Israel’s Superpower Mindset

written by David M. Weinberg | 18.07.2025

Forty or so years of Oslo-style arrangements, in which the West cajoled and pressured Israel into territorial withdrawals and restraint against emerging enemy threats – has proven to be an utter failure. “Containment” policy which prioritized diplomacy over decisive military triumphs against jihadist adversaries – has failed.

These approaches blew-up in Israel’s face, with terror and invasion from the West Bank and Gaza, and Syria and Lebanon, and with the march of Iran’s nuclear bomb program to near completion.

Over the past 20 months Israel has necessarily moved to a better balance between diplomacy and the use of force to scuttle enemy threats. It has shifted to thinking like a superpower; to becoming a force that acts proactively to assert dominance along its borders and strategic ascendancy against threats farther away.

Thus, Israel must and will continue to make fierce, overwhelming, and surprising strikes against enemy assets and strongholds from Khan Yunis to Isfahan. It needs to keep its enemies off base with beeper blasts and bunker-busting airstrikes.

Israel wants to be feared, militarily dominant – and yes, even “hegemonic” – not loved. Jerusalem knows that its neighbors will seek true reconciliation only when Israel is strong.

Thus, Israel can no longer accept policies that emphasize “quiet for quiet” and prioritize “restraint,” because this allows the enemy to develop attack capabilities under the cover of diplomatic breathing time; what some Western officials mistakenly call periods of “stability.”

In this new era, Israel intends to project its strength to definitively neutralize adversaries, and in so doing to lead the region – to gather a coalition of truly peace-seeking nations. Israel intends to truly “stabilize” the region, but not through reliance on hackneyed diplomatic templates and failed formulas that ooze weakness.

All this is based on a clear strategic prism that stems from a realistic understanding of the region. Israelis and their leaders understand that the set of rules by which the worst actors in the Middle East operate are ideological, attritional, and genocidal – not accommodational or transactional.

So, for example, Israelis understand that beyond whatever security accords might be possible with the new regime in Syria (headed by the Sunni jihadist named Ahmed Al-Sharaa) and the Aoun government in Lebanon, the IDF itself must and will continue to regularly interdict threats to Israel over the borders with these countries. Israel will not sit back for a decade or two, merely gathering intelligence on emerging threats until they reach monstrous proportions (as Israel unfortunately did versus Hezbollah for three decades, and Hamas for two).

It means that to some extent Israel will intervene on behalf of the non-jihadist Druze community in Syria which holds a zone of strategic importance in the southeast of that country along Israel's northern border. That is what superpowers do. Israel will not wait for American mediators to calm the situation or rely on UN peacekeepers to protect the Druze and secure the border, nor refrain from hitting Al-Sharaa's assets because Europe is again investing in Syria.

The same goes for Judea and Samaria. Nobody is under the illusion that any Palestinian "authority" can or will counteract the build-up of Iranian backed Islamic terrorist armies in these areas – which directly threaten Jerusalem and central Israel. Only the IDF can and will; thus, the full-scale Israeli military operations in places like Jenin, Tulkarm, and Nablus to resolutely rout out such threats will continue. This is likely to be a permanent feature of Israeli policy.

And by the way, Israel has no confidence whatsoever in the ability of the EU or the US to substantially reform the Palestinian Authority to make it a "democratic, transparent, efficient, and sustainable governance system," as per EU goals.

Thirty years and billions of dollars and euros later, the return on Western investment in Palestinian independence is abysmal. There is no democracy, no rule of law, no transparency, no sustainability, no investment in economic stability, and no peace education in the PA. There is only nepotism and corruption, "pay-for-slay" handouts (meaning the incentivizing and rewarding of terrorism against Israel), violent propagandizing against Israel (including support for Hamas's October 7 invasion and massacres), and diplomatic assault on Israel

in every possible international forum.

And not one single new hospital in the West Bank has been built with those EU and American funds. Only one sewage treatment plant. Not a single refugee has been resettled. They've had over 30 years to do more! You get the picture…

As for Western (especially US) security assistance to the PA, well, over $1 billion in US training and equipment for PA security forces – including over $40 million in US funds for 2025 – has produced mixed results, at best. PA security personnel have repeatedly participated in or facilitated terror attacks against Israeli civilians and IDF soldiers, including PA policemen Mahmoud Abed and Malek Salem who last week murdered Shalev Zvuluny at a Gush Etzion shopping center. PA security personnel account for 12% of all Palestinian terrorists held by Israel.

This explains why it is so nonsensical of France, Saudi Arabia, and others to resuscitate delusions of Palestinian statehood, specifically now. This is a recipe for devastating disappointment and escalated conflict; and of course, for the isolation of Israel.

Alas, that may the entire point of the French/Saudi exercise – to weaken Israel, to prevent it from growing too strong, too "hegemonic" in its ambitions, too "aggressive" in its military actions, too "dominant" in resetting the regional strategic situation. Too successful in defending itself, including the prevention of runaway Palestinian statehood.

According to President Emmanuel Macron of France, Israel must not be allowed to win so much – especially after its game-changing, successful strike on Iran's nuclear bomb program. Instead, Israel needs to be constrained, hemmed-in, humbled, and dictated to. "No discussion" he pompously said this week regarding "the need to urgently recognize" Palestinian statehood. It "must" happen, Macron declared – over the protests, and if necessary, over the dead bodies of Israelis.

The situation regarding Gaza is similar. Israel intends to act hegemonically to end the military threat from Gaza and to secure the Negev for renewed Israeli civilian prosperity. This means that beyond whatever temporary accords might unfortunately be necessary to obtain the release of a few more Israeli hostages held by Hamas, there are no long-term accommodations with that terror movement. It must be rooted out from Gaza.

Certainly, there must not be any reconstruction of Gaza without complete demilitarization of the enclave, which probably means a decade more of warfare at varying degrees of intensity.

Do not expect Israel to rely on Egypt or any other Arab state, never mind UN forces, to bring security or stability to Gaza. For years, Egypt turned a blind eye to the massive smuggling of weapons from the Egyptian-controlled Sinai Peninsula into Gaza, and of course it did nothing to stop Hamas from staging a coup against the Fatah-controlled PA and making Gaza into a Moslem Brotherhood mini-state. Nor will Israel abide a "technocratic" Palestinian government in Gaza that is but a flimsy cover for de facto Hamas rule.

The new Israeli superpower mindset applies, of course, to Iran. Iran must be prevented from rebuilding its nuclear bomb and ballistic missile programs and be deterred from rebuilding its network of proxy armies across the Middle East.

Any attempt at cosmetic boondoggle with Iran, say another insubstantial P5+1 accord with the ayatollahs, will force to Israel to again act against Tehran. Israel will apply its updated defense doctrine, its regional superpower prism, of preventively downgrading enemy capabilities and preempting enemy threats.

In short, Israel intends to bugger on and maintain its upper hand. Israelis understand the long-term ideological and civilizational nature of the battles ahead. They gird themselves for these battles with the superpower mindset described here, intending to be a proactive regional power – the only true Western ally – reshaping the Middle East for the better.

To old-guard denizens of traditional, feeble diplomacy, whose antipathy toward Israel stinks to the high heavens, I say: too bad. Get used to a revamped Mideast strategic situation anchored by a very strong Israel.

Published in The Jerusalem Post, 18.07.2025.