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# A National Security Grand Strategy

by

Dan Ben-David

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What are Israel's plans for the day after it disengages from Gaza? All signs indicate that the prime minister's office assumes that our severe national trauma, widely broadcast in the West, will enable the government to make a hard right turn in the Fall and funnel huge budgets and large populations into the West Bank areas that will remain in our hands. Already there is talk today of beginning new construction in the heart of heavily Arab-populated areas. The country has not yet extricated itself from the Gaza quicksand and it is already widening and deepening the next quagmire. How many times is it possible to bang ones head in the wall before it finally cracks wide open?

It is time for us to come to our senses, to determine a long-term national defense strategy targeted at ensuring the future existence and the Jewish-democratic identity of the State of Israel. There are 10.5 million people living today between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. By the year 2020, this number will rise to about 15 million – of which 45% will be Jewish. Israel's continued existence as a Jewish-democratic state necessitates an urgent, historic, decision to maintain a solid Jewish majority within the sovereign borders of the country, a majority that should be maintained only through moral and legal means. Hence, the determination of Israel's borders must reflect demographic and defense considerations, even when these come at the expense of the Jewish people's historic right to the entire Land of Israel.

The strategic work plan detailed here lays out a clear path merging different ideas raised separately by reserve generals Ami Ayalon, Giora Eiland and Uzi Dayan as well as by President Bill Clinton. It includes principles that, from Israel's perspective, must be included in any final status agreement, it provides two alternative options upon which such a permanent agreement could be based – while prioritizing between them – and it also provides an option in the event that it will not be possible to reach a final status agreement that includes the essential conditions for Israel.

## **The main principles in any final status agreement**

After it disengages from Gaza, Israel should call for negotiations aimed at reaching, within a specified period of time, a final status agreement based upon the following principles:

- There is no Palestinian right of return whatsoever into the State of Israel.
- Permanent borders will be mutually agreed upon by all sides, taking into consideration security needs, demographic realities and the 1967 borders.
- The Palestinian state will be demilitarized and will not pose either a direct or indirect threat to Israel.
- Jerusalem will remain the capital of Israel. There will be no change in the status quo of the holy basin, with freedom of religion and full access to holy sites guaranteed to all.
- The final status agreement will signal the cessation of the Israel-Palestinian conflict and the end of all claims.

These principles include Israel's red lines that guarantee its future security and character as well as Jerusalem as its capital. Israel should not sign any permanent treaty that does not include an agreement by all signatories to these basic guidelines.

## **A multilateral or bilateral final status agreement**

The Gaza strip has 1.3 million inhabitants. By the year 2020 the population in Gaza is expected to reach 2.5 million people. Aside from the severe congestion problem, there is a critical shortage of jobs. Employment of these workers in Israel – the policy in place since 1967 – represents a problematic long-term solution for both sides.

Palestinians are employed in Israel under conditions that violate basic Israeli labor laws. Aside from the extremely problematic legal and moral implications of this, the end result is a crowding out of Israelis from the labor market and a severe blow to the wages of unskilled Israeli workers.

From the Palestinian perspective, the signing of a final status agreement needs to open before them a window of opportunity for achieving a significant improvement in their standards of living. Such an improvement cannot come from menial labor in Israel but from substantial investments in physical and human capital infrastructures in the Palestinian areas – financed generously and supervised closely by international donors and foreign experts after the agreement is signed – that will provide jobs today and hope for the future.

Therefore, the preferred alternative for dividing the land is a multilateral agreement between Israel, Palestine, Egypt and Jordan that is based on three guiding tenets: maintaining Israeli sovereignty over main Jewish settlement blocs; finding a long-term solution to severe problems of congestion and unemployment in Gaza; creation of an economic basis that will provide an incentive for all sides to continue abiding by the agreement in the future. The treaty entails:

- Egyptian transfer to Palestine of territory in Sinai that is adjacent to Gaza in which a new city with a large port will be built.
- In return for receiving Egyptian territory, the Palestinians will yield to Israel large Jewish settlement blocs situated close to the Green Line as well as minor border changes.
- As compensation for territory that will remain in Israel's hands, Egypt will receive Israeli land in the Negev north of Eilat and adjacent to the Egyptian border – a transfer that will enable the construction of an underground or aboveground land corridor approximately 20 kilometers in length for vehicles and oil pipelines connecting Jordan and Egypt.
- Jordan will receive a direct land connection to a port on the Mediterranean Sea, with all of the attendant economic gains that this entails.

The benefits to Israel, Palestine and Jordan are clear. The advantage for Egypt results from defusing the explosive overcrowding and socio-economic pressure along its border with Gaza, from the taxes and tolls that it will collect from the vehicle traffic and oil flow to and from the Palestinian port city, and from the commerce that will materialize in Egyptian territory along the new route connecting the Palestinian city and the Jordan-Egypt corridor north of Eilat.

That said, it would be reasonable to assume that part of the traffic along the new route will come at the expense of traffic through the Suez canal, an outcome that will reduce – though not entirely eliminate – Egypt's gains from the agreement (making American aid to Egypt, roughly 2 billion dollars a year since 1979, contingent on that country's acceptance of the agreement would act as additional "encouragement").

In the event that it is not possible to reach a multilateral agreement, the alternative would be a bilateral agreement between Israel and Palestine, along the parameters put forth by President Clinton in November 2000, with minimal land swaps between the two countries. Israel would receive settlement blocs situated close to the Green line plus minor border corrections. In exchange, we will give the Palestinians land in the Negev that is adjacent to Gaza.

### **If a final status agreement is unattainable**

It stands to reason that the conflict will eventually end in agreement between the sides. But until then, Israel cannot sit idly by – in view of the grave ramifications that the default scenario will have on the future of the country. If it turns out that there is no Palestinian leadership willing, or able, to reach a final status agreement with us along the principles laid out above, then Israel must act unilaterally to ensure its continued existence as a Jewish-democratic state.

This unilateral action includes waging an unremitting war on terrorists and the terror infrastructure in all its forms, everywhere that it exists, and with all of the legitimate means available to Israel, while demanding that the Palestinian leadership eliminate the violence, the terror and the incitement.

In lieu of an agreement, Israel will be free to determine its borders and its security arrangements. This entails initiating an additional disengagement in the West Bank to a temporary border that will enable the IDF to provide security and for Israel to maintain a solid Jewish majority within its borders.

Provision of security also includes the immediate completion of the security fence. The fence is a vital and proven defensive measure for saving lives and effective in fighting terrorism. The route of the fence should be as close as possible to the Green Line in order to limit, as much as

possible, the link between the urgent security need for the fence and the political and diplomatic implications on future final status agreements that may emanate from its placement. Jewish communities outside the fence should be protected with barriers along their municipal boundaries and by protection of the main traffic arteries connecting them. That said, these difficulties should be taken into consideration when determining the extent of the subsequent unilateral disengagement (in the absence of an agreement between the sides).

Implementation of this strategic national security initiative means putting our destiny into our own hands. It will strengthen the personal and national security of Israel's citizens and it will ensure the continued existence of the country as both Jewish and democratic. Even if it will not be possible to reach a final status agreement in the foreseeable future, this work plan transfers the conflict with the Palestinians onto a track that we will be able to deal with as long as necessary – a fact that may help spur Palestinian understanding that time is no longer working in their favor.