies**, based on the following actions:

   - **Creating strong inter-personal relations** – The most effective barrier to Israel's delegitimization is personal relationships that generate an ability to relate to Israel. Many case studies in which delegitimization attempts failed show that the key to success was the activation of already existing personal connections with key individuals. **Hence, cultivating relationships with**

[97] For example, a book that was edited on the request and encouragement of British philanthropist Trevor Pears presents Israeli contributions in the fields of science, medicine, technology, agriculture, and society. Hundreds of copies of the book were distributed by Israeli embassies and Jewish organizations worldwide. See: Helen Davis and Douglas Davis, **Israel in the World,** (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2005).

elites – specifically in hubs – is critically important for the battle against
delegitimization. For example, before the flotilla set sail, meetings should
have been arranged with all intended participants in order to explain the
explosive connection with delegitimization and the true nature of IHH;

■ **Substantively engaging with critics of Israeli policies and building good
working relations with human rights organizations –** Too often, Israel
gives the cold shoulder to those who criticize it and thus push them into the
outstretched arms of the Delegitimization Network. This needs to change.
Israel should try and fix its relations with these organizations by engaging
them seriously and by providing them with a substantive response to their
queries;

■ **Exposing the delegitimizers and showing their true colors** – As
mentioned, delegitimization catalysts should be negatively branded based on
their extremist positions against any peaceful resolution of the conflict or
Israel's very existence. This is critically important in order to drive a wedge
between them and those who criticize Israeli policy;

■ **Delegitimizing the BDS Movement** – The BDS movement stands behind
many of the attempts to isolate Israel. Moreover, the movement has become
one of the main and most sophisticated tools in the attempt to undermine the
State of Israel's legitimacy. While the movement presents itself as
representing progressive liberal values, and thus merely opposing Israeli
policies, its leaders are often clear delegitimizers. (See The BDS Movement
Promote Delegitimization against Israel.)

End.