

‘One Size Fits All’  
Israel, intelligence and the *al-Aqsa Intifada*

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**(Not for quotation)**

*While the world remains familiar with the ever present visual images of the ongoing violence between Israel and the Palestinians, relatively little attention has been paid to the manner in which intelligence has been used by Israel in its attempts to curb what it regards as Palestinian terrorism. This article looks at the way in which tactical or operational intelligence has come to be used by both the Israel Defence Forces and the political leadership to inform strategic choice, a position that favours a military rather than political solution to the ongoing violence. It examines closely the reasons for the emergence of this ‘attitudinal prism’ and concludes with a prescriptive call for the hitherto moribund National Security Council to be put on a statutory civilian footing if more balanced and coherent assessments regarding the nature and scope of Palestinian violence are to be reached.*

Introduction

It has become almost an axiom among observers of the current violence between Israel and the Palestinians to understand the present through the prism of the past. Following the horrific *seder* massacre in Netanya on 28 March 2002, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon addressed the nation and in sombre tones, spoke of the Jewish State being at war with the Palestinians. The emotions stirred up by his speech reminded many of the national mood on the eve of the June 1967 war, when, faced with the animus of its surrounding Arab neighbours, Israel’s very existence appeared to be at stake. This call to

the barricades has a powerful resonance among a polity where defence has been the dominant totem around which national life has been organised.<sup>1</sup> Palestinian violence, often indiscriminate in its choice of targets, is seen as a strategic threat since at its heart, lies the atavistic fear that such violence denies the legality, if not the reality of the other.

The Palestinian strategy in this 'war' has for them proven to be a doubled edged sword. On the one hand, attacks inside the pre-1967 border have sort to impose, to borrow from the terminology of nuclear strategy, a balance of terror, however grotesque or inhumane this may appear to the outside observer. On the other, the retribution exacted by Israel has been costly, both in terms of lives lost, property demolished, and civilian infrastructure destroyed. Indeed, Israel's 'Operation Defensive Shield' in April 2002 was defined as a calibrated response designed to root out the 'terrorist infrastructure', in the Palestinian controlled territory.<sup>2</sup> Descriptions of this conflict range from a war on terrorism, an asymmetric inter-state war, a struggle for national liberation to a civil war. All have validity as explanatory paradigms, but equally, none can capture fully the dynamics of this conflict. Israelis themselves have difficulty in defining this conflict, something that impedes the formulation and implementation of coherent policy options. As the journalist Ze'ev Sternhall has noted, 'The less a society is convinced of its moral rightness, the less certain it is about the aims of the war that has been forced upon it by its rulers - and the more it needs propaganda, pressures and threats.'<sup>3</sup> In the past, conventional interstate wars threatened the survival of the state as well as its people. But the very idea of the all powerful state was a psychological bulwark for the citizen. In the present conflict, the wave of suicide bombings do not by themselves endanger the physical existence of the state, but they do threaten the existence of each individual. It has become a struggle which has exposed the limits of state power against the fragmentary nature of the Palestine National Authority, its warlords, and among a Palestinian people who feel they have little to lose. Simply put, a cleavage exists between description of the conflict and prescriptive measures required to ameliorate its worst excesses. Israel's response has therefore varied from treating the violence as simply a manifestation of open, albeit violent criminality, to being a brazen attempt to embroil Israel in a wider *inter* state conflict.

Such ambiguities have been reflected in Israel's intelligence effort. Much attention has been focused upon the relative success of 'preventative' intelligence in thwarting suicide bomb attacks throughout Israel and the Occupied Territories. The use of this intelligence, essentially tactical in nature, has often proved to have strategic consequences as Palestinian militant groups swear vengeance in return. This has raised the well worn debate in intelligence circles over 'means' and 'ends' and ultimately the relationship between the producer and consumer of intelligence. Such debates were brought into sharp relief following the assassination in Gaza of Salah Shehadeh, a leading figure in the military wing of *Hamas*, *Izz al-din al-Qassem* in July 2002 along with the slaughter of 15 Palestinians, nine of whom were children. Not only was the use of a one ton bomb in a crowded area deemed excessive, but media reports, both in Israel and overseas, suggested that the attack undermined any prospect of the militant Islamist groups declaring a *Hudnah* – a ceasefire - in the aftermath of attack. Indeed, the ritual calls for revenge among Palestinians that punctuated the mass funerals in Gaza merely serve as reminders of the remorseless cycle of violence. Allegedly, Israel's Defence Minister, Benyamin Ben-Eliezer placed blame for the decision to use such a powerful bomb upon the General Security Service (GSS, otherwise referred to as the *Shabbak* – *Sherutha Bitachon ha-Klali* - or *Shin Bet*) who, while providing accurate intelligence as to the whereabouts of Shehadeh, had failed to impress upon the decision makers the likely impact such a bomb would have in such a densely populated area.<sup>4</sup>

Such casuistry aside, Sharon's view that reaching an accommodation with the Palestinians is impossible until 'they are badly beaten' carries an emotive appeal for a nation that perceives itself to be under siege.<sup>5</sup> The spate of suicide or 'homicide' bombings is seen as strategic threat since, at their very core, lies the denial of Jews as a nation to live in their own sovereign space even if Israel were to withdraw fully from the territories captured and occupied after June 1967. As such, questions regarding how intelligence is employed and the extent to which a 'Group Think' mentality, conditioned by the exigencies of this conflict, now exists between Israel's intelligence community and the political leadership have remained under explored. It is this issue that this paper seeks to explore. It cannot make, for obvious reasons, any detailed comment on how intelligence is collated, evaluated and operationalised within Israel's intelligence

services. By drawing on open sources as well as official documentation made available in the aftermath of ‘Operation Defensive Shield’ this paper argues that while Israel’s intelligence effort, particularly at the tactical level, has been impressive, the use of this intelligence in pursuing prescriptive policy options designed to ameliorate tension and further political discussion has been poor. It concludes by arguing that a greater role, perhaps enshrined under a ‘Basic Law’ be given to the National Security Council (NSC) in providing greater balance in the collation and evaluation of intelligence for decision-makers.

### The Context of Israel’s Intelligence Effort

It should be noted from the outset that the very term, *intifada* remains a contested issue. Aside from its first 4 months, the current violence bears little resemblance to the mass street demonstrations and stone throwing that marked the *intifada* of 1987 to 1993. Indeed, the proliferation of militias under the auspices, though never the full control of the Palestine National Authority (PNA) has resulted in the conflict evolving through a number of consecutive stages: popular uprising in Palestinian areas ‘A’, attacks upon Israeli military targets and settlements in the Occupied Territories and East Jerusalem; attacks upon Israeli civilian targets within the Israel’s pre-1967 border; Israel’s massive response in Areas A and targeted attacks on individuals, infrastructure and symbols deemed responsible for the ongoing violence. To be sure, these periods are not mutually exclusive. For example, targeted assassinations have long been a tool in Israel’s armoury irrespective of the wider ramifications that this policy invariably incurs. For example, the killing of Israel’s Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze’evi was a direct response from members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine of their leader, Abu Ali Mustafa.

For the PNA, ending Israel’s occupation of Palestinian land in the West Bank and Gaza remains the common denominator that unites all Palestinian factions. Yet the very fact that we can write of Palestinian factions also highlights the often fragmented nature of the PNA. Arafat’s incompetent and often corrupt authority has allowed for a myriad of groups and militias to emerge under enigmatic leaders able and willing to mobilise support for anti-Israel activities. Until his arrest in April 2002, the best known of these leaders was Marwan Barghouti, the self proclaimed leader of the *Tanzim* militia in

Ramallah. While Barghouti was at least nominally associated with Arafat's own *Fatah* movement, his appeal on the Palestinian street and the increased daring of *Tanzim* attacks suggest a comparison with an emergent Warlordism. With the infrastructure of the PNA devastated by the ferocity of 'Operation Defensive Shield' in April 2002, warlordism, defined here as the appeal of a strong individual within a given geographical confine removed from the control of a strong or reliable overarching authority appears set to continue to define the contours of Palestinian politics.<sup>6</sup>

It is against this background that Israel's intelligence services have had to operate. Three main intelligence agencies exist in Israel: military intelligence (*Agaf Modi'in* or AMAN), the *Mossad* (*HaMossad LeModi'in U'Letafkidim Meyuhadim* – Institute for Intelligence and Special Duties) and the GSS. Of these, AMAN carries the most weight politically, with the director of military intelligence (DMI) and the head of AMAN's research division serving as advisors to the cabinet. They remain subordinate to the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Staff. In April 2000, a new field intelligence unit – *Hel Modi'in Ha'Sadeh* was formed as part of AMAN with special responsibility for the collection of tactical intelligence for the three main IDF territorial commands. Its exact role remains obscure but is probably related to the outcome of the so called 'Magna Carta'. This agreement, reached between Israel's intelligence agencies over a division of labour in January 2000 transferred intelligence gathering in the areas A (under the full control of the PNA) from the GSS to AMAN. The outbreak of the *al-Aqsa intifada* and the need to re-establish hitherto moribund humint intelligence structures in the West Bank once more saw the GSS play a lead role.<sup>7</sup> *Mossad* and the GSS operate under the auspices of the Prime Ministers office and coordinate intelligence gathering and assessment with AMAN through the *Varash* (*Va'ad Rashei Sherutim* – the Committee of the Chiefs of the Services). Yet assessing the objectivity of the 'attitudinal prism' through which an assessment or product is presented to the consumer – in this case the Prime Minister or the Israeli cabinet has in the past proven problematic. Uri Bar-Joseph has chronicled how, on assuming office in 1996, former premier Binyamin Netanyahu believed that as appointees of the previous Rabin/Peres government, the heads of the *Varash* had become politicised into an uncritical acceptance of the Oslo process and as

such, tended to ignore their warnings that as the process stalled, the likelihood of conflict increased.<sup>8</sup>

Suspensions of political bias in formulating policy preferences are not new to a state where ideological disposition has always influenced decision making. Accordingly, much debate has surrounded the establishment by Netanyahu of the NSC which was to be based upon the American model. Intermittent calls for the establishment of such a body can be traced back to the early 1960s but it was only following the debacle of the so called Meshal affair, when *Mossad* operatives assuming the guise of Canadian tourists attempted to kill Khalid Meshal in the Jordanian capital Amman, that bureaucratic resistance from the intelligence community and government bureaucracies was finally overcome. The NSC is supposed to be a forum for balanced assessment of foreign policy aims and objectives but evidence to date suggests that even now, its role remains circumscribed. Established in March 1999, the NSC has been tasked with combating the regional proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, rather than acting, as was the original intention, as a co-ordinating body, overseeing objective assessment over a broad range of foreign policy issues.<sup>9</sup>

Since September 2000, it has been AMAN and the GSS who have carried the main intelligence burden with regard to the Palestinians. Human intelligence (HUMINT) has remained at a premium in this conflict with the pressing need for preventative intelligence requiring the GSS to re-establish networks of informers across the West Bank and Gaza strip.<sup>10</sup> The mass round ups of Palestinian men in both March and April 2002 no doubt afforded the GSS the opportunity to recruit assets held at the Ketziot detention centre in the Negev, using the not so subtle blend of access to work permits, exploitation of family or tribal grievances, as well as ignoring the more nefarious activities of drug pushers and criminals as inducements to supply information.<sup>11</sup> Where possible, information gleaned from such sources is corroborated by either the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and information from other informants. While much is made of the success of the GSS in thwarting terror attacks – Avi Dichter, head of the GSS quoted a figure of over 40 planned attacks thwarted in May 2002 alone - such operational intelligence remains essentially tactical.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the sharp reduction in the number of actual suicide attacks inside Israel's Green Line, has as much to do with the

styptic presence of IDF troops in and around the main Palestinian towns and cities of the West Bank, as it does timely intelligence from the GSS. Indeed, it was disclosed that while it is relatively easy for the *Agaf Mo'din* to listen into the various cell phone and walkie-talkies used by the various Palestinian militia groups, there is a deficit in available specialists familiar with the street slang able to extract the relevant intelligence in real time.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, it is clear that the IDF and GSS have developed a close working relationship in the West Bank, something that stands in sharp contrast to the acrimony between the two organizations that undermined a coherent intelligence effort against the *Hizb'allah* in south Lebanon.<sup>14</sup>

AMAN remains nonetheless at the apex of Israel's intelligence structure, its research division being responsible for the production of the influential national assessment concerning threats, perceived or otherwise to Israeli national security. Much is made of the apolitical nature of these assessments with the Prime Minister reserving the right to accept or reject their recommendations. In practice, apolitical assessments can and do jar with the political masters. Former head of AMAN, Major General Amos Malka, was absent from the Israeli delegation to the Camp David talks in July 2000, following his assessment to former Premier Ehud Barak that Arafat was not capable of reaching a deal on the lines proposed by the Prime Minister.<sup>15</sup> The fact however that Israel's political leadership regards itself in a state of war – albeit one undeclared – with the PNA has inevitable consequences for the manner in which intelligence assessments produced by AMAN have come to be used, not least in identifying avenues towards reconstituting a sustained political dialogue with the Palestinians.

### Closing the credibility gap

During the course of an wide ranging interview with the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, the new Chief of Staff of the IDF, Lieutenant General Moshe 'Boogie' Ya'alon was outspoken in his belief that the conflict with the Palestinians constituted an 'existential' and 'cancerous' threat to Israel, a threat more serious than anything Israel had faced since the 1948 war of independence. When asked what Israel's goal was in this conflict he declared:

I defined it from the beginning of the confrontation: the very deep internalization by the Palestinians that terrorism and violence will not defeat us, will not make us fold. If that deep internalization does not exist at the end of the confrontation, we will have an existential threat to Israel. If that is not burned into the Palestinian and Arab consciousness, there will be no end to their demands on us. ....That's why this confrontation is so important. There has not been a more important confrontation since the War of Independence.<sup>16</sup>

Such forthright statements have become the dominant prism through which the IDF General staff have come to view the conflict, entailing as it does for Ya'alon a complete regime change that would prohibit anyone tarred by association with the PNA under Arafat from running in any future elections. The Chief of Staff compared this to the process of de-Nazification in post war Germany. Ya'alon has been quick to claim consistency in his views. In January 2002, recalling his time as director of AMAN in the mid 1990s, he declared that he had grave misgivings over the PNA and their true intent to abide by the Oslo accords and act against *Hamas* and Palestine Islamic *Jihad* (PIJ). In short, Ya'alon claimed that AMAN and in particular its research division had remained sceptical about Arafat's willingness, let alone ability to clamp down on Palestinian groups and individuals and renounce terror as a strategic option even amid the euphoria after the signing of the Oslo accords. Of note, were interpretations placed upon Arafat's more militant speeches overseas, including his now infamous remarks in a Johannesburg mosque in May 1994 when he compared the Oslo Accords to the prophet Mohammed's *Hudaybiya* truce accord with the *Quraysh* tribe, an agreement that Muhammed violated once his power base had been secured. When combined with the hostility demonstrated openly by the Palestinian media towards Israel from 1994 onwards, it appears that events proved Ya'alon's scepticism to be well founded.

Such scepticism did not reflect the actual appreciations of the AMAN or, according to representatives on Israel's *Knesset* Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, or Ya'alon himself. According to one report drafted by AMAN for the Committee titled 'Arafat's statements in front of Palestinian audiences', and published in August 1995, the PNA chairman remained committed to the Oslo Accords and that his use of the term *Jihad* in

several of his speeches was primarily contextual and related more closely to economic, social and political struggles.<sup>17</sup> Yossi Melman noted that Ya'alon's claim, made in January 2002 during the course of an interview with Israel's *Intelligence Heritage Centre Journal* that 'the ascendance of acts of terror in the years 1994-1996 forced intelligence to furnish answers about terror', is not born out by the facts. According to Melman no attempt was made to construct a series of 'indicating signs' that once flagged, would give a clear warning of Palestinian intent to retain a terrorist option and thus allow appropriate measures, both political and military, to be taken in advance.

Of note was the failure of AMAN's Research Division to attach any great importance to a meeting in December 1995 in Cairo between representatives of the PNA and *Hamas*. The meeting, designed to achieve a *modus vivendi* following a period of heightened tension between the two, also produced, according to Brigadier-General (Res) and head of the Middle East Media Research Institute, Yigal Carmon, a *modus operandi*. The Cairo meeting resulted in a tacit agreement between the PNA and *Hamas* in which the latter would refrain from launching attacks on Israel from Area A but would turn a blind eye to attacks emanating from areas B and C outside the full security control of the PNA. This analysis was based on interpretations of drafts of the agreement that appeared in the Arabic press as well as statements made by Salim al-Zanun, President of the PNA. Carmon proved relentless in his private pursuit of information regarding Arafat's speeches and plans, information that he supplied to politicians opposed to the Oslo process. Indeed, when former premier Yitzhak Rabin reproached AMAN for failing to provide a copy of Arafat's Johannesburg speech, the prevailing view within AMAN was that such open intelligence sources were not considered as important 'outside the cloak and dagger realm of classified information'.<sup>18</sup> In short, both AMAN and *Shin Bet*, had accepted the prevailing political view over Oslo, and it was not until the outbreak of violence in September 1996 over the Hasmonean tunnel excavations in East Jerusalem that AMAN estimates were revised to suggest that Arafat was deliberately preserving a 'terrorist infrastructure intact'.<sup>19</sup>

That the Oslo process represents a political-strategic intelligence failure by AMAN can be seen in the attitudinal prism through which the IDF General Staff now views the present conflict. This prism, constructed around the belief that the conflict is an

existential threat to Israel means that any intelligence that can highlight political options to reduce or curtail the violence plays second fiddle to the more immediate demands of operational intelligence. Just as the General Staff in the mid 1990s can be accused of being socialised into a bland acceptance of the Oslo process, so the present political and military leadership appear set on a course of total victory, a position that has readily adjusted itself to the moral absolutes of George W. Bush's 'War on Terror'. Thus Prime Minister Sharon's determination to fragment and destroy the PNA, re-establish Israeli military superiority over the West Bank and Gaza and reconstitute a more compliant Palestinian political order as constituting the desired outcome of the conflict now finds a receptive audience, as the interview with Ya'alon demonstrates, among senior members of the General staff.<sup>20</sup> This is not to suggest that unanimity exists over the 'means'. Contrary to the stated wish of Sharon, outgoing head of the *Mossad* Efraim Halevy, the director of *Shin Bet* Avi Dichter, as well as Major-General Amos Gilad, the IDF co-ordinator of activities in the West Bank have warned consistently against the forced exile of Arafat. He would, so the argument goes, do more harm in exile, freed from the draconian restrictions that keeps the Palestinian *Rais* all but confined to the *Mukataa*, his headquarters in Ramallah.<sup>21</sup> There remains nonetheless, a broad acceptance that the path followed by Israel – the total dismemberment of the PNA - is correct and must be pursued with the utmost rigour.

Some Israeli commentators regard this as the recrudescence of a military culture in politics and society that had, in the aftermath of Oslo, been in retreat. The totem of an existential threat has always had a unifying effect on a society fragmented along social, ethnic and religious lines. The noted social commentator Aluf Benn argued that this recrudescence of military influence can not be reduced solely to the immediate exigencies of countering Palestinian terrorism. The changing profile of Israel's officer corps with its right-wing drift among its composite members is a contributing factor.<sup>22</sup> More immediately perhaps, there remains a strong incentive among senior IDF officers to recover the prestige of the army and its credibility as an effective deterrent following its unilateral withdrawal from south Lebanon in May 2000. This is seen as particularly important since the various Palestinian militias are viewed as trying to ape the success of the *Hizb'allah*. Given that the conflict has been termed existential the IDF, according to

Benn, perceives itself as having a mission that negates, *a priori*, any serious consideration of the means employed to subdue Palestinian terror, irrespective of the wider political impact that this has.<sup>23</sup> This is most violently seen in the policy of targeted assassinations or ‘regime targeting’.

Since the outbreak of the *Al Aqsa intifada* targeted killings - others prefer the term ‘assassination’ or ‘murder’ – have resulted in the deaths of over 60 Palestinians. The methods used have ranged from the use of helicopter gunships launching missiles into cars and homes, explosive devices hidden in mobile phones and cars, to the use of snipers. Such killings undoubtedly rely on precise operational intelligence, and indeed, the success of such operations has done much to restore the self esteem of *Shin Bet*, tarnished previously by its public failure to protect Rabin from assassination.<sup>24</sup> Few in Israel demonstrate public distaste for such killings, it being relatively easy for such killings to be justified in preventative terms. The horror of suicide bombings in Tel Aviv, Netanya, Haifa, Hadera, Nahariya, and Jerusalem negates both the time and space for moral scruples to be aired in public.

In the aftermath of yet another round of almost ritual bloodletting, Israeli spokespersons continually recite the old mantra of ‘teaching the Palestinians a lesson’, or ‘sending Arafat a message that he must control the terrorists’. Implicit within such messages is the idea that the Palestinian ‘pain thresholds’ equate somehow with those of Israel itself. Such ‘mirror image’ beliefs were present, for example, in Israel’s attempts to deal with the *Hizb’allah* in south Lebanon between 1985 and 2000.<sup>25</sup> Targeted assassinations have remained a standard operating procedure for Israel in dealing with what it perceives as the more militant elements within Palestinian administered areas. The inventive use of a booby trapped mobile phone killed Hamas activist Yahiya Ayyash in January 1996. Ayyash had earned the sobriquet ‘The Engineer’ for his supposed technical ability in the assembly of bombs. Israel paid a heavy price for his removal: throughout February and March of 1996 a spate of suicide bombings inside Israel left some 65 Israelis dead and hundreds more wounded. In the aftermath of these attacks, Arafat’s security apparatus became willing accomplices in the arrest of over 1000 known Islamist activists within its jurisdiction. Yet such attacks did

much to undermine the promise of the Oslo Accords and the political authority of Prime Minister Shimon Peres who had condoned the slaying of Ayyash in the first place.

The evidence to date from its handling of the *al-Aqsa intifada* suggests strongly that Tel Aviv has learnt few lessons over the wisdom of regime targeting or selected assassinations. While they remain a standard operation procedure for the IDF in the Occupied Territories, the assassinations themselves have moved beyond Israel's immediate security concern of curtailing terrorist activity. The killing of Mustafa Zibri, more popularly known as Abu Ali Mustafa, appears to be a watershed in relations between Israel and the Palestine National Authority. Zibri was a founding member of the PLO and the political leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) who had openly renounced the use of violence as condition a for Israel allowing his return to the West Bank in 1999. His death on the 27 August 2001, the most high profile of a Palestinian by Israel since the killing of Abu Jihad, was justified by Tel Aviv on the grounds that Zibri was responsible for two bomb attacks in Jerusalem, a claim that Palestinians continue to deny vehemently. Of crucial importance however was the signal sent by Israel derived from the actual location of his death. His office in Ramallah where he met his bloody fate was only 500 meters from Arafat's headquarters in the city. For many, it was a clear warning that even those Palestinians with an international profile could not expect their fame to act as a protective shield if Israel feels they can be dispensed with. Whatever the extent of Zibri's association with terrorist acts – the evidence presented by the Israelis remains far from conclusive – armed members of the PFLP exacted bloody retribution. Not only was an Israeli settler the immediate victim of a PFLP gun attack inside the West Bank, but members of the PFLP killed Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Zeevi in an East Jerusalem hotel on 19 October 2001.

The policy of assassination is justified by recourse to a moral relativism that rejects any role for the precepts of international law. Former director of the *Mossad*, Danny Yatom declared that, ' We don't take pride in liquidating terrorists. We are in the midst of a battle, in the midst of a war against terrorism and in this war we must strike at those who threaten Israel'. Despite continued reference to the existential nature of the conflict Israel has never declared war formally against the PNA. A state of war, can only exist between two sovereign states and a formal declaration of war would no doubt be seen as

*de facto* recognition of Palestinian state. Colonel Daniel Reisner of the IDF's legal branch prefers the more nebulous terms, "un-conflict" or "active hostilities".<sup>26</sup> But whatever names are applied, it cannot disguise the fact that domestic pressure, as well as a limited ability to apply less lethal means of apprehending terrorist suspects, underpins the continued use of assassination as a tool of state policy. As Yossi Melman wrote so presciently, 'The hits are meant to appease an angry and frustrated public, drum up public opinion in support of the government, fulfil the desire for revenge and raise waning national morale. In practice, the liquidations only accelerate the vicious cycle of violence'.<sup>27</sup>

### Operational Intelligence

Timely operational intelligence remains a necessary condition for preventing attacks and Israel can claim some spectacular success in this field. Of particular satisfaction for AMAN and naval intelligence under Admiral Yehezkel Mashita was Operation 'Noah's Ark', the seizure of the Ship Karine A, 500 kilometres south of the port of Eilat on 3 January 2002. Laden with 500 tons of arms and ammunition including Katyusha rockets and sagger wired guided anti-tank missiles, the ship had been tracked from Beirut, flying under a Tongan flag of convenience, through the Red Sea and past the coastlines of Yemen and Oman before reaching the Iranian island of Kish, north of Dubai. Here, under the supervision of the Iranians and it was alleged, members of the *Hizb'allah*, it was loaded with its cargo for the return journey. How the weapons were to be smuggled to the Palestinians in the Gaza strip remains unclear but it appears that the weapons may have been transferred to smaller craft once the ship had passed back through the Suez canal. Other reports speculated that the haul would have been offloaded along Sinai peninsula coast and smuggled into Gaza.<sup>28</sup>

Whatever the mode of transport, the Karine A incident was seen as a deliberate attempt by the PNA, in collusion with the Iranian authorities to escalate the violence to a strategic level. Claims that the ship was carrying arms intended for the *Hizb'allah* were summarily dismissed once it became known that the ship had been purchased in Bulgaria by Adal Mugarbi, head of the PNA's procurement department for \$400,000 with the money having been supplied by Fuad Shubaki, Arafat's senior finance official.<sup>29</sup> The

captain of the ship, Omar Akawi, was an officer in the Palestine Naval Police. The key question remained over the true extent of Arafat's culpability. Two months before 'Noah's Ark' the Planning Branch of the IDF General Staff, drawing on military intelligence as well as other, non disclosed sources, produced a profile of Arafat that concluded that he preferred eternal struggle – unable and unwilling to forsake openly an end to the Palestinian right of return – over a political settlement. Despite denials of the Palestinian *Rais* of any knowledge of or involvement with the arms shipment, the Karine A affair was grist to the mill of those who view Arafat as an unreconstructed terrorist bent on the ultimate destruction of the Jewish State.

As such, determining the culpability of Arafat in controlling and organizing Palestinian violence has come to dominate Israel's intelligence assessments, assessments that often downplay the fragmented nature of the PNA. The assassination on 14 January 2002 of Ra'ed Karmi, a leading figure in the *Tanzim* militia associated closely with Arafat's own *Fatah* movement triggered a series of events that for Israelis, produced documentary evidence that exposed the true face of Arafat's regime. Karmi's death represented a turning point in this conflagration, bringing as it did an end to a fragile ceasefire that had been negotiated between Israeli and Palestinian interlocutors in December 2001. The resulting wave of suicide attacks inside Israel over the following weeks culminated with the *Seder* massacre in Netanya and the bombing of the *Matza* restaurant in Haifa on 31 March 2002. Over 90 civilians were killed in these attacks and hundreds injured.

In response Sharon authorised 'Operation Defensive Shield', a mass incursion by the IDF that shattered the illusion held by the PNA that Israel lacked the political will to enter and reoccupy Palestinian cities on the West Bank. For the *Shin Bet* and AMAN, the Operation yielded an intelligence treasure trove of documentation, described by one GSS officer as 'the wettest dream I've ever dreamed'.<sup>30</sup> Such hubris appeared to be well founded. In the immediate aftermath of Defensive Shield, the research division of AMAN made documents seized during the operation available to Western embassies and intelligence agencies.<sup>31</sup> Sometimes referred to as the *Mukataa* documents, they provided great detail on the organization and terrorist operations of members of the *Fatah* affiliated *Tanzim* and *al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade*, as well as the activities of *Hamas* and

PIJ. These documents also had a clear propaganda value. Following the widespread accusations of a massacre in the incursion of Jenin refugee camp, AMAN produced a detailed document highlighting the extent to which the camp had sheltered a terrorist infrastructure responsible for 28 suicide attacks. As one *Fatah* memorandum reproduced by AMAN stated, Jenin refugee camp ‘ [I]s characterized by an exceptional presence of fighting men who take the initiative (on behalf of) the national activity. Nothing will beat them and nothing worries them. Therefore they are ready for self-sacrifice with all the means. And therefore, it is not strange that Jenin (has been termed) *A’simat al-Istashidin* (the martyrs capital).<sup>32</sup>

In its analysis of the terror infrastructure in Jenin, AMAN attached particular importance to the financial strength of *Hamas* and PIJ in the camp compared to their more secular associates in the *Fatah* affiliated groups. Its own analysis of the files stated that:

According to the documents, the large amounts of money flowing to Jenin from Damascus enable PIJ and *Hamas* to recruit to their ranks youths with motivation, to provide them with a monthly salary and solve their financial problems (while posing a challenge to *Fatah*, which does not have large financial resources and whose members, as reported in one document, receive financial aid from the PIJ. The strength of their financial sources enable these organizations, inter alia, to penetrate the ranks of the Palestinian intelligence apparatuses, bribe senior commanders of apparatuses in the Jenin area and receive assistance from them in operational activity and in protection against expected PA moves.<sup>33</sup>

The extent of that penetration was revealed in further documents that detailed how the Deputy Chief of the Palestinian Security Directorate (PSD) in Jenin, an Arafat appointee, informed members of the PIJ of impending arrest operations by the PNA, as well as documents detailing how weapons were procured by PSD officers for PIJ and *Hamas* operatives in the Jenin area.<sup>34</sup> In the Jenin dossier, particular attention was focused up letters sent by unnamed members of the *al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade* to Marwan Barghouti, head of the *Fatah* movement in the West Bank and accused by Israel of directing and funding terrorism with the blessing, if not outright connivance of Arafat himself. The

documents produced make fascinating reading, not so much for what they openly convey, but for what they imply. Thus, a letter dated 25 September 2001 from *al-Aqsa* activists not only contains an appraisal of morale among *Fatah* members in the Jenin refugee camp, but also a plea for financial assistance since they were having to compete with Islamic factions that ‘supply them [Palestinian youths] with arms, give them a monthly salary and solve all their economic problems’.<sup>35</sup>

It is apparent that while terrorist infrastructures existed and cooperated on an ad hoc basis, there was no overall central control exercised by the Arafat or his immediate associates over the targets selected or the level or scale of attacks. Indeed, the penetration of the Palestinian Security apparatus by Islamist activists appears from the documents to be a continual headache, both for *Fatah* and the wider Palestinian leadership. But the purpose of releasing the documents was to demonstrate a direct link between Arafat and the ongoing terror campaign. Thus, in its opening statement in its file titled ‘The Palestinian Authority: Employs Fatah Activists Involved in Terrorism and Suicide’, AMAN argues that:

[I]t can be learned that the PA is extending its patronage over Fatah activists involved in the perpetration of terrorist attacks against Israel, by integrating them into the PA’s manpower lists and salary earners. This process is fully under the direction and management of Arafat, wearing his “double hat” of Chairman of the PA and Chairman of the Fatah organization, and his handwriting is on many documents in the file.<sup>36</sup>

At first glance, the material assembled would appear to be clear indictment of Arafat and his involvement against terror activity. The file highlights three levels or ‘floors’ that operate in a hierarchical fashion in support of terror activity. The ‘top’ floor consists of Arafat and his policy of absorbing *Fatah* activists in to the PNA security apparatus. The ‘middle’ floor involved key PNA officials from the treasury department and finance directorate which supply money to *Tanzim* and *Fatah* leaders, while the bottom floor includes the actual activists on the streets who, while receiving salaries from the PNA, continue to engage in terrorist activities.<sup>37</sup> This interpretation of the attached documents was driven by the fact that many of the names who appear, such as Nasser Awis, was wanted by Israel in connection with a series of attacks in January 2002 and his

apprehension demanded of the PNA.<sup>38</sup> This equated very closely to ‘the revolving door policy’, a belief among Israelis that even if the Palestinian security services were to arrest an individual on Israel’s wanted list, his incarceration at the hands of his compatriots would be short lived.

There is not doubt that Arafat knew of the nefarious activities of many men employed by his security services and indeed, was quite willing to entertain requests from *Fatah* leaders, including Barghouti, to employ such men in his security services and where necessary, to cover medical expenses. The undoubted support afforded by Arafat to the *Al Aqsa martyrs Brigade* and the *Tanzim* does not, however, lend itself to the neat interpretation placed on his actions by AMAN. Rather, what emerges is a decidedly mixed picture, of a man captive to his own vanities unable to exercise executive power over a fragmented authority. Indeed, in allowing the multiplication of security agencies and militias affiliated to specific political or religious movements in full breach of the Oslo accords, several Frankensteins of his own making emerged. These groups, often led by charismatic young men became the final arbiters where power lay on the Palestinian street and were quick to demand that the Palestinian municipalities cover expenses ranging from food to the cost of cell phone bills.<sup>39</sup> In essence, with the breakdown of Palestinian civil society, a form of ‘warlordism’ now determines politics in the West Bank with the use payments of from the first floor via the second to the third floor as much about demonstrating fidelity to those tempted to go elsewhere as any *sustained* support (my emphasis) for terrorist acts.<sup>40</sup> Designed fundamentally to shore up his crumbling support, Arafat’s vainglorious strategy has only imposed suffering on a massive scale to the Palestinians.

To be sure, public statements by AMAN have been more nuanced in their appraisal of the PNA. In a public briefing before Western news agencies, Lieutenant Colonel Miri Eisen of AMAN argued that the authority per se was not viewed ‘as one big terrorist organization’, but that individuals employed by the authority were engaged in terrorist activities. Nonetheless, Eisen made it clear that Palestinian violence consisted of four main elements: ideology, people (planners and executors), weapons and money. Of these, ideology was deemed the most important since it provided the motivation to act against Israel. In short, the ideology propagated by the Palestinian leadership was a direct

rejection of the right of Israel to exist.<sup>41</sup> Again, the interpretation placed upon the captured documents as well as from 1450 Palestinians detained during Defensive Shield who admitted involvement in terrorist activities was of an existential threat to the state.

### Emancipating the NSC

Even before ‘Operation Noah’s Ark’, or the horrific violence of March 2002, discussions among members of Israel’s intelligence community had begun focus on the post-Arafat era and the need to create connections to the ‘next generation’ of Palestinians. Arafat, it was argued, was subject to heavy pressure from growing support among Palestinians for *Hamas* and PIJ, from within his own leadership circles, from Israel’s sustained military assaults and from the paucity of international involvement in helping to shore up his position.<sup>42</sup> In June 2001, Major-General Amos Malka, then serving director of AMAN, argued in an address before senior IDF officers that Arafat, faced between fighting Islamist terrorism within his own society or continuing the violence against Israel had made a strategic decision in favour of the latter as the lesser of two evils. He concluded, ‘It would be a mistake if, after each terror attack, we check to see whether it was perpetrated by *Hamas*, PIJ, *Hizb’allah* or the Popular Front (for the Liberation of Palestine). Arafat is the one who is deciding about the strategy and making use of terror.’<sup>43</sup>

This one size fits all approach in a situation regarded as total war has come to dominate the relationship between the political and military leaderships in Israel. The perception of being in the midst of a total war requiring the total defeat of the enemy has come to impact upon intelligence appraisals that all too often deny a context to Palestinian violence, however murderous or bloody. In short, the perception of the conflict as ‘existential’ overrides serious discussion of political options that could ameliorate the violence. The reluctance of the IDF to expand the scope of the withdrawal from Bethlehem to other West Bank towns and cities, citing the immediate needs of ensuring security highlight the extent to which Israel’s national strategy remains conditioned by its military.<sup>44</sup>

This is not to argue that assessments about the various Palestinian factions or Arafat’s individual beliefs are erroneous. It does suggest however that conditioned by the belief

of fighting an all out war, operational intelligence has conditioned, rather than informed strategic analysis of the PNA and its increasingly *ad hoc* nature. What emerges is a self-perpetuating intelligence circle which reinforces existing preconceptions and negates any effective role for alternative approaches to the conflict. Given the symbiotic relationship that exists between the military and political leaderships, there exists no independent intelligence assessment capability able to place such assessments within a broader policy context. It is argued that Israel has no need for such an independent capability. The military and the role of AMAN remains subject to democratic scrutiny through the *Knesset* Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee and its subcommittee on intelligence. Moreover, AMAN can make recommendations to policy makers but whether to accept its assessments or recommendations remains a political decision decided in cabinet. It is a system that has proved functional given that Israel's intelligence community has no independent mechanism akin to the British Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) that can formulate, task, coordinate and collate material required for a strategic or national intelligence assessment.<sup>45</sup> But with the ongoing crises with the Palestinian authority, such a system also highlights the institutional weakness where tasking and assessments remain circumscribed and where all too often, the concept of a current security threat – *bitachon shotef* - has been inflated to the level of strategic threat by those charged with countering terrorist organizations.

Israelis are not blind to the problems of the present intelligence hierarchy and the attendant risks of treating AMAN as the 'font of all knowledge'. The NSC, established in March 1999 to assist the Prime Minister in forming national security policy does have the potential to act as a JIC or at least as an institution in which the intelligence product produced by AMAN can be assessed independently. To date however, its role has been heavily circumscribed and undermined by its role as a political football between the often conflicting demands of Prime Minister and Defence Minister. Former premier Netanyahu pushed through its establishment in the final days of his premiership partly to spite his outgoing defence minister, Yitzhak Mordechai who had, with the support of the *Varash*, opposed its creation.<sup>46</sup> Aside from such bureaucratic friction, further impediments to achieving an independent national intelligence assessment remain the manner in which, to date, the heads of the NSC have been selected and the background from which they

are drawn. The head of the NSC is appointed by the prime minister and as such, the label of 'cronyism' hangs heavily around the neck of the appointee. The 'uniform' background of each of the office holders of the NSC provides an apt description of their former careers: both David Ivri and the present head of the NSC, Uzi Dayan, have held the rank of Major General. Moreover, it was announced recently that the outgoing head of the *Mossad*, Efraim Halevy will replace Dayan. Dayan himself, appointed by Ehud Barak remained a serving officer throughout his tenure, a position, according to Reuven Pedatzur, hardly coterminous with an institution 'wholly civilian in its essence and one that obliges its holder to be critical and unbiased in regard to the military establishment'. Indeed, even when Dayan proved to be critical of IDF policy, the legacy of his fractious relationship with the former IDF Chief of Staff, Shaul Mofaz (as well as his successor Ya'alon) meant that any comment or assessment was deemed to be tainted by personal animosity.<sup>47</sup> When, in August 2002, the NSC recommended a policy of formal separation from the Palestinian territories, taking into account certain demographic realities, it was seen as a sharp riposte to Ya'alon's call for imposing a total military decision upon the PNA before Israel entered any peace talks. In effect, it is a position that allows Israel to dictate the terms of any future arrangement. The NSC also recommended to Sharon that Israel launch a wide ranging political initiative with the PNA that would include action to ameliorate the deteriorating humanitarian and economic conditions in the West Bank.<sup>48</sup>

One of the stated aims of the NSC is to 'warn against dangers [ to the State of Israel] and the ways to prevent or overcome them and to identify opportunities and ways to utilize them', a remit that encompasses all aspects of national security - intelligence included - as well as economic, social and political variables that impinge upon security. In theory, the NSC is therefore well placed to at least cast a critical eye over the intelligence produced by AMAN and other agencies. Its present weakness remains ultimately one of political will. Israel's political elite remains unwilling to place the NSC on a formal legal footing, perhaps through the provision of a 'Basic Law', that would include detailing its composition as well as the means and resources to carry out independent research and analyses. Such strictures would include placing the NSC under the stewardship of senior public servant outside the realm of the military and intelligence

communities. Moreover, the head of the NSC should be appointed by the *Knesset* Foreign and Defence committee, rather than being an appointee of the serving Premier, more concerned with issues of presentation rather than substance. This is certainly a concern voiced that has been over the appointment of Halevy and his suspected role as a private diplomatic vassal that some suspect Sharon wants him to play.<sup>49</sup> Unless such reform of the NSC is forthcoming, analytical recidivism will continue to inform the way in which intelligence is used to pursue the chimera of victory against the Palestinians.

### Conclusion

In his plea for the NSC to be given a greater role in analysing both raw intelligence and formulating policy recommendations for consideration by ministers independent from the intelligence services, Reuven Pedatzur concluded that unless such reform were considered seriously:

The upshot [will be] that the IDF will continue to be the only body that prepared position papers that are used as a basis for government policy making. This is very convenient for the Prime Minister Sharon, especially in a situation in which the senior officers of the General Staff fall into line with the force-based policy he is dictating. The problem is that in the absence of alternatives to IDF planning, not only is Israeli policy stagnant, but when the army is wrong in its recommendations, we will know this only after a blunder occurs or the failure of the proposed policy becomes apparent. Very often, that is too late.<sup>50</sup>

No one should underestimate the suffering that Palestinian terrorism has inflicted upon Israelis, both in terms of its scale and its psychological impact. The base fears that such attacks arouse indicate for many a base recidivism among all Palestinians, unwilling and unable to accept the reality of the Jewish State within their midst. Such existential concern lies at the very heart of an intelligence assessment based on the need to win a war that cannot, despite the best entreaties of Prime Minister Sharon and his Chief of Staff, be won. At the operational level, Israel's intelligence services, particularly the GSS have achieved much in terms of prevention of terrorist attacks, but such success

has all too often been elevated to the level of strategic cure. It remains a moot point as to whether the assassination of individual militants on the basis of information supplied by the GSS has controlled or merely served to exacerbate the cycle of violence. Such killings, despite criticism in the West as to individual culpability, are usually operational decisions taken in real time and within a limited ‘window of opportunity’.

The disclosures from documents seized during ‘Defensive Shield’ are grist to a ‘political-military’ mill that actively seeks ‘regime change’. The often tenuous connection that links Arafat with militia groups comes at the expense of downplaying the fragmented nature of the PNA and Arafat’s bureaucratic and political incompetence. The respite Israel has enjoyed recently from suicide bombing attacks has as much to do with the physical presence of the IDF, now surrounding all but one of the main West Bank towns and cities, as it does with the acumen of operational intelligence. Yet the tendency to ascribe blame to Arafat for every suicide bombing operation - prevented or realised – sees operational intelligence used to justify strategic intelligence assessments that point to the malign intent of *al-Rais*. Such assessments are erroneous on grounds of practice capability alone following the dismemberment of much of the Palestinian security apparatus throughout the West Bank. The need therefore to posit a distinction between the operational requirements of preventative intelligence and a broader political- strategic analysis where context informs policy choice requires that the NSC be placed on a statutory footing, emancipated from the bureaucratic rivalries and interests that have so marred its performance to date. After all, intelligence failure in this conflict has not been an only child, restricted to erroneous assessments of the past concerning Arafat’s true intentions after Oslo. Rather, its siblings are as much the present failure to identify both the context of violence, as well as any agreed political paths towards its cessation.

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<sup>1</sup> See the interview by Lally Weymouth with Ariel Sharon in *Newsweek*, Vol.CXXXIX, No.13, 1 April 2002, pp.34-35.

<sup>2</sup> Mark A. Heller ‘Operation “Defensive Wall”: A Change in Israeli Strategy?’ *Tel Aviv Notes* (Tel Aviv University - Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies/Moshe Dayan Centre for Middle Eastern and African Studies), No.34, 4 April 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Ze’ev Sternhall, ‘Immoral Imperative’, *Ha’aretz*, 16 May 2002.

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<sup>4</sup> Amos Harel, 'From a Pinpoint Operation to Massive Casualties', *Ha'aretz* (in English), 24 July 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Amos Elon, 'No Exit', *New York Review of Books*, Vol.XLIX, No.9 (23 May 2002), p.16.

<sup>6</sup> This interpretation is borrowed from the work of Susan L. Woodward. See her chapter Failed States: Warlordism and "Tribal Warfare" in Richard H. Schultz Jr & Robert Pfaltzgraff Jr (Eds), *The Role of Naval Forces in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Washington D.C.: Brassey's, 2000), p.105.

<sup>7</sup> In the aftermath of 'Defensive Shield', the commander of the Golani infantry brigade, Colonel Moshe Tamir, was quoted as stating, 'What do I need an intelligence officer for? The Shin Bet is my IO'. See Amir Oren, 'Authority without Responsibility', *Ha'aretz* (in English), 21 June 2002.

<sup>8</sup> See Uri Bar-Joseph, 'A Bull in a China Shop: Netanyahu and Israel's intelligence community', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence*, Vol.11, No.2 (1998), p.162.

<sup>9</sup> David Makovsky, 'Government approves national security council concept', *Ha'aretz* (in Hebrew), 8 March 1999.

<sup>10</sup> The importance of Intelligence in Israel's undercover war in the Occupied Territories was shown in the BBC TV Correspondent programme, 'Israel Undercover', broadcast on 15 February 2002. For the transcript see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/correspondent/1820862.stm>

<sup>11</sup> For a detailed account of the techniques of entrapment used see Gershon Gorenberg, 'The Collaborator', *The New York Times*, 18 August 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Gideon Alon, 'Security Chief, PM clash over IDF stay in Area A', *Ha'aretz* (in Hebrew) 3 June 2002.

<sup>13</sup> Vernon Loeb, 'Lesson form Israel: Drones and Urban Warfare', *Washington Post*, 23 September 2002 at [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A44773-2002Sep20.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A44773-2002Sep20.html)

<sup>14</sup> Clive Jones, 'A Reach greater than the grasp: Israeli intelligence and the war in south Lebanon 1990-2000', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol.16, No.3 (August 2001), pp.8-10.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with former senior officer in AMAN, University of Haifa, 22 May 2002. Name withheld on request.

<sup>16</sup> Ari Shavit, 'The enemy within', *Ha'aretz Magazine* (in English) 30 August 2002.

<sup>17</sup> Yossi Melman, 'Wild Card', *Ha'aretz* (in Hebrew), 12 August 2002.

<sup>18</sup> Yossi Melman, 'Don't confuse us with facts', *Ha'aretz*, 20 August 2002.

<sup>19</sup> Melman, *Ha'aretz*, 12 August 2002.

<sup>20</sup> Sharon's aims were outlined by Joseph Alpher, a former member of *Mossad* and now a strategic analyst. See Lee Hockstader, 'Sharon's scorecard', *The Washington Post*, 7 May 2002.

<sup>21</sup> Amos Harel, 'Expelling Arafat won't help, IDF says', *Ha'aretz* (in English), 22 April 2002; Gideon Alon, 'MI Chief: Arafat's isolation has strengthened his hand', *Ha'aretz* (in Hebrew) 1 May 2002.

<sup>22</sup> For an analysis of how the religious and ethnic profile of the officer corps has been changing see Uri Ben-Eliezer, 'Rethinking the Civil-Military Relations Paradigm', *Political Studies*, Vol.30, No.3 (June 1997), p.360.

<sup>23</sup> Aluf Benn, 'In Israel. Too much to leave to the Generals', *The Washington Post*, 18 August 2002.

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- <sup>24</sup> Amir Oren, 'More intelligent intelligence', *Ha'aretz*, 12 May 2002.
- <sup>25</sup> See Clive Jones, 'Israeli counter-insurgency strategy and the war in south Lebanon', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol.8, No.3 (Winter 1997), pp.82-102; Clive Jones, 'Israeli intelligence and the war in south Lebanon 1990-2000', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol.16, No.3 (Autumn 2001), pp.17-21.
- <sup>26</sup> Reisner's comments are quoted in Yael Stein, 'Israel's Assassination Policy: Extra-judicial executions', *B'Tselem* (January 2001) at [www.btselem.org/Download/extrajudicial\\_killings\\_Eng.doc](http://www.btselem.org/Download/extrajudicial_killings_Eng.doc)
- <sup>27</sup> Yossi Melman, 'Controversial policy with a hidden agenda', *The Guardian*, 14 February 2001.
- <sup>28</sup> Amir Oren, 'The Old Man and the Sea', *Ha'aretz* (in English) 11 January 2002; Eric Silver, 'Arafat was behind Arms shipment, says Sharon', *The Independent*, 7 January 2002.
- <sup>29</sup> Amir Oren, 'Capture of ship prevented "Lebanonization" attempt', *Ha'aretz* (in English) 9 January 2002.
- <sup>30</sup> Ronen Bergman, 'The Ra'is will sign and approve', *Yediot Ahronot* (in Hebrew) 12 July 2002.
- <sup>31</sup> AMAN already had access to documents before the mass incursions into the West Bank that detailed the strength of militant Palestinian groups in the Jenin refugee camp. Amir Oren, 'More like Mogadishu than Kosovo', *Ha'aretz* (in Hebrew), 26 March 2002.
- <sup>32</sup> 'Jenin: The Capital of the Palestinian Suicide Terrorists', IDF/Military Intelligence, document TR2-302-02, 18 April 2002, p.2. Hereafter referred to as 'Jenin' TR2-302-02 (IDF/MI).
- <sup>33</sup> Quote taken from 'Jenin' TR2-302-02 (IDF/MI), pp.9-10.
- <sup>34</sup> From 'Jenin' TR2-302-02 (IDF/MI) p.11.
- <sup>35</sup> From 'Jenin' TR2-302-02 (IDF/MI). p.11
- <sup>36</sup> 'The Palestinian Authority: Employs Fatah Activists Involved in Terrorism and Suicide Attacks', IDF/Military Intelligence, document TR2-280-02, 15 April 2002, p.2. Hereafter referred to as 'Palestinian Authority', TR2-280-02 (IDF/MI).
- <sup>37</sup> 'Palestinian Authority', TR2-280-02 (IDF/MI), pp.6-7.
- <sup>38</sup> 'Palestinian Authority', TR2-280-02 (IDF/MI), p.8.
- <sup>39</sup> *Yediot Aharonot*, 12 July 2002.
- <sup>40</sup> See for example Robert Fisk, 'Israel's black propaganda bid falters as documents reveal an impotent leader not a terrorist mastermind', *The Independent*, 9 May 2002.
- <sup>41</sup> Briefing by Colonel Miri Eisin, IDF Intelligence Officer, 23 April 2002. Text reproduced by Jerusalem Media Centre (Israeli Foreign Ministry) 24 April 2002.
- <sup>42</sup> Aluf Ben, 'Intelligence sources: Arafat era nearing an end', *Ha'aretz*, (in English) 26 November 2001.
- <sup>43</sup> Amos Harel, 'Military Intelligence points finger at Arafat', *Ha'aretz* (in Hebrew), 8 June 2001.
- <sup>44</sup> Yoel Marcus, 'Who's the boss?', *Ha'aretz* (in English) 3 September 2002.

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<sup>45</sup> Yigal Sheffy, 'Our First Line of Defense': Intelligence and the Israeli National Security Perception', in Lars Christian Jenssen and Olav Riste (Eds), *Intelligence in the Cold War: Organization, Role and International Cooperation* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, 2001), p.89.

<sup>46</sup> Sheffy, p.89.

<sup>47</sup> Reuven Pedatzhur, 'An unserious national security council', *Ha'aretz* (in English) 18 August 2002.

<sup>48</sup> Uzi Benziman, 'The sound of one opinion clapping', *Ha'aretz* (in English) 30 August 2002.

<sup>49</sup> Ze'ev Schiff, 'The relevance of the security council', *Ha'aretz* (in English) 28 August 2002.

<sup>50</sup> Pedatzhur, *Ha'aretz* (in English), 18 August 2002.