Future Borders between Israel and the Palestinian Authority
Principles, Scenarios and Recommendations

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Introduction

The research team working at the Shasha Center for Strategic Studies in 2009-2010 concluded its salient points of discussion in summer 2010 shortly before the Washington Summit in September of that year. Hosted by President Barak Obama and attended by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas, the summit set out to revive the flagging peace process. As has become customary, the question of borders - the subject of this paper - was at the top of the agenda. It was immediately clear, for the reasons outlined below, that both parties have a long road ahead before a sustainable peace agreement can be reached:

1. Arriving at an agreement on borders does not signal the end of the peacemaking process. The saying, "nothing is agreed-upon until everything is agreed-upon" is particularly apposite here

2. Even assuming that a comprehensive agreement is reached between Israel and the Palestinians on all aspects of the conflict, it is clear that the impetus for its implementation will depend on the goodwill of both parties and on the existence of conducive conditions on both sides

3. Implementation will span a number of years during which delays in the timetable are likely; external circumstances such as an outbreak of hostilities, international crises etc are bound to cause some disruption to the process

4. During the implementation period, changes of regime are likely on one or both sides. Even if the regimes are bound to uphold the legally delineated agreement, internal and / or external changes might lead one or both sides to re-examine the details. It is also possible that during the implementation period, changes will take place in the leadership of the states or entities involved in the agreement, e.g., the US, the Quartet, or NATO.

In view of these observations it is vitally important that our analysis be accessible to interested parties. This comprehensive study strives to

make the issues and options clear and to elucidate the scenarios that could arise at each juncture if certain choices are made, especially in light of the complex web of players and interests involved.

Goal of the Study

Our goal is to examine the future borders between Israel and the Palestinian Authority through development of several scenarios. The questions asked in this context are many and varied. Will there in fact be a border between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, or will it ultimately disappear? If there is a border, what will its nature be? Will it be drawn in order to maintain open commercial and cultural relations, or drawn unilaterally, leaving areas of the conflict unresolved? If the border disappears, what will the nature of the political entities in the region be? Will Israel as a Jewish and democratic state continue to exist? What main processes and players will shape the course of the border and its nature?

The border, as it arises in these questions, is not necessarily perceived as a static line in space legally dividing two political entities; it also reflects a dynamic relationship between the neighbouring countries on both sides. Much contemporary research is devoted to the process of constructing the route of the border. Particularly interesting is the transformation of borderlines from the geopolitical standpoint which emphasises the need for security to an economic standpoint emphasising the creation of a global, cross-border system (Newman, 2003).

In contrast to other studies that focus on the physical course of the line, this study inquires into the processes that may shape the border outline. It seeks to elucidate the kinds of relationship that may develop across the borders by taking into consideration uncertainties, risks and opportunities that may arise in the long run. It takes into account issues such as geopolitics, economics, international law, politics, the environment, settlement etc. It aims to foster an awareness of the complexity of the subject, to identify elements that could shape the course of the border between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and

its nature, and to put forward proposals and recommendations.

The scenarios presented reveal what might happen in the future. In contrast to political thinking, which focuses on the most desirable route of the border, the scenario approach presents various possibilities meant to point out benefits as well as risks. It is important to move beyond existing habits of thought and to envisage the unexpected and apparently impossible. Our scenarios are aimed at the future, focusing on the basic question, "What happens if…?"

The three main questions raised are:
1. What are the possible routes of the border and their nature?
2. What processes currently shape and might in future shape the border's route and its nature?
3. What can or should be done in light of the development of one of these border routes?

Border Discourse – between Ideology and Utopia

The issue of the borders between Israel and the Palestinian Authority lies at the heart of public and research discourse. What has been said and written on the subject can be divided into two main categories:

1. **Future patterns** without relating in depth to the processes behind the pattern that are bound to prevent or disrupt its realisation. Examples are the Geneva Initiative on permanent borders, agreed-upon and established on the principle of two states for two peoples (Geneva Initiative, 2009); proactive unilateral withdrawal and deployment of a separation barrier that is settlement-based and demographic in nature (Saguy and Sher, 2002; Shiftan, 1999); international intervention and establishment of a satellite state in Palestine (Indyk, 2003); agreed-upon exchange of territories between Israel, Egypt, and the Palestinian Authority (Ben-Arieh, 2005); or establishment of a Jordanian-Palestinian federation (Eiland, 2010).

2. **Existing processes** without relating in depth to border patterns that might arise in their wake and their implications. Examples are research and analysis that claim that the processes taking place today will not lead to an agreed-upon border solution (Inbar, July 1, 2007; Yaalon, September 2, 2008; Inbar, 2009). While these studies explain the processes preventing the reaching of an agreed-upon border solution, they do not elucidate the outline of an alternative border, nor its political, social, or diplomatic implications. Thus, for example, it is not clear where the present process of moving away from a final-status agreement is leading. What kind of borders emerge from such a process and what are the implications for Israel and for the nature of a Jewish and democratic state?

Theoretical reflections

Those who focus on patterns outline the desired route of the border but do not explain how to arrive at it. Those who focus on processes, on the other hand, are out to derail what they view as undesirable borders. What the two have in common is the focus on an ideal: one utopian (creating a new paradigm), the other ideological (maintaining the status quo by refraining from intervening in present processes).

The exception in this respect is analysis by researchers such as Meron Benvenisti and Yehuda Shenhav, who focus on current processes and criticise the tendency to strive towards solutions that have no grounding in reality, and who demonstrate how current processes lead to the obsolescence of the two-state model (Benvenisti, October 22, 2010; Shenhav, 2010). What is missing in their analysis is the conjunction between reality and ideal. Ultimately, the drift towards a binational state is something that the majority on both sides opposes. Moreover, international experience, as seen recently in Bosnia and Herzegovina, teaches us that this is a proven recipe for intensifying the conflict, as it encourages separatism and corruption, often leading to secession accompanied by a bloody civil war.

What is missing in the academic and political disciplines is discourse that relates to the process and the pattern as one. In such a discourse we need to address three questions: What are the possible patterns? What are the possible processes in light of prevailing power relations? And given these processes and patterns, what needs to be done to advance the desired processes and prevent those that are undesirable? The salient questions rarely asked are: what processes will enable what patterns (of a border), and what do we need to do about them?

Studies of this type are few. Three of four scenarios developed on the eve of the pullout from Gaza cautioned that a unilateral exit was bound to strengthen the extreme elements, dismantle the Palestinian Authority, and lead to calls for the involvement of international forces (Hasson, 2005: 16-26). Similarly, Rami Nasrallah examined a number of scenarios that could occur in the Palestinian Authority in the wake of the pullout (Nasrallah, 2007), one of which showed a tangible danger of breakdown of the Palestinian Authority or, at the very least, of its being split apart. Another scenario suggested that in the wake of a rift between Hamas and Fatah, progress towards a diplomatic arrangement would be impossible and that international intervention was likely, leading ultimately to the transformation of the Palestinian Authority into a satellite state.

Possible Routes of the Border: Scenario Tree

In order to make sense of the range of possible routes of a future border, a scenario tree was developed that examined various possibilities while grappling with "What if?" questions (see Fig. 1). The first question is: "Can an implementable agreement be reached regarding permanent borders?" The answer to this question creates the initial branching on the scenario tree. "Yes, there will be an agreement; or no, there will not be an agreement".

If no agreement is signed, the question becomes: "Will borders be determined without an agreement, i.e., unilaterally?" If the answer to this question is negative, then the question arises: "In an Israel that

rules over this space, will democracy cease?" A negative answer, i.e., Israel will remain a democracy, means that the border will disappear, i.e., in the wake of not signing an agreement between the two sides, not unilaterally determining a border, and not rescinding democracy, the border will disappear, and three follow-up scenarios are likely: Scenario 1: no border and a binational state emerges in one form or another, i.e., a state of all its citizens or all its national groups. Scenario 2: no border, an ongoing conflict, and the possibility of international intervention alongside the establishment of a Palestinian satellite state. Scenario 3: the border disappears and with it the Palestinian Authority.

Fig. 1: **Scenario Tree: Map of Possible Border Patterns**
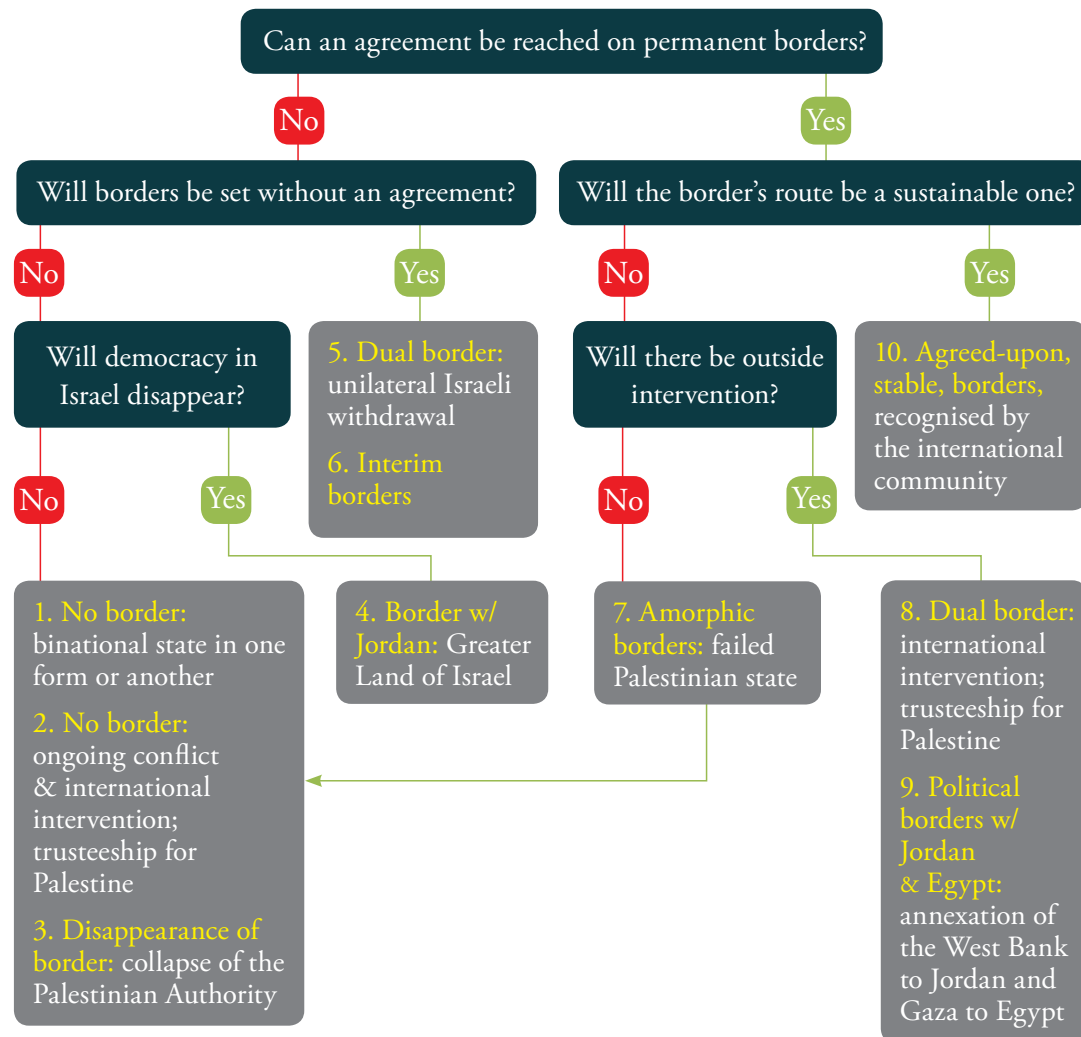
If no agreement is signed, no border will be set unilaterally, and the democratic regime will disintegrate; a Jewish state will emerge that rules over the entire territory, based on a non-democratic regime. This is Scenario 4 of a Jewish state in the Greater Land of Israel that is not established on democratic principles. If an agreement is not signed, yet borders are drawn unilaterally, Scenario 5 will emerge of a dual border, or Scenario 6 of interim borders. The dual border scenario could emerge in the wake of Israeli unilateral disengagement and withdrawal behind a separation barrier while guarding the large settlement blocs and leaving security forces along the Jordan Rift. Israel would thus have a security border along the Jordan and a political border along the barrier. The interim border scenario could emerge in the wake of an agreement between both sides, or in the wake of a unilateral Palestinian declaration of independence inside temporary borders.

On the assumption that an agreement can be reached on permanent borders, the question to ask is: "Will such an agreement be sustainable?" The response to this question establishes that under circumstances of ongoing and complex conflict, signing a peace agreement is not enough; its implementation is not a foregone conclusion and is dependent upon the willingness and persistence of the signatories to realise it in actual fact. So, for example, if an agreement is not accompanied by economic and social benefits grounded in the political stability and legitimacy of the decision-makers on both sides, it is bound to collapse. A study conducted by Stephen Stedman shows that most agreements signed between sides in an ethnic conflict do indeed collapse within five years of their signing (Stedman, 2001).

It emerges that the more complex and difficult the environment of an agreement's implementation, and the less willing other countries are to support it, the greater the chances are of it collapsing. If an agreement is signed and it transpires that it is not sustainable, the question is: "Will there be outside intervention for the purpose of restoring the agreement?" If not, Scenario 7 is likely whereby amorphic borders would surround a failed Palestinian state. In this case Israel would have to decide what to do. Retaking the West Bank and Gaza to ensure Israel's security would probably lead to a return of the binational state scenario, i.e., Scenarios 1, 2, and 3 on the scenario tree. If the superpowers

decided to intervene in order to restore and administer the Palestinian state, it is likely that a satellite state would emerge between a security border along the Jordan Rift and a political border along the previously agreed-upon route, i.e., Scenario 8. With mediation there would be a Palestinian satellite state administered by international forces. Scenario 8 is similar to Scenario 5 of the dual border that emerges in the wake of a unilateral Israeli pullout in the event there is no agreement, yet differs in the sequence of events and the nature of the Palestinian entity that emerges between the two border types. It is also likely that with Israeli agreement, Egypt and Jordan would intervene and annex Gaza and the West Bank respectively, leading to Scenario 9, where future borders with those neighbours are determined. If an agreement is signed and proves sustainable, we may be able to move to a situation of agreed-upon and recognised borders, or Scenario 10.

From this theoretical mapping of possible border patterns, a few insights emerge:

1. Various options are open to Israel and the Palestinian Authority: erasure of the border, interim borders, a dual border, and agreed-upon borders
2. Continuation of the status quo will lead to the emergence of a binational state or ongoing conflict with the possibility of the collapse of the Palestinian Authority
3. There is no certainty that signing an agreement will lead to agreed-upon, stable and secure borders. Even if all essential conditions for reaching an agreement are met, it is not certain that such an agreement would be sustainable. Under certain conditions it is bound to collapse, and a return to the pre-agreement situation is likely. This means that many of the scenarios are possible whether or not an agreement is signed, precisely because of the difficulty in reaching an agreement or in upholding one. This finding is particularly important in light of the hope among large segments of the Israeli public that an agreement would resolve the conflict and bring it to an historic close
4. The scenario tree shows how complex the factors and processes are that shape them and how great the uncertainty of each. It emerges that signing an agreement is not sufficient, as deterioration and a return to the old status quo are likely. Any agreement needs to be

backed up by economic and political benefits to the Palestinians which will in turn weaken radical elements.

The scenario tree highlights a number of critical variables that shape the border's route and nature: policy and governability, nature of the regime, demographics, intervention of various players, geography and sovereignty. While the scenario tree can open our eyes to the range of possible border routes, it cannot tell us much about the various players, processes and factors likely to shape these routes. In this regard, understanding the methodology behind the scenarios is useful.

The Scenario Methodology

The objective of the scenarios is to illuminate the main processes shaping the border and its nature. The main questions in developing a scenario are:

1. What is the mechanism that shapes the border route today?
2. What uncertainties typify this mechanism?
3. How can changes in variables characterised by uncertainty alter the nature of the mechanism and lead to new scenarios?

Dealing with the past can help us discover processes responsible for our present situation. The uncertainty aspect can lead to our discovering new mechanisms that might produce different border routes to those that currently exist. Developing scenarios relating to a border route between Israel and the Palestinian Authority involves several steps:

1. Creating a Mind Landscape Map that describes the complex network of players and the constraints acting upon them (see Fig. 2)
2. Examining the influence of the various elements
3. Mapping the elements by their degree of influence (active) and their degree of being influenced (passive) (see Fig. 3)
4. Identifying the critical factors, i.e., the forces driving the system, and drawing a distinction between certain driving forces, which appear in all scenarios, and uncertain driving forces which lead to different scenarios. Driving forces are those that both influence and are most influenced in the network (see Table 1). Alongside these

are active elements, which strongly influence, yet are themselves less influenced. The passive elements are mainly influenced, yet do not themselves influence

5. Creating a base-line scenario that shows the mechanism that lies at the root of the present situation. This scenario is vital to revealing the existing processes, the elements at their core and the connections between them. Along the way we can also identify uncertain elements that are able to shift the system from its present situation and take it to another level, i.e., another scenario

6. Identifying alternative mechanisms to the present ones that describe various border routes that might or might not be desirable. Identifying alternative mechanisms can be achieved using various tools: hypotheses, theories, trying to answer the question "What if…?", and by looking at various data and interpreting behaviour in light of different hypotheses and theories

7. Detailed development of the various scenarios

8. Estimating the likelihood of each scenario's realisation by testing the vital conditions for it to materialise

9. Gathering insights from the test in no. 8

10.   Presenting conclusions and recommendations.

The Mind Landscape Map (Fig. 2) highlights the many players and elements involved in drawing the borders between Israel and the Palestinian Authority; the main ones are classified in a number of circles. In the inner circle you find the decision-makers on the Israeli and Palestinian sides; in the second circle you find neighbouring countries with either moderate or radical orientations; and in the outer circle you find the international presence. Alongside these players are other non-political players such as terror organisations on the one hand, and Israeli and Palestinian NGOs on the other, some of which support the peace process, and others which do not. The various players act in a complex environment and are influenced by ideological and geopolitical outlooks; economic, social, and cultural developments; international law; psychological outlook and environmental considerations.

It emerges from the Mind Landscape Map that a border's route and its nature cannot be discussed separately from the various players and expected processes. While the state is an important player, it is not

the only one. In the past, the state played a central role, as proven in the signing of the Oslo Accords and the Gaza pullout. The situation is different today. On the Israeli side, the weakness and rifts within the political centre are considerable; in the Palestinian Authority, the rift between Fatah and Hamas does not appear bridgeable. The weaker the state is, the stronger the other elements will become in shaping the borders. Thus, for example, we can assume that internal schisms in the state, conflict-ridden relations between states in the region, and competition between the superpowers will exacerbate tensions and reduce the chances of reaching an agreed-upon border. On the other hand, a situation of internal consensus, consolidation of
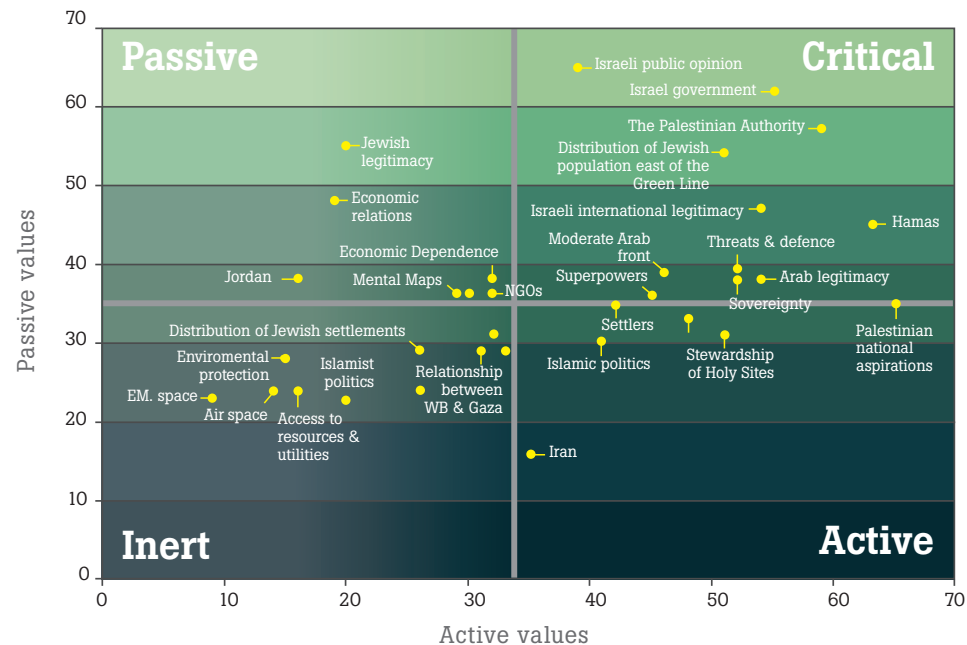
Fig. 2: **Mind Landscape Map**
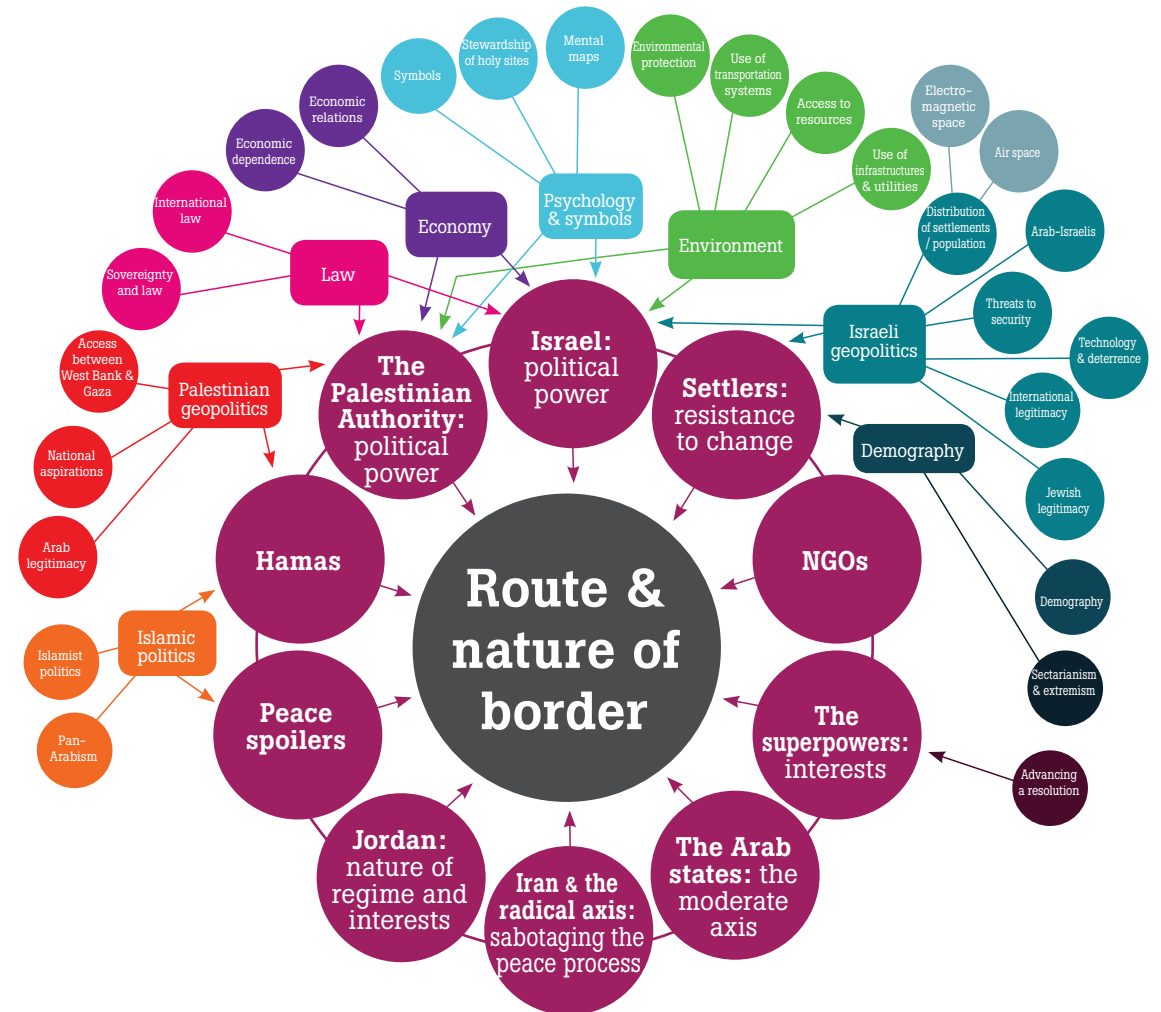
a regional moderate front, and the support of the superpowers based on cooperation, should serve to moderate the tension and motivate the sides towards an agreement on permanent borders. Evaluating the influence of the various elements is achieved by assigning them values between 0 (weak influence) and 3 (strong influence). Based on this ranking, an influence matrix was built wherein each element was ultimately awarded two values: one that represented the total of its influence on the others (degree of activity); and the other representing the degree of its being influenced by the others (degree of passivity). The axis diagram (Fig. 3) shows the degree of influence (activity) of each element and the degree to which that element is influenced by the others (passivity).

The diagram is divided into quadrants by a median of activity and a median of passivity. The upper right-hand quadrant contains the critical variables, which are the forces driving the system. These variables are the most influential and the most influenced. The lower right-hand quadrant contains the active variables. These are the forces that are influential, yet are less influenced. The upper left-hand quadrant contains the elements that are most influenced by the others, yet are themselves less influential. These are the passive elements that actually constitute results of the other elements. In the lower left-hand quadrant are the elements whose activity and passivity are low and which are less important in shaping the borders at present. Fig. 3 clearly shows the six most prominent elements (those that most influence and are most influenced), which are located in the upper right-hand quadrant and categorised as critical: the Israeli government, the Palestinian Authority, Hamas, Israeli public opinion, the distribution of Jewish population east of the Green Line, and Israel's international legitimacy. These elements are characterised by a high degree of uncertainty; it is they that drive the system. There are those who claim that settlement beyond the Green Line is irrevocable and immutable. We think differently. It has already been proven that communities can be evacuated, as was the case in Gaza.

As for the political positions of the decision-makers, these too are characterised by a high degree of uncertainty. In the years since the signing of the Oslo Accords, every Israeli administration has taken its own political measures in the diplomatic process with the Palestinians. In many cases these measures differed from their predecessors'; to a much lesser degree the Palestinian Authority followed suit. In contrast to

Fig. 3: **Axis Diagram**

Table 1: **Critical and Active Factors**

Critical factors:	Active factors:
• The Israeli government	• Palestinian national aspirations
• The Palestinian Authority	• International law
• Hamas	• Stewardship of holy sites
• Israeli public opinion	• Settlers
• Distribution of the Jewish settlements east of the Green Line	• Islamic politics
• International legitimacy for Israel	• Iran
• Arab legitimacy*	
• Moderate Arab axis*	
• Threats and Israeli security*	
• Superpowers*	
• Sovereignty and law*	

* low degree of passivity, and therefore on the borderline between "critical" and "active"

prevailing opinion, Hamas is multi-faceted and able to change. Israel's international legitimacy has not only been conspicuously impacted by the development of the conflict with the Palestinian Authority, but is now being questioned.

Alongside the critical elements which drive the system are other forces that mainly influence and are less influenced. These are the active elements in the lower right-hand quadrant, whose activity must be taken into account. Among the variables in this zone are Iran, international law, and Islamic politics. Table 1 shows a list of critical elements that are the forces that drive the system (the most influential and influenced elements), as well as the active elements, which are mainly those that influence, yet are less influenced.

Based on the critical elements identified and the uncertainty that characterises them, we can build the Scenario Table (Table 2).

The critical elements are shown in Table 2 as driving forces (left-hand column). These are variables that are characterised by uncertainty and can change over a wide range, i.e., from a situation perceived as positive to one perceived as negative. The range of changeability is shown in the following columns, and the active elements identified are accounted for as factors that influence the driving forces (right-hand column). Table 2 demonstrates that the uncertainty applying to the driving forces gives rise to various couplings that could result in a range of possible scenarios.

Table 2: **Scenario Table: Four Scenarios Among Many**

Driving forces	(+)	(–,+)	(–)	Influencing factors
Israeli government	Agreed upon borders / Interim borders / High, proactive governability	Dual border: political & security / Low, fluctuating governability	No borders / Low, fixed governability	Threats & security, Superpowers, Arab–Israelis, Stewardship of holy sites
The Palestinian Authority	High, proactive governability	Low, fluctuating governability	Low, fixed governability	Moderate Arab axis, Palestinian national aspirations
Hamas	Moderate, pragmatic regime	Divided regime	Extreme, militant regime	Islamic politics, Iran
Israeli public opinion	Supports change	In a state of dissonance	Fixed in the status quo	Superpowers, settlers, stewardship of holy sites
Distribution of Jewish settlements over the Green Line	Changeable	Partially changeable	Not changeable	Sovereignty & international law, threats & Israeli security
International legitimacy for Israel	High	Ambivalent	Low	Sovereignty & international law

The Scenarios

In building the scenarios our aim was not to exhaust the gamut of all possible scenarios, but rather to direct our attention to the various driving forces that could give rise to a variety of border routes between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The heart of any scenario is the mechanism, i.e., the driving forces and processes leading to a particular route. The same driving forces appear in every scenario — i.e., governments, public opinion, peace spoilers, distribution of population, a moderate and a radical front, superpowers — yet the driving forces behave differently in each scenario because of the uncertainty applying to the driving forces. In other words the same building blocks are used in each scenario, but each time they behave differently and yield different border routes. Four scenarios are presented below relating to the border's route and the processes leading up to it. These scenarios present two extreme possibilities (no border/agreed-upon borders) and two interim possibilities (interim borders and dual border) that appear in the scenario tree in Fig. 1.

First the summary of each scenario is presented while focusing on elements and mechanisms that form the scenario. Afterwards, a more detailed scenario is portrayed that takes into account the geopolitical pattern formed in the scenario. In the appendix, detailed scenarios are presented that relate to the processes and patterns characterising the scenario. Readers interested in examining the development of each scenario in detail are welcome to look at the passage in the appendix that relates to this question.

The four scenarios are presented below:

1. **No borders:**
   1.1 No borders: Path to a binational state
   1.2 No borders: No resolution
2. **Interim borders: Palestinian state within interim borders**
3. **Dual border: Unilateral Israeli pullout or Palestine as a satellite state**
4. **Agreed-upon international borders: Two states for two peoples**

No Borders Scenario: Path to a binational state

Summary

The mechanism driving this scenario is derived from the historical development that has typified relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority up until now. This development, characterised by deadlock and playing for time, features an inner circle where the main players are the two sides, and an outer circle where many other players act. The two circles — the inner and the outer — are linked thus:

1. Developments in the inner circle are characterised by political deadlock due to a lack of desire to take risks on the part of governments; doublespeak on the diplomatic front; and cognitive dissonance in public opinion, i.e. the public supports two states, yet does not believe that the other side is an honest broker.

2. Development in the outer circle is characterised by regional deadlock due to the renewal of the struggle between the US and Russia while focusing on the Middle East. In this struggle, alliances are formed led by both superpowers. The interests of Russia, Iran, and Syria are served by a strife-ridden Middle East, which enables them to entrench their influence. For this reason, generous aid was given to the peace spoilers such as Hezbollah and Hamas, which act as extensions of Iran, as in the case of Hezbollah; or those enjoying Iranian and Syrian support, as in the case of Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, and smaller Palestinian organisations.

   The US's interest is to create a Middle East "groomed for" American peace, and of course for US influence. Towards this end, the US supports the moderate Arab front, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority. In the evolving struggle, the US demonstrates a high-profile desire to keep from reaching the point of violent confrontation, and this approach is particularly prominent vis-à-vis the coalescence of the main peace spoilers in the radical axis in the region.

3. Both these developments - the inner and the outer - feed upon each other, the geopolitical result of which is dynamic deadlock.

The behaviour of the forces and the nature of their activity do not change, yet at the same time, everything changes: the border becomes more and more blurred. Jews and Arabs share the same space as they settle, work and use its services and products, without consideration for the borders. The result is the formation of a de facto binational space, gradual disappearance of the border from the collective consciousness and from politics, and a gradual drift towards a binational state. This is a gentle process of adaptation to the absence of borders, and even to their blurring in the geographic and the social sense.

This scenario describes a gradual transition from a Jewish nation-state to one caught in civil and political chaos in the worst case, and de facto binationalism in the best case. The transition might be in phases. In Phase 1, a binational space might be created within a mutual adaptation process; and in Phase 2, a binational state might be formed based on Israeli coercion and the denial of Palestinian rights – a situation which is not consistent with the principles upon which Israel was established. Such a scenario of minority rule and ethno-political discrimination is bound to lead to tension and conflict.

Another possibility is an agreement between the sides regarding the existence of a binational state. Such a state would be comprised of two autonomies linked in a federative structure, as proposed by a minority in the 1947 Special UN Committee for Palestine. In such an entity, the Jewish component of the state would shrink and the balance of power between the sides would of course change. In a situation of a demographic majority, the Palestinians would demand that they not share rule with the Jews, that the Law of Return be rescinded and in its place the right of Palestinian return be established and would introduce legislation to alter the state's identity and destiny.

A binational state might actually be Jewish, yet not democratic, or vice versa. This entails a drawn-out process that might continue for decades, and contains within it a mechanism for self-destruction. From the moment that an Arab majority emerges on a borderless piece of land, the appeal of a binational state decreases for both sides: The Arabs would not want to forfeit their right to ethno-political sovereignty when the demographic balance is in their favour; nor would Israel be willing to forfeit her ethno-political sovereignty and identity as a Jewish state. This situation represents a violation of the principles that underpinned Israel's establishment.

In this scenario diplomatic decisions would not be forthcoming because both governments would be focused on loss avoidance. Such a policy is manifested in willingness to negotiate in order to reap short term profit, ease pressure and calm the situation. Yet there is no willingness to conclude the negotiations while taking risks. The result is deadlock. Public opinion in Israel and the Palestinian Authority is characterised by cognitive dissonance. On the one hand, the majority on both sides supports a resolution (including agreed-upon borders) within which two states emerge that coexist peacefully. On the other hand, the majorities of both peoples do not believe that the other side is honest and doubts the other's ability to uphold an agreement. The result is an absence of pressure by the public on their governments to negotiate. In addition, each side contains elements that want to sabotage progress towards a final arrangement. Internal political and social resistance is exacerbated by relations between countries in the region. Regional tension between countries belonging to the moderate front and those belonging to the more extreme camp creates an atmosphere of insecurity, in turn strengthening elements which believe a continuation of the conflict is inevitable.

The superpowers, primarily the US, Russia, and the European Union, contribute to the exacerbation of opposition by renewing regional struggle, engaging in diplomatic doublespeak, and by their inability to compel the sides into an agreement. On the one hand, they emphasise the need for a solution, while on the other they support alliances that guarantee their own strategic and economic interests in the region. The result is sabotage of any attempt to change the status quo. The

continuation of the status quo leads gradually to a blurring of the border between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. The need on the Palestinian side for people to earn livelihoods and to enjoy decent services causes many to cross the border. Coordination between the security forces, improved standards of living, and basic law and order in the Palestinian Authority makes contact between residents of the West Bank and Israel easier and less dangerous.

The change is noticeable in Jerusalem. The Palestinian population gradually moves from the eastern parts of the city westward, initially to areas close to them, such as Pisgat Zeev, Neve Yaakov and French Hill, but increasingly towards the city centre too, as affluent Palestinian families buy in Baka'a, Talbieh, and Katamon. The residential integration is accompanied by economic integration and potentially by political integration too. A Palestinian list runs in municipal elections and gains a power base in the running of city affairs. Alongside the national conflict, a secondary, cross-national conflict brews between fundamental religious elements on both sides, and a moderate secular camp on both sides that wishes to maintain a liberal, Western lifestyle. The result is cross-national alliances between those with a liberal worldview that contributes to the blurring of the national border (for a detailed description of this scenario, see Scenario 1.1 in the appendix).

No Borders Scenario: No resolution

Summary

The mechanism driving this scenario is failure at attempts to get the two sides to the negotiating table and to reach an agreement. It could materialise soon if the present US attempt to broker an agreement fails. The reasons for such a failure are similar to those driving the previous scenario: Path to a binational state.

1. In the inner circle, both governments fear taking risks. The diplomatic language continues to be doublespeak: we talk about an agreement, while in fact both sides act in the opposite direction. The public goes back and forth, spinning its wheels: it wants peace, yet doesn't believe that it is possible.

2. In the outer circle, radical states and their agents act to torpedo the process using terror. On the Israeli side, organisations operate that oppose an agreement and seek to sabotage it in any way possible.

3. What makes this scenario different to the previous one is the growing frustration in the Palestinian public in light of the inability of the international community led by the US to advance an agreement. This frustration is bound to feed extreme elements and to lead to the collapse of the present Palestinian regime, with radical elements rising to power.

4. Local deterioration is bound to spread region-wide, particularly due to the demonstrable failure of the Americans in the Palestinian-Israeli arena as well as in the wider regional arena.

The result is liable to be a drawn-out conflict without any resolution on the matter of borders. For security reasons, Israel will regularly demand to pass through Palestinian Authority territory in order to thwart any terror activity. In an effort to calm the conflict and stabilise the arena, pressure will be applied to Israel to moderate such activity and to agree to station international forces in the Palestinian Authority's territory, to which the Palestinian Authority will agree, thereby limiting Israel's

ability to act. This in turn is bound to be exploited by extreme groups as a chance to regroup and strengthen their forces. Another possibility is that the international force will act with efficacy and will be exploited by the Palestinian Authority to develop an efficacious government and evolve from a Palestinian entity into a state in every respect.

In this scenario, the failure of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority causes one or both governments to collapse. The Palestinian Authority's collapse is bound to be more dramatic and will signal the advent of its demise as a political entity. Hamas will ride the wave of this failure and become more powerful, claiming that these developments prove the validity of its basic policy. Radical-extremist forces will enter the vacuum formed by the Palestinian Authority's collapse, gaining overt support from Iran and Syria, and covert support from Russia.

Israel will be vulnerable to terror and escalating threats from enemy elements in the region. In order to cope with these challenges it will be compelled to draft reserve soldiers for daily security missions. These developments will burden the economy, impair standards of living and levels of employment, harm Israel's international trade and compromise its standing in terms of international investment and foreign currency. Israel will undergo a political crisis. The opposition will criticise the government for its negligence, internal factionalism will emerge and the public will have a crisis of faith in its leadership.

Criticism of Israel's policies will intensify in light of expected developments in the external arena, leading to erosion of its legitimacy and not only that of its policies. While the US will continue to play a major role in the region in order to maintain its stature, behind the scenes it will wag a scolding finger at Israel for not displaying generosity towards the Palestinians or considering the US's strategic needs in the region. American criticism will encourage other Western countries to intensify their criticism of Israel, and Israel's stature in the international

arena will suffer. Against this background, the demands of the US and the international community will increase, manifesting itself in pressure on Israel on concrete issues such as territorial concessions or the stationing of international forces. If the latter are deployed in the Palestinian Authority, Israel will lose its freedom of activity and its ability to respond to terror originating in the West Bank will be impaired. From behind an international shield, radical organisations will gain in power, amass weapons and prepare themselves for the next phase of the conflict (for a detailed description of this scenario, see Scenario 1.2 in the appendix).

Another development in this scenario could stem from activity on the part of an international power. In the wake of international forces' being deployed, a border might emerge, even if not agreed-upon, inside which an autonomous entity could develop; if that entity is supported by the international community it could even become independent. Such an entity would win broad recognition, which not only would restrict Israel's ability to act against it, but would compel it to accept the new status quo, either de facto or de jure.

Interim Borders: Palestinian state within interim borders

Summary

The driving mechanism behind this scenario is a matter-of-fact political approach that strives towards improvement in the status quo without ignoring the difficulties and barriers on the path. This approach is manifested in both the inner circle of relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and the outer circle of the US position regarding the conflict.

1. In the inner circle, the leadership on both sides reaches the conclusion that under the present conditions, it is impossible to progress towards a final resolution, and that a continuation of the status quo harms both sides. Israel and the Palestinian Authority both recognise that given present conditions, the only possible and desirable arrangement is a partial, interim one. This situation is preferable to a drawn-out situation of no solution. The public on both sides even displays a high degree of sobriety that moves away from the ideals of either Peace Now or a Greater Land of Israel. This public support enables the leadership to progress towards interim arrangements.

2. In the outer circle, the US displays creativity and original thought while understanding that in the present situation there is a need to find a balance between a no solution situation and a utopia that is unattainable. The US recognises that neither side is ripe for a final arrangement, that a solution cannot be imposed from without, and that without any progress, the conflict could deteriorate and adversely affect its stature in the region.

3. There is a balance between the thought inside the inner circle and that in the outer circle. The core of this balance is the need for an interim arrangement over the course of which balance and cooperation will grow, shaping a supportive public opinion and neutralising opposition, all for the purpose of progressing from an interim agreement to a permanent arrangement.

The result is agreement on interim borders that grant the Palestinian Authority territorial contiguity and the ability to develop and grow economically. The main advantage of this would be to change the mindset on both sides which would in turn make it possible to proceed from an interim agreement to a permanent resolution.

This scenario presents a Palestinian state within interim borders with full political status and full sovereignty in the parts under its control, without solving the issues of borders and Jerusalem. Both sides reach an agreement regarding cessation of hostilities, interim borders, and vital security and civilian arrangements. This emerges when both governments recognise the impossibility of reaching a permanent arrangement. Several elements prevent progress towards an end to the conflict: (1) Difficulty on the parts of both governments to reach agreement on critical matters such as the final border route, Jerusalem, security arrangements, and refugees; (2) the continued split between the West Bank and Gaza due to the conflict between Fatah and Hamas; (3) public opposition to agreements on sensitive matters such as Jerusalem and the refugees; (4) Israel's difficulty in evacuating the settlers, who are supported by powerful partners in the coalition. Given these conditions, progress in the form of an interim agreement that gives hope to both sides, enables flexible contact, neutralises criticism without dashing the dreams of opponents of an agreement, and creates a basis for progress to the next phase (permanent arrangement), becomes crucial.

In these circumstances both sides recognise the need to reach some agreement that contributes to progress towards a permanent arrangement. Such agreements are intended to encourage internal debate and national consensus on each side, foster coexistence between the sides, reduce violence and improve the Palestinians' economic and institutional situation. Moderate states in the region, as well as the superpowers, understand that given the present situation, this is the best that can be achieved. Advancing towards a permanent arrangement as long as the Palestinian Authority's internal disputes are unresolved

would make no sense. There is a general understanding that insistence on involving Hamas in the negotiations will lead to another delay in reaching an agreement and cause deterioration in the overall situation.

A Palestinian state within interim borders will upgrade the Palestinian Authority's status by transforming it into an independent state. This process will strengthen Fatah's status vis-à-vis Hamas, but will not enable the Palestinian Authority to achieve its aspirations for borders that resemble those of June 4, 1967. The greatest advantage of this development is to create a sovereign Palestinian state able to negotiate with Israel on future borders. Such an arrangement obligates the Palestinians to uphold and enforce the cessation of hostilities and grants Israel security arrangements for an extended period. During this time both sides can present achievements to their publics: quiet on both sides of the border, decent living conditions and economic prosperity. This will enable public opinion on both sides to adapt to life under peace, which is crucial to creating a supportive mindset towards a permanent resolution (for a detailed description of this scenario, see Scenario 2 in the appendix).

Dual Border: Unilateral Israeli pullout or Palestine as a satellite state

Summary

This scenario has a threefold mechanism driving it:

1. Political asymmetry: Israel's government is strong and interested in advancing towards an agreement. The Palestinian Authority displays weakness in decision-making. Due to threats and criticism from within, it refuses to advance towards an agreement, makes claims that Israel cannot accept, and reneges on commitments it took upon itself. Israel, which is driven by security and demographic considerations, seeks borders that ensure demographic homogeneity and strategic advantage. Under these circumstances, it refuses to grant the Palestinian Authority veto power over its nature as a Jewish state. In contrast to the approach which states that in the absence of agreement, Israel remains in the territories, in this situation Israel is willing to leave the territories with assurance of strategic advantage that it needs for its defence. Israeli public opinion supports government policy, mainly because of a sense of the growing demographic threat. This support enables the government to evacuate small settlements outside the large settlement blocs.

2. Radical states in the region and their agents act to sabotage any agreement whatsoever, including an interim one between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Their activity weakens the Palestinian Authority, which makes decisions mainly in response to these threats.

3. The superpowers, which could act to thwart activities on the part of radical elements and advance towards an interim agreement, remain passive due to lack of interest in the conflict. The US displays weakness in dealing with the radical axis, and offers no new solutions. It supports the Israeli initiative of withdrawal from political borders while maintaining security borders. This initiative is familiar to the US from its activity in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

The result is a unilateral Israeli initiative leading to the creation of a dual border system: a security border along the Jordan and the Jordan Rift, and a political border along the separation barrier. In the zone between the two there will be contiguous Palestinian territory from which the small settlements have been evacuated. The evacuation reflects an effort to achieve demographic homogeneity inside Israel and to reduce to a minimum its involvement in Palestinian Authority territory, which could undergo changes, from sliding into anarchy, to stabilisation by the Palestinian government, to international intervention for the purpose of developing and stabilising the Palestinian Authority.

In this scenario, Israel has a dual system of borders: a security border on the Jordan and along the Jordan Rift of varying width, and a political border that follows the separation barrier, outside which lies Palestinian territory that could constitute a state in the making, or a satellite state with an international mandate. In this scenario, the Israeli government is strong and can reach an agreement, while the Palestinian government is weak and resorts to making impossible demands. In addition, the Palestinian system is split, with Hamas in Gaza challenging the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. Israel, in consultation with the US, proposes a pullout from the West Bank, excepting large settlement blocs (in exchange for which it is willing to carry out territorial exchanges). Israel's willingness to implement these changes and the Palestinians' stubbornness wins Israel favourable world opinion.

The decision to leave the West Bank is based on security, demographic and political considerations. Demographically, Israel's continued presence in the West Bank is bound to lead to a binational state, wherein it would lose its character as a state with a Jewish majority rooted in democratic values. This consideration wins the widespread support of the Israeli public. Security-wise, as long as there is no agreement and a threat from the eastern front still exists, Israel cannot forfeit its strategic advantage.

The US does not oppose the dual border approach. The geopolitical developments in the global arena strengthen understanding of Israel's situation. The West, which finds itself more and more threatened by terror, is compelled to act far from its own borders in order to secure them. The main Middle East item on its agenda becomes how to administer failed states that are bound to constitute incubators for terrorism. The possibility of a Palestinian state's becoming such a failed state strengthens support for the dual border scenario. Based on this support, both from within and without, the Israeli government can overcome settler opposition and evacuate settlements that lie outside the large blocs.

A dual border scenario could also arise following the signing of a final agreement by two strong governments, whereupon it emerges that the Palestinian leadership is unable to establish a sustainable state (for reasons such as internal division, external subversion, and economic issues). In such a situation extreme elements that wish to sabotage the agreement become stronger, supported by radical states from the outside. Israel then retakes the West Bank and agrees to withdraw in exchange for international trusteeship over Palestinian territory or Egyptian and Jordanian trusteeship. Israel demands Palestinian demilitarisation and security control along the Jordan Rift. In an agreement with the superpowers, Israel leaves the West Bank and withdraws to political borders while leaving its forces on security borders (for a detailed description of this scenario, see Scenario 3 in the appendix).

Agreed–Upon International Borders: Two states for two peoples

Summary

The mechanism driving this scenario is based on the rise of a strong and decisive leadership on both sides that comes up with creative solutions to complex problems while enjoying international support.

1. On both sides, a strong, decisive leadership arises that sweeps both publics towards a final agreement while resolving core issues and agreeing on the borders between the two.

2. This leadership constructs a new paradigm: Two states for two peoples, wherein a minority enjoying equal rights coexists with the rest.

3. The leadership on both sides succeeds in overcoming internal difficulties. The Palestinian Authority brings about rapprochement between Fatah and Hamas; in Israel, a new coalition is formed that overcomes the obstacles.

4. The ability of the leadership to overcome internal rifts and gaps separating Israel and the Palestinian state wins the admiration and support of both the neighbours and the superpowers, who offer resources to stabilise the agreement both materially and geopolitically, i.e., neutralising the radical states and those opposing peace.

The peace agreement signed is sustainable. It yields economic and political benefits that ensure stable borders. Moderate Arab states take on the commitment to stabilise the agreement, as do the superpowers, which are concerned about the rise to power of radical forces in the region. The signing of an agreement and the existence of a sustainable Palestinian state serves as a springboard to regional peace aided by the Arab League initiative.

In this scenario, the western border of the Palestinian state with Israel follows the separation barrier, alongside territorial exchange at a 1:1 ratio, based on President George W. Bush's letter of April 2004. This route is also the basis for the border with Gaza. A security zone temporarily controlled by the IDF will run alongside the Palestinian state's border with Jordan. At the close of an agreed-upon period (around 5-7 years), an international force will be deployed in the security zone. The Palestinian state is demilitarised and prohibited from entering into any military alliance whatsoever without Israel's agreement. Jerusalem is the capital of both countries, surrounded by a wall rather than divided by one. It will be divided politically according to Clinton's parameters yet physically, economically and socially, it will be one entity, with the Old City and the Holy Basin administered by a joint administrative body. The large settlement blocs will be annexed to Israel as per the Clinton and Bush documents and the small settlements east of the barrier will be evacuated and their inhabitants duly compensated. The large settlements east of the barrier, two thirds of whose residents choose to remain as permanent residents of the Palestinian state, will remain therein. It is agreed on that in principle there will be no return of Palestinian refugees to Israel. At the same time, Israel expresses willingness to take in a symbolic number of Palestinians for humanitarian reasons. Gaza is an integral part of the Palestinian state, with an open border crossing (land-bridge) between it and the West Bank, which is under Israeli sovereignty (for a detailed description of this scenario, see Scenario 4 in the appendix).

Possible Borders according to the Scenarios in International Law

The scenarios present a number of different routes. What is the status of the various arrangements? What does international law say about the various possible arrangements raised in this paper? Any discussion of this matter necessarily requires consideration of the joint positions of both sides:Israel's positions and the Palestinian positions.

Joint positions of both sides

- Since 1993, there has been an agreement between Israel and the Palestinian side that in spite of the ambiguity according to international law of the status of the PLO and the Palestinian Authority, any arrangement reached between the sides has and shall have the status of an international agreement. The rules relating to the wording of international agreements, their being honoured, and their interpretation, apply to any accord between Israel and the Palestinian side.

The Israeli position

- Israel's position in principle is that countries, including entities bearing international legal character such as the PLO, are authorised to reach agreements with each other as long as there is no consequent harm to any third party

- Since there has never been a recognised international border between Israel and a Palestinian state, setting any future border depends upon the results of negotiations between the parties alone

- A country can take upon itself security or other restrictions as long as it does so within an agreement achieved willingly, even if such an agreement is reached as a result of political or economic constraints

- UN General Assembly resolutions have no legal status.

The Palestinian position

- Any agreement must be based on international legitimacy, i.e., no agreement may contradict international law. At the same time, agreements may be reached regarding overall implementations thereof

- An agreement imposed upon any side is not valid

- The rules of international law grant the right of self- determination and the right of return to Palestinian refugees

- The 1949 armistice line (the Green Line) has obtained over the years the status of a permanent border, and as such, it must be honoured

- Some of the UN General Assembly resolutions, including clause 11 of Resolution 194 (relating among others to the matter of Palestinian refugees) have the status of binding decisions.

An Assessment of the Probability of the Different Scenarios

In order to assess the probability of the border routes in the four scenarios, two principal questions need to be addressed:

1. What combination of forces (players and processes) is required in order to realise the geopolitical outlines presented by the scenarios?
2. What is the probability that each of these combinations can be realised?

The first question looks at the assumptions at the basis of each scenario whereas the second examines the likelihood of each such a combination becoming reality.

Agreed-Upon International Borders: Assumptions

- **The Government of Israel:** strong internal governmental support (a genuine desire to reach agreement); highly effective governance (ability to implement the agreement)
- **The Palestinian Authority:** strong internal governmental support (a genuine desire to reach agreement); highly effective governance (ability to implement the agreement)
- **Hamas:** low capability. It is unable to torpedo the agreement, joins the Palestinian Authority in an agreement that recognises the right of the State of Israel to exist and recognises the Oslo Agreement. It abandons its active opposition to both the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority
- **Public opinion:** supportive on both sides
- **The settlers:** the spatial distribution of the settlements and opposition to evacuation. Low opposition; evacuation can be carried out without significant resistance
- **The moderate Arab axis:** prestigious and influential
- **The radical Iranian axis:** weak
- **The superpowers and international legitimacy:** strong support
- **The principal mechanism:** political maturity of the leadership in both Israel and the Palestinian Authority – a leadership that prefers the intrinsic advantages of an agreement over the inherent dangers of a status quo; the capability of both governments to overcome internal opposition. The political strength of the moderate axis

neutralises the radical axis and its proxies. Resolute support on the part of the leading international powers generates economic dividends for the peace process.

Probability of realisation - low

Dual Border - A Political and Security Border: Assumptions

- **The Government of Israel:** strong internal governmental support for withdrawal from the heart of the West Bank, for evacuation of settlements in those areas and for assuring defensible borders
- **The Palestinian Authority:** weak and divided, incapable of being a partner to such a process
- **Hamas:** powerful but unable to torpedo the move
- **Public opinion:** Israeli public opinion supports the process; Palestinian public opinion in the West Bank supports evacuation of settlements from the heart of the West Bank but there is opposition to Israel retaining a presence along the Jordan Rift and along the eastern mountain range
- **The settlers:** the spatial distribution of the settlements and opposition to evacuation: symbolic opposition amongst the settlements in the depth of the West Bank but practical acquiescence amongst the majority
- **The moderate Arab axis:** support for the process as a preliminary to complete withdrawal
- **The radical Iranian axis:** no practical resistance to the process
- **The superpowers and international legitimacy:** behind the scenes support a step in the right direction accompanied by a public call for a permanent agreement
- **The principal mechanism:** disillusionment amongst the policy-makers in Israel coupled with the understanding that the status quo is not an option; a comprehension that the Palestinian Authority should not be granted veto power over the existence of the State of Israel as the State of the Jewish People. A clear understanding that a unilateral initiative is necessary to forestall moves that might undermine the status of Israel on the international scene. A growing realisation amongst the Israeli public that the continued status quo could bring about the collapse of Israel as a national state of the Jewish people based on democratic principles.

Probability of realisation – moderate

A Palestinian State within Interim Borders: Assumptions

- **The Government of Israel:** a strong government supportive of the concept of a Palestinian state but divided on the detailed borders of such a state; continued calls for negotiations on permanent borders, the maintenance of a security border along the Jordan Rift and the eastern mountain range
- **The Palestinian Authority:** a strong government supportive of the concept notwithstanding its demand for de jure recognition of the 1967 borders; it compromises de facto on the interim border as an interim step granting it internationally recognised statehood
- **Hamas:** weak, expresses verbal dissension but due to its weakened position is unable to put up significant resistance. It can accept this solution ex post factum since it is defined as "not final"
- **Public opinion:** support for the idea in Israel and in the West Bank
- **The settlers**: the spatial distribution of the settlements and opposition to evacuation: mainly rhetorical opposition with emphasis on their link with Israel
- **The moderate Arab axis:** support for the concept
- **The radical Iranian axis:** ineffective opposition and support for Hamas policy on the issue
- **The superpowers and international legitimacy:** support as a step towards an overall solution
- **The principal mechanism:** a sober approach amongst the leadership of both sides to the effect that a permanent solution is not possible in the foreseeable future whereas the continued status quo poses serious dangers to both parties. Public support for this move with an emphasis on changing the current situation. Support from the moderate Arab states which strive to strengthen their status in the region as against the radical axis. Support from the United States and Europe that endeavour to strengthen their status in the Middle East.

Probability of realisation – moderate

No Borders – On the path to a binational state: Assumptions

- **The Government of Israel:** little desire to advance towards an agreement; weak governance
- **The Palestinian Authority:** weak and divided, unable to reach an agreement; under threat of Hamas
- **Hamas:** moderate to powerful; able to torpedo any agreement by means of terrorism and "heating up" the Gaza Strip
- **Public opinion:** support on both sides for the two states for two peoples concept, but deep mutual distrust leads to mutual paralysis
- **The settlers**: the spatial distribution of the settlements and opposition to evacuation: powerful enough to be able to torpedo any agreement
- **The moderate Arab axis:** weak
- **The radical Iranian axis:** strong
- **The superpowers and international legitimacy**: lofty statements but little power
- **The principal mechanism:** both governments are bent on maintaining the status quo because of the dangers inherent in any change in the current situation. Public opinion on both sides is characterised by cognitive dissonance (people believe in two states for two peoples but do not believe in the sincerity of the other side). The moderate axis in the region is in confrontation with the radical axis. The superpowers engage in doublespeak, waging struggles against each other and thus preventing any progress on the issues at hand. The end result is multi –level conflict that preserves the status quo.

Probability of realisation – moderate to high

A look at the power network and mechanisms at the root of each of the border routes shows a high likelihood of the border's disappearance and the emergence of a binational state. At present, the likelihood that an agreed-upon border will be achieved, anchored in a diplomatic agreement of two states for two peoples, is low. The reason for this is the weakness of both governments; their propensity for maintaining the status quo; and the strength of peace spoilers and their supporters. There is a slim chance of a Palestinian state within interim borders and of a dual border nature.

Insights arising from the scenarios

1. **A policy whose objective is maintaining the status quo in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not a diplomatic option.** In the long-term, spinning our wheels might jeopardise Israel's national security and cause a drift towards a binational state or a non-democratic regime. In the short-term it could isolate Israel, distance its friends (including its one strategic ally, the US), intensify the delegitimisation of the Jewish state, and lead to Israel's being penalised by the international community. Inside Israel, economic crises could foment, and in their wake social fragmentation arise, increasing tension and polarisation between population groups and intensifying political criticism. The status quo could also lead to a collapse of the Palestinian Authority, increasing the danger of terror with its human and economic price (consider the Intifada 2001-2003) and even foment a violent struggle. For these reasons, we cannot sustain the present situation, and a diplomatic initiative must be taken.

2. **Ending the conflict by establishing two states for two peoples is not feasible at present.** The scenarios show that various obstacles will thwart movement towards a two-state solution. The Palestinians are divided politically and ideologically, but mainly territorially, with no reasonable link or crossing between the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinian Authority's ability to "come up with the goods" in terms of legitimate representation and effective authority to implement any agreement is extremely limited. The scenario of agreed-upon borders describes the processes needed for its realisation, among them: uniting the Palestinian public under one leadership while overcoming the rift between Hamas and Fatah; the appearance in Israel of a strong government that can make historical decisions like that on the Palestinian question; both parties' leaderships overcoming the gulf that divides them on core issues; functional arrangements regarding infrastructures and economic development that would contribute to trust between the sides; and finally, regional and international support. Such an intricate mechanism has to overcome the rift between Hamas and Fatah, between opponents and supporters in Israel, between the Palestinian Authority and Israel; between moderate states and radical states in the region; and between superpowers with opposing interests. The chances of all this materialising are low in the short-term, yet significant in the long-term. In the short-term it appears that neither side's leadership is able to discard its political-ideological baggage on core issues. Extremists are powerful and opponents of peace have sufficient support to undermine the possibility of moving towards a resolution of the conflict. The will and ability of the superpowers to intervene is low: they can block geopolitical deterioration or spur both sides to enter negotiations, but they cannot bring about the signing of an agreement. The possibility of renewal of the struggle between the superpowers and their need for both political and non-political clients in the Middle East is bound to thwart inter-superpower cooperation that might lead to a resolution to the conflict. Therefore, despite the fact that the majority of Israelis and Palestinians support a two-state solution, it is more convenient for them to accept the present reality and/or advance interim local arrangements instead of reaching a permanent solution.

3. **It emerges that what is possible is not desirable (a binational state), and what is desirable to the majority on both sides (two states for two peoples) is impossible, at least in the short-term.** In light of this, alternative solutions should be developed. It is anticipated that the PA will declare independence within interim borders, even without an agreement with Israel. It is progressing towards this goal by developing an institutional and economic infrastructure in the West Bank (in the absence of access to Gaza), striving for international recognition, and trying to isolate Israel. If indeed such a state emerges, it will by definition have interim borders until a permanent solution is reached. Israel too has developed an alternative solution, that of dual borders: defensible borders and political borders that ensure a Jewish majority. This is a deep paradigmatic shift that challenges the geopolitical views that have prevailed up until now. Instead of full control of most territory or withdrawal to the '67 borders with adjustments, the emphasis has shifted to a medial view at the heart of which are two main considerations: ensuring Israel's security and its existence both as a Jewish state and as a democracy.

Evaluation of the future: Follow-up scenarios and the Israeli response

Based on the scenarios and resulting insights, we need to ready ourselves for various potential situations. The ideal solution to the conflict is two states for two peoples, in each of which resides a national minority that identifies socially and culturally with the national majority in the neighbouring state. This is a paradigm that must guide the leaders on both sides in the long-term. We must also take into consideration a surprise breakthrough and progress towards an arrangement of permanent borders agreed-upon by the Israelis, the Palestinians and the Americans. While the chances of such a scenario materialising are low, it cannot be ruled out.

At the same time, we would do well to ready ourselves in the short-term for other potential situations resulting from the scenarios. Specifically, we need to ready ourselves for the possibility of a unilateral Palestinian declaration of a state, with or without defined borders. Likewise, we must take into account a situation of crisis in negotiations with the Palestinians arising from their untenable demands. In such a situation, it is advisable to draft, with American agreement, a framework for a diplomatic solution alongside partial withdrawal of Israel from the West Bank and creation of a dual border: a security border along the Jordan and a political border along the separation barrier. In any case, it is important that Israel readies itself for any development, and takes the initiative in any situation, while understanding that a continuation of the status quo or failure of the diplomatic process will work against it. Even if a permanent agreement cannot be reached in a single breakthrough, we must strive to reach one piecemeal. The various situations described in the scenarios can serve as building blocks towards a permanent solution.

Follow-up scenario 1: Permanent borders agreed upon with the US and the PLO

If negotiations with the Palestinians progress towards a permanent, agreed-upon solution, insistence on the following principles are advised:

1. The western border of the Palestinian state with Israel shall be along the separation barrier, along with territorial exchange at a 1:1 ratio based on George W. Bush's letter of April 2004. The border route shall also be the basis of the border with Gaza.

2. A security zone controlled temporarily by the IDF should run alongside the Palestinian border with Jordan. At the close of an agreed-upon time period (around 5-7 years), an international force will be deployed there.

3. The Palestinian state shall be demilitarised and prohibited from entering into any military alliance whatsoever without Israel's consent.

4. Jerusalem is the capital of both countries, surrounded by a wall rather than divided by one. It will be divided politically according to the Clinton parameters, yet physically, economically and socially, it will be one entity, with the Old City and the Holy Basin administered by a joint administrative body.

5. The large settlement blocs will be annexed to Israel according to the Clinton and Bush letters, and the small settlements east of the barrier will be evacuated and their inhabitants duly compensated. The large settlements east of the barrier, two thirds of whose residents choose to remain permanent residents of the Palestinian state, shall remain therein.

6. In principle there will be no return of Palestinian refugees to Israel. At the same time, Israel will express willingness to take in a symbolic number of Palestinians based on humanitarian considerations.

7. Gaza shall be an integral part of the Palestinian state, with an open border crossing (land-bridge) between it and the West Bank, under Israeli sovereignty.

It is advisable that progress on this alternative not be tied in with reaching a framework agreement. A framework agreement that cannot be translated into a detailed implementation plan will only detract

from the goal. Moreover, such a process is liable to end in failure unless it also blocks the path to a later agreement on adoption of a piecemeal solution. A framework agreement with no possibility of implementation leads to a solutionless situation.

Follow-up scenario 2: Palestinian declaration of statehood, with or without defined borders

If the Palestinian Authority should choose to declare statehood with or without defined borders, it is advisable for Israel to recognise in principle its right to do so, and as a gesture it should withdraw from Area A as an expression of support for the Palestinian state. The borders themselves will win recognition and Israel will call for negotiations on their route(s) and the matter of Jerusalem as well. If negotiations should begin, the guiding principles for a permanent solution as set forth in Follow-up scenario 1 are advised.

The present situation in Gaza is unsustainable; in the context of a Palestinian declaration of a state within temporary borders, there are three options: (1) imposed rapprochement between Fatah and Hamas in the spirit of the Mecca Agreement: Israel can either come to terms with this solution or reject it, thus risking the collapse of the entire diplomatic process; (2) a separate arrangement with Hamas in Gaza and tacit acceptance of its sovereignty over its territory coupled with strict monitoring of weaponry on its territory; (3) maintaining the status quo until the last possible moment, knowing that the situation could rapidly unravel. In such a case, Israel could lose its ability to shape developments.

Follow-up scenario 3: Untenable Palestinian demands facing Israeli initiative to win US agreement for a diplomatic solution through the creation of a dual border

In the event of a crisis in negotiations resulting from Palestinian insistence on untenable demands, it is advisable to draft, in consultation with the US, a framework for a diplomatic solution that serves as the basis for a continuation of talks if and when the Palestinian Authority adopts a focused approach. In such a case, the route of the eastern border

along the Jordan Rift shall remain under Israeli security control, and its western border shall follow the separation barrier. Israel shall act to preserve national homogeneity and ensure the Palestinian Authority's territorial contiguity by evacuating and compensating the settlers in the small settlements outside the large blocs. Jerusalem shall be under Israeli sovereignty, and it shall take measures to form local municipal councils even without Palestinian agreement. If the Palestinians in Jerusalem were to cooperate, this would be an important achievement for Israel. If they refuse, appointed councils could be formed that constitute the basis for a future solution which would win the support of the global public. Regarding Gaza, Israel would rescind the maritime blockade, yet add security measures permitting human and commercial traffic between the West Bank and Gaza subsequent to permission for such from both sides. In the context of this scenario, future relations between the temporary Palestinian state and Gaza would remain open.

All three follow-up scenarios aim to craft responses to various situations that are likely to arise. Any is preferable to total failure of the diplomatic process and the continuation of the status quo. If indeed the diplomatic process fails, there will be far-reaching implications for Israel, as described below.

Failure of the diplomatic process

In the event of failure of the diplomatic process, the moderate Palestinian leadership, whose authority in the West Bank is not sufficiently stable, could well lose control and disappear from the map. As a result, institution-building and security cooperation will come to a halt. The moderate leadership that presently acts to stabilise the situation is liable to be replaced by anarchy, or by a radical force that unites its public behind confrontation with Israel. With no diplomatic safety valve, the Palestinian populace will lose faith. Political chaos will ensue, possibly giving rise to a third intifada.

West Bank-originating violence directed against Israel will increase, the struggle will be renewed, and its suppression will intensify international criticism of Israel and isolate it in world opinion. Against the backdrop of human rights violations there will be international

calls for intervention designed to curb Israel's activity. Given these conditions, the US is liable to re-examine its relationship with Israel, with a concomitant weakening of strategic support for Jerusalem by Washington.

The US administration is liable to apply symbolic or limited economic sanctions against Israel. It could withhold essential weaponry and/or reduce financial aid. Economic measures are not new. At the beginning of the 1990s the US halted aid guarantees for Israel's absorption of post-Soviet immigration in an effort to compel Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to cease funding West Bank settlement activity. The refusal to grant guarantees continued until Shamir was replaced by Yitzhak Rabin, who had a different approach to the conflict with the Palestinians.

Even if the US administration's steps are symbolic, they signal to others that it is not afraid to apply sanctions against Israel. Should this point be reached, the stability of Israel's economy would be significantly undermined, as it is indisputably dependent upon its commercial ties with other countries: (1) Nearly all raw materials are imported; (2) Exports constitute over 40% of Israel's national product; (3) Foreign investment in Israel in the past decade reached $10 billion a year, or 5% of GDP. In the world financial markets, US support for Israel is viewed as an informal guarantee of the latter's economic robustness. The huge grants that Israel has received from the US for decades, the special grant for the 1985 stabilisation programme, and the credit guarantees for immigrant absorption are testimony to American largesse. Any change in the US's relationship with Israel signals to the markets that Israel's economic crutch is not to be taken for granted. This is bound to encourage other countries to take economic measures against Israel that are even more severe than those applied by the US. Embargos or sanctions on exports are bound to harm Israel's economy and standard of living. Such a development will raise the interest rates that Israel pays to foreign markets; if Israel's debt grows in the ensuing chain reaction, Israel is likely to have difficulty borrowing. Such developments are bound to severely impair growth, increasing Israel's national debt with severe economic repercussions.

Against the backdrop of such developments, Israel's political-social polarisation will deepen and threaten its government's legitimacy. Failure of the diplomatic process could also have regional ripple effects: the already-sensitive agreements with Egypt and Jordan will be called into question and could suffer significantly. At the same time, the radical axis' power will grow, in turn weakening the moderate front. As a result, the regional geopolitical environment will become threatening and more dangerous for Israel, while the US's traditional support will not be automatic.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper focuses on the route of the border between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and its nature. The factors determining the border's route are surrounded by uncertainty and can be grouped into several circles: the closest circle — political nature of governments, public opinion, and the opponents of peace; the neighbouring countries' circle— the moderate Arab front, the radical axis and their agents; and the most remote circle — the superpowers which have interests in the region.

The processes unfolding among these players and the relationships between them will necessarily shape the various border routes and their nature. As part of this study, we identified ten possible scenarios and came up with four patterns: disappearance of borders, interim borders, a dual border, and agreed-upon borders. In contrast to approaches that recommend a defined border route as a preferred solution, we chose to evaluate various possible border routes — i.e., scenarios — and to assess the chances of their realisation. The following conclusions and recommendations emerge:

1. Continuation of the status quo will lead to a binational state with Israel no longer the national homeland of the Jewish people based on democratic principles. (If such a state were democratic, it would not be Jewish, and vice versa.) Therefore the continuation of the status quo is not an option; Israel must strive towards negotiations with the Palestinian Authority.

2. The negotiations, which begin with indirect talks brokered by the US and then move to direct talks, must yield geopolitical results. The absence of an Israeli initiative in the coming year will lead to deterioration in its international standing and will impair its economic stature and internal stability. The absence of progress would lead to radicalisation in the Palestinian Authority and possibly to renewed terror. Such developments would impair Israel's efforts to shape events. The guiding paradigm must be to strive towards a permanent solution that covers all disputed areas: borders, Jerusalem, refugees, settlement and security. Nevertheless, one should prepare for a variety of alternative situations.

3. An analysis of the scenarios reveals that the desired route of a border in the eyes of a large segment of the Israeli and Palestinian publics, i.e., agreed-upon borders, is not achievable in the short-term. The reasons for this are varied: a wide gulf between the parties on the critical issues of borders, Jerusalem, and refugees; unwillingness to make concessions due to internal political considerations; mutual mistrust and the division of the Palestinian Authority into two hostile sub-entities. It also emerges from the scenarios that the border route that has the highest chance of materialising is in fact the disappearance of the border leading to a binational state. Thus it transpires that what is desired is not possible, and vice versa. It is advisable to prepare for a situation of interim borders or for a dual border (security along the Jordan Rift and political along the separation barrier).

4. The interim border scenario might be the result of an agreement between the sides, or of a unilateral Palestinian declaration. In the event of the latter, it is advisable for Israel to reject the border route declared by the Palestinian Authority, yet recognise the Palestinian Authority as a state, and even make a gesture towards increasing the Palestinian Authority's territorial contiguity. The dual border scenario would be the result of an Israeli initiative in consultation with the US. According to this scenario, Israel would withdraw unilaterally from part of the West Bank while maintaining large settlement blocs and strategic areas therein. In addition, Israel would remain deployed along the Jordan and the Rift in order to

ensure strategic advantage. Both these scenarios entail Israel's not giving in on the principle of security while striving to retain its image as a majority Jewish state rooted in democratic principles. In both interim situations a Palestinian state in the West Bank should emerge and negotiations would continue to be conducted between the states. In such interim situations, functional arrangements could be advanced in the spheres of the economy and infrastructure which would aid progress towards a permanent solution. Such situations are inestimably preferable to the status quo and are stepping stones towards a permanent solution. Central figures in the international arena involved in diplomatic activity do not rule out the logic of this functional approach. However, its supporters prefer to keep a low profile on the matter in order not to disrupt negotiations on a permanent solution — a subject that still takes political centre stage at the time of writing.

5. This approach is essentially that of a gradual progression towards a resolution of the conflict. It places a permanent solution within sight while remaining aware of the difficulty in achieving it in a single breakthrough. This approach is commensurate with the spirit of the Road Map which recognises that in the current climate — a divided Palestinian Authority with an administration in the West Bank headed by Fatah and another in Gaza headed by Hamas, and a lack of willingness or ability to reach an agreement on Jerusalem or the refugees - we cannot move towards permanent agreements. Two interim situations - interim borders and a dual border - remove Jerusalem and the refugees from the negotiating table and focus on territory, the Palestinian Authority's political status, and the settlements (here too there is full convergence with the Road Map). In both interim situations, the Palestinian Authority becomes a state, Palestinian territory increases and partial evacuation of settlements is carried out. It is incumbent upon Israel to define 'red lines' as well as territories about which negotiations will be conducted during the transition from interim agreements to a permanent solution. This gradual approach affords a breathing space for lessons to be learned and creates a link between diplomatic progress and withdrawal from the territories. It presents a shift in paradigm in the geopolitical mindset, moving away from ideology-

based fantasy (territorial withdrawal to permanent borders) and religious fantasy (settlement expansion) to principles of security, a nation-state and democracy. It strives for realisation of a two-state solution, strengthens the Palestinian Authority by making it a recognised state, and grants Israel time and space to level-headedly examine and plan its next steps.

6. In the present situation, the chances are fair that interim situations that are not risk-free can be realised. In the political arena the Palestinian leadership has declared its intention to establish a state in temporary borders in the very near future. In contrast to past leaderships, the current leadership invests national resources in building state institutions and acts vigorously in the spheres of infrastructure, security, and law and order. It enjoys the sympathy of world opinion and gains broad and comprehensive diplomatic support. The time is ripe to advance a piecemeal solution while improving relations with the Palestinian Authority and with countries that support it. Israel should mobilise the support of the US for such a solution while drawing attention to the fact that such a solution is compatible with the Road Map. Ignoring this opportunity is bound to undermine the moderate Palestinian elements. It is also bound to bring about a reevaluation of relations between the US and Israel, intensifying Israel's isolation in the international arena and harming Israel economically and socially.

7. While there is no doubt that a permanent solution is preferable, an analysis of the scenarios reveals that such a solution has little chance of being reached. Moreover, in a situation where we have to choose between a permanent solution whose chances are slim and the status quo that leads to a binational state, we prefer interim solutions whose chances of realisation are greater. One should recall, however, that there are many barriers on the road to an interim solution. The willingness and ability of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and President Abu-Mazen to go through with a unilateral declaration is doubtful in light of their stature among the Palestinian public. The structure of the present coalition and coalitional considerations in Israel are bound to make an interim solution difficult. Opposition by settlers and their supporters in the

government must also be taken into account. An interim solution would require several rounds of settler evacuation. Hamas, which remains off the playing field, is bound to sabotage the diplomatic process while receiving support, encouragement, and intervention from Iran. An interim solution should ultimately offer peace, security, and a period of acclimatisation. All these points highlight the drawbacks of an interim solution. Given this situation, we need to take into account that failure of the diplomatic process is bound to play into the hands of Hamas and Iran, and would be taken as proof that the West Bank leadership is weak and negotiations useless. Against this backdrop, Hamas could claim that the only path open to the Palestinian people is opposition and armed struggle.

8. For these reasons, it is incumbent upon Israel to encourage the diplomatic process in various ways and not surrender to the status quo. In this context: We propose minimising the Palestinian public's opposition by means of creating a two-phase plan that leads from interim borders to permanent borders. The interim phase will have a time limit, with a permanent solution in sight. Israel can act to calm the situation in Gaza both by rescinding the blockade and calling for future Gazan participation in the process. Israel can and should act to advance practical solutions to economic and social distress and address the housing shortage in Gaza. A plan such as this should ease talks between Fatah and Hamas and enable progress towards permanent borders (see the recommendations of the International Crisis Group, 2008).

9. To empower the diplomatic process and stabilise any agreements reached, it is advisable to harmonise this process with a regional security outline. The scenarios show that signing a peace agreement in itself does not guarantee stability. Such an agreement could disintegrate due to the activities of radical elements that want to increase their influence in the region, among others by undermining any agreement signed.

10. On the internal social front, the Israeli public should be prepared to live with ambiguity, i.e., departing from the status quo and seeking an agreement while at the same time understanding that an end-state agreement might not be forthcoming and can be undermined.

11. Readiness in the external arena necessitates progress in the diplomatic process between Israel and the Palestinian Authority for the purpose of intensifying regional strategic discourse. The two are inextricably linked: on the one hand, diplomatic progress in relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority will lend support to nurturing the moderate front in the region. On the other hand, broadening ties and cooperation between the countries that comprise the moderate front contributes to stabilising the border's route and improving relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Needless to say, intensification of conflict in the Middle East coupled with Iran's empowerment is liable to jeopardise any progress in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and to empower radical forces. As one scenario shows, it could even cause the collapse of an agreement. In this respect, Israel should bolster the statures of the US and the moderate front. Consolidating agreements with the Palestinian Authority — even interim agreements — is an important step in this direction. Progress on both fronts — the local conflict and the regional strategic discourse — can also contribute to reducing Iran's influence, repairing relations with Turkey and stabilising and improving relations with Egypt and Jordan.

Appendix

The scenarios in the appendix, presented as an historical narrative and a discussion, detail possible future developments. They offer a means of presenting some future possibilities among many others. The focus is not so much on specific events and dates of their occurrence, but on the processes that shaped them.

Scenario 1.1 No Borders: Path to a binational state

Good evening, Mr. Chairman, and good evening to our panelists. In my lecture this evening, as part of the '30 Years of Failure of the Oslo Accords' series, I seek to clarify how we arrived at the current situation with respect to Israel's borders. As you all know, I am no scholar. I've spent my life in various public posts, including intelligence, foreign relations, and most recently, as an advisor to the Prime Minister. What I have to say is based more on involvement and contact with reality and less on academic research.

If I had to sum up the period between 1993 and 2023, I would say that we're on the road to a binational state with no recognised borders. We have a security border with Jordan, and a defence border route in the form of a separation fence that has never been completed, has outgrown its purpose over time, and is now crossed easily from both sides. The important thing is what takes place between the two; what has occurred is simply the laying of solid groundwork for a binational Israeli-Palestinian state. The nature of the new state has not yet been clarified. Will it be a federation, a confederation, or a Palestinian autonomy within Israel? These matters are being vigorously argued by both sides as we speak. One thing is clear: It will be impossible to revert to the '67 borders or any route close to those lines. This is becoming clear to more and more people on both sides.

How did this happen? I don't care to go into detail; I'll leave that to the historians. Instead, I wish to focus on the main players and the relationships between them. For 30 years, it has been obvious that both governments - the Israeli and the Palestinian — have at most times not wanted to reach an agreement, and in the short periods when they

were interested in doing so, were unable to do so due to opposition on the parts of extreme elements on both sides. In the various fora convened, both governments declared their intentions of reaching an honourable and fair agreement, yet it was a deception intended to win points from the international community. Beyond the rhetoric, the two governments were unwilling to pay the price of an agreement, fearing both internal and external elements. Israel was afraid of the risks entailed in withdrawal and evacuating settlements in the belief that this would jeopardise its security and ignite a civil war with the settlers. The Palestinians were unwilling to concede on core issues such as the refugees' right of return and Jerusalem because they feared losing legitimacy and with it their rule. Neither side was willing to take the risks entailed in an agreement and a pullout. While there were a few junctures at which a breakthrough could have occurred, unfortunately these were not exploited. I'd like to elaborate on three main missed opportunities.

The first opportunity to progress towards an agreement occurred with the election of Barack Obama. It appeared for a moment that a new spirit had descended upon our region. The new diplomacy that the US president displayed, the European support for his Middle East policy, and the consolidation of a moderate Arab front united around the Arab peace initiative appeared to bode well. And indeed, the series of meetings between the Israeli Prime Minister and the heads of the Palestinian Authority during 2010-2011 signaled progress towards an agreement. It appeared for a moment that things were on the brink of change. What scuttled it was the renewal of the Cold War in the region. Russia, led by Putin, returned to centre stage in the Middle East. The Syrian-Iranian axis, Iran's nuclearisation, and the strengthening of the Islamic movement in Egypt provided Russia with the necessary tools for restoring its strategic presence and power in the region. Together with Syria and Iran, Russia acted with the support of China in constricting the US's steps in the Middle East and the moderate front that it nurtured. As you all recall, a string of mass terror attacks carried out in 2011 by Hezbollah, the Al-Aqsa Brigades and the Islamic Jihad with the encouragement of Iran and Syria in which dozens of Israelis were killed in Jerusalem and in two Jewish Community Centres in New York, radically changed the picture.

While terror was carried out at the initiative of Iran, it couldn't have been carried out without Russia's encouragement behind the scenes. Visions of the Gulf petroleum fields danced in Russia's head, particularly during the period when the price of crude oil rose to an unprecedented high. Against this background opposition to an agreement gathered strength in Israel, particularly in light of the fact that some of the terrorists were Palestinians who had served in the Palestinian Authority security forces.

It is relevant to recall that public opinion in Israel supported the two-state solution, yet at the same time believed that trust should not be placed in the other side. The leadership's fear of taking risks, the cognitive dissonance in public opinion, the renewal of enmity between the superpowers, and the ongoing activity of the peace opponents all converged to produce a freeze in the peace process.

The failure of talks created the background for a second opportunity. At the end of 2012, Hamas, with European arbitration, proposed an open-ended hudna (truce) in exchange for Israeli agreement to withdraw to '67 borders. Accepting this proposal would facilitate an Israeli withdrawal from the territories and a return to borders that would ensure a Jewish majority. Yet Hamas's pragmatism was rejected by Jerusalem's policymakers, who claimed that it was nothing but a deceit that didn't stand a chance, and that the new borders would constitute an essential threat to Israel from a fundamentalist movement that had strengthened its stature. Israeli public opinion and Palestinian West Bank public opinion had reservations about recognising Hamas. West Bank Palestinians feared an agreement that would strengthen Hamas's rule and ultimately bring it from Gaza to the West Bank, while the Israelis recoiled from any recognition of a movement that was a standard-bearer of three slogans: No to Oslo, no to Israel, and no to a cessation of terror. I believe that not accepting Hamas's proposal was a major loss, as it was the pragmatic forces in Hamas that brought it to the point that enabled it to overrule the militants in Palestinian society, control the West Bank, and even withstand Iranian incitement. Rejecting this opportunity weakened these pragmatic forces and allowed the reins to fall into the hands of the extremists, who claimed that the only path Israel understands is the path of opposition and struggle.

The third opportunity occurred in 2013, when in the wake of the radicalisation of Israeli public opinion, a settler from Tekoa was elected Prime Minister by sweeping support from the right. Immediately upon entering office he declared that he wanted to reach an agreement and evacuate the settlements. As you recall, an attempt to evacuate two settlements ended with five dead and dozens injured. In the wake of this attempt, an incitement campaign began that included threats on the Prime Minister's life. There are those who believe that this campaign led to deterioration in his health. In his favour I will say that he was not swayed from his position. Had he survived his heart attack, I am sure that he would have succeeded, similarly to Ariel Sharon in his time, in evacuating the settlements and perhaps even reaching an agreement on '67 borders. His death left a vacuum that has still not been filled. May he rest inpeace.

The failure of talks with the Palestinians, the rejection of Hamas's proposal and Israel's inability to evacuate the settlements led to deterioration in the situation. Led by extreme factions in Hamas, terror re-erupted: Israelis were hit in cafes and buses, and calls for revenge were heard in every corner. As you know, Israel acted swiftly against the Hamas government in Gaza. World opinion, which initially expressed anger and fear in the face of the terror, quickly turned, and Israel came under attack for its activity against Hamas in Gaza. Hamas won popularity on the Palestinian street, and the government in the West Bank found itself threatened. Against this backdrop, from 2014 on, cooperation grew between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. As part of this cooperation, checkpoints were removed, work permits were issued to West Bank Palestinians, many roads were designated binational, and coordination on infrastructure and utilities such as sewage and water improved.

In addition, a fascinating development occurred in Jerusalem. In 2018, for the first time since 1967, a Palestinian list for city council was formed that ran in municipal elections and won seven of thirty-one seats. The Jewish mayor, whose list won eight seats, invited the Palestinian list to join his coalition as a counterweight to the ultra-Orthodox. Many of Jerusalem's secular residents believed that this cooperation was preferable to ultra-Orthodox control over their city. In the city itself, far-reaching

geographic diversification took place, such that today concentrations of Palestinians can be found not only in the northern part of the city in neighbourhoods such as Neve Yaakov, Pisgat Zeev, and French Hill, but also in formerly Arab neighbourhoods such as Baka'a, Talbieh and Katamon. In this year's elections [2023], the Palestinian list won ten seats, and there are those who predict that ultimately the mayor will be Palestinian.

The Hamas threat that hangs over the Palestinian Authority, alongside the formation of the Jerusalem model of a successful binational city, convinced the Israeli and Palestinian publics that there is nothing wrong with a binational state based on an alliance between moderate forces. Such a state, the elite on both sides claims, is in fact the only assurance against fundamentalism— Jewish ultra-Orthodox and Islamic — that threatens the regime's foundation. A look at the past few weeks' newspapers, and particularly the somewhat impassioned but nonetheless highly illuminating and instructive article by the reputable Shevet Arayot in Ha'aretz, reveals that among large portions of the public, particularly the affluent and educated, a dramatic turning point is approaching whereby a cosmopolitan worldview is replacing the old nationalist approach.

At the same time things are still quite fragile. Nationalist and fundamentalist camps on both sides criticise recent developments. The latest polls show a balance between the cosmopolitan and the national camps. Only the future will tell if the open borders between the Palestinian Authority and Israel and the growing trend for cross-border cooperation will continue or not.

I conclude my remarks with these words from Ecclesiastes: "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath man of all his labour which he laboureth under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; and the earth abideth forever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteneth to his place where he ariseth…Is there a thing whereof it is said: 'See, this is new?' It hath been already, in the ages which were before us." [Ecclesiastes 1:2-6; 10].

There is indeed nothing new under the sun when it comes to the issue of borders between Israel and the PA. Yet —and here's the big surprise — even when nothing new is happening, we find ourselves in a new geopolitical situation. Basically, we've lost the possibility of preserving Israel as a Jewish state, and in its place a binational space has suddenly emerged that is liable to become a binational state. There are those who see this as a positive development, and there are those who believe the opposite. I, it seems, am of a different time, as I long for the good old Land of Israel. Thanks for your attention.

Scenario 1.2: No borders – No solution

When should a no-solution scenario develop?

A no-solution scenario is likely to develop if the diplomatic process launched by the US in 2010 should fail. The way this failure is publicly portrayed by the US will have a huge influence on future developments. Against this backdrop, the possible approaches to be taken by the Palestinians, Israel and the US should be examined. The end of the Israeli government or the Palestinian Authority would serve as stinging testimony to the failure of the process. The collapse of the State of Israel or the end of the Israeli government as a normal regime is most unlikely. On the other hand, the fall of the Palestinian Authority government is a real possibility and would in all likelihood bring about an end to the Palestinian Authority.

What will happen to the Palestinian Authority in a no-solution scenario?

Fall of the Palestinian Authority government: A development such as this could occur for a number of reasons:

1. President Abbas abdicates, with no acceptable successor
2. Abbas resigns and no replacement acceptable to the Palestinian public is found
3. The internal Palestinian rift deepens and Abbas is unable to approve one or other arrangement that he is asked to sign
4. Despair on the part of Fatah figures such as Salam Fayyad and their exit from the political arena.

Disintegration of the Palestinian Authority: The Palestinian Authority in its current incarnation i.e., governing parts of the West Bank, tied its future in to the diplomatic process. If this process does not yield a Palestinian state, its reason for existence disappears. As soon as the process ends, the Palestinian Authority will find it difficult to survive. The failure of the diplomatic process will provoke internal foment both in Israel and on the Palestinian side. A no-solution scenario will induce or accelerate the Palestinian Authority's disintegration, a scenario which has a medium to high chance of occurring.

The Palestinian Authority will find it difficult, if not impossible, to survive after a failure of the present US initiative. In the best case, a group of second-tier leaders will come to power, and collectively run the show until elections can be held, either in the West Bank only, or in the West Bank and Gaza. The authority of either an individual or a group will be partial and temporary, and their ability to rule the West Bank questionable. The future of the forces trained by the US team known as the Dayton Force, who are subservient to the Palestinian Authority, will become uncertain. Will they succeed in maintaining their operational strength and cohesion?

It is doubtful whether a disintegrating Palestinian Authority will succeed in maintaining reasonable civilian services, such as education and health care.

An increase in the power of Hamas and the radical axis: The realisation of this and similar scenarios arising in the midst of chaos on various levels is bound to encourage Hamas to extend its rule to the West Bank, aided by Syria, Iran and Hezbollah. Its success will depend on the weakened resistance of the local population, on the character of Israel's rule, and to a lesser extent, on the severity of counter steps promoted by the US. The diplomatic bottom line is the absence of an alternative Palestinian partner with the ability and authority to talk to Israel or to the world - a situation that will continue for years to come.

What will happen to Israel in the no-solution scenario?

The suspension of the diplomatic process led by the US will present Israel with a long list of tests and dilemmas:

The security dimension. Based on developments in the Palestinian Authority, Israel will invest immediate resources and efforts in defending its 300,000 citizens in Judaea and Samaria, and in preventing the slide of terror over the Green Line. Commensurate with the collapse of the Palestinian Authority described above, Israel is liable to be required to allocate military forces and civilian back-up to deal with the Palestinian population in Judaea and Samaria. These steps will require a considerable reserve call-up, a halt to recruit training, and diversion of attention and capabilities hitherto dedicated solely to confronting other major strategic threats. The massive investment anticipated in ongoing security will compromise IDF training and its readiness to deal with regional strategic threats (see for example the effect of large IDF investments in training and operations for the disengagement from Gaza on its readiness for the second Lebanon war). And that's not all: volatile situations are bound to develop in a matter of days, including terror attacks of varying intensity that necessitate urgent drawn out consultations and decision-making at the highest political levels. This means reaching decisions that address the need for massive deterrence while at the same time preventing a situation where Judaea, Samaria and Gaza are reoccupied. The longer Israel is preoccupied with deterring such a phenomenon, the greater the danger of momentary setbacks caused by non-state actors coupled with sweeping condemnation by an international community opposed to the reoccupation of territory.

The economic front. The aforementioned possibilities will place a heavy burden on Israel's economy, impair its standard of living and employment record, harm its international trade and threaten its reputation in terms of financial markets and investment.

The internal political front. The combined effect of these developments will almost certainly threaten Israel's social and political cohesion, and will raise the possibility of loss of public confidence in its elected officials. The more vivid the picture of a people under siege, the greater the internal pressure for change.

What will happen to the US in the wake of a no-solution scenario?

A shift in the US's diplomatic objective. The chances are good that the US will refrain from officially declaring the diplomatic process dead because this would negatively affect both its national and international stature. Inside the US, the president will strive to build a "continuation plan" for negotiations. According to this scenario, the disintegration will be gradual and initiatives will be undertaken to slow down or prevent a final collapse.

Among the possibilities that the US government is likely to choose is an essential change in defining the objective of the diplomatic process. If the US administration should conclude that a full agreement on a permanent solution is not feasible or that implementation of an agreement is not operable, it is likely to initiate or encourage an interim long-term arrangement as a preferable escape route to the entire collapse of the present process (see interim borders scenario). One might surmise that the US administration will refrain from blaming either side publicly for temporary or ultimate failure as it is dependent on the goodwill of both sides if it is to maintain a measure of control over the developing situation.

International intervention in the Palestinian Authority and pressure on Israel. Even if the US administration does not blame Israel alone for failure, it will view it as bearing the larger portion of the responsibility for any crisis that arises. The US will act quickly to stabilise the situation in Palestinian areas, and in an extreme case such as terror and civil turmoil, will even consider establishing international trusteeship, alone or with others. Another alternative would be for the US to apply maximum pressure on Israel to evacuate the territories slated for a Palestinian state. A situation is likely where the US will oversee negotiations with Israel and even invite a group of Arab states to administer the territory temporarily. If the US should fail in these efforts, it is likely to scale down its involvement in the region.

Wagging an accusing finger at Israel. Strategic considerations will not allow the US to blunt Israel's military edge. On the diplomatic front, however, it will initiate adjustments in its policy and its support of Israel will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The scaling down

of US involvement in the conflict will naturally leave room for others to enter e.g., Russia and Europe. In any case, heavier investment on the part of the US will be required if the US is to maintain its standing and interests in the Arab world (especially in post-Mubarak Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states).

Conclusion

The no-solution scenario appears quite realistic politically and otherwise. The reasons for this are the gaps between the sides on the ideological and strategic planes and the inability of the two highest political levels to sign or enforce an agreement. On the other hand, the price of no solution is prohibitive for both sides. Signing an unenforceable peace agreement will have grave consequences. The absence of enforceability is bound to drive another nail into the coffin of any resolution for a long time. On the public fronts — both Israeli and Palestinian — the reality of "living by the sword forever" will intensify. Paradoxically, while the no-solution alternative appears the most realistic in 2011, the high price that each side will pay is bound to make it the least acceptable of all. The parties will be required to find a balance between no solution and a permanent arrangement that is unenforceable.

The time for this alternative is bound to arrive when the US argues that it cannot lead both sides to an agreement with reasonable chances of realisation. The US president today is calling for each side to make hard decisions and come to the table knowing that they will leave without all their demands having been met. Finding a balance between no solution and a permanent agreement will place him in a unique position to act on his own advice: to settle for less and more importantly to bring temporary calm to both peoples.

Scenario 2: Interim borders

When is the interim border scenario likely to develop?

The interim-border scenario - or long-term interim borders - is likely to develop in two cases: upon signing a permanent arrangement that turns out to be unenforceable due to conditions in the field; or if a diplomatic process reaches an impasse. In this case, all the players - Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the US, and the international community — are bound to prefer any alternative to no solution. There are two basic such alternatives:

1. **An imposed solution**. The inability to reach a binding agreement in the form of a permanent solution, or to implement it after signing, will necessitate an attempt to impose an arrangement on the sides. Adoption of an imposed agreement policy on the part of the international community will in turn necessitate significant economic and personnel investment. This alternative is not appealing on account of its high cost and because it indicates diplomatic failure on the parts of the international community and the US. Moreover, its chances of survival are low.

2. **An interim agreement based on progressing through phases**. According to this scenario, the diplomatic effort towards a permanent agreement will be applied to reaching an interim agreement as an essential step towards a permanent arrangement. It is based on recognition on the part of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and the international community that in present conditions the possible and desirable arrangement is an interim and partial one. This situation is preferable to entering a drawn-out situation of no solution.

The obstacles to a diplomatic arrangement

The main mechanism driving a temporary arrangement is the inability of both sides to make the leap from the present situation to long-term peace in the shortest time possible. Several obstacles prevent such a leap:

1. The public on both sides is not ready for it
2. The Palestinian side is divided and led by a weak leadership that is dependent upon Israel and on the international community for its very existence
3. Strong organised opposition on both sides. If the diplomatic echelons ignore it, it will only grow stronger
4. Both sides face serious difficulty in implementing a permanent agreement. Israel faces considerable difficulty in relocating hundreds of thousands of settlers in Judaea and Samaria to inside Israel proper; the Palestinian Authority faces commensurate difficulty in restoring Gaza to its rule. From what is foreseeable in 2011, a process of regulating these components will take several years in the best case
5. The unique nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which differs from Israel's conflicts with its neighbours, is an obstacle to a diplomatic solution. The logic of a temporary arrangement, or a series of temporary arrangements carried out in various time frames and over at least two generations, stems from this difference. Ultimately, none of Israel's Arab neighbours ever aspired to rule over any part of Mandatory Palestine. Neither Egypt, which held Gaza for a time, nor Jordan, which controlled the West Bank, ever really saw these areas as integral parts of their countries. During rounds of negotiations between Israel and its neighbours, the territorial element of the conflict became a dominant and deciding factor. Sinai, parts of Jordan annexed to Israel south of the Dead Sea, and in the future the Golan, were and will be the kernel of the conflict. The moment the land-based aspect is resolved, the path to peace is open. These were conflicts between existing countries where national interests dictated arrangements, i.e., separate arrangements with each country unrelated to the aspirations of the Palestinian people. In contrast, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a conflict between two peoples occupying the same plot of land, a conflict between two nations that find it very difficult to reach a compromise requiring concessions relating to their dream of exclusive rule over all the disputed territory. It is a conflict riddled with religious ideology: one side claims that every grain of soil is holy Arab land that no mortal can forfeit; the other side claims that the land is theirs by divine decree. The implementation process

of the agreement between Israel and Egypt took a few years; any foreseeable Israeli-Syrian arrangement will also necessitate an interim phase. However, a permanent agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, which is much more problematic and harder to attain, might require a much longer process.

The need for flexibility offered by an interim arrangement

A permanent arrangement that acquires the status of an off-the-shelf agreement will be unimplementable in the long-term. A permanent arrangement whose implementation is spread over years - five, ten, twenty or more – is infinitely preferable. Interim solutions are essential to the implementation of a permanent arrangement and serve as an escape route in the event of failure to reach a permanent arrangement.

Experience has shown that political decision-makers find it difficult to implement agreements decided upon and signed by their predecessors. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's attitude towards the Oslo Accords, signed by his predecessor, is such an example. Since implementation of agreements is spread over lengthy periods of time during which regimes on both sides can change, not only reason but necessity dictates a multi-phase agreement that takes these changes into account.

An ironclad agreement containing no flexibility that is supposed to respond to changes in circumstances on both sides is bound to cause the unraveling of the agreement. Precisely because of this, an agreement must be worded in such a way that its durability prevents either side from dodging its implementation. This view works in theory only. If one or the other side should assess in the future that a change in its circumstances necessitates discontinuing implementation of an agreement signed a generation ago, no signature on a piece of paper will stop it.

The characteristics of an interim agreement

The components of a temporary agreement must be implementable within a short time period. The agreement must respond to urgent needs, both political and practical, and be worded in terms that do not undermine its validity over time. This is to avoid a situation in which

implementation could be perceived in terms of a countdown. Such a situation would intensify pressure and could cause the collapse of the agreement. The wording of the agreement must enable political leaders on both sides to sell the product to their publics and to guarantee their support over time.

Two basic components form the core of any interim arrangement: near-immediate declaration of a Palestinian state in temporary borders and demilitarised conditions; and a cessation of warfare between Israel and the Palestinians (note: the borders will be temporary, not the state. There is no legal construction whatsoever that permits a temporary state).

The temporary nature of the arrangement will permit temporary security arrangements that serve as safety valves during the transitional period and whose relaxation or removal could serve as milestones along the path of progress between an interim and a permanent arrangement. Alongside the security clause, a broad civic clause will be drafted that regulates day-to-day relations between the Palestinian state and Israel. The validity and weight of the security and civic regulations will be backed by the Arab and Islamic states which will be invited to participate in, and to support, the process towards a permanent arrangement.

Any temporary arrangement shall not include in its wording a cessation of the conflict, or make final arrangements regarding Jerusalem and the refugee problem. While the final route of the temporary border will not be that of the permanent border, an attempt should be made to come as close to it as possible. With the exception of the core issues, the interim agreement will focus on matters relevant to day-to-day life, and aside from its two anchors - a Palestinian state and a cessation of warfare - its wording will not stray into ideological pronouncements.

The advantages of an interim agreement

1. First and foremost, it grants the Palestinians the status of an independent state and places the fate of the Palestinian people in its leaders' hands. With time, Israel will shed its responsibility for the fate of the Arab residents of Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza. This responsibility exists as long as there is no other arrangement in the offing.
2. The agreement obligates the Palestinians to uphold and enforce the cessation of warfare and tests them on a day-to-day basis. It leaves security arrangements in Israel's hands for a lengthy period in order to protect its interests.
3. It enables both sides' leaderships to present their publics with a list of achievements, such as genuine calm on both sides of the border for an extended period, as well as the routine arrangements essential for a decent life.
4. The open-ended nature of the agreement — or its temporariness — leaves opponents on both sides with their dream of "no solution", yet significantly lessens public support for this option. On the Palestinian side, the agreement improves the chance of a partial rapprochement between Fatah and Hamas, and strengthens the moderate elements of Hamas. On the Israeli side, the evacuation of settlements in Judaea and Samaria will be accompanied by a reinforcement of territories that will be annexed to Israel. These developments are bound to lead to a new discourse between either some or all of the settlers.
5. We will witness a period of acclimatisation as the new reality being built with our proud new Palestinian neighbour takes shape.
6. From the moment an agreement is signed, the discourse between Israel and its neighbour assumes the nature of negotiation between sovereign states, each of which bears full responsibility for its fate and for that of its citizens.

The drawbacks of an interim agreement

1. It grants the Palestinians a state without their having signed on to a cessation of the conflict, and necessitates evacuating residents of Judaea and Samaria without a permanent arrangement, thereby seemingly granting an advantage to the Palestinians

2. On the other hand, the Palestinians will need to become accustomed - in return for having a state - to temporary borders, cessation of warfare, and to taking full responsibility for their fate prior to the finalisation of core issues such as Jerusalem and the refugees

3. Some of the restrictions that will be placed on the Palestinian state will make it difficult to sell the arrangement

4. The extremists will continue their warfare, and the Palestinian state will be compelled to cope with Iran and Hezbollah's entry into the fray. The calm demanded by the US and its allies will not be achieved as long as their fronts are under attack throughout the Middle East and Asia.

Conclusion

The temporary borders scenario should not be discussed in and of itself, but rather in relation to other possible developments. If it were possible to reach a permanent arrangement and implement it in one fell swoop, this option would obviously be preferable to any other. Yet that is not the situation. The path to a permanent arrangement is strewn with obstacles and the chances of its realisation are unclear. In any case, a permanent arrangement cannot be implemented rapidly. It is desirable from the outset that the Palestinians be required to bear full sovereign responsibility for their citizens. Under such circumstances, it is appropriate to examine the possibility of temporary borders under a temporary arrangement which would be advantageous to both sides as well as to the US.

A unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state along the '67 borders, known as the 'Fayyad alternative,' is another option. Practically speaking, negotiations will take place between the states on immediate temporary arrangements. These arrangements must promptly become an interim arrangement, thus jump-starting a process of drafting a permanent agreement whose implementation will take at least a generation.

Scenario 3: Dual border

The article below was published on April 26, 2023 / 5th of Iyar 5783 in the Washington Post marking 75 years of Israeli independence:

I've resided in Israel and Palestine for the past 20 years and have watched the complex political processes in this region unfold from my ringside seat. I've learned how fluid the issue of borders is and how the situation is capable of knocking the best experts for a loop. Nothing predicted has materialised. Today more than ever, I doubt the experts' ability to say anything of value about future relations between Israel and Palestine or about the borders between them.

I will admit that I didn't think like this when I arrived in Tel Aviv in 2003, and when I moved to Ramallah in 2013. Like many others, I believed then that for Israel's sake and for that of the entire region, it was advisable to adopt the Geneva Initiative and to withdraw from the West Bank. In the wake of the past 20 years' developments, I'm much more sceptical.

It appears that the tidal waves of change that the region has undergone in the past 20 years justifies more than a little scepticism. That period can be divided into three sub-periods: the Israeli occupation, which continued until 2012; the Palestinian state, which continued until 2018; and Israeli rule and the region's transition to an international mandate, which pertains as of this writing.

End of Israeli occupation

The Israeli occupation ended in 2012 in the wake of internal criticism and increasing international pressure. During the years 2010-2012, Israel became a pariah state, similar to South Africa in the past. Even its best friends turned their backs and demanded withdrawal from Judaea and Samaria. Articles about Israeli apartheid in the territories and Jerusalem became fashionable in academia in Israel, and even entered international political discourse. Friendly countries imposed a boycott on Israel and the US refused to continue defending it in the UN Security Council.

Organisations from within and without repeatedly called upon Israel's government, for the sake of its own survival as a Jewish state, to leave the territories and thus prevent the emergence of a binational state. Yet what had the greatest impact on Israel was the nuclearisation of Iran and the American pledge: security backing for Israel in the struggle against Iran in exchange for the latter's withdrawal from the territories and a Palestinian state. Given these assurances, the Israeli public conceded that its demographic-national homogeneity was more important than territory. With US brokering, progress began on solving the disputes, including borders, refugees and Jerusalem.

In the wake of progress in talks and confidence-building, Israel released Marwan Barghouti from prison. With Abu-Mazen's subsequent resignation, Barghouti was elected chair of the PLO and then Palestinian Authority president. Upon his release, Barghouti declared that he was willing to enter into negotiations with Israel with no pre-conditions. He used the "prisoners' document" drafted with Hamas during his incarceration as the basis for peace talks. His next step was to propose a peace agreement with Israel based on '67 lines without withdrawing from the settlements. According to his proposal, the sides agreed that Israelis that wished to continue residing in Palestine could do so under the condition that they accept the laws of the state where they chose to reside.

Against this backdrop, a supportive political base formed on both sides for withdrawal from the territories with certain border adjustments, and a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority was signed. Most of the Jewish inhabitants in the large settlement blocs were annexed to Israel, while the rest — about 80,000 — were permitted to remain in their homes on condition that they accepted Palestinian sovereignty. Most, if not all, chose to depart and receive compensation.

An independent Palestinian state

The establishment of Palestine in 2012, with recognised and approved borders, generated a wave of euphoria and sympathy around the globe. In Israel the left celebrated its victory, viewing it as testimony to its sober and sane political path since the signing of the Oslo Accords.

Unanticipated implications of Israeli withdrawal soon became clear. I admit that I myself was taken by surprise, and came to understand just how fragile our region is.

In the elections held after Palestine was declared, Hamas, led by its militant wing, won a large majority in the parliament. This wing demanded the continuation of the struggle to liberate the Palestinians' occupied homeland, including the Galilee, the Negev, Haifa, Jaffa, Acre, Lod and Ramle. The leader of Hezbollah repeatedly stated that Israel was a fly-by-night phenomenon that was shrinking territorially and would soon disappear from the map. Iran and Syria continually spurred their "Palestinian brothers" to bear the standard of resistance until the Zionist enemy was uprooted from the land. President Barghouti fell in line with the militant rhetoric and won praise from powerful Muslim parties in Iran, Turkey, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan and Yemen.

The Israeli Arabs, led by intellectuals with a nationalist and Islamist orientation, were influenced by the Islamist wave that washed over the region. In contrast to the past, they explicitly demanded full autonomy and a binational state. To words were added actions: demonstrations on main thoroughfares in the Galilee and the Negev accompanied by stone-throwing and shooting and a siege on Jewish communities compelled Jews to move about in convoys. In an article published in 2013, I raised the question of whether we hadn't returned to the pre-state days. Attempts to disperse the demonstrations ended in dozens of Arabs dead and hundreds wounded, igniting the Galilee, the Negev, Palestine, Jordan, and Egypt. Mass protests washed over the Arab capitals and those of other Muslim countries. A mass vigil was held in Trafalgar Square in solidarity with the oppressed Arabs in Israel and Palestine. Israel was condemned by the UN General Assembly, and Egypt and Jordan withdrew their ambassadors. Hamas made contact with militant elements among the Israeli Arabs with the objective of overthrowing the Zionist occupying regime. Iran and Syria encouraged militant factions to continue their terror against Israel, and according to the Israeli government, even provided them with weapons and advanced training.

In Jordan and Egypt the Islamist elements grew strong and demanded that peace agreements with Israel be rescinded. Around the globe Israel was seen as the obstacle to stability in the region. Who would have believed that these would be the consequences of a peace agreement? Every so often, I asked myself whether those of us who had preached Israel's withdrawal weren't to blame for the situation. And indeed Israel's friends, who had demanded in the past that it withdraw from the territories in order to preserve its character, now called for it to change its nature and adopt a character that acknowledged the presence of Arabs among its citizenry. In a conversation with Israel's Prime Minister, the US president proposed that Israel should show more flexibility towards the Arab Israelis and adopt an inclusive approach that would replace the label "Jewish democratic state" with "Israeli democratic state". "At the end of the day", he said, "you created a unique people — the Israeli people — who differ in character from the Jewish people." This change, the president continued, "will give expression to the existence of an Israeli nation comprised of members of various faiths: Jews, Muslims, and Christians." This is a small concession, he said, "that would eventually yield worldwide payoff." The Israelis interpreted the remarks made by its friend and ally as meaning that in an Arab-dominated space such as the Middle East, there is no room for a national Jewish home, whose very existence causes dissent and instability.

All Palestine's energy was directed into the geopolitical realm at the expense of economic development. Palestine deteriorated economically and its GNP, which had grown until the signing of the peace agreement, plummeted to a new low. Financiers around the world refused to invest in Palestine, and Palestinian intellectuals, who had in the past clustered in Ramallah, pounded on the doors of embassies in an attempt to obtain visas to their countries.

On Independence Day eve 2018, just as Israel was getting ready to mark seventy years of statehood, two shoulder-launched missiles were fired at an El Al plane carrying hundreds of passengers landing at Ben Gurion Airport. The entire planeload —270 people — was killed. Public opinion in Israel turned 180 degrees overnight. Articles appeared criticising the peace agreements and the naiveté of Israel's leadership. "Israel is friendless!" shouted the headlines in one paper. "We must rely on our power alone." In harsh battles that unfolded in June 2018, the IDF retook the West Bank, cut its transportation link with Gaza, and imposed a military regime on the Arab communities in Israel. In the Negev, a state of emergency was declared which involved 350,000 Bedouin being rounded up and concentrated in seven cities. In response, battles broke out in Jordan and Egypt between Palestine supporters and the regimes in which hundreds were killed and thousands wounded.

For the first time in years the Western press was questioning the wisdom of a Palestinian state. In a piece I published in the Washington Post in October 2018, I claimed that such a state would not only be unsustainable, but would cause instability in the entire region. By the way, following the publication of that piece, I was forced to relocate from Ramallah to Jerusalem.

Against the backdrop of internal tension in the Arab world and uncertainty in the wake of the reoccupation, the Arab states declared a state of high alert. Iran intensified its threats on Israel, and the entire region appeared to be on the brink of an Armageddon. In turn, the UN Security Council passed a resolution calling for a withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestine and replacing them with an international force that would act to ensure Palestine's security and economic and institutional rehabilitation.

Palestine as a trusteeship

Thus the third period in Palestine's history began: a trusteeship state under UN protection. IDF forces, which withdrew from most of the reconquered territories, stationed themselves in strategic areas atop the hills of Judaea and Samaria with the objective of preventing attacks on population centres in central Israel, and were deployed along the Jordan Rift with the objective of preventing infiltration by enemy forces from the east.

Israel claimed that it was willing to withdraw to political borders as agreed in the 2012 peace treaty, but as long as Palestine remained unstable, it was obligated to ensure the security of its citizens by means of a presence on the security border. In its defence Israel further claimed that the superpowers too deploy their forces in zones bordering hostile territory such as those in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The superpowers' activity on Palestinian soil was carried out similarly to that carried out in the past in Bosnia and Kosovo: a commissioner appointed by the superpowers acted to rehabilitate the economy, develop infrastructure, improve standards of living and education and establish contacts between Palestine and Israel. The idea was to establish conditions within Palestine that would foster local industry and reduce the need for imported goods. Unfortunately, this did not help. A smuggling network sabotaged local industry. Despite five years' intense activity on the part of the UN, the future of Palestine is still shrouded in uncertainty. There are those who support the intensification of Jordan's and Egypt's involvement in Palestine, and there are those who even propose annexing the West Bank to Jordan and Gaza to Egypt.

Last month, I attended a conference of heads of state and academics hosted by UN University, where the central question was how to administer remnants of states such as Bosnia, Kosovo, and Palestine. The heart of the problem is how to draft new regulations in international law that will support a situation that lies between sovereignty and trusteeship. Israel was absent from the discussions and its spokespeople expressed scepticism regarding the results. "We've had enough of talks," the Israeli Prime Minister said in explaining Israel's absence from the conference. In a speech yesterday, the eve of Israel's 75th Independence Day, he said:

> We are a peace-seeking people. We forfeited our ancestors' legacy in Hebron, Samaria and Beit El. We withdrew IDF forces, evacuated ideological settlers risking a civil war, we absorbed Palestinian refugees. And what did we get in return? Conflict, irredentism and terror. We learned several lessons the hard way. The first lesson is that ensuring the existence and security of Israel demands **clear political borders** encompassing a clear Jewish majority. Yet that's not all. The second lesson is that alongside political borders, we need **sustainable security borders** that afford a defence, deterrence and security zone. Between these two borders - political and security - we are willing to consider various solutions that allow administration of the **wild frontier**. A third lesson is that the

Palestinian problem cannot be solved in Judaea and Samaria without resolving the issue of Arabs in Israel. We can no longer apply the "salami system", i.e., starting in Judaea and Samaria and ending in the Negev and the Galilee. The fourth lesson is that Israeli concessions pave the way for more concessions. Those who called us an apartheid state have continued to do so, even after we withdrew. Those who believed that withdrawal would herald an era of peace were sorry to learn that the conflict only got worse. The most important lesson is that we live in a hostile area that is violently opposed to Jews' settling their ancestral land. If we don't maintain our strength and build **an iron wall** of power and deterrence, we will not be able to dwell here much longer.

As a veteran journalist living here for twenty years I consider the lessons set forth by the Prime Minister vital for anyone aspiring to find a solution to the complex geopolitical conundrum of borders between Israel and Palestine. I have no doubt that if it weren't for Israel's strength, Israel's friends abroad and its critics at home would have brought upon it a fate like that concocted for Czechoslovakia by Chamberlain, Hitler, Daladier and Mussolini in the Munich Agreement of September 1938.

Scenario 4: Agreed-upon borders

At the beginning of 2011, Marwan Barghouti was elected president of the Palestinian Authority. His special relationship with the leaders of the various Palestinian factions such as the Democratic Front and Hamas carried him to a sweeping victory. Also, his contribution to the successful close of the Shalit affair caused him to be looked upon favourably in the Palestinian street. While Barghouti was not released in a prisoner exchange, when Mahmoud Abbas decided to step down and elections were scheduled, it was clear that he would be elected whether still incarcerated or not. Releasing him before the elections on the advice of Israel's strategic team turned out to be a worthwhile gesture.

Even before assuming his duties, Barghouti made it clear that he would work towards national rapprochement between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority as set out in the "prisoners' document", and would assemble a unity government that would conduct negotiations with Israel. And indeed, on May 16, 2011, the Palestinian Authority Cabinet won the confidence of the Palestinian parliament, which convened in Ramallah for a joint session of members from Gaza, Judaea and Samaria.

The first clause in the bylaws of the Palestinian unity government, headed by Salam Fayyad with Ismail Haniyeh as Interior Minister and Jibril Rajoub as Defence Minister, determined that it would conduct speedy negotiations towards peace with Israel based on '67 lines with willingness for border adjustments and a land link between the West Bank and Gaza. The significant innovation in these bylaws was the statement that Israelis residing in settlements inside what would become Palestinian territory could continue living there if they agreed to abide by PA law.

Outrage ensued. Rightists left the Israeli coalition, among them members of Likud, Yisrael Beiteinu and Shas; Kadima joined the coalition. The new Israeli government agreed to enter into negotiations with the Palestinian Authority as per the two-states-for-two-peoples paradigm, with a national minority of each side residing inside the other's territory. After a year of talks, the sides agreed on borders between the two countries. This included a 4% territorial exchange that allowed for the annexation to Israel of Jerusalem's Jewish neighbourhoods and large settlement blocs. Of a total of half a million Israelis who had resided over the Green Line, 370,000 returned to inside Israel's borders and 115,000 remained in Palestine.

According to the agreement, Israel was allotted a two-year period, or until the end of the present Knesset's term, to carry out the stipulated changes. The Evacuation Compensation Act, enacted within two months, clarified the nature of the compensation that each evacuated family would receive and ruled that only those communities where at least two thirds of the residents had decided to remain in Palestine would be recognised as Jewish communities with property rights; all other communities outside the Green Line would be evacuated.

The Israeli authorities were compliant: forty communities containing a total of 55,000 residents remained in Judaea and Samaria, while about 60,000 were evacuated as per the Evacuation Compensation Act. All structures in the former settlements, including homes, passed to the Palestinian administration and were used to house refugees. As a goodwill gesture, and as per an agreement, the end of the evacuation process heralded recognition by both sides that Jerusalem was the capital of both countries and that there would be a cessation of the conflict. Israel agreed to accept 55,000 Palestinian refugees on the basis of family reunification, a process that would be completed in 2018.

In addition a peace agreement was signed between Israel and Syria, and in 2020, an agreement was signed with Saudi Arabia. While Hezbollah continued to oppose peace with Israel, its power in the international arena decreased; some surmise that fourteen years after Operation Cast Lead, Israel and Lebanon will also sign a peace agreement.

Insane? Perhaps. Possible? It's up to us!

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