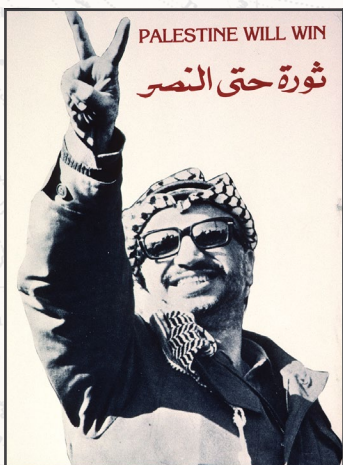


# STRATEGIKA

CONFLICTS OF THE PAST AS LESSONS FOR THE PRESENT



## Is There a Military Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?

### IN THIS ISSUE

Andrew Roberts • Thomas H. Henriksen • Kori Schake • Peter Berkowitz  
Victor Davis Hanson • Edward N. Luttwak • Bruce Thornton



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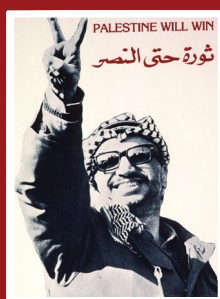
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## ABOUT THE POSTERS IN THIS ISSUE

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# Just the Start of an Age-Old Conflict?

*Andrew Roberts*

In a fascinating appendix to his history of guerilla warfare, *Invisible Armies*, the military historian Max Boot displays an extraordinarily comprehensive database of the 443 military insurgencies that have taken place globally since 1775. The earliest of these that is still ongoing is the Kachi and Karen tribes' struggle against Burma, which started in 1948. Second comes the FARC/ELN/EPL/M-19 narco-insurgency against the government of Colombia, which started in 1963. But the world's third oldest is the Palestinian Liberation Organization's campaign against Israel, which started in 1965 and which was joined by those of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in 1968, the Abu Nidal organization (1974), Hezbollah (1982), Islamic Jihad (1981), and Hamas (1987). In the intensity of conflict and sheer number of organizations involved, however, Israel easily emerges top in the world league of nation-states that terrorists have vowed to destroy. As in Burma and Colombia, these campaigns have become quite literally multi-generational, with the children and now grandchildren of the original terrorists joining the family business.

In the past three decades Israel has also had to fight off two Intifadas ("Uprisings," or literally "Shakings Off"), the first from December 1987 to September 1993, and the second from September 2000 to August 2005, which featured strikes, boycotts, and demonstrations as well as direct violence. With the end of the latest 50-day-long campaign in Gaza this year, it is clearly worthwhile asking whether any military solution is possible, or whether the situation has gone beyond that.

For as Boot's book points out, "the narrative of events," i.e. the telling of the story from a propaganda point of view, "has now become more important than actual combat in determining the course of events." With the world media heavily biased towards the Palestinian "narrative," which since 1967 it has (wrongly in my view) construed as that of the underdog, have we reached the point where even a military solution would be no solution at all?

Of course in one sense there is always the possibility of a military solution, if the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) simply abandoned its long-established rules of engagement and simply cleared the Arab populations out of Gaza, the West Bank, and possibly also Southern Lebanon, as it perhaps ought to have done at the end of the Six Day War in 1967, saving

everyone—especially the Palestinians—the past half-century of strife. Israel undoubtedly has the military might to achieve this. If Israeli soldiers were to ignore the terrorists' tactic of hiding behind civilians, especially women, children, and the elderly, and open fire regardless, then the fighters of Hamas, Fatah, and Hezbollah could undoubtedly be killed in large enough numbers to neutralize those organizations for a generation.

Yet such a campaign goes flatly against all IDF training, as well as Jewish moral teaching, and so it is inconceivable that it would ever be adopted. No army in the world takes as much care to avoid collateral damage as the IDF, knowing that the eyes of the world—and the constant moral disapproval of the global media—are constantly upon it. The Armageddon option is therefore not one that will be adopted by Israel, which will continue effectively to fight with one arm tied behind its back. If the struggle were taking place before the Geneva Convention, or was restricted purely to Jews and Palestinian Arabs, with no danger of outside intervention from the other Arab states or the rest of the world, then things might possibly have been different, but they are not.

Since the 1950s, Israel's basic national security doctrine has been that it can never defeat the Arabs decisively enough to end the conflict, in the same way that the Allies defeated Nazi Germany and Japan in the Second World War, say, because the geographic and demographic asymmetry is too greatly stacked against her. As David Ben Gurion put it: "For us there exists no hope of a final war; after every war we win the Arabs can recover and start a new one, in which they can hope for a decisive and terminal victory." Yet he hoped that if every time the Arabs attacked—as in 1948, 1967, and 1973—they were decisively defeated, then perhaps after a while they would relegate the destruction of Israel to political rhetoric and ever-hopeful prayer.

This policy seemed to be working after the 1967–1970 "War of Attrition" when first the Jordanians and then in March 1979 the Egyptians under Anwar Sadat made peace with Israel, an arrangement that was finalized in October 1994. Without Egypt, no Arab state felt strong enough to attack, but the rest of the Arab world continued to pose a threat, not least by supporting Palestinian aspirations. In 1982 the IDF forced Hezbollah out of Lebanon, but did not get rid of the Palestinian population, although the Palestinians were initially denied the ability to recover their military capabilities by the Lebanese themselves. Theoretically, Israel could do the same in Judea and Samaria and Gaza; she could eradicate the Palestinians' physical presence between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, but wars are not purely military events.<sup>1</sup> Moreover the Jews are hobbled both by their innate decency and their recent history—the phrase "Final Solution" has too many overtones for them ever to seek the kind of final military solution that is easily within their grasp. Precisely what makes them so special as a race also condemns them to seemingly perpetual peril.

Israel is too small and dependent on others to withstand more than a certain level of international censure—even when it does less damage to civilians than the U.S. and its allies did in Afghanistan and Iraq, Israel is attacked diplomatically and with “law-fare” (threats of international legal indictments). The hypocrisy of the White House’s criticism of Israel over the deaths of civilians in the recent Gaza war—considering the number of wedding parties and other innocent gatherings blasted by U.S. drones over the past decade in Pakistan and elsewhere—was of course breathtaking, but such is the small change of modern politics and the lack of irony in President Obama’s thought processes.<sup>2</sup>

Of course Max Boot might just as easily have gone back earlier than 1965, to November 1947 when the UN General Assembly adopted its resolution replacing the British Mandate in Palestine with a partition plan, one which would have made Jerusalem a UN city. This resolution sparked violence in which thousands were killed and wounded, and which in turn led to direct clashes between the Haganah and what was to become the Arab Liberation Army. Hostility between Arab and Jew has been continuing at differing levels ever since, with occasional massive flare-ups in the wars of 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, and so on. As Senator George Mitchell pointed out in a thoughtful *Boston Globe* article on September 7, 2014, “There have been 12 American presidents and 20 secretaries of state since 1948. Each has tried to reconcile the differences between Israelis and Palestinians.”<sup>3</sup> Yet each has failed.

Might it therefore simply be that there are such things as insoluble problems in international affairs, and that we are only exhibiting absurd optimism in assuming anything else? If the Burmese and Colombian wars against terrorism have been going on for over half a century, they’re hardly alone in fighting long wars. There has so far been no military solution to the struggles of the Naxalites against India, which started in 1967, the NPA against the Philippines (1969), the Baluchi separatists against Pakistan (1973), or the Cabindi province’s struggle against Angola (1975), and there are plenty more guerrilla wars almost as equally as old that are still ongoing at various levels of violence elsewhere around the world. Although it might be hard for American idealists, who tend to believe that every problem must have a solution, to accept, perhaps the Israeli-Palestinian conflict



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is just part of the human condition, like cancer. (Indeed, if you ask people to predict which is more likely to be cured first, I suspect most people would say cancer.)

This is simply a recognition that when two antagonistic peoples claim the same piece of land, and the stronger of the two is prevented by moral scruples and outside pressure from exterminating the weaker, while the weaker feels no compunction in ignoring the rules of human decency in its campaign against the stronger, then you have a classic impasse. The Italians waited 183 years for Napoleon to rid them of the Austrians, after all, and the Greeks waited over 600 years before the Turks left their shores. Perhaps the Israeli-Palestinian war is not old at all, therefore, but relatively young. Since we can be certain that a Hamas/Fatah/Hezbollah/Islamic Jihad/ISIS victory would be immediately followed by a Second Holocaust in Palestine almost as comprehensive as the first, the prospect of never-ending struggle is far from a counsel of despair.

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1 Elliott Abrams, "The Long War Against Hamas," *Weekly Standard*, August 4, 2014, [http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/long-war-against-hamas\\_797370.html](http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/long-war-against-hamas_797370.html).

2 Elliott Abrams, "The Fog of Cease-fire," *Weekly Standard*, September 8, 2014, [http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/fog-cease-fire\\_803983.html#](http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/fog-cease-fire_803983.html#)

3 George Mitchell, "How we got here," *Boston Globe*, September 7, 2014, <http://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2014/09/06/how-got-here/5NpegungSPbZ4V6FqEgsMI/story.html>



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# Burning the Terrorist Grass

*Thomas H. Henriksen*

Over and over, we have heard the no-military-solution shibboleth applied to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as to insurgencies or military clashes elsewhere. The sheer length of Palestinian and Arab armed hostility toward Israel superficially lends credence to the fuzzy notion that only high-minded diplomacy can dissolve the Middle East belligerency. One after another grand peace schemes, however, have failed. Yet faith remains in them rather than a military end.

Today, the no-military-solution vaporings are mostly invoked as a diplomatic means to halt Gaza's unrelenting terrorism with Israel's unrequited concessions. In an ill-judged forfeiture to the peace process, Jerusalem turned over the Gaza to the Palestinians in 2005. Shortly afterward Hamas—the Islamist terrorist network—seized power in the coastal strip. An ally of Iran, Hamas stocked up on ever-longer range missiles from Tehran and entered a permanent state of terrorism directed at Israel.

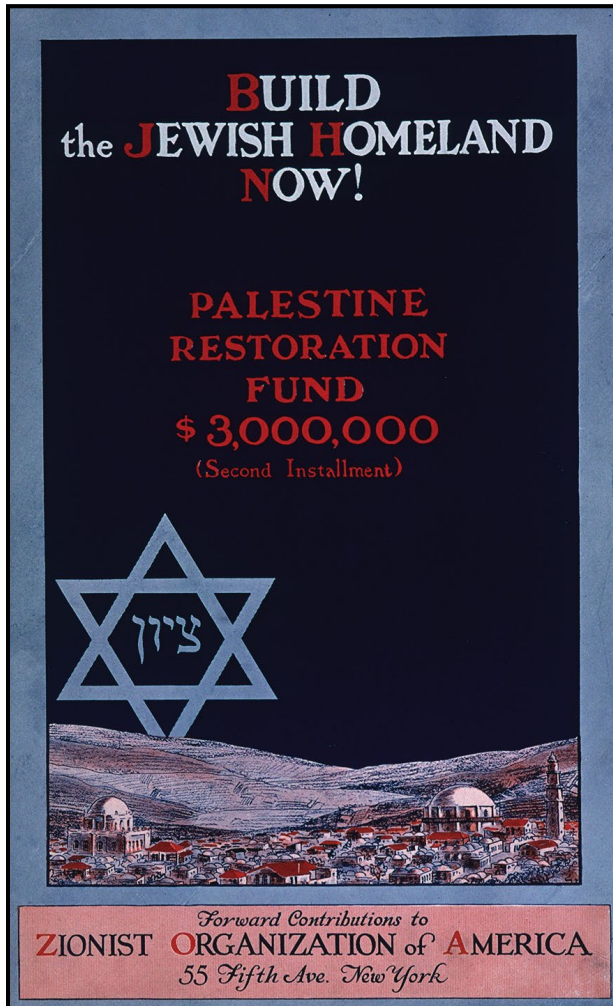
There may be no silver bullet to resolve Hamas's deep-seated animosity against Israel. But according to some, Israel may have found the way to a bronze one. This remedy lies in Israel's three lopsided but still inconclusive military victories over Gaza. In late 2008—early 2009, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) fought a ground war in Gaza termed Operation Cast Lead. Then, in 2012 the country's air force engaged in the week-long Pillar of Defense campaign. And finally, the IDF concluded its 50-day Operation Protective Edge with a truce on August 26. It has been the most destructive to Gaza and its Hamas forces but also to Israel, which

lost 67 soldiers (six times higher than the ten killed in Cast Lead). The Palestinians sustained high casualties with 2,100 deaths, of whom Israel claimed nearly half were armed militants.

Some have referred to the IDF strategy as “mowing the lawn.” By clipping the capabilities of Hamas and its allied terrorist movements, the Israeli military will hold Hamas in check. But each time Hamas emerges more deadly, firing longer range rockets into Israel. Additionally, its fighters have dug attack tunnels beneath the border into southern Israel. These subterranean corridors funnel killers and kidnapers out of sight of Israeli defenses so as to prey on civilians or half-squads of IDF soldiers. Even the “peace” periods (between the stepped-up attacks) have been

## **POLL: HOW SHOULD ISRAEL DEAL MILITARILY WITH HAMAS?**

- Israel must destroy Hamas militarily and thereby achieve a peace.
- Israel should periodically invade Gaza to weaken Hamas.
- Missile defense, drones, and border defense can permanently contain Hamas.
- Inconclusive fighting is inevitable and favors Hamas.
- There is no military solution to the conflict.



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characterized by persistent desultory missile frings on southern Israel. Hence, it is time to reexamine the military-is-not-the-solution refrain, especially in light of Gaza's history.

Not long ago, Israel experienced a dangerous Gaza and defeated the threats emanating from the enclave. As a consequence of the 1967 war, it acquired Gaza along with the West Bank. It ruled the pocket-sized strip directly but permitted the Gazans to live normal lives, engage in commerce, and work within Israel. Local terrorists sought to strike at Israeli forces and at the rising standard of living as well as the normalcy

increasingly enjoyed by the Gaza residents, fearing that improvements in their well-being might sap their hatred of Israel. Yasir Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) infiltrated arms, money, and trained cadre from Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. The PLO and PFLP established underground movements, recruited youths, mounted ambushes on the IDF, and murdered suspected Israeli collaborators (or critics of their policies). They sought to destabilize Gazan society through killings, torture, and intimidation in order to force Israel to abandon the tiny land. As typical in insurgent-terrorist environments, violence hit the civilian population hardest in order to sever its cooperation with the government. The PLO and the PFLP benefited from classic insurgent advantages of melding into the population or eluding security forces in the orange groves.

Major General Ariel Sharon, commander of the southern zone, turned his attention in 1971 to the mushrooming Gaza insurgency. Sharon spent two months walking much of the territory, analyzing the terrain, and thinking about an appropriate counter strategy to root out the insurgents while not unduly harming the locals. He devised a unique method of subdividing Gaza in order to cripple the terrorists' movement and communication. Within the one- or two-mile square divisions, the general inserted "first-rate infantry units" for what he termed "antiterrorist guerrilla warfare" whose adaptive tactics presented "a new situation for every terrorist every day." He dressed soldiers in Arab garb so they blended into the crowds. The soldiers intimately learned their squares and the comings and goings of the inhabitants. Anything out of the ordinary aroused their attention. They often turned captured terrorists into agents, who handed



over intelligence used to eliminate or capture other terrorists. It was microscopic, intense anti-insurgency work, which Sharon later wrote about in his autobiography, *Warrior*, as did many other military specialists.

Might such a counter-terrorism strategy be re-applied in Gaza? Times have changed. The Gaza population is larger than in the early 1970s. The world's anti-Israeli bias is also stronger than in the earlier period. Yet across the globe there is a rising recognition that terrorist sanctuaries must be degraded and Islamist terrorists destroyed. Israel is on the right side of history in this regard. The IDF's experience in keeping the lid on violence in the West Bank is also richer since its 1970s strip campaign. There have been occasional terrorist attacks originating in the West Bank, but there have been no missile barrages as from Gaza. Implementing a similar West Bank security architecture in Gaza promises to burn the grass—a better result than the reliance on perennially shearing the lawn.



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He specializes in the study of US diplomatic and military courses of action toward terrorist havens in the non-Western world and toward rogue regimes.



# Military Means for Political Ends in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

*Kori Schake*

There are many military solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; the problem is that none of them are particularly good outcomes. In fact, they are so draconian as to admit the proposition that there is no practical or sustainable solution that is solely military. That, however, is the case for most wars. Any war that stops short of killing every single member of the opposing society accepts a political solution.

Wars are contests of political will, and military force is just one tool of many at societies' disposal for affecting the enemy and one's own public. Rare is the military contest in which strictly military options can produce durable political outcomes. Rome's destruction of Carthage even relied on the political economy of salting its fields to impoverish an enemy across a generation that it may not rebuild its strength.

As on so many other subjects, British Parliamentarian Edmund Burke cuts to the point: "The use of force alone is but temporary; it may subdue for a moment but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again. And a nation is not to be governed that must perpetually be conquered." It ought to add poignancy for Americans that he was speaking in 1775 of British policy toward the thirteen rebellious colonies.

Military action can foreclose some options political leaders and communities may have been holding out hope for. Syria's assassination of Rafik Hariri eliminated the one politician of this generation with demonstrated ability to unite Lebanon's quarrelsome

factions. The dropping of the second atomic bomb signaled American willingness to impose unlimited casualties on Japan's civilian population unless the Japanese government capitulated. Shakespeare's Henry V credibly conveyed a similar determination during the Agincourt campaign, saying "France being ours, we'll bend it to our awe, / Or break it all to pieces."

But politics is what makes for the end of conflict. In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there existed an obvious political solution, once supported by the majority of Israelis until 2005: trading land for peace. Israel would withdraw its military forces and civilian settlements from mutually agreed areas, leaving Palestinians to govern and control themselves.

The fundamental loss of confidence in that basic bargain stems from Palestinian reaction to Israel's withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza: rocket attacks into Israel. The violence wreaked from the areas under Palestinian governance shattered the prospects for progress. The revolving-door warfare that has continued between Palestinians and Israelis since feeds embittered reactions on both sides of the conflict, narrowing the political trade space.

One can be sympathetic to the grievances of Palestinians while still allowing their choices to be self-defeating. By indulging revenge fantasies, Hamas collapsed belief among Israelis that trading land would produce peace. By seemingly supporting Hamas's attacks and voting Hamas into elected

office in the West Bank and Gaza in 2006, Palestinians stoked Israeli fears that no peace offering would produce peace. It may seem perverse that the strong power, Israel, is the one that needs reassuring by the weak power; still, that is the current dynamic of producing peace in Palestine. Israelis chose peace, while Palestinians chose war. Political solutions that do not address the underlying public support for violence by Palestinians will not be adopted by Israelis after their experience since 2005.

There are military actions that can abet peace between Israel and Palestine. One was an impressive display during the recent military campaign: missile defenses that blunt the effect of Palestinian rockets. The cost-exchange ratio is dramatically skewed in favor of Palestine, their missiles being relatively inexpensive, but Israel's economic advantages probably level out the scales. Precision in intelligence and



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communication that reduce civilian casualties among Palestinians are also helpful in highlighting the moral difference between the military tactics of Israel and those of Palestinians. Technologies that can identify tunneling will also reduce Israel's physical vulnerability. Cooperation with Egypt—the government of which has done more than any other to bear down on Hamas in intelligence and military fields—is surely occurring, but could probably be expanded.

More broadly, Peter Berkowitz has suggested the tantalizing proposition for military forces of Arab governments to become a buffer and interface between Israel and Palestine in Gaza.<sup>1</sup> Arab governments have long said the lack of progress on peace between Israel and Palestine is a cause of extremism in their own societies and an impediment to cooperation with the United States. They have contributed enormous sums to Palestine and been major donors of medical and government facilities. Israel has common cause with several Arab governments in preventing the advance of Islamist political parties: the ejection from power of Syria's Bashar al-Assad; reducing Iranian infiltration and terrorism in Lebanon, Syria, and beyond; and preventing terrorism by Arabs against Arabs.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt, at a minimum, could contribute small contingents of security forces to staff border checkpoints and conduct patrols with Israeli and Palestinian security forces. Jordan may not have the military capacity to contribute, given the pressures on it from the Syrian and Iraqi wars and preventing the Islamic State making inroads, but it would be a valuable contributor and perhaps mediator. Turkey's antipathy toward Israel probably rules it out of what might otherwise be a useful leadership opportunity to cooperate with Arab states.

Creating a multinational Arab force to police Gaza would separate the necessities of security from the

fraught political issues of Israeli dominance. It would also give greater political weight to the peace proposals Saudi Arabia and others have made for them to be active contributors in producing mutually beneficial outcomes. Advances in pervasive and sustained surveillance can also increase Israel's confidence in the work being done by forces other than their own military, an accumulating asset. It would also free up the Israeli military for other uses, a welcome economy.

Enacting the proposal would require an enormous set of policy changes by the Arab states, though—changes whose cost has recently been further increased by the emergence of the Islamic State from Syria, into Iraq, and beginning to pressure Jordan. Those states (other than Jordan) would need to extend diplomatic recognition to Israel, which they have avoided doing, despite often close clandestine links between their governments. They would need to divert their intelligence forces from domestic security at a time when public demands for greater political representation and economic opportunity, the emergence of Islamist political parties, and ferocity of Islamist terrorist movements are roiling the region.

Participating countries would open themselves up for criticism from Islamists, could even see called into question their legitimacy as faithful and as guardians

of holy Muslim sites (as Iran has done previously and the Islamic State portends to). And they would need to work in military concert with each other, something they have largely avoided doing even in the instance of defending their own countries. All this while undertaking a non-trivial military operation fraught with the kind of political questions they have not answered particularly well for their own societies.

American training of Palestinian security forces in the West Bank has also been a good investment, shifting from Israel to Palestine the responsibility for producing security among Palestinians. While training programs have their limits—they are no guarantee forces will uphold order when the political incentives run counter—they have produced Palestinian security forces capable and for the most part willing to act on behalf of the state rather than Hamas. Palestinian military and Israeli Defense Force units collaborate now (less so in the aftermath of the latest fighting), but U.S. military assistance might be also helpful in establishing operations and intelligence fusion centers to ensure the two forces have a common operational picture and can improve their security collaboration.

So while there are no exclusively military solutions that will produce acceptable and sustainable political outcomes in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there are contributions that military forces and military operations can make to advance peace. They cannot, however, substitute for rebuilding Israeli confidence that peace is possible and diminishing the grievances Palestinians feel. Until some means is found that can achieve those objectives, Israel and Palestine will remain—at best—in a tenuous truce.



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1 Peter Berkowitz, "What Israel Won in Gaza & What Diplomacy Must Now Gain," *Real Clear Politics*, September 16, 2014, [http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2014/09/16/what\\_israel\\_won\\_in\\_gaza\\_what\\_diplomacy\\_must\\_now\\_gain\\_123980.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2014/09/16/what_israel_won_in_gaza_what_diplomacy_must_now_gain_123980.html).

## RELATED COMMENTARY

Related commentary includes both original material commissioned by the Hoover Institution as well as relevant material from other news sources that include print and digital publications and citations.

### WHAT ISRAEL WON IN GAZA & WHAT DIPLOMACY MUST NOW GAIN

*Peter Berkowitz*

[http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2014/09/16/what\\_israel\\_won\\_in\\_gaza\\_\\_what\\_diplomacy\\_must\\_now\\_gain\\_123980.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2014/09/16/what_israel_won_in_gaza__what_diplomacy_must_now_gain_123980.html)

### U.S. MUST STRONGLY AFFIRM ISRAEL'S RIGHT OF SELF-DEFENSE

*Peter Berkowitz*

[http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2014/08/06/us\\_must\\_strongly\\_affirm\\_israels\\_right\\_of\\_self-defense\\_123571.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2014/08/06/us_must_strongly_affirm_israels_right_of_self-defense_123571.html)

### THE MIDDLE EAST'S MAZE OF ALLIANCES

*Victor Davis Hanson*

<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/387619/middle-east-s-maze-alliances-victor-davis-hanson>

### SHERMAN IN GAZA

*Victor Davis Hanson*

<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/385698/sherman-gaza-victor-davis-hanson>

### A STRONGER ISRAEL?

*Victor Davis Hanson*

<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/384512/stronger-israel-victor-davis-hanson>

### WINNING A LOSE/LOSE WAR

*Victor Davis Hanson*

<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/383942/winning-lose-lose-war-victor-davis-hanson>

### WHY OBAMA, KERRY, ABBAS, HAMAS, BDS, AND HEZBOLLAH WILL ALL GO POOF!

*Edward Luttwak*

<http://tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/178540/luttwak-zionism-history>

### THE INCOHERENT EXCUSES FOR HATING ISRAEL

*Bruce Thornton*

<http://www.frontpagemag.com/2014/bruce-thornton/the-incoherent-excuses-for-hating-israel>

### ISRAEL'S WORST ENEMY: LIES AND MYTHS

*Bruce Thornton*

<http://www.frontpagemag.com/2014/bruce-thornton/israels-worst-enemy-lies-and-myths>

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

### **IS THERE A MILITARY SOLUTION TO THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT?**

1. Does the material damage that Israel inflicts on Gaza and the Hamas leadership infrastructure curb Hamas aggression?
2. Why exactly does Hamas enjoy comparable or superior political support in the West during the recent Gaza war?
3. Is it wise for Israel to bolster the Palestinian Authority in order to isolate Hamas?
4. Why did the Palestinian Authority and/or Hezbollah not join the Hamas rocket barrages against Israel?

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

1. Eliot Cohen, Michael Eisenstadt, and Andrew Bacevich, “Knives, Tanks, and Missiles’: Israel’s Security Revolution” (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1998). (available online at: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/knives-tanks-and-missiles-israels-security-revolution>).
2. Alan Dowty, “The Arab-Israel Conflict,” *Oxford Bibliographies* (available online at: <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756223/obo-9780199756223-0124.xml>).
3. Michael B. Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Oxford University Press, 2002).
4. Mark Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. [2nd ed.] (Indiana University Press, 2009).

## IN THE NEXT ISSUE

**WHAT IS THE LIKELY TRAJECTORY OF CHINESE-JAPANESE TENSIONS AND HOW WILL THE UNITED STATES BE AFFECTED?**



## Military History in Contemporary Conflict

As the very name of Hoover Institution attests, military history lies at the very core of our dedication to the study of “War, Revolution, and Peace.” Indeed, the precise mission statement of the Hoover Institution includes the following promise: “The overall mission of this Institution is, from its records, to recall the voice of experience against the making of war, and by the study of these records and their publication, to recall man’s endeavors to make and preserve peace, and to sustain for America the safeguards of the American way of life.” From its origins as a library and archive, the Hoover Institution has evolved into one of the foremost research centers in the world for policy formation and pragmatic analysis. It is with this tradition in mind, that the “Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict” has set its agenda—reaffirming the Hoover Institution’s dedication to historical research in light of contemporary challenges, and in particular, reinvigorating the national study of military history as an asset to foster and enhance our national security. By bringing together a diverse group of distinguished military historians, security analysts, and military veterans and practitioners, the working group seeks to examine the conflicts of the past as critical lessons for the present.

## Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict

The Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict examines how knowledge of past military operations can influence contemporary public policy decisions concerning current conflicts. The careful study of military history offers a way of analyzing modern war and peace that is often underappreciated in this age of technological determinism. Yet the result leads to a more in-depth and dispassionate understanding of contemporary wars, one that explains how particular military successes and failures of the past can be often germane, sometimes misunderstood, or occasionally irrelevant in the context of the present.

## Strategika

*Strategika* is a journal that analyzes ongoing issues of national security in light of conflicts of the past—the efforts of the Military History Working Group of historians, analysts, and military personnel focusing on military history and contemporary conflict. Our board of scholars shares no ideological consensus other than a general acknowledgment that human nature is largely unchanging. Consequently, the study of past wars can offer us tragic guidance about present conflicts—a preferable approach to the more popular therapeutic assumption that contemporary efforts to ensure the perfectibility of mankind eventually will lead to eternal peace. New technologies, methodologies, and protocols come and go; the larger tactical and strategic assumptions that guide them remain mostly the same—a fact discernable only through the study of history.



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