What Israel Wants

written by Meir Ben Shabbat | 12.09.2025

The events of October 7, 2023, shook Israel to its core. Hamas's brutal attack—which left some 1,200 dead and hundreds more held captive—made clear to Israel's leaders and citizens alike that the country must change its approach to national security to ensure its survival.

In the subsequent two years, Israeli decision-makers have discarded old security paradigms in favor of new strategies. Israel is no longer content with weakening, rather than defeating, its adversaries. Instead, Israeli leaders are much more willing to employ the country's military strength to proactively shape a new order that protects its national interests.

Some have interpreted Israel's new strategy as a quest for regional hegemony. In reality, although it is the strongest military power in the region, Israel is not a regional hegemon—nor does it seek to be one.

Israel does not want to dominate the regional order. But it does seek to shape that order to a greater degree than ever before. This includes defending its assets and allies, holding territory and adjusting borders when strategically necessary, forging diverse alliances around common interests, and preventing any potential enemy from developing capabilities that would threaten its existence or security.

By embracing a strategy that prioritizes real security concerns over wishful diplomacy and proactive intervention over reactive restraint, Israel is making itself stronger, not weaker. It can thrive only if its borders are secure, existential challenges on its periphery are removed, and its regional partnerships grow deeper. As long as Israeli leaders continue to embrace this new paradigm, it will safeguard Israel and create the necessary conditions for a more stable and prosperous Middle East in the future.

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