The Strategic Balance of Israel's Withdrawal from Gaza

(2005–2016)

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Executive summary

Israel completed its disengagement from the Gaza Strip in September 2005. Since then, the Gaza front has changed dramatically: more rockets have been fired into Israel, at greater ranges; Israel waged three major operations; Hamas took over Gaza and enforced law and order where the Palestinian Authority had failed to do so; and smuggling from Egypt was rife until some three years ago. Nonetheless, an October 2013 poll conducted by Molad indicated broad public support for the disengagement among Israelis,[1] and decision-makers apparently share the feeling that Israel is better off without Gaza. The facts speak for themselves: despite several IDF operations in Gaza since 2005, at no point did Israel choose to reconquer it.

All this does not deter many on the Israeli right from arguing against any future withdrawal from the West Bank on the grounds that "we cannot afford another Gaza". Apparently, they truly believe that the disengagement was a dangerous miscalculation. Some politicians even claim that Israel must reoccupy Gaza, and some have gone so far as to call for civilian resettlement of the area. Real terror threats emerging from Gaza are cited as proof that dismantling the settlements there was a mistake. This is an intentional blurring of the distinction between two markedly different aspects of the disengagement: dismantling settlements and evacuating all Israeli civilians from Gaza, on one hand, and withdrawing all military presence there, on the other.

This paper analyzes these arguments to determine whether, in the overall balance, Israel has benefited from the disengagement in terms of security and international standing. We ask: **Eleven years on and looking ahead, is Israel in a strategically better position than it would have been without leaving Gaza in 2005? Our analysis shows that the general answer is: yes. Despite the challenges that have developed since the withdrawal, Israel has benefited from its redeployment along the Gazan border. This does not mean that the actual implementation of the withdrawal was optimal.**

The study centers on Israeli security and foreign relations in the context of the disengagement. Therefore, it does not examine social concerns over the evacuation and relocation of settlers from Gaza, nor does it offer a comprehensive explanation for the discrepancy between public support for the withdrawal and the entrenched idea that the move harmed Israeli security. The study does touch briefly on political and military aspects of Israel's choice to act unilaterally. Importantly, our analysis focuses solely on Israeli interests and does not extend to the repercussions for Palestinians.

The paper consists of four sections: (1) Implications of the settler evacuation, (2) Strategic benefits of the military withdrawal, (3) Strategic disadvantages, (4) Analysis of the events leading up to Israel's 2014 operation in Gaza. The appendices offer a timeline of major events

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1 See "Peace Process, Settlements, National Priorities: Molad Survey 2013 Part II": http://www.molad.org/en/researches/Peace-Process-Settlements-National-Priorities-Molad-Survey-2013-Part-II (Hebrew). These were the most recent figures available at the time of writing; although they may have dropped somewhat after Operation Protective Edge in Gaza in 2014, it is important to note that the 2013 poll data were gathered after two similar operations.

before and after the disengagement, a map of Gaza before the disengagement, and a list of casualties of Gaza-based terrorism since September 28, 2000. The study draws primarily on Israeli and international research and journalism from before and after the disengagement. We also conducted interviews with Israeli politicians and defense officials who held key positions during the disengagement.

Key findings

● **Prior to the disengagement, Israeli settlers accounted for a fraction of Gaza's population, with 8,000 Israelis living in the midst of roughly 1.5 million Palestinians.**

● **Defending the settlements in Gaza was highly risky and required extensive resources.** Especially after the second Intifada began, Gaza settlements and their access routes came under heavy threat that required massive military protection.

● The settlements did not prevent Hamas from gaining power in Gaza or from developing rocket firing capacities. **Continued IDF presence within Gaza could not replace largescale operations there**: Israel had to operate deep within Gazan towns from time to time in the years prior to the withdrawal.

● The settlements constrained IDF action in Gaza. The presence of Israeli civilians would have immensely complicated operations such as Cast Lead (2008-9) and Protective Edge (2014), as the IDF would have had to protect civilians scattered throughout the Gaza Strip instead of dealing with the single line of defense it now faces.

● The improvement of IDF defense capacities has greatly decreased Israeli casualties of Gaza-based terrorism, despite terrorist motivation to attack Israelis remaining unchanged.

● Israel's international image, bruised by years of Intifada, **improved significantly following the disengagement.** Egypt and Jordan resent ambassadors to Israel, the international community largely supported Operation Cast Lead in 2008-9, and former US President Bush issued a letter guaranteeing Israel official US support for its basic interests in negotiations with the Palestinians.

● **Despite popular belief, the disengagement did not bring Hamas to power in Gaza.** Hamas had been gaining strength for two decades (while Israel largely stood by); the disengagement was merely one factor that allowed the movement to actualize its power. The disadvantages of the new Hamas rule are somewhat mitigated by its success in restoring law and order to Gaza and in restricting attacks by its own armed wing and by other organizations, except in largescale confrontations. This highlights the importance of Israel having powers along its borders that are both able and willing to exercise their authority.

● Rocket and mortar fire from Gaza into Israel began in 2001 **and militant groups had begun to extend their range of fire before the disengagement**. These attacks increased after the disengagement because the withdrawal of civilians and troops limited opportunities to directly attack Israelis. Terrorists can now threaten the Israeli rear in largescale confrontations, but the actual risk from ballistic fire has greatly diminished since the Iron Dome air defense system was introduced.

● **Israel's political and military leaders were not surprised by the discovery of Hamas tunnels leading into the country**, as opposed to what the public was led to believe after the 2014 operation. Gazan militants were using tunnels to attack Israeli civilians and military forces before the disengagement, too. In fact, as far back as 2004, the IDF defined this as one of the two most challenging problems it faced in Gaza (the other being rocket fire).

● On one hand, **Israel's military presence in Gaza until the disengagement prevented the growth of the tunnel network to its current size**; on the other hand, terrorist groups saw little need to invest in such expensive infrastructure as long as Israeli soldiers and civilians were physically vulnerable within Gaza. Since the disengagement, terrorists have also expanded their underground smuggling capacities and the quality of both smuggled and self-manufactured weapons. These problems, which the IDF could not resolve while still in Gaza, required Egyptian action to remedy. Egypt has proven its ability to greatly reduce smuggling when motivated to do so.

● In conclusion, **the withdrawal from Gaza vastly reduced security threats to Israelis and improved IDF defense capacities**, despite the increase in potential threats from Gaza during largescale confrontations. The disengagement gave Israel leeway to reshape its strategic ties with Gaza in order to improve security. As proven by the unintentional escalation that led to Operation Protective Edge in 2014, successive Israeli governments have not taken full advantage of this opportunity.

1. Advantages of the disengagement

1.1 The civilian question: First line of defense or security burden

Before Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip in 2005, some 8,000 Israelis were living there amidst some 1.5 million Palestinians. In other words, only about 0.5% of the population in Gaza was Israeli. Most settlements were concentrated in two large blocs, one in northern Gaza and the other in Gush Katif, and three other settlements were isolated: Morag (on the outskirts of Gush Katif), Kfar Darom, and Netzarim. In total, the settlements covered some 20% of Gaza's land area.[2] This reality had massive implications for Israel's ability to defend its citizens in Gaza — a mission that became immensely more complicated after the second Intifada began in September 2000. The settlements were easy targets for militant Palestinian groups, which had found it difficult to carry out attacks within Israel since the fence separating Israel from Gaza was built in 1995. Civilian vehicles moving on roads that passed by Palestinian communities in Gaza were similarly vulnerable.[3]

Over the years, Israeli security forces had to protect the settlers in Gaza from three major types of threat: infiltration of settlements, attacks on roads, and rocket and mortar fire.[4]

Infiltration attacks: From the beginning of the second Intifada, in September 2000, to Israel's civilian withdrawal from Gaza, in September 2005, 32 Israelis were killed in Gaza by Palestinian militants who infiltrated settlements or border crossings: 16 civilians and 16 members of the security forces. Prominent examples include the March 2002 infiltration of the pre-military academy at Atzmona, in which five students were murdered, and the September 2004 infiltration of the Morag army outpost.

Attacks on roads: Movement to and from settlements in Gaza relied on roads that cut through the heart of Palestinian territory. This was especially true of Netzarim and Gush Katif. The Kissufim Route, which connected Gush Katif with Kissufim Crossing, was exposed primarily to shooting attacks from Khan Yunis, while the Karni-Netzarim Route, which ran just south of Gaza City, was exposed to shooting from within the city.

This meant that any Israeli civilian traveling through the Gaza Strip had to be accompanied by an IDF security detail, while the settlements themselves had to be guarded by soldiers. In an interview with Molad, a reserve IDF officer who served as a commander in the area described the daily routine of children from the settlement of Morag prior to the disengagement: "Every morning, a taxi with three children would drive out accompanied by an armored personnel carrier, and a D9 bulldozer would open up the route (clear explosives — A.B.G)."

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2 See Appendix B for map.

3 Amiram Oren and Rafi Regev, "Use of Land for Security Purposes: The Platform for the Disengagement — On Security Relations and Geography", in: Haim Misgav and Udi Lebel, eds., *In the Shadow of the Disengagement: Strategic Dialogue in Crisis*, (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2008), 31-52 (Hebrew).

4 Moshe Sharvit, "The Military and Security Implications of Israel's Disengagement from the Gaza Strip", in: *Strategic Assessment*, vol. 8 (3), (Tel Aviv: INSS, November 2005), 46.

From September 2000 to September 2005, 54 Israelis — civilians and members of the security forces — were killed on roads or in crossings in Gaza by live fire, explosive devices, or other forms of attack. Memorable incidents are the IED explosion of a school bus in Kfar Darom in November 2000, the demolition of two tanks by IED on the Karni-Netzarim route in February and March 2002, and the murder of Tali Hatuel and her daughters in June 2004.

Rocket and mortar fire: Mortar shelling of the settlements also rose in the years leading up to the disengagement. In 2000-2005, some 2,500 incidents of mortar fire were documented in the Gaza Strip,[5] almost all aimed at settlements. Six people were killed in these attacks, some Israeli and others foreign nationals working in settlements. Rockets were also occasionally fired at settlements, killing one person in June 2005. However, Gaza's militant groups used rockets mostly to target communities within Israel.

Due to the frequency and varying nature of these threats, the settlements and the roads connecting them were turned into military zones. Military bases and posts were erected in every settlement, at times with the absurd result of soldiers outnumbering residents. Every settlement was protected by a fence, landmines, and other obstacles, and was secured like a military post. Civilians went in and out in armored vehicles that moved in convoys, accompanied by soldiers. Researchers Amiram Oren and Rafi Regev described this reality as "the most extreme security routine imposed on a civilian population in Israel since the War of Independence."[6]

Moreover, as time passed, Israel's hold over Gaza posed a growing risk to its long-term goal of remaining a democratic state with a Jewish majority. Staying in Gaza would have forced Israel into a tough choice between controlling a growing Palestinian population while denying their rights, and naturalizing this population — including thousands of militants dedicated to fighting Israel.

While the pain of the settlers evacuated from Gaza must not be dismissed, examining the civilian disengagement separately from the military withdrawal makes it clear that dismantling the settlements was necessary and strategically justified. The number of settlers in Gaza was negligible compared to the Palestinian population. Once Israel recognized that Gaza would not be incorporated into its permanent borders, defending the settlements was no longer a sovereign obligation but a heavy burden that constantly put lives at risk.

To mask this truth, it is often argued that the Gaza settlements helped defend communities within Israel by drawing fire away from them. This claim not only belies the facts but is morally dubious. The fact is that as of 2001, rocket fire into Israel increased alongside rocket fire at settlements. Even if the settlements did draw some of the fire, the IDF had to defend them in unfavorable conditions instead of concentrating defense efforts along Israel's borders. Nor does the fact that terror organizations in Gaza have developed their military capacities since the disengagement support this argument: The potential threat that Israel currently faces from Gaza would have remained an actual threat to the settlements that would have forced Israel to adopt strategic policies and actions which are now unnecessary. The moral argument is highly

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5 According to ISA (Israel Security Agency) definitions, high-trajectory fire is considered a single incident "whether over the course of the strike, a single rocket or mortar is fired or whether a volley is fired". Data on the number of launches is available only as of 2005.

6 "Use of Land for Security Purposes", 60 (Hebrew).

problematic since one group of citizens must not be expected to live in danger so that others can enjoy tranquility. The right-wing claim that the existence of settlements in Gaza helped defend communities in southern Israel is tantamount to saying that the latter now exist in order to defend Tel Aviv, and therefore must reconcile themselves to suffering rocket attacks from time to time. Israel was obliged to defend the Gaza settlements under the conditions in which they existed; therefore, drawing fire from one group of Israelis to another was ultimately unhelpful.

Finally, it is easy to imagine how difficult large military operations such as Cast Lead (2008-9) or Protective Edge (2014) would have been, had the settlements still existed in Gaza – even in the unlikely event of terrorism capacities remaining the same rather than developing over time. In fact, even when Israel still had regular military presence in Gaza, militant groups were developing increasingly sophisticated ways to manufacture and smuggle weapons, dig tunnels into Israel, and train operatives. The IDF found it hard to respond fully to these threats. Having to deal with them while defending 8,000 Israeli citizens living inside Gaza, instead of deploying along a single line of defense, would have made matters immeasurably more complicated.

To sum up, since the presence of Israeli civilians in Gaza was strategically unwarranted, removing them improved the IDF's ability to defend Israel's southern borders. The settlements in Gaza did not help Israelis live more safely – they compromised security.

1.2 The strategic question: Security gains and political benefits

It is hard to dispute the necessity of Israel's civilian withdrawal from Gaza. However, the strategic implications of the military withdrawal paint a more complicated picture. In this section, we analyze strategic developments relating to Gaza since Israel withdrew its military presence there. A separate chapter is devoted to the important connection between the largescale 2014 operation and the disengagement that took place almost a decade earlier.

The strategic advantages of Israel's disengagement from Gaza can be divided into security gains and political benefits. In terms of security, the disengagement led to a drop in the number of people killed by terror attacks originating in Gaza; as described above, it also simplified some of the challenges forced upon the IDF by the presence of Israeli civilians there. Politically, the disengagement was a boon to Israel's international status, reviving the country's legitimacy after the setbacks of the second Intifada, and resulting in a letter of guarantees in which the US made an unprecedented commitment to Israeli interests in a future agreement with the Palestinians. Domestically, leaving Gaza resolved a substantial threat to Israel's future as state with a Jewish majority.

Lives saved[7]

As Israel's security efforts center on protecting its citizens, casualty numbers are an important measure for the impact of the disengagement. In five years, from the beginning of the second Intifada in September 2000 to the end of the military withdrawal from Gaza in September 2005, 162 people were killed in terror attacks coming from Gaza. In the ten years that followed — double the time — 140 people were killed in attacks coming from Gaza, 72 of them (67 soldiers and five civilians) during Operation Protective Edge in 2014. This is an inclusive calculation, as it takes into account non-Israelis killed in attacks aimed at Israelis and attacks coming from Gaza but not directly tied to it, such as the attack on Route 12 in southern Israel in August 2011 that killed eight. This attack was carried out by Jihad operatives in the Sinai Peninsula, and it is not clear whether they were tied to Gaza in any way. For a full analysis of Operation Protective Edge, see Chapter 3.

Before the disengagement in 2005, 2.7 people were killed every month on the Israeli side, on average, by terror attacks originating in Gaza (if the tally is divided by actual months of fighting). From the disengagement to Operation Protective Edge in 2014, the number dropped to 0.7. Dividing the period from 2005 to 2014 into before and after Operation Cast Lead in 2008-9 makes the results even more clear: before (and during) the operation, an average of 1.1 people were killed a month; from early 2009, the number dropped to 0.4.
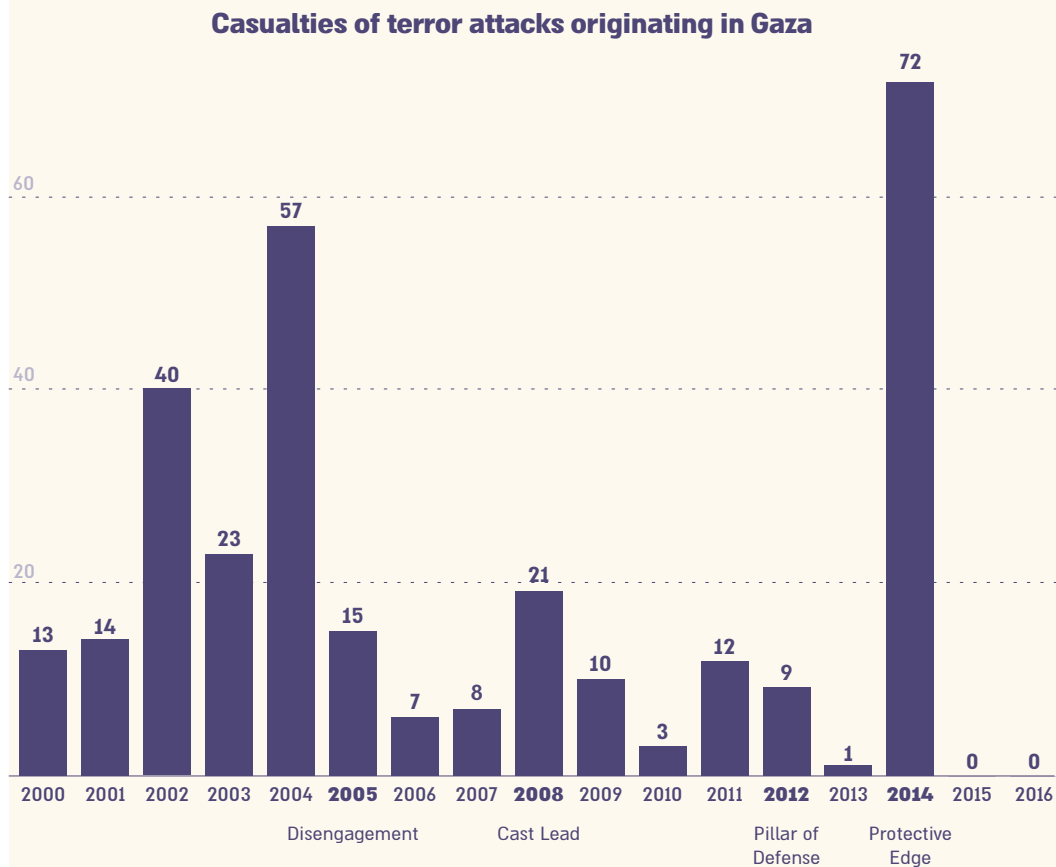
Deriving the annual casualty figures from this data, we see that from the beginning of the second Intifada to the disengagement, some 32 people were killed every year in Gaza-based attacks. From the disengagement to the end of Operation Cast Lead, this figure dropped by some 60% to approximately 13; and from Cast Lead to Operation Protective Edge, the number dropped even further to about 5 people killed a year. In other words, between Operation Cast Lead in 2009 and Operation Protective Edge in 2014, 85% less people were killed on the Israeli side than when Israel controlled the Gaza Strip — even without taking into account the probability that terrorist operations in Gaza would have improved their capacities and taken more lives, had Israel remained in Gaza.

In Operation Protective Edge in 2014, 72 Israelis were killed — 67 of them members of security forces. Yet even that did not stop the general decline in casualty numbers: Figuring in the casualties of Protective Edge, we see that after the disengagement, the average number of casualties per year is almost 60% lower than in 2000-2005.

It is much harder to obtain reliable data on the number of people injured. It appears that in the first few years after the disengagement, more Israelis were

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7 See Appendix C for a full list of casualties of terrorism originating in Gaza. The list is based on casualty details published on Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/terrorism/palestinian/pages/victims%20of%20palestinian%20violence%20and%20terrorism%20sinc.aspx), with additional information on the casualties of Operation Cast Lead and on the types of attack taken from media reports. The figures are updated until the end of 2016.

injured by Palestinian terror attacks than before — with an especially sharp rise in anxiety and shock symptoms due to rocket fire. However, the number of injuries dropped significantly after Operation Cast Lead:[8] for example, not a single Israeli was injured by Gaza-based terrorism in 2013.[9]

Casualties of terror attacks originating in Gaza

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
13	14	40	23	57	15	7	8	21	10	3	12	9	1	72	0	0

Disengagement (2005), Cast Lead (2008), Pillar of Defense (2012), Protective Edge (2014)

Annual casualty average by months of actual fighting:

Pre-disengagement: 32.4
Post-disengagement: 13.2

8 ISA, "A Decade of Palestinian Terrorism — a Report by the Israel Security Agency", http://en.idi.org.il/analysis/terrorism-and-democracy/issue-no-14/a-decade-of-palestinian-terrorism-%E2%80%93-report-by-the-israeli-security-agency/ (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

9 ISA, "2013 Annual Summary", 12 Jan. 2013, http://www.shabak.gov.il/ENGLISH/ENTERRORDATA/REPORTS/Pages/2013AnnualSummary.aspx (retrieved Dec. 14, 2016).

When it comes to the important price paid in Israeli lives, the disengagement from Gaza gradually led to a significant decrease in the loss of lives — both civilian and military. More Israelis were killed during the five years of the second Intifada, when Israel was still in Gaza, than in the following eleven years. Even figuring in the high death toll in the summer of 2014 (analyzed below in relation to the disengagement), the annual number of casualties dropped by 60% and is still declining.

1.2.1 Operational problem alleviated

Defending communities in southern Israel grew more complicated after the disengagement for two main reasons. First, increased rocket fire meant that the home front had to be equipped with defense infrastructure, a prior-warning mechanism, and later an active defense system (Iron Dome). Second, the IDF had to find a way to respond to tunnels being dug into Israel. Yet in almost all other aspects, operational challenges relating to Gaza became simpler, especially the daily ones. After the disengagement, the IDF was free to focus on defending the Gaza perimeter, which is much shorter than the total area of settlements and roads that previously required attention inside Gaza. To that end, the IDF was able to employ sophisticated defense systems and fortifications.[10] The IDF amplified security measures along the perimeter fence, established a buffer zone and security routes, and used technologies such as aerial surveillance and the Sentry Tech system, which transmit information back to bases inside Israel. In that context, although the abduction of Gilad Schalit in 2006 was highly regrettable, such kidnappings took place in Gaza before the disengagement and still do in the West Bank, where the IDF operates much more freely than it had in Gaza for decades. In fact, having a clear line of defense vis-a-vis Gaza has helped prevent several cross-border attacks since then, including during and after Operation Protective Edge.

Improved security along the Gaza fence is evident in the number of casualties resulting from Gaza-based attacks. In the five years of confrontation that led up to the disengagement, 162 people were killed by terror attacks originating in Gaza. In the nine years that passed between the disengagement and the IDF's 2014 operation within Gaza, 68 people were killed — 42 of them before Operation Cast Lead in early 2009. The number of casualties dropped drastically, although the motivation of terror organizations to target Israelis did not. In fact, the number of casualties from routine terrorism related to close-range military contact, such as explosive charges, firearm shooting, anti-tank missiles and infiltration attacks, all dropped sharply — even factoring in the losses of Operation Protective Edge. As stated, this is compounded by the likelihood that without the disengagement, the increased capacities of terror organizations would have taken a higher toll on the lives of Israeli civilians and security forces within Gaza. In other words, the real decline

10 "The Military and Security Implications of Israel's Disengagement from the Gaza Strip", 44.

Casualty figures by type of attack
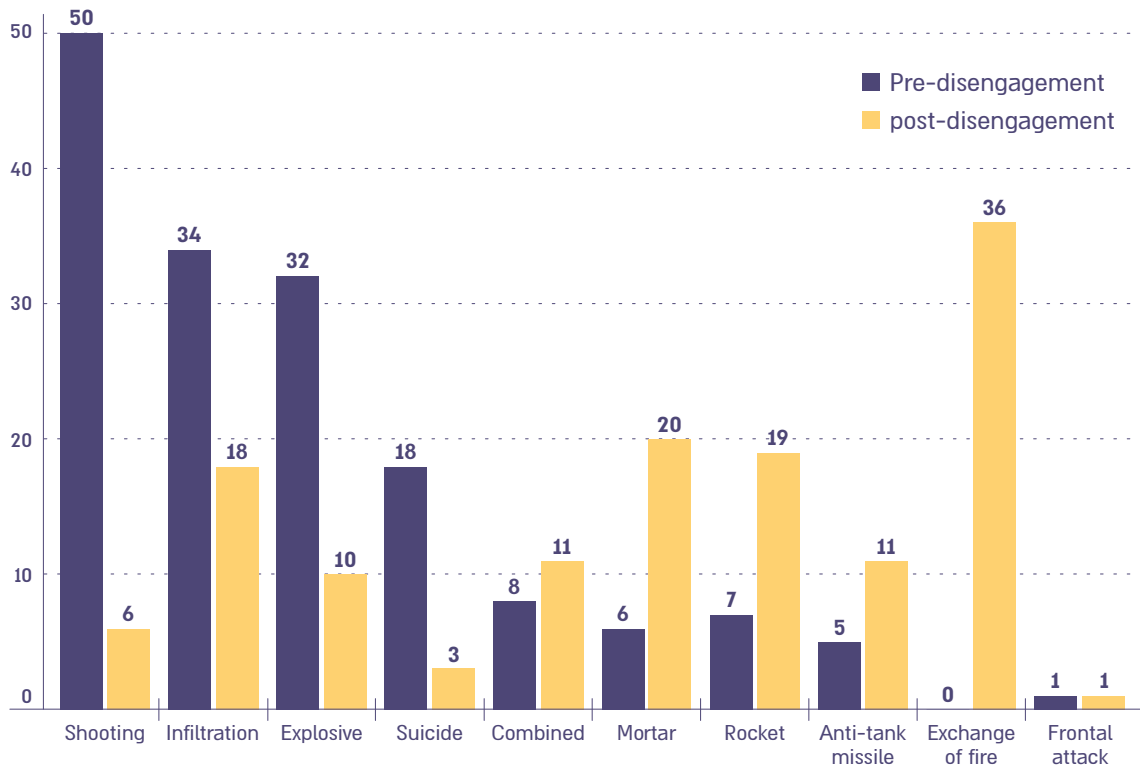
in the number of casualties is even greater than the figures indicate. Telling proof is the rise in casualty numbers throughout 2004 — a trend that gives some idea of the alternative reality that would have developed without the disengagement.

1.2.2. Positive responses in the international community

Prior to 2005, Israel was growing increasingly isolated due to the failing peace process and the outbreak of the second Intifada, which took a heavy toll on Palestinian lives in its early years. Despite the wave of Palestinian terrorism, Israel's international status was declining. Among other things, the Intifada led Egypt and Jordan to recall their ambassadors from Israel. The election of Ariel Sharon as prime minister in early 2001 harmed Israel's image even more: Sharon was seen as a violent, hawkish leader and the Bush administration, which would later become his close ally, initially appeared wary of working with his government.[11] The US seriously increased support for Israel after 9/11 and the IDF's seizure of the "Karine A", a weapon-loaded freighter bound for Gaza. However, not all of Israel's allies responded in the same fashion. In fact, as the number of victims of Palestinian terrorism dropped, especially in the West Bank, pressure grew on Israel

11 Dov Weisglass, *Ariel Sharon — Prime Minister* (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Aharonot-Sifrey Hemed, 2012), 104, 170 (Hebrew).

throughout 2002 to make progress on the Palestinian front.[12] Att. Dov Weisglass, Sharon's bureau chief and one of his most trusted advisors, described the dynamic as follows:

> "In the fall of 2003 we understood that everything was stuck. And
> although by the way the Americans read the situation, the blame fell
> on the Palestinians, not on us, Arik (Sharon) grasped that this state
> of affairs could not last, that they wouldn't leave us alone, wouldn't
> get off our case. Time was not on our side. There was international
> erosion, internal erosion. Domestically, in the meantime, everything
> was collapsing. The economy was stagnant, and the Geneva Initiative had
> gained broad support."[13]

This was one of the reasons for Sharon's declaration of intent to withdraw from Gaza. As the scheduled date of the withdrawal grew near and the details of the Disengagement Plan took shape, international support for Sharon and Israel grew. On February 8, 2005, the Sharm a-Sheikh Summit brought together Prime Minister Sharon, President Mubarak of Egypt, King Abdullah of Jordan, and newly-elected President of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas, whom Israel found amenable as opposed to his predecessor, Arafat. In the summit, the Israelis and Palestinians formally declared an end to the mutual violence and announced a series of trust-building initiatives. A short while later, Jordan reinstated its ambassador to Israel[14] and within weeks, Egypt followed suit,[15] marking the end of the diplomatic crisis that began with the second Intifada.

The improvement in Israel's diplomatic relations extended to the entire international community. Although economic in part, we chose not to try and quantify it here since the effects of Sharon's political initiative are difficult to distinguish from the end of the global crisis that began with the 'dot-com' collapse earlier that decade, and from the near-absolute success in stopping Palestinian suicide attacks coming from the West Bank. It is much easier to credibly trace formal acts taken by the international community towards Israel.

In recent years, public sentiment in Israel has come to view the UN as hostile and the third world as an automatic supporter of Israel's enemies. However, the withdrawal from Gaza helped to considerably soften this reality. For example, it helped gather the international support needed to resolve a dispute that was barring Magen David Adom, Israel's national medical service, from joining the International Committee of the Red Cross. Also, in 2005, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution introduced by Israel designating an international Holocaust Remembrance Day, and Israel succeeded in amending a UNGA resolution for the first time in

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12 Ibid., 177-178.

13 Ari Shavit, "Top PM Aide: Gaza Plan Aims to Freeze the Peace Process", *Ha'aretz*, Oct. 6, 2004, http://www.haaretz.com/top-pm-aide-gaza-plan-aims-to-freeze-the-peace-process-1.136686 (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

14 Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "FM Shalom welcomes new Jordanian ambassador", Feb. 21, 2005, http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2005/Pages/Shalom%20welcomes%20Jordanian%20ambassador%2021-Feb-2005.aspx (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

15 "Egypt ambassador back in Israel after 4-year break", *China Daily*, March 18, 2005, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-03/18/content_426180.htm (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

fifty years when its initiative to host a conference on combating desertification was accepted.[16] The change wrought by the disengagement from Gaza was evident in the UNGA's unusually warm reception of Sharon in September 2005.[17]

The diplomatic advantages were also made clear by European responses to the declared Disengagement Plan. As long as Europe doubted Sharon's willingness to follow through with the plan and feared that his declaration of intent would be used to compromise the peace process, European leaders refused to back the plan. Yet once it became clear that Sharon was prepared to pay a political price at home to fulfil it, Israel's status improved. The EU sent a mission to man the Rafah border crossing, a move that indicated international willingness to assist in future arrangements between Israel and the Palestinians. Improved relations with Europe following the disengagement also facilitated the April 2005 signing of an action plan for cooperation between Israel and the EU.[18] Thanks to this plan, which is based on previous agreements, Israel currently enjoys economic benefits in its trade relations with the EU, leading to an estimated profit of hundreds of millions of euros a year for the Israeli market.[19] This tightening of ties with Europe came to a halt once Netanyahu came into power in 2009 and the peace process stalled.

It is hardly surprising that Israel's willingness to make progress on the Palestinian issue drew favorable responses from the international community. The West supports Israel and backs its moves. Yet Israel's allies are wary of demonstrating their support, primarily when Israel does not seem to be making efforts to end its control over the Palestinians and works to expand settlements.[20] Sharon's determination to dismantle settlements in Gaza and in the northern West Bank and to end Israel's military presence in Gaza was therefore welcome, and helped bolster Israel's international standing.

The international support for Israel garnered by the disengagement remained firm for years, diminishing only when the peace process froze under Netanyahu.[21] This support is what allowed Sharon's successor, Ehud Olmert, to wage a comprehensive military operation in Gaza (Cast Lead) with broad international backing. Although the criticism levelled at Israel in the Goldstone Report that followed the operation is what stands out in public memory, the fact is that Israel's allies in Europe saw the operation as justified, given the disengagement and progress with peace talks at the time. In an extraordinary move, the leaders of Spain, Italy, Britain, France, and the Czech Republic made a show of support by visiting Israel towards the end of the operation.[22] In

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16 For a report on the matter by Foreign Ministry representative Aharon Leshno Ya'ar, see https://search.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06PARIS744_a.html (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

17 Interview with Dov Weisglass, Dec. 2, 2013.

18 Toby Greene, "Can Disengagement Secure Legitimacy?", in: *Strategic Assessment*, Vol. 16 (4), (Tel Aviv: INSS, January 2014, 55.

19 See Molad, "Alliance in Crisis: Israel's Standing in the World and the Question of Isolation", 17, http://www.molad.org/images/upload/researches/Isolation_Report.pdf; Oded Eran, "A Reversal in Israel-EU Relations?" in: *Strategic Assessment*, Vol. 12 (1), (Tel Aviv: INSS, May 2009).

20 "Alliance in Crisis", 55-57.

21 Sharon Pardo & Joel Peters, *Uneasy Neighbours: Israel and the European Union*, (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010), 26, 76.

22 Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, "Statements by PM Olmert and European leaders", Jan. 18, 2009, http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/pressroom/2009/pages/statements_pm_olmert_european_leaders_18-jan-2009.aspx (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

interviews with Molad, senior Israeli defense officials said that the disengagement had "filled Israel's legitimacy reserves". Political credit, like other kinds of credit, can be gained and lost. The fact that later governments created a deficit in Israel's balance of international support does not detract from the political capital gained by the disengagement.

While the overall improvement in Israel's international standing may be attributed to broader processes, one achievement is the direct result of the disengagement: President Bush's letter of guarantees to Prime Minister Sharon. The letter guaranteed official US commitment that in any future agreement, the Palestinian refugee problem would be resolved within the Palestinian state and the agreement would include border adjustments based on reality on the ground — i.e., on the large settlement blocs. Ideas of this kind come up periodically in Israeli-Palestinian talks, usually as an Israeli demand. Thanks to the disengagement, for the first time, Israel won American presidential support for these positions as the basis for a future agreement.

The Bush letter was the result of communications that began between Israeli and American teams in November 2003 to ensure that the US would reward Israel for its unilateral move. Israel did not expect to receive anything from the Palestinians in exchange for the disengagement, as the plan was formed when Arafat was still in charge and Israel had no intention of coordinating the move with him. The US agreed, but as the date drew near and the scope of the guarantees that Bush was set to give Israel became clear, elements within the Administration tried to moderate the wording of the letter. In the end, the president's personal team had to step in to counter the State Department, which objected to the extent of support given to Israel's demands on territory and refugees.[23]

Unlike Clinton's parameters, which were explicitly restricted to his term in office and remained a non-binding idea, the Bush letter was endorsed by both houses of Congress.[24] Thus, the disengagement effectively won Israel American support for two of its fundamental interests in the peace talks — land swaps, as part of the territorial solution, and resolving the refugee problem outside Israel's borders. Even if an agreement on border adjustments would have been reached without resorting to the letter, the fact that it was issued proved just how beneficial Israeli moves can be, even without fully meeting international standards.

[23] *Arik Sharon – Prime Minister*, 211–212, 231–234.

[24] Ibid., 239.

2. Negative developments after the disengagement

Although Israel benefited substantially from the disengagement, it has since faced considerable security challenges relating to Gaza. Three major concerns are: Strategic implications of Hamas' rule; ballistic fire into Israel; and improved terror capacities, including the expansion of tunnels into Israel. In this section, we analyze each of these concerns and examine the impact of the disengagement on their development.

2.1. Hamas' takeover of Gaza: Culmination of a 20-year process

It is often argued in Israel that the disengagement created 'Hamastan' – a hostile fundamentalist regime in Gaza. At the time of the withdrawal, Gaza was controlled (officially, at least) by the Palestinian Authority, headed by Abbas. In January 2006, Hamas won the elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council; in June 2007, after a year and a half of violent clashes fuelled by Fatah's refusal to share power with Hamas, the latter took control of the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian Authority's security apparatuses, which were based on Fatah institutions, were dismantled. The Fatah leadership was persecuted until, within months, all its senior members left Gaza. This led to the current state of affairs, in which the PA controls the West Bank and Hamas controls Gaza.

What role did the disengagement play in this development? Hamas did not take over Gaza because of Israel's unilateral move. It had slowly risen to power on the wings of social trends and various actions by Israel and the PA. Israel's withdrawal provided one of the conditions – and not necessarily an essential one – for this gradual process to become manifest. In any case, even if IDF presence in Gaza could have prevented the Hamas takeover (a question discussed below), **the presence of Israeli civilians in Gaza would have not played a part in this**.

There is no dispute over the fact that the manifestations of Hamas' increased power – its election victory and physical takeover of Gaza – occurred largely after the disengagement. It does not follow that the disengagement caused them. Take the local election results held in late 2004, a year before the disengagement: In the West Bank, Hamas won nine councils and Fatah 14; in Gaza, Hamas won eight to Fatah's two, despite Israel's control of the area. In another round of voting in May 2005, Hamas won 34% of the votes in the West Bank and Gaza.[25] As these figures show, Hamas' success with voters was not tied to Israeli presence in Gaza, although it is true that its victory in the 2006 general elections was aided by popular belief that the movement had succeeded in driving Israel out of there.

Hamas gained power as the result of three processes: Building its popular power base on the foundations of social aid (*da'wah*); the decline of the PA and Fatah; and Hamas' violent struggle

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25 Hassan Balawi, "Palestinian Municipal Elections: A Gradual Change" in: *IEMed.Yearbook 2006*, 25, http://www.iemed.org/anuari/2006/aarticles/aBalawi.pdf (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

against Israel. The PA began to lose popular support in the 1990s, due to widespread corruption and its perceived failure in achieving expected goals in the peace process. This weakness became tangible when Israel dismantled the PA's security apparatuses in response to Palestinian terrorism in the second Intifada. At the same time, Hamas' violent resistance to Israel in Gaza and its attacks on civilians in Israel, largely launched from the West Bank, bolstered public support for the movement, which was already popular thanks to its extensive welfare network.

Another recurring argument is that had Israel remained in Gaza, Hamas would not have been able to over the area. This is a highly doubtful hypothesis. The takeover was the result of growing frustration with Fatah for refusing to let Hamas rule despite its election victory. Although Israel objected to the elections, which were held at US insistence, it could not alter the results. Hamas was finally pressured into forcefully taking power by its support base, after a year or so of infighting with Fatah. The takeover was possible thanks to Hamas' trained forces, which, though outnumbered by Fatah forces, were much better coordinated. In certain areas, such as southern Gaza, Hamas may have found it harder to overcome Fatah without Israel's withdrawal. However, in northern Gaza and in the refugee camps of central Gaza, Hamas was in power even before the disengagement. In fact, prior to the takeover, Israel and the US tried to bolster Fatah forces (a mission accorded to US General Dayton), yet did not succeed in stopping Hamas.

Could Israel have intervened to prevent the Hamas takeover? Probably. This capacity was not essentially affected by the disengagement — and especially not by the civilian withdrawal. It is highly doubtful that Israel would have intervened in the Palestinian infighting to block Hamas. The takeover was carried out by Hamas' armed wing and its Executive Force — a police force established to replace the PA's security apparatuses, which remained loyal to Abbas and Fatah. Israel may have been able to prevent the establishment of this police force, yet it did not stop Hamas' armed wing from gaining strength prior to the disengagement. Direct Israeli assistance to the PA's weak apparatuses would have placed the PA under full indirect rule — a situation that Israel did not want. Accordingly, over the years, Israel made it clear that it did not wish to intervene in internal conflicts within the PA.[26] For example, Israel stood by as the disintegration of the PA's security apparatuses created anarchy in West Bank towns, acting only when the backlash resulted in terror attacks against Israelis. It also did nothing when violent clashes over control of Fatah erupted in Gaza between Muhammad Dahlan followers and Arafat loyalists, a year and a half before the disengagement.[27]

One can only imagine what Israeli civilian and military life in Gaza would have looked like, had Palestinian towns and refugee camps become centers of massive infighting or fallen to Hamas prior to the withdrawal. Israelis travelling along the Karni-Netzarim Route that passed by Gaza City, or the Kissufim Route in Khan Yunis, would have been extremely vulnerable.

The Hamas takeover complicated Israeli decision-making and helped the organization gain military power, while also reining it in and keeping the Gaza-Israel border more peaceful apart from large confrontations. On the ground, Hamas instilled law and order after five years in

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26 In this context, see the chapter "From Mecca to Annapolis" in Elliot Abrams' *Tested by Zion: The Bush Administration and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

27 Arnon Regular, "It Could End in More Political Murders, or Even Civil War", *Ha'aretz*, March 6, 2004, http://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.950481 (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

which the PA had failed to do so. A glaring example was the almost immediate release of British journalist Alan Johnston, who had been kidnapped by the Doghmush clan. The PA failed to secure his release for some four months, yet Hamas managed to free him in a military operation mere weeks after taking over Gaza.[28] This was the first sign of a stronger central rule in Gaza, which meant more security for residents and greater Hamas control over the extent of rocket fire towards Israel – including the ability to ramp it up as desired. For example, rocket fire considerably decreased during the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas that began in the second half of 2008. Unlike previous attempts by the PA, Hamas managed to almost entirely prevent rocket fire when it saw fit, and to resume it with far greater force once the decision was made to renew the fighting.[29]

In terms of restraining the attacks from Gaza on a day to day basis, Israel clearly has a much more capable address in Gaza now. However, Hamas' tighter control comes with a price. Unlike the PA, Hamas does not share Israel's strategic logic. It does not strive for a peace deal and has declared that at most, it will accept a long-term ceasefire. Accordingly, rocket fire at Israel increased immediately after the Gaza takeover. It took time and Israeli action to create the mutual deterrence that drove Hamas to rein in the firing. Only after Operation Cast Lead in early 2009 was there a clear set of incentives in place for Hamas to enforce an almost total ceasefire. Also, while Israel enjoyed direct contact and security coordination with the PA in Gaza, once Hamas took over this became virtually non-existent, until the communications channel via Egypt was established. This channel gained importance after Operation Cast Lead.[30]

In terms of the peace process, the Hamas takeover split the Palestinian front into two distinct political entities, with every effort to reconcile them failing thus far. The PA's basic strategy is to use diplomatic tools to establish a state within the 1967 borders, while Hamas and its government believe in fighting Israel to destruction with military means. This poses a challenge to the logic that has guided Israeli policy since the early v,[31] namely, to end the conflict by achieving a permanent agreement with a representative Palestinian partner. Hamas can now prevent any bilateral agreement that Israel may sign with the PLO from being implemented in Gaza – although a multilateral agreement based on the Arab Peace Initiative would resolve some problems created by this situation.[32]

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28 "BBC's Alan Johnston is Released", *BBC*, July 4, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6267928.stm (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

29 ISA, *2008 Year-end Summary: Statistics and Trends in Palestinian Terror*, December 2008, http://www.shabak.gov.il/SiteCollectionImages/english/TerrorInfo/2008-sum-english.pdf (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

30 Emily Landau, "Egypt's Regional Position Revisited", in *Strategic Assessment*, vol. 11 (4), (Tel Aviv: INSS, February 2009).

31 This position was voiced in interviews that Molad held with present-day policy makers, and is often heard in political discussions in Israel. See, for example, Lieberman's statement in 2009, "Israel FM queries Abbas authority", http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8147477.stm; a video published by the My Israel movement titled "John Kerry – We Have a Partner", https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mSrlwlaxbI; Economy Minister Bennett on his Hebrew Facebook page in December 2013: "There are 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza living under the rule of Hamas, which does not recognize Abbas and certainly is not committed to any agreement of his with Israel", https://www.facebook.com/NaftaliBennett/posts/663534790334859 (all retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

32 See Molad, "The Arab Peace Initiative: Israel's Strategic Loss and Historic Opportunity", http://www.molad.org/images/upload/files/The-Arab-Peace-Initiative-Final.pdf.

Rocket fire from Gaza by month, 2008
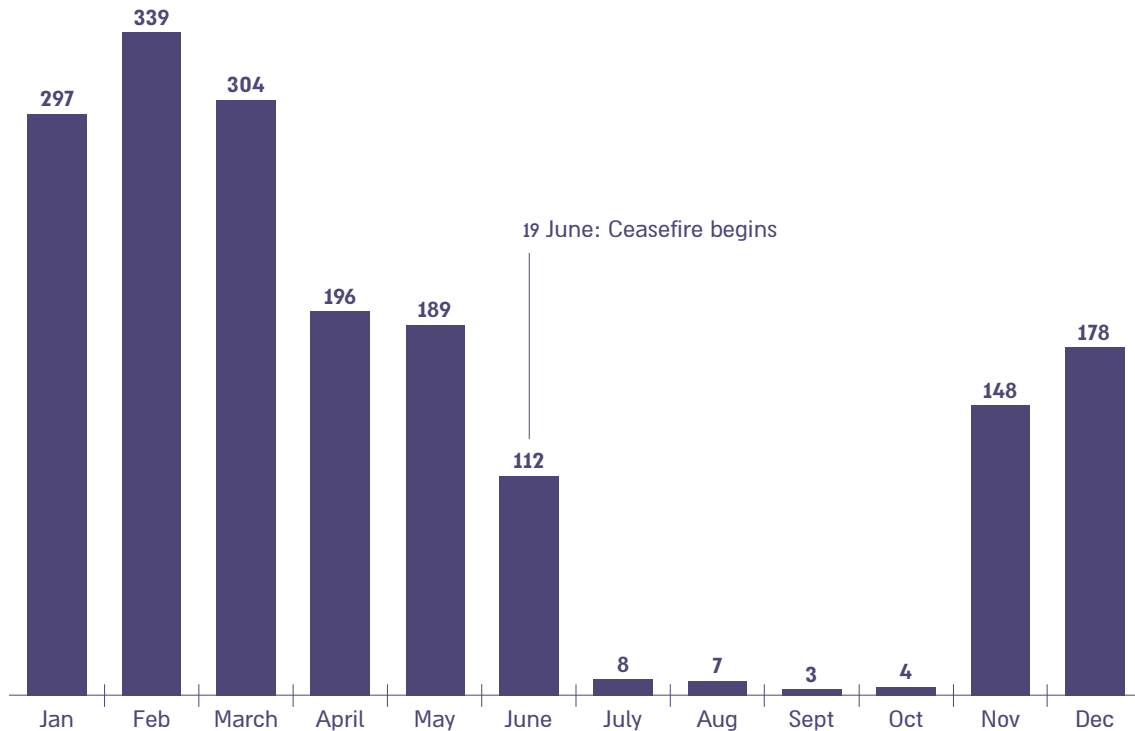
Source: Israel Security Agency (ISA), 2008 Year-end Summary: Statistics and Trends in Palestinian Terror[33]

However, to analyze the effect of the disengagement on a possible peace deal, we must compare the current state of affairs with the way things stood at the time of the disengagement in 2005, and not when the Oslo Accords were signed. In the early 1990s Hamas was a small terror organization, albeit with strong popular support, and Israel could negotiate with the PLO without paying serious attention to Islamic opposition. The PLO's power waned over the next decade and especially during the second Intifada.

In practice, the politicization of Hamas posed a challenge to peace talks even before the 2007 Gaza takeover, and in many ways even before Israel's withdrawal in 2005. The movement's rise to power became evident in the 2006 general elections, which resulted in what the Israeli defense establishment dubbed "a two-headed entity". Israel found it hard to differentiate the Palestinian presidency, which was controlled by the Palestinian secular school of thought, from the Hamas-led government and parliament. This posed serious dilemmas for Israel's ties with the Palestinians concerning politics and security — even on the most technical levels.[34]

33 https://t.shabak.gov.il/SiteCollectionImages/english/TerrorInfo/2008-sum-english.pdf (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

34 Government resolution no. 4780, "Israel's Policy towards the Palestinian Authority upon Establishment of Hamas Government" (Apr. 11, 2006), http://www.pmo.gov.il/Secretary/GovDecisions/2006/Pages/des4780.aspx (Hebrew), (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

Yet Hamas' takeover of Gaza also had several strategic benefits. The new order in Palestinian politics is what facilitated the Annapolis peace talks, as Abbas and the PA were no longer weighed down by a Hamas government. It also enabled Israel to treat Gaza as a "hostile entity" in every respect.[35] In addition, the takeover alerted Fatah to the danger of rising political Islam. As a result, since the disengagement, the PA has stepped up enforcement concerning Hamas. In the West Bank, measures taken by the PA have halted the process of political takeover that seemed virtually inevitable after the 2006 general elections, leading to broad security cooperation with Israel — a major factor in current prevention of terror coming from the West Bank.[36] Finally, the fact that Hamas came into power was crucial to Israel's ability to establish the deterrence that significantly decreased the level of confrontation with Gaza.[37] For example, in May 2015, OC Southern Command Sammy Turjeman explained Israel's interests regarding Gaza and Hamas:

Source: Wikimedia, Dekel E. See precise details on rocket fire at varying ranges below.

Range of missiles launched from Gaza Strip

By Rockets:
- "Qassam 2", "Qassam 3"
- "BM-21 Grad"
- "Upgraded Grad" (WS-1E)
- "Fajr-3"
- "Sejjil-55"
- "Fajr-5", "M-75"
- "Upgraded M-75", "J-80"
- "R-160", "M-302 D"

By Years:
10 km Max – 2004	45 km Max – 2011
20 km Max – 2006	75 km Max – 2012
40 km Max – 2008	160 km Max – 2014

Warning Time
- 15 seconds
- 30 seconds
- 45 seconds
- 1 minute
- 1.5 minutes
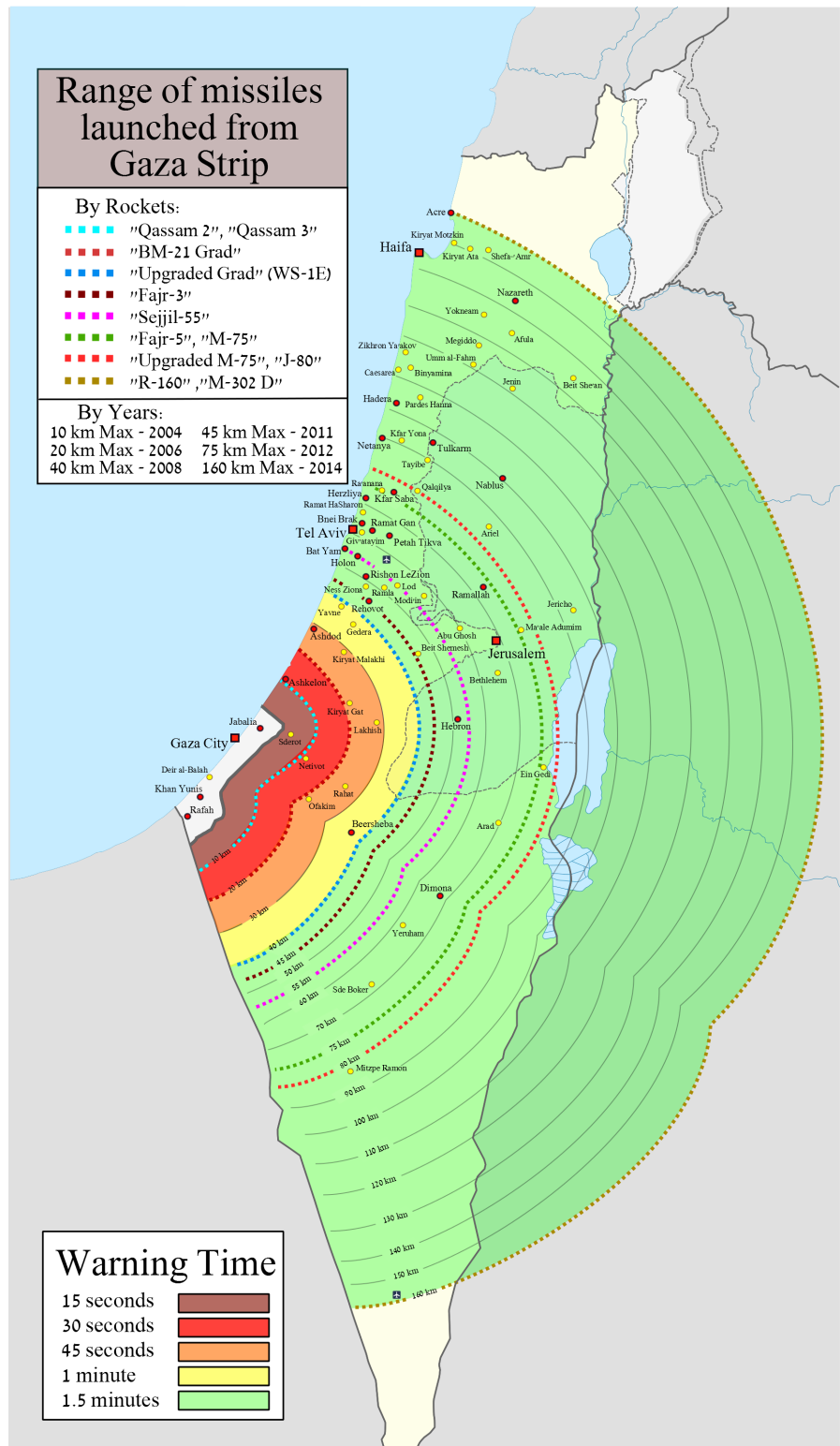
35 For statements by senior Israeli officials that in retrospect, Hamas' takeover of Gaza has a 'half-glass full' aspect because it would simplify Israel's diplomatic dilemmas, see: https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07TELAVIV1733_a.html.

36 Avi Issacharoff, "Hamas at Historical Low, Has Rehabilitation Plan: Gilad Schalit 2", *Walla!*, Oct. 17, 2013, http://news.walla.co.il/item/2686721 (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

37 Lecture by Amos Yadlin at the INSS annual conference, Tel Aviv, Dec. 15, 2009; Jonathan Shachter, "Unusually Quiet: Is Israel Deterring Terrorism?" in *Strategic Assessment*, Vol. 13 (2), (Tel Aviv: INSS, August 2010), 19–28.

"The sovereign on the ground is now Hamas. At present, and for the
foreseeable future, there is no alternative ruler. The alternatives are
the IDF or chaos. Hamas is the only entity that can hold Gaza, apart from
the IDF, of course. The Palestinian Authority can't go in there, and that's
irrefutable… Israel wants an address in Gaza, because otherwise there
will be governmental chaos and maintaining security will be much more
difficult. That is why it is in our interest to have an address there.
Hamas in Gaza is the lesser of the evils we face. It's not a dream come
true, but it's the least problematic of our options."[38]

Hamas' rule in Gaza has made it considerably more difficult for Israel to promote a uniform policy regarding the Palestinians. It has also increased threats to Israeli security. However, it is unclear whether the movement's rise to dominance in Gaza was a consequence of the Israeli withdrawal. Even those who disagree would be hard pressed to explain how the civilian settlements in Gaza could have helped prevent Hamas from gaining control. Also, as mentioned above, the negative repercussions of the disengagement are balanced to some extent by the advantages of a strong central government and other indirect consequences.

2.2 Ballistic fire: Long-range attacks in lieu of direct contact

Since 2001, thousands of rockets and mortars have been fired at Israel. Until 2005, they were also directed at settlements in Gaza. This modus operandi is aimed at circumventing the IDF's lines of defense and compensating for lack of military power compared to Israel. Over the years, rockets have proven invaluable to terror organizations as a means of countering Israel's military upper hand and creating a balance of terror.[39] These organizations began firing rockets at Israeli targets in early 2001, and have since steadily improved their rocket power and mortar launching capacities. Rockets and mortars became an increasingly important means of harassing the Israeli home front after the disengagement, when the potential for direct contact with Israeli security forces or settlers all but disappeared. Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the large terror organizations in Gaza, currently have enough ballistic power to threaten Israel's major population centers — in central Israel and in Jerusalem — and to at least attempt strikes on northern Israel.[40]

Mortars: In 2001 there were some 500 incidents of mortar shelling, some including more than one mortar bomb. This figure rose to approximately 880 incidents in 2004, dropped sharply to 28 in 2006, and peaked in 2008 with 912 incidents, in which a total of 1,668 mortars were launched.[41]

38 Naama Anghel Mishali, "OC Southern Command: Hamas Isn't Just One Shot and Goodbye", *NRG*, May 11, 2015, http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/694/222.html (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

39 The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "Rocket Threat from the Gaza Strip", December 2007, 32, http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/data/pdf/PDF_07_177_2.pdf, (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

40 Elhanan Miller, "80% of Syria rebels are Islamist, senior IDF officer says", *Times of Israel*, June 9, 2014, http://www.timesofisrael.com/80-of-syria-rebels-are-islamist-senior-idf-officer-says/ (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

41 ISA, "A Decade of Terrorism", 73-83, http://shabak.gov.il/SiteCollectionImages/Hebrew/TerrorInfo/decade/DecadeSummary_he.pdf (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

After Operation Cast Lead, mortar shelling dropped to 300 bombs in 2009, including those launched during the operation. The numbers continued to drop in the following years, although in Operation Protective Edge (2014) the organizations once again found mortar shelling to be the most effective way of causing casualties (beyond psychological impact and disruption of daily life). It stands to reason, therefore, that future clashes will see renewed use of this weapon.42 In total, 26 Israeli civilians and soldiers have been killed by mortar shelling from Gaza — six before the disengagement and twenty after, most of them during Operation Protective Edge.

Rocket fire: The first incident of rocket fire from Gaza into Israel apparently occurred in April 2001, although the rocket — fired at the southern town of Sderot — was mistaken for a mortar. Hamas first took responsibility for rocket fire in early November 2001, naming the rocket fired a week earlier the Qassam. This became the generic term for any rocket manufactured by Palestinians, although every faction names its rockets differently. In total, four incidents of rocket fire were identified in 2001; it is highly likely that more rockets were fired but were mistaken for mortars. In 2002, 35 rockets were fired on 17 occasions43 — seven times more than the previous year.

Rocket fire from Gaza, by number and range

42 ISA, "2014 Annual Summary Terrorism and CT Activity", Dec. 31, 2014, http://www.shabak.gov.il/English/EnTerrorData/Archive/Annual/pages/2014AnnualSummary1.aspx (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

43 "A Decade of Terrorism", 34; "Rocket Threat from the Gaza Strip", 32–34.

Rocket fire from Gaza steadily increased, reaching 270 incidents in 2004. In the months prior to the disengagement in 2005, it decreased somewhat thanks to the intra-Palestinian ceasefire. After the disengagement, attacking Israeli targets became much harder and terror organizations centered on rockets as a means of harassing the Israeli home front. As a result, rocket fire rose sharply in 2006 (from 401 to 1,722 rockets fired). The launchings took place largely in correspondence with IDF operations in Gaza following the abduction of Gilad Schalit and during the Second Lebanon War. Another spike occurred in 2008, leading to Operation Cast Lead. The number of launches then dropped sharply, rising again in 2012, which led to Operation Pillar of Defense. Then the number dropped sharply again, subsequently rising until Operation Cast Lead in 2014.[44]

Along with the steady increase in rocket fire and drop in mortar shelling, the quality of rockets improved. The organizations succeeded in extending the range of their self-manufactured rockets, developing heavier warheads, and obtaining increasingly advanced standard rockets. This process of improvement began already in 2001. In less than a year, the ballistic range of rockets fired from Gaza more than doubled, from three to seven kilometers. In 2004, self-manufactured rockets reached a distance of 12 kilometers and, by 2006, the first standard (i.e., state-manufactured) rockets, known as Grads, were fired at a 20-kilometer range. The next leap took place during Operation Cast Lead, when extended-range Grad rockets hit Be'er Sheva and Kiryat Malachi in southern Israel, some 40 kilometers from Gaza.[45] In 2009, the IDF identified an experimental launch of the Iranian Fajr 5 rocket from Gaza, some 60 kilometers out to sea.[46] The Fajr 5, like the self-manufactured M75 rocket, has a range of 75 to 80 kilometers;[47] both types of rocket were fired at Jerusalem and Tel Aviv during Operation Pillar of Defense in 2012. Syrian M302 rockets that can reach Haifa (in northern Israel) were fired during Operation Protective Edge in 2014, along with self-manufactured R160s. In recent years, self-manufactured rockets have regained dominance as smuggling from Egypt has grown harder.[48]

As noted, the steady improvement in rocket quality and range, as well as in the organizations' firing capacity, began when the first rocket was fired at Israel from Gaza in 2001, years before the disengagement. However, the Israeli withdrawal did have several implications in this context. First, removing all forms of Israeli presence from Gaza made it much more difficult to attack Israelis in formats that had previously proven successful. This drove terrorist organizations to concentrate on improving their only remaining weapon of consequence against Israel — ballistics. Casualty figures clearly show that all types of attacks against Israelis either decreased or remained at a similar level after the disengagement, except ballistic fire and confrontations during largescale operations. Second, as terror organizations in Gaza gained power after the

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44 Ibid.; ibid.

45 Ilana Curiel, "Rocket barrages hit Beersheba, Ashkelon; 5 lightly hurt", *Ynet*, Dec. 31, 2008, http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3647765,00.html (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

46 Pinhas Wolf and Nir Yahav, "Hamas Experiments with Rocket That Can Reach Tel Aviv", *Walla!*, Nov. 3, 2009, http://news.walla.co.il/item/1600870 (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).
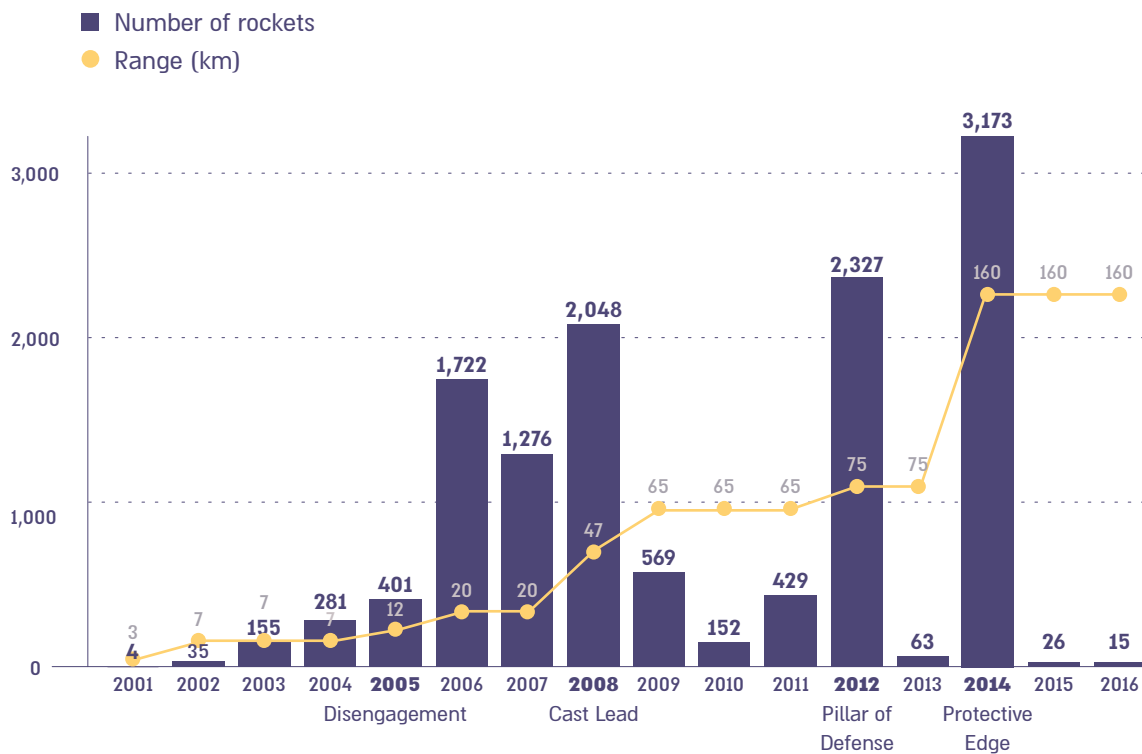
47 Elhanan Miller, "80% of Syria rebels are Islamist, senior IDF officer says", *Times of Israel*, June 9, 2014, http://www.timesofisrael.com/80-of-syria-rebels-are-islamist-senior-idf-officer-says/ (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

48 Arik Bender, "Netanyahu: "I Don't Want a One-State Solution, Committed to Two States", *Ma'ariv*, June 9, 2015, http://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/Article-480139 (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

disengagement thanks to improved smuggling and manufacturing capacity, their stock of rockets grew – and especially standard rockets. However, as demonstrated below, the IDF found it hard to stem the tide of these developments even while still in Gaza. Third, the fact that the IDF withdrew and Hamas took over made it easier for terrorist groups to access launching areas in northern Gaza that had previously been patrolled by the IDF.

It is important to note that rocket fire from Gaza plays a major political role. Most of the firing since 2007 has been carried out by the large terrorist organizations in Gaza – Hamas and Islamic Jihad. These groups, and especially Hamas, are almost always driven by political considerations. Accordingly, whenever it was in Hamas' best interest to stop rocket fire from Gaza, it did so with remarkable success. Hamas has been known to use rocket fire to divert attention from internal conflicts or from its own mistakes, and as a means of communicating with Israel about the limitations of its actions – a tactic known as "dialogue by fire".[49] However, as Hamas continues to strengthen its status as a ruling party, it faces growing constraints to hold fire other than in exceptional circumstances, and to rein in other terrorist activity. In that sense, Operation Cast Lead played an important role in clarifying the potential price of confrontation with Israel. As a result, rocket fire has drastically dwindled in recent years. As the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center put it in 2012:

> "In the three and a half years which have passed since Operation Cast Lead, the Hamas movement in the Gaza Strip has maintained a policy of restraint regarding terrorist attacks, different from its policy before the operation. Hamas' policy maneuvers between the movement's Islamist jihad identity and the constraints and considerations which direct it toward pragmatism."[50]

Hamas does not enjoy absolute control. It is constrained by being a Jihadist movement committed to violent struggle against Israel, and is unwilling to directly confront other terror organizations. As a result, Hamas has adopted a complex policy regarding terror attacks, rather than stop them altogether. It is not always stringent in penalizing sporadic rocket fire by other groups, particularly Jihadist ones, and seeks out indirect ways to pursue terrorism (such as firing from Sinai without taking responsibility for the attack). Less often, Hamas wilfully ignores extensive firing by other organizations, and especially by Islamic Jihad, if the action is justified on "good enough grounds".

Far from illustrating Hamas' lack of control, these examples show that in the current reality dictating the actions of militant groups in Gaza, terror against Israel is the exception rather than the rule. When escalations cross a certain threshold, political messages conveyed between Israel and Hamas via Egypt are often enough to calm affairs. For instance, in March 2014, Islamic Jihad fired dozens of rockets at communities in southern Israel, apparently in response to Israel's

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49 "Rocket Threat from the Gaza Strip", 9.

50 The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "Hamas' restraint policy in the Gaza Strip: the results of the tension between Hamas' jihadist ideology and pragmatic considerations, which include governmental obligations and Israel's deterrent capabilities", May 23, 2012, http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/20335 (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

apprehension of Iranian weapons ship Klos C some ten days earlier. This led to an escalation that lasted several days, with two notable features: Islamic Jihad used inferior rockets that more often than not blew up soon after the launch, and Israel managed to end the round of violence by pressuring the Palestinian organizations via Egypt.[51] The use of low-grade rockets indicated that the fire was intended to send a message to Israel and ease internal pressure rather than cause real damage.

The various constraints on terror organizations in Gaza have been compounded by Israel's ability to actively defend itself since 2012. The development, successful testing, and deployment of the Iron Dome air-defense system vastly reduced the danger of rockets and their impact on Israeli morale.[52] This became abundantly clear in Operation Protective Edge, when Iron Dome managed to intercept 90% of rockets fired at populated areas in Israel. The thousands of rockets fired killed only two people — one of them in an unrecognized Bedouin village that lacked proper shelter. In comparison, 15 people were killed during the operation by mortars — a far more primitive weapon.

For organizations with substantial ballistic capacity, firing rockets has become a means of deterring Israel from launching large ground operations in Gaza and of exacting a price for Israeli actions that Hamas and Islamic Jihad see as a breach of the established boundaries between Israel and Gaza. Accordingly, the impact of potential rocket fire from Gaza has diminished over time: What was once considered an insufferable disruption of daily routine in Israel is now a threat primarily during severe escalations — and even then, the risk of physical damage is limited.

This is an important point: Although rocket fire allows terror organizations to threaten Israel with strategic emergencies (such as shutting down Israel's international airport, which occurred during Operation Protective Edge), it is less costly to Israel than having easy civilian and military targets within Gaza.

2.3 Tunnels and smuggling: Military development of terror organizations

Since Israel withdrew from Gaza, terrorist organizations there, and especially Hamas, have greatly enhanced their abilities. This includes acquiring standard weapons, developing more sophisticated military doctrines, and improving military infrastructure — and particularly tunnels. The goal of this advancement is to prevent a ground entry of Israeli forces or, failing that, to maximize relative advantages given the IDF's obvious military superiority.

Operation Protective Edge drew massive attention to the tunnels that Hamas dug into Israel. Public dismay over the extent of the revealed network turned the strategic goal of the operation, which Israel had launched with no prior planning, into destroying the tunnels. Terrifying

51 Ron Ben Yishai, "Iranian-Inspired Rocket Fire from Gaza", *Ynet*, March 13, 2014, http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4498543,00.html (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

52 Yiftah Shapir, "Lessons from Iron Dome", in: *Military and Strategic Affairs*, vol. 5 (1), (Tel Aviv: INSS, May 2013), 81-94.

descriptions of tunnels leading into kibbutzim and baseless rumors of planned attacks in which hundreds of terrorists would infiltrate communities along the border fuelled public fears.[53] Also, most of the military casualties in the operation were the result of efforts to take down the tunnel network — an undertaking that took much longer than the defense minister's optimistic prediction of "two to three days".[54] Naturally, the Right was quick to blame the tunnel problem on the disengagement; some of its politicians even openly gloated that residents of southern kibbutzim who had supported the disengagement were now paying the price.[55] Certain ministers, including then-Economy Minister Naftali Bennett, played up the perceived threat posed by the tunnels for personal political needs.[56]

The element of surprise was central to the public trauma caused by the discovery of the tunnels. However, as transpired during the operation and became even clearer afterwards, Israel knew that Hamas was digging tunnels into its territory. For quite some time, the IDF top command, Prime Minister Netanyahu, and Defense Minister Ya'alon had been receiving periodic updates by the Israeli Defense Intelligence about Hamas' progress in digging the tunnels. Netanyahu's and Ya'alon's choice to keep this information from the rest of the government heightened the political and general alarm when knowledge of the tunnels became public.[57]

Regardless of the avoidable general panic, the tunnel network poses a significant challenge to the IDF. Yet to what degree is this related to the disengagement? The tunnels consist of three different threats: There are those leading into Israel, which are intended for attack; those meant primarily for movement within Gaza; and those for smuggling between Gaza and Egypt. Let us examine the first two types.

Even before the disengagement, terror organizations in Gaza were using tunnels to attack Israelis. In 2004, the IDF defined tunnels leading into Israel and Egypt as one of two Gaza-related problems that it was having difficulty overcoming — the other being rocket fire. This came after years of failed attempts to prevent subterranean terror attacks and smuggling:[58] On

53 Ariel Kahana, "Hamas Plan: Hundreds of Terrorists to Emerge from Tunnels on New Year's Day", NRG, July 25, 2014, http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/600/825.html (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016). For a refutation of this argument, see: Yoav Limor, "Interim Summary", Yisra'el Hayom, July 31, 2014, http://www.israelhayom.co.il/article/205719 (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

54 Amos Harel, "Intelligence War: Gap in Estimates of Israeli Defense Intelligence and Israel Security Agency Concerning War in Gaza", Ha'aretz, Sept. 5, 2014, http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/.premium-1.2425438 (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016); Ricky Ben-David, Lazar Berman, and Haviv Rettig Gur, "PM vows to keep hitting Hamas until calm restored; US urges sides to avoid civilian casualties", Times of Israel, July 11, 2014, http://www.timesofisrael.com/operation-protective-edge-israel-hamas-day-4/ (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

55 Naftali Bennet, "Things I learned from the disengagement", Facebook, Aug. 5, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/NaftaliBennett/photos/a.656000644421607.1073741830.396697410351933/783843034970700/?type=1 (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016); Menachem Rahat, "The Disengagement and the Tunnels: Crime and Punishment", Arutz Sheva, July 24, 2014, http://www.inn.co.il/Articles/Article.aspx/12592 (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

56 Stuart Winer, "Ya'alon accuses Bennett of politicizing summer conflict", Times of Israel, March 2, 2015, http://www.timesofisrael.com/yaalon-accuses-bennett-of-politicizing-summer-conflict/ (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

57 "Intelligence War: Gap in Estimates of Israeli Defense Intelligence and Israel Security Agency Concerning War in Gaza".

58 Amir Rapaport, "Underground Threat", NRG, Aug. 20, 2004, http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART/771/495.html

26 September 2001, three soldiers were injured when a tunnel exploded under an army outpost in Rafah; on 27 June 2004, one soldier was killed and seven injured by the explosion of a tunnel that ran dozens of meters from Khan Yunis to a nearby IDF outpost; on 12 December 2004, five soldiers were killed and six wounded in a combined attack in which an 800-meter-long tunnel was detonated under the JVT outpost near Rafah crossing while terrorists stormed the outpost on foot.[59]

 After the IDF withdrew from Gaza, tunnels were used much more frequently for attacks along the border. For example, the terrorists who abducted Gilad Schalit in June 2006 entered Israel via tunnel; over the years, the IDF uncovered several other tunnels that were apparently intended to enable terror attacks along the border. Also, after the disengagement, Hamas created an extensive tunnel network within Gaza for secure movement and communications. Both types of tunnel were massively developed after Operation Cast Lead in 2008-9.

Compared to other issues reviewed here, the increased threat of tunnels is more directly tied to the disengagement. Routine IDF activity within Gaza prevented the development of such a broad infrastructure. More importantly, while the IDF and the settlers were still within Gaza, terror organizations had no reason to invest in such development. They were engaged in specific confrontations with the IDF on a regular basis and could easily strike at civilians or at forces operating near the civilian population — as is evident in the number of Israelis killed in Gaza by infiltration of settlements, IEDs, or suicide bombings. After the disengagement, the organizations had to prepare for a different kind of IDF response, such as massive ground entry or sweeping airstrikes. This became abundantly clear to Hamas after Hezbollah successfully used tunnelling to fight the IDF, and after the IDF managed to operate relatively freely in Gaza in Operation Cast Lead yet minimize casualties, by avoiding crowded urban combat.[60] To conclude this point: Israel's military withdrawal from Gaza heightened the threat posed by the tunnels largely because until then, militant groups had no reason to invest in developing such an expensive, complex infrastructure to attack the IDF and to defend against it. Until the disengagement, more impressive impact could be attained at considerably lower cost.

In that context, it should be stressed that the IDF was well aware of this threat but, for various reasons, did not prepare accordingly. Among other things, the political directive to focus on a possible action against Iran diverted attention from scenarios involving the Gaza front.[61]

In addition to the tunnels dug into Israel and throughout the Gaza Strip, another underground problem is the smuggling tunnels running under the Philadelphi Route, which separates between the Gazan and Egyptian parts of Rafah. These tunnels were used for smuggling copious arms while the IDF was still in Gaza, and extensive efforts to block them met with scant success.[62]

(Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

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59 ISA, "Hamas Use of Gaza Strip-based Subterranean Route", https://www.shabak.gov.il/English/EnTerrorData/Reviews/Pages/hamas-tunnel.aspx (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

60 Ibid.

61 Amos Harel, "This Israeli Lawmaker Won't Let the Gaza War Be Pushed Under the Rug", *Ha'aretz*, April 24, 2015, http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.653167 (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

62 See, for example, statement by then-Head of the ISA Yuval Diskin that Israel had not manage to operate effectively in Rafah since 1994: https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07TELAVIV3258_a.html (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

Prior to the disengagement, various alternatives were considered for dealing with this challenge, including leaving an Israeli force only along the route and digging a channel to be filled with seawater. The first idea was ruled out as the forces would be operating along a narrow strip adjacent to a dense urban area, and for fear that leaving soldiers in Gaza would hamper the image of full withdrawal that Israel wished to promote. The second idea was abandoned due to the objection of then-Attorney General Meni Mazuz, as it required demolishing some 3,000 homes in Rafah.[63]

However, even if the IDF had found a way to continue battling the smuggling network around the Philadelphi Route, the returns would probably not have been high. In 2009, after Operation Cast Lead, Major-General (ret.) Giora Eiland wrote:

> "It must be clear to all that it is impossible to prevent the smuggling from Egypt into the Gaza Strip if efforts at prevention begin and end with the Philadelphi axis (the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt). This is a very narrow expanse, with members of the same families living on both sides of the borders, some in the Egyptian part of Rafiah and some in the Palestinian part of Rafiah. It is impossible to prevent the existence of smuggling tunnels connecting the two sides of the axis. Even when the IDF was in control of the area (until 2005), it was only partially successful."[64]

After the disengagement, planning focused on procedures for running the Rafah crossing in order to prevent terrorist elements from using it. However, it became clear that the tunnels were the most vulnerable access route for both weapons and terrorism-training personnel. Also, the years after the disengagement saw the growth of a tunnel economy in Gaza.[65] This became necessary as, after Gilad Schalit was captured in 2006 and especially after Hamas took control of Gaza in 2007, Israel and Egypt tightened their economic pressure on Gaza. More tunnels were built, and of better quality. Gaza's militant groups used them once they realized they had to obtain more sophisticated weapons after Operation Cast Lead, and the entire population of Gaza grew to depend on them for products barred entry by Israel and Egypt.[66]

When this reality was finally altered, it proved what experts had been claiming for years — that the tunnel smuggling would stop only if Egypt wanted it so.[67] As of February 2013, the Egyptian military increased efforts to effectively close off the border. That year, Egypt — still under the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood — shut down most of the smuggling tunnels connecting the

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63 "Use of Land for Security Purposes", 63 (Hebrew).

64 Giora Eiland, "Operation Pillar of Defense: Strategic Perspectives", *in: Shlomo Brom (ed.), In the Aftermath of Operation Pillar of Defense*, (Tel Aviv: INSS, 2012), 11, http://www.inss.org.il/uploadImages/systemFiles/ memo124f027134590.pdf (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

65 Amira Hass, "UN Report: Smuggling Tunnels Help Alleviate Gaza's Economic Woes", *Ha'aretz*, Dec. 9, 2011, http://www.haaretz.com/un-report-smuggling-tunnels-help-alleviate-gaza-s-economic-woes-1.400433 (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

66 "Hamas Use of Gaza Strip-based Subterranean Route".

67 Regarding Israel's displeasure with Egypt's activity to stop the smuggling and claims that it could do so if it wished, see footnote 16.

Egyptian and Palestinian sides of Rafah.[68] After the military coup in July 2013, Egypt stepped up these efforts, waging a broad operation against terror organizations in Sinai.[69] By the time Israel launched Operation Protective Edge in July 2014, Egypt had shut down some 1,400 tunnels, which formed the bulk of the smuggling network at the time.[70] After the operation Egypt renewed its efforts, sealing off 1,429 entrances to tunnels between October 2014 and June 2015 in order to combat smuggling.[71] The Egyptians also evacuated and demolished thousands of homes to create a buffer zone about one kilometer wide in the city of Rafah, and dug a channel about two kilometers from the border in order to impede the movement of smugglers in and out of Rafah.[72] Although Egypt probably did not uncover all the tunnels, it managed to greatly restrict military smuggling in and out of Gaza, exacerbating the economic crisis there.

Over the years, terrorist organizations also tried to bring weapons into Gaza by sea. Several such attempts were thwarted thanks to precise intelligence and successful Israeli naval operations.[73] Other attempts, such as importing standard weapons from Iran via Sudan, offered Israel opportunities to act far from its territory, according to foreign sources.[74] This highlights the wisdom of Eiland's observation that weapons intended for Gaza must be apprehended long before they reach the tunnels between Egypt and Israel, if terror organizations are to be stopped from arming themselves.[75]

In summary, the prediction that terror organizations would improve their smuggling skills and weapons quality in the wake of the disengagement came true. However, as with the rocket fire, it was not Israel's withdrawal that created the problem but both time and Palestinian militants' insistence on enhancing their ability to attack Israel. It is pertinent to ask to what degree the disengagement expedited this process. Yet the problem was not solved by Israeli presence in Gaza prior to the disengagement, and its resolution was certainly not tied to the existence of settlements there. Gazan smuggling efforts were blocked when Israel broadened its preventive scope and primarily, when Egypt decided to come on board.

Finally, Gaza's militant groups have also increased their manufacturing capacities, military infrastructure, and combat training. These organizations, and especially Hamas, have established

68 Harriet Sherwood, "Palestinians in Gaza feel the Egypt effect as smuggling tunnels close", *The Guardian*, July 19, 2013, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/19/palestinians-gaza-city-smuggling-tunnels (retrieved 15, 2016).

69 Assaf Gibor, "Egypt Establishing New 'Philadelphi Route' Along Border with Gaza", *NRG*, Sept. 2, 2013, http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/504/334.html?hp=1&cat=875&loc=1 (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

70 AFP, "Egypt destroys 1,370 Gaza smuggling tunnels", *Times of Israel*, March 12, 2014, http://www.timesofisrael.com/egypt-destroys-1370-gaza-smuggling-tunnels (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

71 "Egypt: 1,429 Tunnels Destroyed in North Sinai in 18 Months – Armed Forces", *All Africa*, June 14, 2015, http://allafrica.com/stories/201506151779.html (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

72 Mohamed Yusri and Ahmed Hassan, "Egypt Digging Trench Along Gaza Border to Stop Smuggling", *Ha'aretz*, June 22, 2015, http://www.haaretz.com/news/middle-east/1.662481; "Egypt to Evacuate 10,000 Homes in Ongoing Gaza Buffer Zone Expansion", *Albawaba News*, June 6, 2015, http://www.albawaba.com/news/egypt-evacuate-10000-homes-ongoing-gaza-buffer-zone-expansion-704056 (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

73 Two notable attempts in recent years were the "Victoria" in March 2011 and the "Klos-C" in March 2014.

74 See, for example: "How Israel Foiled an Arms Convoy Bound for Hamas", *TIME*, March 30, 2009, http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1888352,00.html (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

75 "Operation Pillar of Defense: Strategic Perspectives", 13.

training camps and semi-military institutions throughout Gaza, created infrastructure for manufacturing and storing weapons, built fortifications, upgraded their communications systems and, as mentioned above, developed a vast tunnel network for traveling within Gaza and for attacking Israel's rear during major confrontations.[76] Yet the institutionalization of Hamas — and, to a lesser degree, of other organizations — offers Israel new opportunities, especially since institutionalized organizations are more vulnerable to military action aimed at organized units during flare ups and can more easily be deterred when not in direct confrontation.

76 The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "Hamas' Rise in Military Power in the Gaza Strip (current analysis for March 2008)", http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/data/pdf/PDF_19009_1.pdf, 6-7, 23-49 (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

3. Protective Edge and the status quo: The operation that no one wanted

Since 2014, detractors of the disengagement have repeatedly cited Operation Protective Edge as proof that Israel's withdrawal from Gaza was a mistake. This tactic cynically exploits the trauma that Israelis underwent that summer to promote the right-wing agenda of forestalling an end to the conflict — the same agenda that led to the unnecessary escalation in 2014 to begin with.[77]

Contrary to common belief, Hamas leadership was not seeking a wide-scale confrontation before the 2014 operation, although the movement's armed wing was preparing for one. Hamas repeatedly emphasized throughout the operation that it had no desire to clash with Israel at the time.[78]

How, then, did such a confrontation evolve if no one wanted it? The answer lies in the previous year — 2013. The agreements reached after Operation Pillar of Defense in November 2012 eased the economic pressure on Gaza, leading to the quietest year in terms of Gaza-based terrorism since 2000: A total of 63 rockets were fired into Israel (less than half the amount fired in 2003), no one was injured by terror attacks originating in Gaza, and one person was killed. Yet as of the summer of 2013, political and economic pressure on Hamas mounted. The pro-Hamas Muslim Brotherhood was overthrown in Egypt, replaced by a military regime that limited movement through Rafah Crossing and took firm action against the smuggling tunnels that were Gaza's lifeline. The restricted movement of goods through Israeli crossings was not enough to serve the needs of the population. Gaza's construction industry came to a virtual halt when Israel banned the import of building materials after a tunnel was discovered near Kibbutz Ein Hashlosha in October 2013.[79] Meanwhile, tension had been growing since 2011 between Hamas and Iran and Syria due to Hamas' support of the Muslim Brotherhood and its objection to Assad's oppression of the rebels in Syria.[80] The result was a major drop in Iranian support of Hamas, and the movement's leadership in exile was forced to leave its convenient base in Damascus. At the beginning of 2014, Hamas found itself with a failing economy in Gaza, taxation from tunnels cut by two-thirds, and no way of paying wages to more than 40,000 civil servants.[81]

This crisis urged Hamas to accept reconciliation with Fatah, in the hope that it would help pay wages, ease economic pressure on Gaza, and quell rising domestic opposition to Hamas'

77 Assaf Sharon, "Failure in Gaza", Molad, Feb. 12, 2015, http://www.molad.org/en/articles/failure-in-gaze.

78 Roi Kais and Elior Levi, "Mashal: We will agree to nothing but a lifting of the siege", *Ynet*, July 23, 2014, http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4549022,00.html (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

79 OCHA, "Humanitarian Bullet — Monthly Report", January 2014, https://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_the_humanitarian_monitor_2014_02_19_english.pdf (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

80 The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "Hamas evacuates its Syrian external headquarters: overview and initial analysis", http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/data/pdf/PDF_11_278_2.pdf (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

81 Ibrahim Barzak and Karin Laub, "Hamas in worst financial crisis since seizing Gaza", *Times of Israel*, March 14, 2014, http://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-in-worst-financial-crisis-since-seizing-gaza (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

rule. From this position of weakness, Hamas signed a reconciliation agreement with Fatah in April 2014, which led to the establishment of a government of technocrats accepted by both movements and headed by Abbas' representative, Rami Hamdallah. Israel immediately declared a boycott on the government and set out to have it dissolved. Rather than use this opportunity to bolster Abbas by channelling economic benefits into Gaza through him, Israel stopped transferring tax revenue to the Palestinian Authority and prevented the transfer of funds from Qatar to pay Hamas' civil servants in Gaza. Then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Lieberman went so far as to declare Robert Serry, the UN envoy to the region, a persona non-grata for suggesting assistance in mitigating the salary crisis.[82] Interestingly, in the following months Serry played a crucial role in mediation attempts to end the fighting between Israel and Hamas.[83]

Hamas' strategic position further deteriorated after Palestinians held the movement responsible for the abduction (and subsequent murder) of Israeli teens Naftali Frenkel, Gilad Sha'er, and Eyal Yifrach in the West Bank on 12 June 2014, and for the Israeli crackdown that followed. Although it transpired within days that the kidnapping was the independent initiative of Hamas-affiliated operatives,[84] Israel insisted on holding the movement responsible and called for dismantling the Palestinian unity government. In addition to locating the abducted teens, the IDF was charged with undermining Hamas in the West Bank and began a massive sweep, arresting Hamas operatives, including some released by Netanyahu in the Schalit deal in 2011.[85] In the days after the abduction and the IDF operation that followed, rocket fire from Gaza rose sharply. Over the course of the escalation that eventually led to Operation Protective Edge, Netanyahu did all that was in his power to maintain an impossible status quo in which Fatah and Hamas remained split, talks with the PA stalled, pressure on Hamas rose on all fronts, and yet Israel enjoyed complete quiet.

In the weeks preceding the operation, while Hamas did not use its full power to stop other organizations from firing rockets, it did hold fire itself — until an IDF attack on June 29 killed one of its operatives. Then Hamas joined in the rocket fire and the situation escalated in a series of retaliations.[86] The July 2 abduction and murder of Palestinian teen Muhammad Abu Khdeir by Jews in Jerusalem heightened tensions further. Israel's attempt in early July to declare a ceasefire based on the principle that it would stop responding if Hamas held fire failed: In a mediated negotiation, Hamas and the other Palestinian organizations demanded an end to the blockade — i.e., economic sanctions — on Gaza, and that Israel commit to stop targeting operatives by air. They apparently also demanded release of the militants arrested in previous weeks. Meanwhile, Israel struck a Hamas tunnel that was meant to facilitate a terror attack in the area of Kerem

82 AFP, "Israel threatens UN envoy over Qatar cash for Palestinians", *Ynet*, June 22, 2014, http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4532879,00.html (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

83 Elior Levy, Roi Kais, Yoav Zeitoun, Yitzhak Benhorin and Attila Somfalvi, "72-hour ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, 5 soldiers killed last night", *Ynet*, August 1, 2014, http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4553136,00.html (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

84 "Interim Summary".

85 "Israel Searches for Teens Kidnapped in West Bank, Day 5", *Ha'aretz*, June 17, 2014, http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.599302 (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

86 Avi Issacharoff, "Hamas fires rockets for first time since 2012, Israeli officials say", *Times of Israel*, June 30, 2014, http://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-fired-rockets-for-first-time-since-2012-israeli-officials-say/ (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

Shalom in southern Gaza and had been worrying security forces for several weeks. Israel rejected Hamas' demands and, after the firing continued, declared the commencement of Operation Protective Edge on July 8.[87] About a week later, Israel accepted a ceasefire proposed by Egypt that was based on renewing the easing of economic sanctions agreed upon after Operation Pillar of Defense in 2012. However, Hamas was no longer willing to make do with these terms and rejected the offer. The movement's counter offer was to open the crossings between Gaza and Israel, keep Rafah Crossing permanently open, establish a seaport and airport in Gaza, permit worshippers from Gaza to pray at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and release the operatives released in the Schalit deal and recently arrested again.[88] The principle that Hamas would abide by a stable ceasefire in exchange for major improvement of economic conditions in Gaza remained in place until the fighting ended.[89]

Several hours before rejecting the Egyptian proposal, Hamas sent 13 terrorists through a tunnel leading to Kibbutz Sufa, but they were identified and the attack was thwarted. Consequently, the Israeli cabinet – which until then had been prepared to accept a ceasefire – decided to launch a ground operation to demolish the tunnel network. Although the defense minister vowed that the operation would be over in days, it ended up lasting much longer.[90] Throughout the operation, Netanyahu attempted to reach a ceasefire that would ensure what he had sought from the outset – a return to the understandings reached after Operation Pillar of Defense, which Israel had stopped implementing some eight months earlier after exposing a Hamas tunnel in its territory. However, Hamas was no longer willing to accept these terms. In negotiations held during the operation, Netanyahu demanded demilitarization of Gaza. Small wonder that this unrealistic demand was not included in the ceasefire that finally ended the operation after 50 days. When the fighting ended, Israel boasted that it had not bowed to Hamas' demand for a seaport and airport in Gaza or for paying employee wages.[91]

Two years on, Israel's defense establishment and government are vigorously debating the best way to enable economic wellbeing in Gaza, with some ministers on the right even supporting the establishment of a seaport.[92] Almost all of Hamas' other demands were met long ago, and it is generally agreed in Israel that maintaining security requires an economically flourishing Gaza.[93] Therefore, paying civil servant salaries in Gaza has long since been recognized as an Israeli interest. This, however, is being thwarted by the PA, which is once again on hostile

87 Ron Ben Yishai, "Hamas' Terms for a Lull", *Ynet*, July 5, 2014, http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4538211,00. html (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016); Avi Issacharoff, "Hamas' Formula: Salaries for Ceasefire", *Walla!*, July 5, 2014, http://news.walla.co.il/item/2761538 (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

88 Itamar Eichner, Yoav Zeitoun, Roi Kais, Elior Levy, and Attila Somfalvi, "Ceasefire Negotiations: Head of ISA to Represent Israel in Cairo", *Ynet*, July 17, 2014, http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4544949,00.html (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

89 "Mashal: We will agree to nothing but a lifting of the siege".

90 See footnotes 53 and 59.

91 Barak Ravid, "Netanyahu Saw His Chance to Run Away From Gaza, and He Took It", *Ha'aretz*, Aug. 26, 2014, http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.612637 (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

92 Jonathan Lis, "Right-wing Minister: Conditions for Palestinians at Checkpoints Are 'Disgrace and Shame' on Israel", *Ha'aretz*, April 16, 2016, http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.714679 (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

93 Omri Nahmias and Amir Bohbot, "Head of Israeli Defense Intelligence Research: Rehabilitating Gaza is the Basis for Maintaining Calm", *Walla!*, June 10, 2015, http://news.walla.co.il/item/2862204 (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

terms with Hamas. In July 2016, the media reported that Israel had allowed Qatar to pay the salaries of Hamas workers in Gaza.[94] Also, the crossings have been opened to let in equipment for rehabilitating Gaza; for the first time since 2007, limited export has been allowed from Gaza into Israel,[95] the permitted fishing zone off Gaza has been widened,[96] and worshippers from Gaza have been permitted to travel to the Temple Mount.[97] Demands to ease restrictions for humanitarian purposes were addressed as part of the reconciliation agreement between Israel and Turkey.[98]

Had Israel taken any of these measures in early 2014, it could have reduced the risk of fighting erupting in Gaza. Doing so before the summer confrontation, which ultimately strengthened Hamas and severely damaged Abbas' reputation, could have strengthened positive Palestinian elements instead of saving Hamas from an ongoing crisis. Yet Netanyahu insisted on doing nothing unless his hand was forced. As a result, Israel ended up yielding much more to Hamas than what the movement would have accepted before the operation, in addition to restoring the movement's glory and undergoing an unnecessary round of hostilities. All this took place only 18 months after the previous operation and under the best regional conditions to date, which gave Netanyahu the quiet and the leverage over Hamas that were needed to create a positive new strategic reality on the Gaza front.[99]

Some may argue that without the disengagement, an operation such as Protective Edge would have been simpler for the IDF and cost less lives. As explained above, this is a flimsy argument. From 2000 to 2005, Israel faced growing violence in Gaza and as did its degree of sophistication. As Israel has not regularly operated deep within Palestinian towns in Gaza for years, a ground entry of the kind experienced by the Golani Brigade in Shuja'iyeh or by the Givati Brigade in Rafah in the summer of 2014 would have been highly complex in any case.[100] Therefore, the belief that staying in Gaza would have spared Israel the broad, painful operations needed to deal with security challenges there is unfounded. Also, had Israel stayed, the IDF would have had to

94 Adam Rasgon, "Qatar coordinated payment to Hamas employees with Israel, PA", *JPost*, July 24, 2016, http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Qatar-to-pay-salaries-of-Hamas-public-sector-employees-in-Gaza-462209 (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

95 OCHA, "Monthly Overview — March 2015", http://www.ochaopt.org/content/monthly-overview-march-2015 (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

96 Barak Ravid, "Netanyahu Saw His Chance to Run Away From Gaza, and He Took It", *Ha'aretz*, Aug. 26, 2014, http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.612637 (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

97 Amir Tibon, "COGAT to Gazans: No Siege, Everything Open", *Walla!*, Feb. 25, 2015, http://news.walla.co.il/item/2833176 (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

98 Donald Macintyre, "Israel and Turkey end six-year standoff", *The Guardian*, June 27, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/26/israel-and-turkey-to-announce-end-of-six-year-stand-off (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

99 See, also: Assaf Sharon, "Failure in Gaza", *The New York Review of Books*, Sept. 25, 2014, http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2014/sep/25/failure-gaza/#fn-3 (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

100 A clear example was the APC disaster that occurred in Zeitoun on 11 May 2004, when six IDF soldiers were killed by an explosive device that went off under a Givati APC. It should be noted that the APC destroyed in this incident, as well as the one destroyed the next day on the Philadelphi Route, were M-113s — the same type of APC that was leading the Golani force that lost seven soldiers to anti-tank fire while entering Shuja'iyeh during Operation Protective Edge.

defend thousands of Israelis deep within Gaza while carrying out a massive operation in urban terrain. As the settlements could easily be targeted with mortar shelling and tunnels far less sophisticated than those discovered in 2014, the death toll would likely have been much higher.

Therefore, the fault for the violent eruption in 2014 does not lie with the disengagement but rather with the policy led by Netanyahu, who has been in power since 2009 and cherishes the status quo.

Summary

Analyzing the strategic pros and cons of Israel's withdrawal from Gaza reveals that the disengagement benefited major Israeli interests. In other words, the strategic balance of the disengagement is positive, and Israel is better off in 2016 than it would have been without withdrawing from Gaza. The number of casualties of Gaza-based terrorism continues to drop, even taking into account the fatalities of Operation Cast Lead, with both civilians and soldiers less vulnerable to attacks. Israel gained many international points from the move, including more legitimacy and the tangible achievement of Bush's letter of guarantees to Sharon. The disengagement also resolved an unreasonable civilian living arrangement. By remaining in Gaza, instead of these achievements Israel would have had to deal with a rapid deterioration including rising casualties in and around Gaza, growing international isolation, pressure to take unwanted steps on the Palestinian front, and long-term challenges to Israel's civic identity as a democratic state with a Jewish majority.

Nonetheless, current reality in Gaza still poses significant challenges to Israel's strategic interests. Hamas' control of the area, the threat of rocket fire at the home front, and the growing power of terror organizations are major challenges that have increased since the disengagement. In other words, while the actual day-to-day risk has dropped sharply, the potential threat from Gaza at times of confrontation has grown.

However, as analyzed in detail above, most of the security risks that Israel currently faces in Gaza were not created by the disengagement, although they did develop after it. Hamas rose to power as the result of an almost twenty-year-long process that first showed institutional signs soon after Arafat's death in November 2004. Rocket fire into Israel had already proven beneficial to terror organizations in the early years of the second Intifada, and the smuggling of knowledge and means to facilitate it began before the disengagement. Moreover, the introduction of the Iron Dome defense system greatly mitigated the effectiveness of this threat. Attack tunnels into Israel and smuggling tunnels into Egypt were in use even when the IDF was regularly active in Gaza, despite efforts to eradicate them. Also, some disadvantages of Hamas' greater power are balanced by benefits such as organization of the Palestinian political system and having a responsible address in Gaza that can be held accountable and deterred.

In any case, it is important to emphasize for those who think that the cons of rocket fire and militant development outweigh the pros of Israel no longer being in Gaza, that dealing with these disadvantages does not require civilian presence in Gaza, but only military control over parts of it.

The study reveals another aspect of the strategic balance that did not receive sufficient attention in real time, yet is evident more than a decade after the disengagement. Israel withdrew from an area that is in the throes of political reordering. This reality currently has more benefits than costs for Israel, and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. The gradual process of civic stabilization in Gaza is especially important given the absence of a partner bound by an agreement. At the same time, the fact that it took a massive military operation to encourage Hamas to maintain quiet highlights the disadvantage of Israel's position: The other party is undergoing a transition of government and there is no binding agreement limiting the new

regime's scope of action — unlike the situation in Egypt after the Muslim Brotherhood came into power, where the regime remained committed to the peace treaty with Israel. Netanyahu's right-wing governments, which were in power after all three major operations in Gaza, failed to use the lulls that followed to take an initiative that would fundamentally alter relations with the Palestinians in Gaza.

Several lessons can be gleaned from the developments that followed in the wake of the disengagement, which may help reduce potential risks of future withdrawals. These conclusions highlight the importance of having a meaningful sovereign on the other side of the border. First, the disengagement was not negotiated with the Palestinians. As the plan was formed while Arafat was still in power, Israel made do with coordinating the move with Abbas' people. However, this coordination was lacking —for example, updated maps of the settlements slated for evacuation, for which the Palestinians were supposed to assume responsibility, were transferred only in early August 2005.[101] This coordination was not enough to ensure that the Palestinian side was ready to take control on the ground. The decision to carry out the civilian and military withdrawals virtually back to back, instead of first dismantling the settlements and then gradually withdrawing troops, also made it difficult for the PA to accept immediate responsibility in all areas, as its forces were not adequately prepared. Consequently, the PA failed to prevent Palestinian masses from overrunning the deserted settlements. Finally, the reality that developed after Hamas took control of Gaza shows how important it is for the sovereign on the other side of the border to have full authority, responsibility, and ability to realize its powers. By the time Israel remembered that the Palestinian security forces in Gaza had to be trained and equipped, it was too late to prevent Hamas' forceful takeover. However, it was actually the stabilization of Hamas as a governing power that strengthened Israel's ability to threaten the movement, with the extraordinary result that an organization that is fundamentally a terrorist group is reining in rocket fire against Israel.

As with all "what if" questions, it is hard to argue unequivocally against hypothetical alternative realities. However, the analysis presented here clearly shows the advantages of the disengagement from Gaza and the ways in which it improved Israeli security. To the extent that the negative developments reviewed here are related to the disengagement, they are tied to the military withdrawal and to the way in which it was carried out. The dismantling of settlements, which has become the focus of right-wing attempts to portray the disengagement as a failure in collective Israeli memory, was actually highly beneficial to Israel and did not cause substantial security losses.

101 "Mofaz Gives Dahlan Updated Map of Settlements", *Arutz Sheva*, August 10, 2005, http://www.inn.co.il/News/News.aspx/120771 (Hebrew) (retrieved Dec. 15, 2016).

Appendix A – Timeline

Sept. 28, 2000

Second Intifada begins

Sept. 30, 2000

Clashes at Netzarim junction

Jan. 24, 2002

President Bush speech outlining basics of what will later become the Road Map

March 29, 2002

IDF Operation Defensive Shield in West Bank

April 30, 2003

Road Map made public
Dec. 17, 2003

Dec. 17, 2003

Sharon speech at Herzliya Conference – first announcement of disengagement plan

April 15, 2004

President Bush letter of guarantees to Israel

May 2, 2004

Likud party referendum votes against disengagement plan

June 6, 2004

Government authorizes plan

Oct. 26, 2004

Knesset votes in favour of plan

Nov. 11, 2004

Arafat dies

Jan. 9, 2005

Abbas elected

Feb. 16, 2005

Knesset passes bill to implement disengagement plan

August 15-22, 2005

Gaza settlements dismantled

August 23, 2005

Northern West Bank settlements dismantled

Sept. 12, 2005

IDF withdrawal from Gaza completed

Sept. 23-Oct. 1, 2005

Operation Summer Rains – IDF activity renewed in Gaza and stepped up in West Bank in response to Hamas rocket fire

Jan. 25, 2006

Palestinian Legislative Council elections

June 25, 2006

Gilad Schalit abducted

June 12-14, 2007

Hamas takes over Gaza

Jan. 23, 2008

Gaza-Egypt border breached at Rafah

June 19, 2008

Israel-Hamas ceasefire begins

Dec. 18, 2008

Hamas declares end of ceasefire (fighting renewed the previous month due to IDF operation to uncover tunnel); massive rocket fire into Israel begins

Dec. 27, 2008 – Jan. 18, 2009

Operation Cast Lead

May 31, 2010

Gaza flotilla; IDF takeover of Mavi Marmara kills 9 flotilla participants

Oct. 18, 2011

Gilad Schalit released

July 14-21, 2012

Operation Pillar of Defense

July 8 – Aug. 26, 2014

Operation Protective Edge

Appendix B — Settlements in Gaza[102]

102 http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/gaza_strip_may_2005.jpg

Appendix C – Casualties of Gaza-based terrorism since September 28, 2000

Date	Name	Age	Attack location	Attack type	Member of security forces	Comments
November 8, 2000	Noa Dahan	25	Philadelphi Route	Shooting	No	
November 11, 2000	Avner Shalom	28	Gush Katif junction	Shooting	Yes	
November 13, 2000	Gabi Zaghouri	36	Kissufim junction	Shooting	No	
November 18, 2000	Baruch (Snir) Flum	21	Kfar Darom	Infiltration	Yes	
November 18, 2000	Sharon Shitoubi	21	Kfar Darom	Infiltration	Yes	
November 20, 2000	Miriam Amitai	35	Kissufim junction	Explosive charge	No	
November 20, 2000	Gavriel Biton	34	Kissufim junction	Explosive charge	No	
November 21, 2000	Itamar Yefet	19	Gush Katif junction	Shooting	No	
November 23, 2000	Edward Matchnik	21	Gaza DCO	Explosive charge	Yes	
November 23, 2000	Samar Hussein	19	Gaza DCO	Shooting	Yes	
November 24, 2000	Sharon Arameh	25	Neve Dekalim	Shooting	Yes	
November 28, 2000	Gad Marasha	30	Sufa crossing	Explosive charge	Yes	
November 28, 2000	Yonatan Vermullen	29	Sufa crossing	Explosive charge	Yes	
January 14, 2001	Ron Tzalah	32	Kfar Yam	Infiltration	No	
February 5, 2001	Rujayah Salameh	23	Rafah	Shooting	Yes	
May 10, 2001	Constantin Straturula	52	Kissufim junction	Explosive charge	No	
May 10, 2001	Virgil Martinesc	29	Kissufim junction	Explosive charge	No	
June 22, 2001	Aviv Iszak	19	Dugit	Suicide	Yes	
June 22, 2001	Ofir Kit	19	Dugit	Suicide	Yes	
August 25, 2001	Gil Oz	30	Marganit military post	Infiltration	Yes	

Date	Name	Age	Attack location	Attack type	Member of security forces	Comments
August 25, 2001	Kobi Nir	21	Marganit military post	Infiltration	Yes	
August 25, 2001	Tzahi Grabli	19	Marganit military post	Infiltration	Yes	
October 2, 2001	Liron Harpaz	19	Elei Sinai	Infiltration	Yes	
October 2, 2001	Assaf Yitzhaki	20	Elei Sinai	Infiltration	No	
November 24, 2001	Barak Madmon	26	Kfar Darom	Mortar shell	Yes	
November 24, 2001	Etty Fahima	45	Kissufim route	Shooting	No	
December 2, 2001	Baruch Singer	51	Elei Sinai	Shooting	No	
January 9, 2002	Ashraf Hawash	28	Kerem Shalom	Infiltration	Yes	
January 9, 2002	Ibrahim Hamadieh	23	Kerem Shalom	Infiltration	Yes	
January 9, 2002	Hana (Eli) Abu-Ghanem	25	Kerem Shalom	Infiltration	Yes	
January 9, 2002	Mofid Sawaid	25	Kerem Shalom	Infiltration	Yes	
February 14, 2002	Ron Lavie	20	Karni-Netzarim route	Explosive charge	Yes	
February 14, 2002	Moshed Peled	20	Karni-Netzarim route	Explosive charge	Yes	
February 14, 2002	Asher Zaguri	21	Karni-Netzarim route	Explosive charge	Yes	
February 18, 2002	Ahuva Amergi	30	Kissufim route	Shooting	No	
February 18, 2002	Mor Elraz	25	Kissufim route	Shooting	Yes	
February 18, 2002	Amir Mansouri	21	Kissufim route	Shooting	Yes	
March 3, 2002	Steven Kenigsberg	19	Kissufim crossing	Shooting	Yes	
March 6, 2002	Pinhas Cohen	23	Khan Yunis	Shooting	Yes	Killed in action
March 6, 2002	Alexander Nastarenko	37	Nir Oz	Infiltration	Yes	
March 7, 2002	Arik Krogliak	18	Atzmona	Infiltration	No	
March 7, 2002	Asher Marcus	18	Atzmona	Infiltration	No	
March 7, 2002	Eran Picard	18	Atzmona	Infiltration	No	

Date	Name	Age	Attack location	Attack type	Member of security forces	Comments
March 7, 2002	Ariel Zana	18	Atzmona	Infiltration	No	
March 7, 2002	Tal Kurtzweil	18	Atzmona	Infiltration	No	
March 10, 2002	Kobi Eichelboim	21	Netzarim	Shooting	Yes	
March 14, 2002	Matan Biderman	21	Karni-Netzarim route	Explosive charge	Yes	
March 14, 2002	Ala Hubeishi	21	Karni-Netzarim route	Explosive charge	Yes	
March 14, 2002	Rotem Shani	19	Karni-Netzarim route	Explosive charge	Yes	
March 29, 2002	Tuvia Wisner	79	Netzarim	Infiltration	No	
March 29, 2002	Michael Orlansky	70	Netzarim	Infiltration	No	
April 6, 2002	Nisan Avraham	26	Rafiah Yam	Shooting	Yes	
April 12, 2002	David Smirnoff	22	Erez crossing	Shooting	Yes	
April 20, 2002	Uriel Bar-Maimon	21	Erez industrial park	Shooting	Yes	
May 12, 2002	Nisan Dolinger	43	Rafiah Yam	Shooting	No	
June 15, 2002	Haim Yehezkel Gutman	22	Elei Sinai	Shooting	Yes	Killed in action
June 15, 2002	Alexei Gladkov	20	Elei Sinai	Shooting	Yes	Killed in action
June 22, 2002	Anatoly Krasik	22	Elei Sinai	Shooting	Yes	Killed in action
July 10, 2002	Hagai Lev	24	Rafah	Shooting	Yes	Killed in action
August 20, 2002	Kevin Cohen	19	Khan Yunis	Shooting	Yes	Killed in action
September 5, 2002	Malik Grifat	24	Nisanit	Shooting	Yes	
September 5, 2002	Aviad Dotan	21	Kissufim crossing	Explosive charge	Yes	
November 6, 2002	Assaf Tzfira	18	Pe'at Sadeh	Shooting	No	
November 6, 2002	Amos Sa'ada	52	Pe'at Sadeh	Shooting	No	
November 9, 2002	Madin Grifat	23	Netzarim	Explosive charge	Yes	
November 22, 2002	Shigdaf Garmai	30	Tel Qateifa	Shooting	Yes	
December 20, 2002	Yitzhak Arama	40	Kissufim route	Shooting	No	

Date	Name	Age	Attack location	Attack type	Member of security forces	Comments
January 12, 2003	Mikhail Kazakov	34	Nitzana	Infiltration	Yes	Through Egypt
February 15, 2003	Noam Bahagon	20	Dugit	Explosive charge	Yes	
February 15, 2003	Alexei Belitzky	21	Dugit	Explosive charge	Yes	
February 15, 2003	Doron Cohen	21	Dugit	Explosive charge	Yes	
February 15, 2003	Itay Mizrahi	20	Dugit	Explosive charge	Yes	
February 23, 2003	Doron Lev	19	Neve Dekalim	Shooting	Yes	
April 15, 2003	Zachar Rahamin Hanukayev	39	Karni industrial zone	Shooting	No	
April 15, 2003	Ahmad Salah Kara	20	Karni industrial zone	Shooting	No	
April 20, 2003	Lior Ziv	19	Rafah	Shooting	Yes	
June 8, 2003	Assaf Abergil	23	Erez crossing	Shooting	Yes	
June 8, 2003	Udi Eilat	38	Erez crossing	Shooting	Yes	
June 8, 2003	Boaz Emete	24	Erez crossing	Shooting	Yes	
June 8, 2003	Chen Engel	32	Erez crossing	Shooting	Yes	
June 27, 2003	Erez Ashkenazi	21	Gaza	Explosive charge	Yes	Killed in action
September 25, 2003	Avihu Keinan	22	El Boureij	Shooting	Yes	Killed in action
October 15, 2003	John Eric Branchizio	37	Beit Hanoun junction	Explosive charge	No	US citizen
October 15, 2003	John Martin Linde, .Jr	30	Beit Hanoun junction	Explosive charge	No	US citizen
October 15, 2003	Mark T. Parson	31	Beit Hanoun junction	Explosive charge	No	US citizen
October 24, 2003	Alon Avrahami	21	Netzarim	Infiltration	Yes	
October 24, 2003	Adi Osman	19	Netzarim	Infiltration	Yes	
October 24, 2003	Sarit Schneor-Senior	19	Netzarim	Infiltration	Yes	
December 22, 2003	Hagai Bibi	24	Kissufim route	Shooting	Yes	

Date	Name	Age	Attack location	Attack type	Member of security forces	Comments
December 22, 2003	Leonardo Weissman	23	Kissufim route	Shooting	Yes	
January 14, 2004	Andrei Kegeles	19	Erez crossing	Suicide	Yes	
January 14, 2004	Tzur Or	20	Erez crossing	Suicide	Yes	
January 14, 2004	Gal Shapira	29	Erez crossing	Suicide	No	
January 14, 2004	Vladimir Trostinsky	22	Erez crossing	Suicide	Yes	
February 26, 2004	Amir Zimmerman	25	Erez crossing	Shooting	Yes	
March 14, 2004	Gil Abutbul	38	Ashdod Port	Suicide	No	
March 14, 2004	Danny Assulin	51	Ashdod Port	Suicide	No	
March 14, 2004	Avraham Avraham	34	Ashdod Port	Suicide	No	
March 14, 2004	Zion Dahan	30	Ashdod Port	Suicide	No	
March 14, 2004	Ophir Damari	31	Ashdod Port	Suicide	No	
March 14, 2004	Moshe Hendler	29	Ashdod Port	Suicide	No	
March 14, 2004	Mazal Marciano	30	Ashdod Port	Suicide	No	
March 14, 2004	Avi Suissa	56	Ashdod Port	Suicide	No	
March 14, 2004	Maurice Tubul	30	Ashdod Port	Suicide	No	
March 14, 2004	Pinhas Avraham Zilberman	45	Ashdod Port	Suicide	No	
April 17, 2004	Kfir Ohayon	20	Erez crossing	Suicide	Yes	
May 2, 2004	Tali Hatuel	34	Kissufim route	Shooting	No	
May 2, 2004	Hila Hatuel	11	Kissufim route	Shooting	No	
May 2, 2004	Hadar Hatuel	9	Kissufim route	Shooting	No	
May 2, 2004	Roni Hatuel	7	Kissufim route	Shooting	No	
May 2, 2004	Merav Hatuel	2	Kissufim route	Shooting	No	
May 11, 2004	Adaron Amar	20	Gaza	Explosive charge	Yes	Killed in action
May 11, 2004	Aviad Deri	21	Gaza	Explosive charge	Yes	Killed in action

Date	Name	Age	Attack location	Attack type	Member of security forces	Comments
May 11, 2004	Ofer Jerbi	21	Gaza	Explosive charge	Yes	Killed in action
May 11, 2004	Ya'akov Marviza	25	Gaza	Explosive charge	Yes	Killed in action
May 11, 2004	Kobi Mizrahi	20	Gaza	Explosive charge	Yes	Killed in action
May 11, 2004	Eitan Newman	21	Gaza	Explosive charge	Yes	Killed in action
May 12, 2004	Elad Cohen	20	Philadelphi Route	Anti-tank missile	Yes	Killed in action
May 12, 2004	Aiman Ghadir	24	Philadelphi Route	Anti-tank missile	Yes	Killed in action
May 12, 2004	Aviv Hakani	23	Philadelphi Route	Anti-tank missile	Yes	Killed in action
May 12, 2004	Za'ur Smelev	19	Philadelphi Route	Anti-tank missile	Yes	Killed in action
May 12, 2004	Lior Vishinski	20	Philadelphi Route	Anti-tank missile	Yes	Killed in action
May 14, 2004	Rotem Adam	21	Rafah	Shooting	Yes	Killed in action
May 14, 2004	Alexei Hayat	21	Rafah	Shooting	Yes	Killed in action
June 21, 2004	Weerachai Wongput	37	Kfar Darom	Mortar shell	No	Thai citizen
June 27, 2004	Roi Nissim	20	Orhan military outpost	Explosive charge in tunnel	Yes	
June 28, 2004	Mordechai Yosepov	49	Sderot	Rocket	No	
June 28, 2004	Afik Zahavi	4	Sderot	Rocket	No	
September 23, 2004	Tal Bardugo	21	Morag	Infiltration	Yes	
September 23, 2004	Nir Sami	21	Morag	Infiltration	Yes	
September 23, 2004	Israel Lutati	20	Morag	Infiltration	Yes	
September 24, 2004	Tiferet Tratner	24	Neve Dekalim	Mortar shell	No	
September 29, 2004	Yuval Abebeh	4	Sderot	Rocket	No	
September 29, 2004	Dorit Benisian	2	Sderot	Rocket	No	
September 30, 2004	Gilad Fisher	22	Beit Hanoun	Ground attack	Yes	

Date	Name	Age	Attack location	Attack type	Member of security forces	Comments
September 30, 2004	Shlomit Batito	36	Nisanit	Combined	No	
September 30, 2004	Victor Ariel	20	Nisanit	Combined	Yes	
October 6, 2004	Pratheep Nanongkham	24	Kfar Darom	Infiltration	No	Thai citizen
October 21, 2004	Moshe Almaliach	35	Philadelphi Route	Explosive charge	Yes	
October 28, 2004	Michael Chizhik	21	Morag	Mortar shell	Yes	
December 7, 2004	Nadav Kudinski	20	Karni crossing	Explosive charge	Yes	
December 12, 2004	Araf Azbarga	19	Rafah crossing	Combined	Yes	
December 12, 2004	Sa'id Jahaja	19	Rafah crossing	Combined	Yes	
December 12, 2004	Hussein Abu Leil	23	Rafah crossing	Combined	Yes	
December 12, 2004	Adham Shehada	19	Rafah crossing	Combined	Yes	
December 12, 2004	Tarek al-Ziadne	20	Rafah crossing	Combined	Yes	
December 14, 2004	Jitladda Tap-arsa	19	Ganei Tal	Mortar shell	No	
January 11, 2005	Nissim Arbiv	25	Erez industrial park	Mortar shell	No	
January 12, 2005	Gideon Rivlin	50	Morag	Explosive charge	No	
January 13, 2005	Dror Gizri	30	Karni crossing	Infiltration	No	
January 13, 2005	Ibrahim Kahili	46	Karni crossing	Infiltration	No	
January 13, 2005	Munam Abu Sabia	33	Karni crossing	Infiltration	No	
January 13, 2005	Ivan Shmilov	53	Karni crossing	Infiltration	No	
January 13, 2005	Herzl Shlomo	51	Karni crossing	Infiltration	No	
January 13, 2005	Ofer Tiri	23	Karni crossing	Infiltration	No	
January 18, 2005	Oded Sharon	36	Gush Katif junction	Suicide	Yes	
January 21, 2005	Ayala-Haya Abukasis	17	Sderot	Rocket	No	
June 7, 2005	Bi Shude	46	Ganei Tal	Rocket	No	Chinese citizen
June 19, 2005	Avi Karouchi	25	Philadelphi Route	Combined	Yes	
July 14, 2005	Dana Galkowicz	22	Netiv Ha'asara	Rocket	No	
July 23, 2005	Dov Kol	58	Kissufim route	Shooting	No	
July 23, 2005	Rachel Kol	53	Kissufim route	Shooting	No	

Date	Name	Age	Attack location	Attack type	Member of security forces	Comments
June 25, 2006	Hanan Barak	20	Kerem Shalom	Infiltration	Yes	Gilad Schalit abduction
June 25, 2006	Pavel Slutzker	20	Kerem Shalom	Infiltration	Yes	Gilad Schalit abduction
September 12, 2006	Name withheld	44	Kissufim crossing	Shooting	Yes	Killed in action
November 1, 2006	Kiril Golenshein	21	Beit Hanoun	Exchange of fire	Yes	Killed in action
November 15, 2006	Fatima Slutsker	57	Sderot	Rocket	No	
November 21, 2006	Yaakov Yaakobov	43	Sderot	Rocket	No	
January 29, 2007	Emi Haim Elmaliah	32	Eilat	Suicide	No	Through Egypt
January 29, 2007	Michael Ben Sa'adon	27	Eilat	Suicide	No	Through Egypt
January 29, 2007	Israel Zamalloa	26	Eilat	Suicide	No	Through Egypt
May 21, 2007	Shirel Friedman	32	Sderot	Rocket	No	
May 27, 2007	Oshri Oz	36	Sderot	Rocket	No	
July 12, 2007	Arbel Reich	21	Bureij refugee camp	Exchange of fire	Yes	Killed in action
October 17, 2007	Ben Kubani	20	Khan Yunis	Exchange of fire	Yes	Killed in action
October 29, 2007	Ehud Efrati	34	Sufa crossing	Exchange of fire	Yes	Killed in action
January 15, 2008	Carlos Andrés Mosquera Chávez	21	Ein Hashlosha	Shooting	No	Citizen of Ecuador
February 27, 2008	Roni Yihye	47	Sderot	Rocket	No	
March 1, 2008	Doron Asulin	20	Northern Gaza	Exchange of fire	Yes	Killed in action
March 1, 2008	Eran Dan-Gur	20	Northern Gaza	Exchange of fire	Yes	Killed in action
March 6, 2008	Name withheld	27	Border fence	Explosive charge	Yes	
March 9, 2008	Liran Banai	20	Border fence	Explosive charge	Yes	
April 9, 2008	Sayef Bisan	21	Southern Gaza	Exchange of fire	Yes	Killed in action
April 9, 2008	Oleg Lipson	37	Nahal Oz	Infiltration	No	
April 9, 2008	Lev Cherniak	53	Nahal Oz	Infiltration	No	

Date	Name	Age	Attack location	Attack type	Member of security forces	Comments
April 16, 2008	Menhash al-Banyat	20	Southern Gaza	Exchange of fire	Yes	Killed in action
April 16, 2008	Matan Ovdati	19	Southern Gaza	Exchange of fire	Yes	Killed in action
April 16, 2008	David Papian	21	Southern Gaza	Exchange of fire	Yes	Killed in action
May 9, 2008	Jimmy Kadoshim	48	Kfar Aza	Mortar shell	No	
May 12, 2008	Shuli Katz	70	Yesha	Rocket	No	
June 5, 2008	Amnon Rosenberg	51	Nir Oz	Mortar shell	No	
December 27, 2008	Beber Vaknin	58	Netivot	Rocket	No	Operation Cast Lead
December 29, 2008	Hani al-Mahdi	27	Ashkelon	Rocket	No	Operation Cast Lead
December 29, 2008	Irit Sheetrit	39	Ashdod	Rocket	No	Operation Cast Lead
December 29, 2008	Lutfi Nasraladin	38	Nahal Oz	Mortar shell	Yes	Operation Cast Lead
January 4, 2009	Dvir Emanuelof	22	Northern Gaza	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Cast Lead
January 5, 2009	Dagan Wartman	32	Gaza	Friendly fire	Yes	Operation Cast Lead
January 5, 2009	Nitai Stern	21	Gaza	Friendly fire	Yes	Operation Cast Lead
January 5, 2009	Yousef Muadi	19	Gaza	Friendly fire	Yes	Operation Cast Lead
January 6, 2009	Yehonatan Netanel	27	Northern Gaza	Friendly fire	Yes	Operation Cast Lead
January 6, 2009	Alexander Mashvitzky	21	Gaza	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Cast Lead
January 8, 2009	Omer Rabinovitch	23	Northern Gaza	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Cast Lead
January 8, 2009	Amit Robinson	20	Northern Gaza	Shooting	Yes	Operation Cast Lead
January 8, 2009	Roi Rosner	27	Northern Gaza	Anti-tank missile	Yes	Operation Cast Lead
January 27, 2009	Name withheld		Border fence	Explosive charge	Yes	
March 18, 2010	Manee Singmueangphon	34	Netiv Ha'asara	Rocket	No	

Date	Name	Age	Attack location	Attack type	Member of security forces	Comments
March 26, 2010	Eliraz Peretz	32	Border fence	Exchange of fire	Yes	
March 26, 2010	Ilan Sviatkovsky	21	Border fence	Exchange of fire	Yes	
April 17, 2011	Daniel Viflic	16	Sa'ad	Anti-tank missile	No	
August 18, 2011	Pascal Avrahami	49	Route 12	Combined	Yes	Through Egypt
August 18, 2011	Moshe Naftali	22	Route 12	Combined	No	Through Egypt
August 18, 2011	Flora Gez	52	Route 12	Combined	No	Through Egypt
August 18, 2011	Moshe Gez	53	Route 12	Combined	No	Through Egypt
August 18, 2011	Shula Karlinsky	54	Route 12	Combined	No	Through Egypt
August 18, 2011	Dov Karlinsky	58	Route 12	Combined	No	Through Egypt
August 18, 2011	Yosef Levy	57	Route 12	Combined	No	Through Egypt
August 18, 2011	Yitzhak Sela	56	Route 12	Combined	No	Through Egypt
August 20, 2011	Yossi Shushan	38	Beersheba	Rocket	No	
September 4, 2011	Eliyahu Naim	79	Ashkelon	Rocket	No	
October 29, 2011	Moshe Ami	56	Ashkelon	Rocket	No	
June 1, 2012	Netanel Moshiashvili	21	Border fence	Infiltration	Yes	
June 18, 2012	Said Fashapshe	35	Border fence	Infiltration	No	
September 21, 2012	Netanel Yahalomi	20	Israel-Egypt border	Infiltration	Yes	
November 15, 2012	Mirah Scharf	25	Kiryat Malachi	Rocket	No	Operation Pillar of Defense
November 15, 2012	Aharon Smadja	49	Kiryat Malachi	Rocket	No	Operation Pillar of Defense
November 15, 2012	Itzik Amsalem	24	Kiryat Malachi	Rocket	No	Operation Pillar of Defense
November 20, 2012	Yosef Fartuk	18	Eshkol Regional Council	Mortar shell	No	Operation Pillar of Defense
November 20, 2012	Alayaan Salem al-Nabari	33	Eshkol Regional Council	Mortar shell	No	Operation Pillar of Defense
November 22, 2012	Boris Yarmulnik	28	Eshkol Regional Council	Rocket	Yes	Operation Pillar of Defense
December 24, 2013	Salah Shukri Abu Latyef	22	Border fence	Shooting	No	
July 15, 2014	Dror Hanin	37	Erez crossing	Mortar shell	No	Operation Protective Edge

Date	Name	Age	Attack location	Attack type	Member of security forces	Comments
July 18, 2014	Eitan Barak	20	Beit Hanoun	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 19, 2014	Ouda Lafi al-Waj	32	Bedouin community near Dimona	Rocket	No	Operation Protective Edge
July 19, 2014	Amotz Greenburg	45	Kibbutz Kissufim	Infiltration	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 19, 2014	Adar Barsano	20	Kibbutz Kissufim	Infiltration	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 19, 2014	Bnaya Rubel	20	Southern Gaza	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 19, 2014	Bar Rahav	21	Southern Gaza	Anti-tank missile	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 20, 2014	Tsafrir Bar-Or	32	Shujaiyeh	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 20, 2014	Zvi Kaplan	28	Shujaiyeh	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 20, 2014	Gilad Yaakobi	21	Shujaiyeh	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 20, 2014	Oz Mendelovitch	20	Shujaiyeh	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 20, 2014	Nissim Sean Carmeli	21	Shujaiyeh	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 20, 2014	Moshe Melako	20	Shujaiyeh	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 20, 2014	Max Steinburg	24	Shujaiyeh	Anti-tank missile	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 20, 2014	Shachar Tase	20	Shujaiyeh	Anti-tank missile	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 20, 2014	Daniel Pomerantz	20	Shujaiyeh	Anti-tank missile	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 20, 2014	Shon Mondshine	19	Shujaiyeh	Anti-tank missile	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 20, 2014	Ben Ouanounou	19	Shujaiyeh	Anti-tank missile	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 20, 2014	Oren Noach	22	Shujaiyeh	Anti-tank missile	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 20, 2014	Oron Shaul	19	Shujaiyeh	Anti-tank missile	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 21, 2014	Dolev Keidar	38	Nir Am	Infiltration	Yes	Operation Protective Edge

Date	Name	Age	Attack location	Attack type	Member of security forces	Comments
July 21, 2014	Nadav Goldmacher	23	Nir Am	Infiltration	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 21, 2014	Baynesain Kasahun	39	Nir Am	Infiltration	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 21, 2014	Yuval Heiman	21	Nir Am	Infiltration	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 21, 2014	Jordan Ben Simon	22	Shujaiyeh	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 21, 2014	Tal Ifrach	21	Shujaiyeh	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 21, 2014	Yuval Dagan	22	Shujaiyeh	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 21, 2014	Oded Ben Sira	22	Khan Yunis	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 21, 2014	Ohad Shemesh	27	Khan Yunis	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 22, 2014	Dimitri Levitas	26	Shujaiyeh	Shooting	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 22, 2014	Natan Cohen	23	Beit Hanoun	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 22, 2014	Evyatar Tourjeman	20	Khan Yunis	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 23, 2014	Paz Eliyahu	22	Khan Yunis	Explosive charge	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 23, 2014	Li Mat	19	Khan Yunis	Explosive charge	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 23, 2014	Shahar Dauber	20	Khan Yunis	Explosive charge	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 23, 2014	Narakorn Kittiyangkul	36	Netiv Ha'asara	Mortar shell	No	Operation Protective Edge
July 25, 2011	Yair Ashkenazy	36	Northern Gaza	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 25, 2011	Guy Levy	21	Central Gaza	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 25, 2011	Guy Boyland	21	Southern Gaza	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 25, 2011	Amit Yaori	20	Southern Gaza	Ground attack	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 26, 2011	Roi Peles	21	Gaza	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge

Date	Name	Age	Attack location	Attack type	Member of security forces	Comments
July 26, 2011	Avraham Greentzweig	21	Northern Gaza	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 26, 2011	Gal Besson	21	Northern Gaza	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 26, 2011	Barak Refael Degorker	27	Sdot Negev Regional Council	Mortar shell	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 26, 2011	Rami Cahlon	39	Gaza border	Shooting	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 26, 2011	Liad Lavi	20	Southern Gaza	Explosive charge	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 28, 2014	Eliav Eliyahu Haim Kahlon	22	Gaza border	Mortar shell	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 28, 2014	Meidan Maymon Biton	20	Gaza border	Mortar shell	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 28, 2014	Adi Briga	23	Gaza border	Mortar shell	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 28, 2014	Niran Cohen	20	Gaza border	Mortar shell	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 28, 2014	Moshe Davino	20	Khan Yunis	Anti-tank missile	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 28, 2014	Nadav Raimond	19	Nahal Oz	Infiltration	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 28, 2014	Daniel Kedmi	18	Nahal Oz	Infiltration	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 28, 2014	Barkay Ishai Shor	21	Nahal Oz	Infiltration	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 28, 2014	Sagi Erez	19	Nahal Oz	Infiltration	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 28, 2014	Dor Dery	18	Nahal Oz	Infiltration	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 30, 2014	Guy Algranati	20	Southern Gaza	Explosive charge	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 30, 2014	Matan Gotlib	21	Southern Gaza	Explosive charge	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 30, 2014	Omer Hay	21	Southern Gaza	Explosive charge	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 31, 2014	Omri Tal	22	Gaza border	Mortar shell		Operation Protective Edge
July 31, 2014	(Liran Adir (Edry	31	Gaza border	Mortar shell		
July 31, 2014	Daniel Marsh	22	Gaza border	Mortar shell		

Date	Name	Age	Attack location	Attack type	Member of security forces	Comments
July 31, 2014	Shai Kushnir	20	Gaza border	Mortar shell	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
July 31, 2014	Noam Rosenthal	20	Gaza border	Mortar shell	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
August 1, 2014	Benaya Sarel	26	Rafah	Combined	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
August 1, 2014	Hadar Goldin	23	Rafah	Combined	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
August 1, 2014	Liel Gidoni	20	Rafah	Combined	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
August 31, 2014	Shahar Shalev	20	Khan Yunis	Exchange of fire	Yes	Operation Protective Edge
August 22, 2014	Daniel Tregerman	4	Nahal Oz	Mortar shell	No	Operation Protective Edge
August 22, 2014	Netanel Maman	21	Gan Yavne	Rocket	No	Operation Protective Edge
August 26, 2014	Ze'ev Etzion	55	Nirim	Mortar shell	No	Operation Protective Edge
August 26, 2014	Shahar Melamed	43	Nirim	Mortar shell	No	Operation Protective Edge