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Article 1.

The Washington Institute

## **Asset Test: How the United States Benefits from Its Alliance with Israel**

(Executive Summery)

[Michael Eisenstadt](#) and [David Pollock](#)

September 2012 -- THE U.S.-ISRAEL special relationship has traditionally been defined in terms of a moral obligation, shared values, and common interests. During the Cold War, Israel also came to be seen as a

strategic asset that served as a bulwark against Soviet influence and a counter to radical Arab nationalism. U.S. military assistance to Israel contributed to peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan, and has deterred the outbreak of major interstate Arab-Israeli conflicts since 1982. The U.S.-Israel relationship likewise has helped spur closer U.S.- Arab ties ever since the 1973 war, because most Arabs have believed that only the United States could deliver the Israeli concessions that they required for a peace agreement. Yet since the end of the Cold War, some in the United States—and Israel—have preferred not to discuss the details of the security relationship, at least in public, because it was feared that it would disrupt U.S. cooperation with Arab and Muslim allies. As a result, many of the benefits of U.S.-Israel security cooperation have gone unrecognized.

A decade after 9/11, however, al-Qaeda is a fragmented, weakened organization. And while the war on al-Qaeda and its affiliates is far from over, the United States faces a changed, more complex security environment. It is defined not only by the “hard” security challenges posed by terrorism and conventional/hybrid military threats, but also by new and emerging “soft” security challenges related to economic competitiveness, the information technology revolution, sustainability (i.e., water and food security, and the quest for energy alternatives), and public health. All of these challenges will test U.S. resilience and require broad international cooperation if they are to be solved. Israel is one of the few countries positioned to help the United States deal with both these traditional and emerging security challenges.

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#### The Enduring Strategic Logic

Many of the considerations that provided the rationale for the U.S.-Israel security relationship during the Cold War remain valid today. Israel is a bulwark against radical Islamism in the Levant, as embodied by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and a quiet but effective ally of Jordan. U.S. military support helps bolster Israeli deterrence against hostile state and nonstate actors, while military equipment pre-positioned in Israel, valued at nearly \$1.2 billion, is available to support U.S. contingencies in the eastern Mediterranean and Persian Gulf. Likewise, Israel continues to serve as a testing ground for advanced weapons and war-fighting concepts, many of which are eventually employed by the United States. Washington, for its part, is still seen as an address for Arabs seeking to influence Israeli policies, while Israel is still seen as an address for some Arabs seeking to influence Washington.

Israel is the only de facto nuclear weapons state in the region. While Israel’s bomb may have contributed to initial, unsuccessful attempts at nuclear proliferation by Egypt, Libya, and Syria, its policy of opacity also made it easier for some of these countries to subsequently forgo nuclear weapons. And its policy of prevention in the region has precluded the

emergence of additional nuclear weapons states in Iraq (1981) and Syria (2007)—at least thus far.

The relationship with Israel has not been without risks for Washington, or without costs for the United States in terms of its standing in Arab and Muslim states. The 1973 October War nearly led to a confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, while the emergency resupply of Israeli forces during the war prompted an Arab oil embargo. The 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon led to an ill-fated U.S. intervention in Lebanon and helped catalyze the emergence of Hizballah, which has targeted both U.S. and Israeli interests. American support for Israel during the first and second intifadas, the 2006 war against Hizballah, and during the 2008–2009 war in Gaza reinforced negative attitudes against the United States in many Arab states. Likewise, U.S. support for Israel has been used by al-Qaeda as a central theme in its propaganda. Apart from these cases, however, the impact of American support for Israel on U.S. interests has been quite limited—and nowhere near as great as the costs of U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf.

In fact, the historical record shows that in recent decades, U.S. support for Israel has not affected the substance of America's relationship with its Arab, Muslim, or other allies. Except for UN votes, which are largely symbolic, there is no evidence that any of these countries withheld support for U.S. efforts to contain Iraq in the 1990s, fight al-Qaeda, or contain Iran. Measured in concrete terms at both official and popular levels, Arab ties with the United States have flourished over the past decade: bilateral trade and investment are booming, Arabs are coming to the United States in record numbers, anti-American street protests have fallen dramatically since the start of the Iraq war in 2003, and defense cooperation is as close as ever—all despite continued U.S. support for Israel. Furthermore, several Arab states maintain intelligence ties with Israel and even engage in behind-the-scenes efforts to enlist Israel as an intermediary with Washington. All this only underscores the enduring primacy of interests, as opposed to attitudes, in U.S. relations with Arab and other predominantly Muslim states.

The United States has given Israel extensive diplomatic, economic, and military support, committed to preserve Israel's "qualitative military edge," granted it "major non-NATO ally" status, signed a free-trade

agreement with the Jewish state, and has provided Israel with substantial military and economic aid—topping \$115 billion since 1949. But this assistance has enabled Israel to build a military that has obviated the need for U.S. military intervention on Israel’s behalf. By contrast, the United States has spent much in blood and treasure—since the 1970s, more than 6,500 killed, tens of thousands wounded, and several trillion dollars—to ensure the free flow of oil, prevent the emergence of a regional hegemon (first Iraq, then Iran), and fight terrorist groups that arose partly in response to the U.S. presence in the Gulf. This was all because America’s Arab allies were unable to secure these objectives on their own.

Israel is a democracy that shares Washington’s interests in regional stability, in successful democratic transitions in formerly authoritarian regimes, in countering violent Islamic extremism, and in preventing additional nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. The Arab uprisings have highlighted the unstable foundations of some of Washington’s traditional Arab allies. At a time of great uncertainty, and of growing tensions with Iran, the United States is even more likely to depend on its more stable nondemocratic allies, such as Saudi Arabia, and its stable democratic allies, such as Israel and Turkey, to secure its interests in the region.

#### Dealing with Traditional Threats

To deal with the traditional “hard” security threats they both face, the United States and Israel collaborate in numerous areas: intelligence sharing, rocket and missile defense, military and defense-industrial cooperation, and since 9/11, homeland security.

Intelligence cooperation. During the Cold War, Israeli intelligence provided invaluable information regarding Soviet intentions, weapons systems, and intelligence activities, as well as the activities of Palestinian and other Arab terrorist groups (such as Hizballah) that targeted both U.S. and Israeli interests. Israeli intelligence played a key role in exposing Iraqi efforts to rebuild its nuclear program following the Osiraq raid of 1981, helping UN weapons inspectors dismantle Iraq’s WMD programs after the 1991 Gulf War, uncovering Russian support for Iran’s missile program in the mid-1990s, and exposing Syria’s nuclear program before Israel’s air force destroyed it in 2007. Today, Israeli intelligence remains a major

source of information regarding Iran's nuclear program, Hizballah's global activities, and the activities of al-Qaeda affiliates—and Israeli intelligence operations have helped delay Iran's nuclear program. Israel's comparative advantages include a sustained focus on key hard targets, the cultivation of unique sources and innovative methods, and a willingness to incur risk. And as Washington cuts its intelligence budget in the coming years, it will increasingly rely on allies such as Israel to fill capabilities and knowledge gaps, manage risk, and maintain situational awareness.

**Rocket/missile defense.** Israel is America's most sophisticated and experienced partner in this domain. It is the only country in the world with an operational national missile defense system protecting major population centers. Since the late 1980s, U.S. aid for this program has exceeded \$3 billion. In return, the United States has obtained a deeper understanding of the rocket and missile threat in the Middle East, and lessons-learned drawn from Israel's extensive operational experience dating to 1991. Moreover, U.S. funding of the Arrow III interceptor will provide Washington with insights into a system that will be more capable and advanced than anything the United States has on the drawing board.

Israel's Iron Dome counter-rocket system has enabled Israel to act with restraint during recent rocket attacks from Gaza and, along with another system, David's Sling, provides unique capabilities that neither the United States nor its allies currently possess. Accordingly, the United States and some of its allies are considering acquiring the latter system to protect troops deployed in areas subject to a heightened threat of rocket attack.

**Military cooperation.** The armed forces of the United States and Israel have benefited from decades of extensive collaboration in the fields of counterterrorism, military lessons learned, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

**Counterterrorism.** The Israeli military conducted the first successful rescue of hostages from a hijacked airline in 1972 and pioneered many of the tactics eventually adopted by counterterrorism

units the world over. Since then, U.S. and Israeli special forces have forged professional relationships and regularly train together. Israeli intel-

ligence support has been instrumental to the apprehension by U.S. authorities of wanted terrorists, and Israel is widely believed to have killed Hizballah's Imad Mughniyah, who had more American blood on his hands than any terrorist besides Usama bin Laden. The United States and Israel also conduct cooperative counterterrorism research and development (██████) through the Combating Terrorism Technical Support Office.

■ ■ Military lessons learned. Lessons learned from the 1973 October War influenced the design of a number of key weapons systems and contributed to the emergence of the U.S. military that prevailed in Operation Desert Storm in 1991. Lessons learned from Israel's 1982 war in Lebanon regarding the use of decoys and UAVs and the conduct of an integrated air-defense suppression campaign were applied in subsequent U.S. operations over Libya, Iraq, and the former Yugoslavia. And lessons learned from the 2000–2005 intifada and the 2008–2009 Israeli incursion into Gaza regarding counterterrorist operations, urban warfare, and the use of dogs in combat have been applied by U.S. forces in Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond. In particular, Israel's approach to integrating human and technical collection means and weapons platforms (attack helicopters, strike aircraft, and UAVs) has profoundly influenced the U.S. approach to targeting violent extremist networks in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen.

■ ■ UAVs and robotics. Israel is a pioneer in the development and use of UAVs for intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and combat, and Israeli innovations in this area during the 1982 Lebanon war and afterward jump-started the U.S. program. Since purchasing its first Israeli UAVs in the mid-1980s, the United States has emerged as the world leader in the production and employment of unmanned vehicles—although the U.S. government and industry continue to use a number of Israeli systems. Israel is also producing robotic systems for use on the land and in the sea, and the IDF is pushing to rapidly integrate robotic systems into its force structure. Given its head start in this arena, Israel stands to play a leading role in the fielding of ground and naval unmanned systems, much as it led in the development and use of unmanned aerial vehicles.

Defense-industrial cooperation. In the past decade, Israel has emerged as a major supplier of defense articles to the U.S. military, with sales growing from \$300 million prior to 9/11 to \$1.5 billion annually today (or about 20 percent of Israel's total arms exports). In many cases, Israeli firms have partnered with American firms to enhance the prospects of sales to the U.S. military and to third countries, thus preserving or creating U.S. jobs. The numerous Israeli-origin defense articles used by the U.S. military include UAVs, airborne targeting pods, precision air-to-ground munitions, helmet-mounted sights, lifesaving armor used on armored bulldozers, thousands of logistical vehicles, and more than 15,000 armored vehicles (MRAPs, Bradley IFVs, M1 tanks, and AAV-7 and Stryker AFVs), naval point-defense weapons systems, and battlefield intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) systems. In the future, Israel's defense industries—working with U.S. partners—are likely to remain important niche suppliers of innovative high-tech items and systems that fill U.S. capabilities gaps in a number of areas, including robotics, rocket defenses, battlefield ISR, advanced munitions, passive and active defenses for armored vehicles, and mini-satellites.

Homeland security. Following the attacks of 9/11, homeland security became a major U.S. priority, and in the decade since, U.S.-Israel cooperation in this area has expanded dramatically. Areas of cooperation include counterterrorism; critical infrastructure protection; emergency planning, response, and consequence management; aviation and port security; cybersecurity; chemical, biological, nuclear, and radiological (CBNR) security; and joint ████████ of homeland security technologies.

Since 9/11, tens of thousands of U.S. law enforcement, homeland security, and emergency services personnel have been trained on counterterrorism, emergency response, and consequence management techniques used in Israel.

Accordingly, the Transportation Security Administration adopted aircraft security measures (sealed cockpits with armored doors) and an approach to screening airport passengers based on behavioral observation techniques used in Israel. And many U.S. government agencies and local security authorities have acquired Israeli homeland security technologies to secure border crossings, critical infrastructure, and air- and seaports.

With the passing of the post-9/11 era, the nature of national security is being redefined. In addition to traditional threats—terrorism, rocket/missile and WMD proliferation, and conventional warfare—the United States faces a number of new and emerging security challenges. These include the imperative to revitalize the American economy, secure and exploit the cyber domain, deal with threats to water and food security, pursue diverse and renewable energy sources, improve public health, and enhance societal resilience. Israel is positioned to make significant contributions in all these areas.

**Economic revitalization.** There is bipartisan agreement that restoring the vitality and competitiveness of the U.S. economy is crucial to preserving U.S. global leadership. Technological innovation is key to achieving this goal. While Israel is a small country, it ranks among the top half-dozen countries worldwide in various indices of innovation. U.S.-Israel investment, █████, and joint ventures create tens of thousands of jobs for American workers in information technology, medical █████, and defense. Israel is among the top twenty international direct investors in the United States, and two-way trade between America and Israel leads a number of much larger countries, such as Spain and Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, in certain niche areas (such as information technology and cybersecurity, clean technology [cleantech] and renewable energy sources, biomedical devices and instruments, and defense) Israel plays an outsize role. Many of the largest U.S. high-tech companies have set up technology incubators in Israel (including Microsoft, Apple, Cisco, Abbott Laboratories, IBM, Google, GE, and General Motors). In addition, the United States and Israel have created several very successful binational foundations to spur joint █████ and start-ups in emerging technologies, generating billions of dollars in additional revenues over the past quarter-century. And because of the longstanding U.S.- Israel relationship, U.S. companies are frequently the partners of choice for Israeli firms seeking to market their products in the United States and globally.

**Cyberdefense/Cyberwar.** Israel has emerged as a pioneer in IT, and U.S.- Israel cybersecurity cooperation in the private sector is substantial. The architecture for many of Intel's most successful computer chips was invented in Israel, accounting for an estimated 40 percent of the firm's revenues. Israeli-designed algorithms and techniques are also key to

securing a significant percentage of U.S. financial transactions and telecommunications. Thus, in early 2012, Cisco paid \$5 billion to acquire the Israeli-founded firm NDS, one of the top TV-encryption companies worldwide. Israeli researchers also play a disproportionate role in many other computer-related and telecommunications inventions and applications, including instant messaging, voice-over internet protocol (VoIP), online money transfers, and data mining programs. Official U.S.-Israel cyber cooperation is also reported to be significant, and may include offensive cyberwarfare against Iran's nuclear program.

**Water and food security.** In the coming years, large parts of the Middle East, the western United States, and other regions of the world are increasingly likely to experience freshwater shortages due to rapid population growth, climate change, and economic development—with potentially serious implications for food security. Israel has been developing solutions to this problem since its establishment, becoming a world leader in water conservation and management and high-tech Israel recycles more than 80 percent of its wastewater, the highest level in the world. Israel is also a pioneer of drip-irrigation for farming in arid regions, capturing 50 percent of the global market in this area—with major production facilities in the United States. And Israel is emerging as a player in desalination, ranking fourth worldwide in reverse osmosis, which requires less energy than other means of desalination and is well suited for producing water for the agricultural and industrial applications that account for 80 percent of total use.

Israel's 100,000 dairy cows are the most productive in the world, due to scientific breeding and feeding techniques that it is sharing with developing countries. An Israeli firm has developed an online system to advise farmers on how to maximize crop yields—partnering with IBM to market this product worldwide. And Israel is providing aquaculture techniques for an international partnership at Lake Victoria, which is the source of sustenance for five million Africans. Such innovations support long-term U.S. national security objectives in the developing world, including sustainable development, water and food security, economic growth, and political stability.

**Energy security.** The recent discovery of large natural gas deposits off Israel's shores promises to make it self-sufficient in energy within a

decade, and a significant net gas exporter. But Israel also has the potential to make important contributions in cleantech/renewable energy sources. Ideas, products, and processes originating in Israel already help U.S. energy companies. These include the top finishers in recent GE Ecomagination competitions—including a solar window that will enable office buildings to produce their own electricity, and a design for a more efficient, more cost-effective wind turbine rotor. Israeli innovations also underpin the achievements of BrightSource Energy, which is building a plant in California to double the amount of solar thermal electricity produced in America. Other examples are the Israeli technologies in use by the U.S. firm Virent Inc. to

commercialize biofuels made from cellulose feedstock, and the Better Place electric car, which will provide insights into the commercial viability of this highly innovative technology.

Medical research. Israel is a world leader in basic research and clinical applications in the medical field. It produces the most medical device patents per capita of any country, and the Weizmann Institute of Science has generated thousands of medical products and earned more royalties from them than any other academic institution anywhere. Teva is the largest generic drug manufacturer in the world, with major operations in the United States. Israel is also a world leader in the computerization of patient records. The most recent Israeli medical innovations include a video camera in a pill for noninvasive diagnostics; a cancer vaccine currently in clinical trials; a method of noninvasive brain-function imaging; and a growing list of highly effective medicines.

U.S.-Israel medical cooperation is broad and deep; Israeli-developed techniques, procedures, and products are in widespread use in the United States, in both military and civilian settings. The U.S. military and numerous emergency services use a novel Israeli bandage that enables more rapid treatment of the injured, and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals are evaluating an Israeli exoskeleton that enables wounded veterans to walk again. Israel is also on the cutting edge in medical imaging, nuclear medicine, and health care IT, with GE's Israeli subsidiaries contributing to that company's leading status in these areas. Israel's medical accomplishments contribute to the health of the American public and economy, by helping reduce health care costs, increasing the

productivity of the American workforce, and adding to the commercial success of U.S. biomedical manufacturers. U.S.-Israel cooperation also provides public health benefits for the developing world, such as a U.S.-UN project to circumcise 20 million Africans to prevent AIDS—based on Israeli techniques and inventions used in Swaziland and South Africa.

**Societal resilience.** As a country that has endured six decades of war and terror and has still managed to build a flourishing economy and vibrant democracy, Israel offers insights into individual and societal resilience. Israeli techniques for enhancing warrior resilience are helping U.S. soldiers prepare for multiple combat tours and deal with post-traumatic stress disorder. U.S. government agencies have drawn lessons-learned from the Israeli experience in dealing with terrorism. And practitioners and administrators from both countries collaborate on advances in emergency response, mass casualty treatment, and preventive education and information strategies.

#### Future challenges

Israel is a small country that punches way above its weight in a number of areas, enabling it to make important contributions to various U.S. national security, economic, and global foreign policy objectives. Achieving the full potential of this strategic partnership, however, will require that Israel (and the United States) deal with a variety of challenges enumerated below.

**Peace with the Palestinians.** The perception that Israel bears a measure of responsibility for the current impasse with the Palestinian Authority has gained traction in various circles in the United States, including parts of official Washington, and could someday endanger the U.S.-Israeli relationship. This is a largely self-inflicted wound; greater restraint with regard to land expropriations, the destruction of illegal Palestinian dwellings, and settlement construction would help avoid unnecessary tensions between Israel and the United States while keeping the focus on the many common interests these allies share.

**The Arab uprisings.** To the extent that new, more populist governments in Egypt and perhaps elsewhere are hostile to Israel, or more sensitive to public opinion, the United States may find it more difficult to balance its relationship with Israel and the Arabs. Yet Arab political turmoil also has the potential to reinforce the U.S.

alliance with Israel—because it is already a strong, stable democracy where public opinion is solidly pro-American.

Reducing mistrust. While rooted in close ties in a large number of areas, U.S.-Israel relations are still affected by an undercurrent of mistrust. This reflects past incidents (such as the Jonathan Pollard affair, Israeli technology and arms transfers to China, or Washington's insistence on the 2006 election that brought Hamas to power), and current tensions caused by divergent approaches toward the peace process and toward Iran. It also reflects the impact of an Israeli interpersonal and political style that some Americans find off-putting. While differences between even the closest of allies are inevitable, both sides can do more to avoid or defuse such tensions.

Self-reliance. The U.S.-Israel relationship has thrived, in part, because Israel has never asked Americans to risk their lives on its behalf. Should the United States eventually decide—for its own reasons—to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities, some Americans may nonetheless conclude that the United States acted at Israel's behest, thereby undermining a principle that has underpinned the U.S.- Israel relationship for decades. Moreover, indefinite requests for U.S. military aid, especially if the U.S. economy remains in the doldrums and Israel reaps an energy windfall in the coming years, could introduce additional tensions into the relationship.

Economic challenges. Israel transformed an economy with high unemployment and hyperinflation in the 1980s into one enjoying solid growth ever since. This is a remarkable achievement. Yet there are danger signs to be addressed if Israel is to ensure its economic vitality. These include the highest poverty rate of any country within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with dramatic disparities in the distribution of wealth; a lackluster public education system; and a growing number of unemployed in the ultraorthodox Jewish and the Arab communities—which by 2040 may make up half of Israel's population. Steps are under way to address some of these issues, but it remains to be seen if they will prove sufficient.

Delegitimization. Israel's enemies and critics are turning to boycotts, divestment campaigns, and efforts to delegitimize the Jewish state as a means of diplomatically isolating it, limiting its military and economic

options, and pressuring it to unilaterally withdraw from the West Bank (which, for some, would be a first step toward Israel's elimination). While such efforts have not garnered widespread support in the United States and have had only a limited impact thus far, they could, if successful, harm investment in Israel and hinder collaborative [REDACTED] and production efforts central to the Israeli economy and to U.S.-Israel relations.

## Conclusions

Israel is a small country, but one that contributes significantly in a number of areas important to the security of the United States. Israel is a valued partner for the U.S. intelligence and counterterrorism communities and for the U.S. military. It is a leader in the development of technologies that are transforming the face of modern warfare, including cyber systems, robotics, rocket/missile defenses, battlefield ISR, advanced munitions, passive and active defenses for armored vehicles, and mini-satellites. And Israeli innovations in a number of civilian areas—IT, water conservation and management, high-tech agriculture, medical [REDACTED], clean-tech/renewable energy, and societal resilience—have the potential to help the United States meet many of the “soft” security and global economic competitiveness issues of the future.

For this potential to be fully realized, there needs to be greater recognition that Israel not only benefits immensely from U.S. support, but also contributes significantly to U.S. interests. Israel's own strength and stability, along with its military, technological, and scientific achievements, enhance the U.S. ability to meet the security, economic, and development requirements (at home and abroad) that are increasingly essential to preserving American prosperity and leadership.

Thus, U.S. leaders and officials should encourage and explicitly acknowledge these partnerships with Israel, alongside the more traditionally invoked shared democratic values, moral commitments, and Middle East peacemaking aspirations. U.S. commercial, technical, scientific, medical, and aid agencies should take greater advantage of Israeli experience and expertise—and more actively involve Israel alongside other international partners. And the U.S. private sector business, technological, and scientific communities, which are already deeply invested in practical partnerships with their Israeli

counterparts, should be further incentivized to bring home the benefits of these multifaceted and unusually productive bilateral connections.

*MICHAEL EISENSTADT is director of the Military and Security Studies Program at The Washington Institute, focusing on irregular and conventional warfare and nuclear weapons proliferation in the Middle East. DAVID POLLOCK is the Kaufman fellow at The Washington Institute, focusing on Mideast political dynamics and U.S. policy in the region.*

Article 2.

BBC

## **Saudi Arabia's al-Qaeda challenge**

Gerald Butt

8 September 2012 -- Saudi Arabia's continuing campaign against al-Qaeda-inspired terrorism has enjoyed considerable success. The atmosphere in the country is noticeably more relaxed than it was a few years ago when the kingdom was buffeted by several major suicide bombings.

But the arrest earlier this month of eight men accused of plotting terror attacks in Riyadh and Jeddah is proof that the campaign is not over. As one Saudi newspaper editorial put it: "Renewed vigilance is required." Of the eight men arrested in the latest sweep, two were Saudis and the other six were Yemenis. There seems little doubt that the terror plot was hatched in Yemen.

It is well known that al-Qaeda supporters are exploiting the lawlessness in that country to set up bases. But even if order were to be restored to Yemen, Saudi security officials would still need to be vigilant: the war in Syria is giving impetus to al-Qaeda groups there, and energizing jihadists in Iraq.

Tightening border controls is only part of the solution. Saudi officials know they also have to take steps at home to discourage their own young

men from being lured into groups advocating the use of violence in the name of Islam.

For since the monstrous 9/11 World Trade Centre attacks in 2001 and up to the failed plot in the kingdom earlier this month, a surprising number of Saudi nationals have been associated with terror incidents.

Trouble on the borders

The Saudi authorities' attempts to eliminate al-Qaeda, and thereby remove its potential attraction to the kingdom's disaffected young men, have been greatly hindered by developments beyond the country's borders.

The absence of a strong central government in Yemen has given al-Qaeda, despite frequent US drone attacks, the freedom it has been looking for.

Furthermore, jihadist leaders are unequivocal about their aims.

Earlier this year, an Islamist website called on Muslims to "do everything possible to strengthen the jihadist front in Yemen as it serves as a source of back-up and reinforcement for operations in the Land of the Two Mosques [Saudi Arabia]."

Some Muslims are heeding the call. Just last week, the Yemeni authorities arrested two Egyptians who had entered the country illegally, en route to Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi government's concern is that the war in Syria and rising sectarian tension in Iraq will provide yet more recruiting and training opportunities for al-Qaeda, creating more threats to the kingdom.

'New and decent lives'

The challenge, as ever, will be to convince young Saudis of the folly and danger of attaching themselves to jihadists.

Many Saudis remain mystified by the apparent appeal of such groups.

Writing in the daily al-Watan, columnist Yahya al-Amir wondered "why Saudi youth follow calls to jihad, fighting and seeking martyrdom more than anyone else".

He concluded that changes were needed to religious education in the kingdom, making a clear distinction between Wahhabi Salafi doctrine on the one side, and that of jihadist Salafis advocating violence on the other. For example, he said, the concept of jihad was "a vital idea of value in Islam", but had been presented out of context in an absolutist way by jihadists. Saudi authorities have made some progress in re-education.

As another columnist pointed out, "an enlightened attitude to the rehabilitation of those who have been duped into supporting the bigoted ideas of al-Qaeda has led to a small but significant number of captured terrorists rejecting their evil past and seeking to live new and decent lives in society."

### Education challenge

The problem is that new potential al-Qaeda recruits are emerging each day in the form of disillusioned young Saudis with no jobs and meagre prospects of employment.

One reason for this is that many job-seekers lack practical skills.

Saudi Arabia's Deputy Minister of Labour Mofarrej al-Haqbani admitted in a speech last May that the education system was out of step with the demands of the market place.

"We have to deliver improved standards of training and education. I have to say here that in Saudi Arabia the majority of students after high school turn to study literary and theoretical disciplines", Mr Haqbani said, rather than technical and applied ones. "

"It is one of our major challenges," he added.

Schemes providing financial incentives for job-seekers have so far enjoyed only limited success. The same is true of the "Nitaqat" programme that requires all businesses to employ a 30% quota of Saudi nationals.

Adding to the problem is the prevailing expectation amongst Saudi youth that they should accept nothing less than a comfortable job in the civil service.

So Saudi Arabia's campaign against al-Qaeda is likely to continue for some considerable time. Only a foolhardy gambler would bet on when stability will return to Yemen, Syria and Iraq - and when every young Saudi has a job.

Article 3.

Al-Ahram Weekly

## **Peace treaty must be revised**

[Galal Nassar](#)

6 - 12 September 2012 -- Egypt is in a state of disarray. In spite of the great Egyptian grassroots revolution, anarchy remained the primary trait of the transitional period, regardless of the degree to which it was fed by political developments, constitutional and legal controversies, and major and minor events in the capital, up and down the Nile from Alexandria to Aswan, and along the fringes of the country, in Sinai, Al-Wadi Al-Gadid and Marsa Matrouh. The chaos, aggravated by mounting polarisations between the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), the Muslim Brotherhood, and other political forces, has persisted in spite of the election of a new president. But more than any other locus of tension in the country, the current conflict in Sinai epitomises the crisis of the erosion of central control, security breakdown, and their socio-political and strategic ramifications. The recent events in Sinai, which were triggered by the terrorist attack that killed 16 Egyptian soldiers, cast to the fore numerous crucial domestic and foreign policy questions not least of which are the security of Sinai and Egyptian-Israeli relations.

The situation in Sinai had already begun to deteriorate well before the January Revolution. This was largely due to two factors. The first was the security agencies' mismanagement of a series of difficulties and crises in that area, generating a growing gap between the people of Sinai and the central government. On one side, some entertained doubts as to the patriotism of the Sinai Bedouin in spite of the fact that they bore the burden of the resistance against the Israeli occupation of Sinai following the 1967 war. On the other was mounting resentment against a regime that ignored the developmental needs of Sinai, failed to open job opportunities to Sinai youth in tourist projects that proliferated after control over the area was restored to Egypt, and did not recruit them into military academies as a means to assimilate Sinai's society into national structures. The second factor was the spread of extremist thought in a religious guise during the Sadat and Mubarak eras. Almost intrinsically hostile to many domestic and foreign policy orientations, that type of thought inevitably spread to Sinai.

As the situation in Sinai deteriorated in the Mubarak era, Israel increasingly began to complain that this posed a threat to its own security. While a chief cause of that situation -- the malpractices of the security agencies -- may have been eliminated following the January Revolution,

the grip of the central state had weakened at the same time. In Sinai, that grip became almost non-existent. The result was an unprecedented boost to terrorist groups operating in that area. They became increasingly active and more and more audacious until the latest tragic attack. The repercussions of their activities also became increasingly dangerous, especially after Israel was forced to respond to the latest attack when two of the terrorists stormed across the border into Israeli territory. Israel has since seized upon this incident as a pretext for levelling harsh criticisms against Egyptian policy in Sinai and calling into question Egypt's ability to control that peninsula. This, in turn, has stirred suspicions in Egypt that Israel may be planning to reoccupy part of Sinai or to grant itself licence to undertake military operations there or, at the very least, to call for an international force to be stationed on our side of the border.

Islamist political forces and the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) in particular were quick to accuse Israel of being behind the latest attack, though to be fair a number of non-Islamist forces shared the opinion. Nevertheless, I believe that part of the Islamists' motive for pointing fingers in that direction was to deflect blame from themselves. The terrorists espouse extremist ideas that they erroneously attribute to Islam, upon which Islamist forces presumably base their political legitimacy. Also, in the immediate aftermath of the Rafah attack, President Mohamed Mursi came under fire for his "ill-considered" decision to establish closer relations with Hamas. It was argued that steps taken in this context made it easier for terrorist groups in Gaza to coordinate with and join their counterparts in Sinai in order to carry out the attack. Mursi was simultaneously criticised for his decision to grant amnesties to prisoners who had been found guilty of involvement in terrorist attacks that had claimed the lives of many Egyptians and foreigners. The critics hold that the amnesties helped create a climate conducive to terrorism which encouraged those who carried out the Rafah attack and could inspire similar attacks in the future, and all the more so if the newly released persons turn around and issue supportive "fatwas" or even actively collude in plots.

Naturally, there is always some logical basis for suspecting Israel. It remains the foremost threat to Egypt's national security to which history offers ample testimony. However, if blame is to be cast, at the very least it

should be founded upon concrete evidence and clearheaded reasoning so that we do not find ourselves chasing after groundless hypotheses that prevent us from properly attributing responsibility and, hence, from ending the vicious cycle of insecurity and instability in Sinai. Proceeding from this basis, three observations weaken the contention that Israel was behind the recent attack. First, it issued several warnings of an impending attack and sufficiently in advance to give Egyptian security agencies time to take precautions. Second, sources in SCAF mentioned that the terrorists had received support from inside Gaza while they were carrying out their operation. Apparently, mortar bombs were fired from the vicinity of Gaza airport with the purpose of distracting Israeli forces from what was happening in Sinai. Third, there is no denying the already dangerously deteriorating situation that existed in Sinai and the gross negligence on our part in handling that situation. That security breakdown, mismanagement, general anarchy and disintegration at the fringes helped clear the way for the operation, regardless of the ideological or national affiliation of the perpetrators.

So, what needs to be done? Egyptian military command has deployed land and air forces, destroyed tunnels that are often suspected of being used as a transit for terrorists, and laid siege to rugged mountainous areas used as terrorist hideouts. Often such measures produce immediate results.

Unfortunately, however, the benefit is temporary because they fail to address the root causes. Recourse to the "iron fist" approach cannot, in and of itself, remedy the security breakdown, the root causes of which are to be found in economic, social and educational problems that lay the grounds for extremism. Simultaneously, the "iron fist" approach will remain a kind of mirage unless the protocols of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty are revised, especially with regards to the deployment of Egyptian forces in Area C in Sinai. The provisions of those protocols were originally devised on the basis of two fallacious assumptions: firstly, that Egypt poses a threat to Israeli security rather than the reverse; and secondly, that the only threat that Egypt faces comes from Israel.

Theoretically, under a peace agreement, both assumptions are invalid. Be that as it may, the situation has changed radically since 1979, which should be reason enough for revising the treaty or even abolishing it. We cannot rule out, at this juncture, the possibility that some ultra-extremist

forces assume power in Israel and execute a plan to reoccupy all or part of Sinai, or assume the right to send in forces in pursuit of targets or other "security" aims. More immediately, the provisions of the treaty do not reflect the reality that terrorism in Sinai is an immediate threat to Egypt before being a potential threat to Israel. While Israel has certainly given the Egyptian military command the green light to bring in forces that are not necessarily provided for under the arrangements of the peace agreement for the purpose of counterterrorist operations, there is no logical reason why Egypt should remain at the mercy of the whims of this or that Israeli government for permission to deploy our forces as needed on our own territory.

It follows that our primary concern, now, should be to push for a revision of the unfair conditions of the protocols of the peace treaty. Indeed, President Mursi should declare this as one of his foremost priorities. The treaty does provide for the possibility of amendment, but it requires the agreement of both sides in order to set the process into motion. Therefore, as a first step, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry should submit an official request to Israel for this purpose and the president should form a negotiating team, reminiscent of our "Taba team", consisting of our best legal, military and diplomatic experts. At the same time, we should preempt possible Israeli intransigence by bringing in reinforcements into Area C in sufficient force to confront the threat of terrorism in Sinai, for otherwise we will be laying ourselves open to the likelihood that intermittent terrorist attacks will escalate into a flood that could overflow the bounds of Sinai and threaten the entire country.

We cannot overstate the need to succeed in restoring security to Sinai. Success there will reverse the trend of deterioration and mounting anarchy and herald the restoration of stability throughout the country.

Article 4.

Washington Post

## **A more religious world**

[David Ignatius](#)

September 8 -- God had a good convention: The Almighty's name was mentioned (albeit at the last minute) in the platform at the Democratic National Convention. And He was invoked no less than 12 times in the Republican platform, in case He is keeping score.

But the real news is that God is having a strong millennium, according to some fascinating poll results from the Pew Research Center. The data show that even as the developing world is getting more modern, it is also getting more religious, with especially sharp gains for both Christians and Muslims in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Pew studies are reassuring in that they indicate that the rise in Muslim and Christian belief in Africa is accompanied by a surprising degree of tolerance for others and support for democracy. They also show a deep fundamentalism, with Christian support for biblical law about equal to Muslim support for sharia.

The big change in this picture of a devout world is the role of Europe. According to a December Pew study of "[Global Christianity](#)," faith in Jesus is no longer a Euro-centric phenomenon. In 1910, 66.3 percent of the world's Christians lived in Europe; by 2010, that had fallen to only 25.9 percent.

"Europe no longer dominates global Christianity the way it did 100 years ago," Pew noted. The Americas now have the largest number and highest proportion of Christians. But it's in sub-Saharan Africa where the Christian awakening has been most dramatic, with the Christian population growing from 9 percent in 1910 to 63 percent in 2010.

The 1.6 billion Muslims around the globe were the subject of a Pew study published last month called "[The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity](#)." It involved 38,000 interviews in 39 countries. The study found that Muslim devotion was strong throughout the world, with a median of 93 percent saying they fasted during Ramadan, 77 percent saying they paid alms, and 63 percent claiming to pray five times a day.

The world's Muslims have very traditional ideas: 89 percent said they believe in fate; 88 percent said they believe in angels; 94 percent said they believe in heaven, but, interestingly, only 87 percent believe in hell.

Younger Muslims are less committed to their faith than those older than 35, but only slightly. In Egypt, for example, 74 percent of younger Muslims say that religion is very important in their lives, compared with

76 percent of their elders. And Muslim women in most regions appear more committed to religion than men, more likely to pray and more likely to read or listen to the Koran daily.

There's much talk in the Muslim world about the Sunni-Shiite split, but the Pew study found greater tolerance in countries where the two branches of Islam are mixed. In multi-ethnic Iraq and Lebanon, for example, only 14 percent and 21 percent of Sunnis, respectively, said that Shiites aren't Muslims. This compares with 53 percent among Sunnis in Egypt and 50 percent in Morocco, countries with tiny Shiite minorities.

Sub-Saharan Africa is seeing one of the great religious booms in history, according to data in an April 2010 Pew study that drew on more than 25,000 interviews in 19 countries. The study found that, since 1900, the Muslim population has increased 20-fold, to 234 million. The growth of Christianity there has been even more spectacular, growing 70-fold to 470 million. People are passionate about their religion, either way, with nine in 10 saying it is very important in their lives.

Happily, this growing religiosity in Africa doesn't seem to be accompanied by widespread intolerance for others. Big majorities in every country said that it's a "good thing" that others are "very free" to practice their religion. African Christians and Muslims also have a strong chiliastic belief, with a median of 61 percent of Christians saying that Jesus will return to Earth in their lifetime, and 52 percent of Muslims believing the caliphate will be re-established while they are alive.

Many African believers seem to have a love-hate relationship with American culture: Majorities in most countries say that they think Western movies, music and television have hurt morality; majorities also say that they like Western movies, music and television.

And what about religion in America? Various Pew studies have generated reams of interesting data, but here's my favorite item, from a September 2010 nationwide survey: It found that, when asked 32 questions testing religious knowledge, those who had the highest percentage of correct answers described themselves as "atheist" or "agnostic."