ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE: INCHING TOWARD AND LOOKING BEYOND NEGOTIATIONS

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This article starts with the proposition that the political and military developments of 2006 have sharpened the dilemma that has marked the Israeli-Palestinian peace process since the breakdown of negotiations at the beginning of 2001. The need to return to the negotiating table is more important than ever after the violence of the summer of 2006 and beyond. But the obstacles to doing so have increased with the election of a Hamas-led government and the rise and fall of the Kadima party in Israel. The article then proceeds to outline two strategies that, used in tandem, can help overcome this dilemma: a gradualist strategy of inching toward the negotiating table and a visionary strategy of looking beyond the negotiations.

THE WARS OF 2006

In exploring the implications of the wars of 2006 — the war between Israel and Hezbollah and the escalation in Gaza — I start with the conviction that there is no military solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is an existential conflict, in which the very survival of the two peoples is at stake. Neither side can win militarily, except perhaps at a cost that is too terrible to contemplate: the destruction or subjugation of the other as a nation. Continuation of the military struggle could well lead to the mutual destruction of both societies — if not their physical demise, then their destruction as viable societies with the ability to provide for the welfare of their populations, with moral integrity and good standing in the world community.

My view that there is no military solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been strongly reinforced by the recent wars. Let me focus for a moment on Israel's war with Hezbollah, which has an obvious bearing on its conflict with the Palestinians. On both the Israeli and the Hezbollah sides, there have been attempts to put a spin on the outcome of the war to allow a claim of victory. A simple example of contrasting spins is provided by the estimates of the proportion of Hezbollah missiles that have been destroyed by Israeli raids — estimates ranging from 7 percent to 70 percent. But whatever spin the two sides may put on the outcome, my conclusion is that neither side won that war. Israel did not achieve any of its military objectives. As for Hezbollah, it scored some points, but at a rather heavy cost. It proved its capacity to stand up to Israel's

military might for an extended period of time; it achieved popularity in the Arab world but also created suspicion and hostility; it gained leverage in the internal political struggle within Lebanon, although it has also created a backlash, particularly in view of the heavy cost to Lebanon's general population and infrastructure that Hezbollah's provocation of Israel has brought about. Even Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, in effect, acknowledged that backlash when he announced that he would not have undertaken the cross-border raid had he anticipated the intensity of Israel's reaction.

What the war demonstrated was that each side has the capacity to inflict significant pain and damage on the other. This is obvious in the case of the Israeli strikes against Lebanon. The resulting loss of life, destruction of public buildings and collapse of infrastructure have had a devastating effect on a country still in the process of recovering from its long civil war. We should not underestimate, however, the damage that the war has done to the Israeli population. To be sure, the number of deaths, injuries, people displaced and homes destroyed was much smaller on the Israeli side than on the Lebanese side. But there were significant losses. And there was significant disruption in the lives of Israeli citizens. A large proportion of the population of northern Israel — some hundreds of thousands — had to leave their homes, along with their jobs and schools, and move to other parts of the country or live in air-raid shelters for several weeks. By the same token, the Qassam rockets fired from Gaza — while they have fortunately so far caused relatively few deaths and injuries and relatively little damage — have traumatized

and profoundly disrupted the lives of the population of Sderot and other areas of Israel in the vicinity of the Gaza border.

Let me add, in this connection, that all sides — Israel, Hezbollah and Hamas — have committed war crimes, even though there are large differences in the level of destruction they have caused. They have done so by deliberately firing at population centers, by dropping bombs or launching missiles indiscriminately, or by giving insufficient weight to the inevitable civilian deaths resulting from attacks on military targets.

THE MYTH OF ISRAELI INVULNERABILITY

Perhaps the most important effect of the 2006 war, with distinct relevance for renewal of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, is that it broke the myth of Israeli invulnerability, a myth shared by many Israelis and Palestinians, as well as Arabs in general. "Invulnerability" is probably too strong a term. Israelis, fearfully, and Palestinians, hopefully, believe that indeed Israel is *ultimately* vulnerable. For Israeli (as well as diaspora) Jews, the sense of vulnerability goes back to the Jewish historical experience over the centuries, which is not easily erased by several decades of statehood. The sense of ultimate vulnerability is reinforced by Israel's isolated position in the midst of the Arab world. On the Palestinian side, the hope that Israel is ultimately vulnerable is reflected in the common analogy of Israel with the Crusaders, who are perceived as foreign intruders in the region that were eventually forced to depart. It is also reflected in the conclusion many Palestinians have drawn from Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Southern Lebanon and from Gaza: sufficient violence can eventually drive the Israelis out.

My reference to the myth of Israel's invulnerability should thus be taken as shorthand for the belief in Israel's possession of overwhelming military might and its status as a regional superpower. However ambivalently both sides may subscribe to this myth, much of their rhetoric and many of their actions give expression to it. This myth has been shattered by the events of last year, not only Israel's war with Hezbollah, but also the confrontations across Israel's border with Gaza. The important question is, What lessons are to be drawn from this new reality?

In Israel, recent events have generated profound concerns over the country's loss of its deterrent power — both vis-à-vis Hezbollah and its presumed backers, Syria and Iran, and vis-à-vis the Palestinians. Israeli political and military leaders are worried that Israel can be seen as — and can indeed become — vulnerable to attacks from across its borders with Lebanon in the north, with Gaza in the south, and eventually with the West Bank in the middle of the country, borders that are close to Israel's large population centers. Loss of Israel's deterrent power represents a nightmare scenario for its leaders. The immediate response to that evidence of vulnerability has been the use of greater military force and massive retaliation against Hezbollah and Hamas. But this strikes me as a shortsighted response to the new reality.

The important lesson for Israel, in my view, is that its military superiority, which is largely geared to respond to attacks from other states, is not particularly useful in the kind of asymmetric warfare that Israel has been confronting. This problem is not unique to Israel; it is the problem faced by the United States and other powers engaged, in Iraq and elsewhere, in what General Rupert Smith in a recent book has called "war amongst the people."[1]

The futility of its military superiority in its conflict with Hezbollah and Hamas was brought home to Israel in several painful ways:

- Hezbollah and Hamas have demonstrated that Israeli unilateral actions cannot in themselves solve Israel's security problem.
- The problem cannot be entirely contained by building walls and fences. Hezbollah and Hamas have shown that they can penetrate Israel by going under and over these barriers.
- The threat to Israel from Hamas and other militant groups can become increasingly severe as they acquire ever-more sophisticated rockets that can reach further than Sderot and even Ashkelon, particularly if they manage to smuggle rockets into the West Bank, which would threaten Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.
- Massive retaliation only extends and prolongs the agony for Israel and increases its costs, including the population's pervasive sense of insecurity and the country's loss of international standing.

The latter is not a cost that can be easily dismissed. Israel's international standing is vital to the country's survival as a legitimate actor in the global economy, the high-tech industry, and the world of science, art and education. The decline in Israel's international standing would affect most directly the upper middle class, including entrepreneurs, computer specialists, intellectuals and academics — the very people who have the option to leave the country if life there becomes too

difficult and unrewarding. Thus, even if Israel's physical existence is not at stake in its continuing conflict with the Palestinians, its existence as the integral player in the international community that it has become and wants to remain is at stake.

On a personal note, since the first few days of the 1967 war, I have not felt as worried about Israel's security and its future as I felt last summer and continue to feel now.

One conclusion the Israeli public has already drawn from last year's experience is that unilateral withdrawal and separation — Kadima's disengagement plan, which helped to give it a majority in the 2006 election — will not bring Israel peace, even in the limited sense of "tranquility," as described by Yoram Peri.[2] From my point of view, the rejection of unilateral disengagement is a step in the right direction, if and only if it is followed by the further conclusion that what is needed is a return to serious negotiations aimed at a *bilateral* agreement for ending the occupation and the conflict.

Before turning to the imperative of renewed negotiations, I want to comment on the implications of the 2006 war for the Palestinian side. Palestinians, too, need to draw some important lessons from the breaking of the myth of Israel's invulnerability or overwhelming power. As in the Israeli case, one immediate Palestinian response to the signs of Israel's vulnerability was to do more of the same, suggesting that the wrong lesson was learned. What Hamas seemed to learn from Hezbollah's experience was that it was possible to do great damage to Israel; so they proceeded to imitate Hezbollah by escalating the launching of rockets, taking advantage of Israel's vulnerability.

As I see it, an important lesson to be learned from the evidence of Israel's vulnerability is that it imposes a higher level of both moral and prudential responsibility on Palestinian actors to help create the conditions for a return to serious negotiations. For understandable reasons, Palestinians have perceived themselves as the perpetual victims of Israel's overwhelming power. As a consequence, they have tended to believe that they only have the capacity to respond, but are not in a position to take independent action. Moreover, they have tended to feel that anything they might do to counteract Israeli oppression was justified as the victim's act of desperation.

What is evident from recent events is that Hamas and other militant groups are doing harm to Israeli civilians and are likely to do greater harm if they acquire more sophisticated weapons and spread them to the West Bank. There is no question that the harm Israel is doing to the Palestinians is greater and likely to remain so for some time to come. Nevertheless, Palestinians are doing harm to Israeli civilians and bear moral responsibility for their actions.

Furthermore, Palestinian attacks are provoking Israelis into acts of desperate retaliation and repression as they feel their deterrent power slipping. Clearly, the moral responsibility for these acts rests on Israel's shoulders. But Palestinians must take prudential responsibility for the consequences to the Palestinian population of Hamas provocation. In this vein, Nasrallah, in the statement I have cited, seemed to acknowledge some responsibility for the consequences to the population of Lebanon of Hezbollah's provocation.

One of the facts that is often cited by Palestinians and others when they point to

Israel's overwhelming might and regional superpower status is its nuclear capacity. But the possession of nuclear weapons does not make a state invulnerable to attacks, as the U.S. experience has shown. It only means that it can retaliate against such attacks with a massive, violent response, which gives it some deterrent power. In the case of Israel, even this deterrent function of nuclear weapons is of limited value. Given the close proximity of Israel's potential enemies, nuclear weapons can serve only as *suicide bombs*, to be used if Israel were attacked — or about to be attacked — in a way that imminently threatens its existence.

POLITICAL OBSTACLES TO NEGOTIATION

I have argued that the events of last year have shattered the myth of Israel's invulnerability. They have made it even clearer than it has always been that there is no military solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They have also shown that there can be no unilateral solution. Return to the negotiating table is now more important than ever. But efforts to move in that direction are severely hampered by the anomalous state of public opinion on both sides.[3]

The general shape of a two-state solution that could be acceptable to the moderate elements of both sides and that is likely to emerge from final-status negotiations is by now widely known. It would establish a Palestinian state along the 1967 lines, with some mutually agreed-upon border adjustments that would allow West Bank territory that contains most of the Israeli settlements to become part of Israel, in return for Israeli territory of equal size and value to be ceded to the Palestinian

state. The remaining settlers would return to Israel or, by mutual consent, stay in the Palestinian state as Palestinian citizens or resident aliens. Jerusalem would serve as the capital of both states; the Jewish neighborhoods, including those of the Old City, would be under Israeli sovereignty and the Arab neighborhoods under Palestinian sovereignty, with some form of shared or joint sovereignty worked out for the holy sites. Detailed arrangements for security, freedom of movement, and municipal services for the entire city would have to be negotiated and jointly administered. Finally, the issue of Palestinian refugees would be resolved in all of its dimensions, with comprehensive plans for their compensation and resettlement. Refugees would be granted citizenship in and the right to return to the Palestinian state. Only a limited number would be able to return to Israel proper, but Israel would acknowledge its share of the responsibility for the plight of the refugees.

The Israeli and Palestinian participants in the last round of negotiations in Taba in January 2001 came very close to an agreement along these lines. Similarly, the Clinton points of December 2000, the Geneva initiative of 2003, and the People's Voice (Ayalon-Nusseibeh) initiative of 2002 all envisaged a solution more or less along the lines that I have outlined. Public-opinion polls have consistently shown that majorities on both sides support a two-state solution based on these parameters. Yet the publics have not fully embraced such initiatives as the Geneva accord, especially its formulas for resolving the issues of Palestinian refugees and sovereignty in Jerusalem. The main reason for the publics' ambivalence has been the profound mutual distrust that has marked the

relationship between the two communities since the failure of the Camp David summit in July 2000 and the onset of the second intifada. The prevailing narrative on each side has held that, while "we" have demonstrated our readiness to make the necessary compromises for peace, "they" have refused to do so. The publics have been unwilling to support painful concessions on such emotional and existential issues as the right of return and Jerusalem at a time when they have no confidence that the other side will reciprocate and follow through on its commitments.

The widely held belief on each side that there is no credible negotiating partner on the other side explains the anomalous findings of the opinion polls. Even as majorities on both sides have continued to endorse a two-state solution and some of the compromises it requires, majorities (with fluctuating percentages) have also supported anti-Israeli violence, including suicide bombings on the Palestinian side, and violent and at times indiscriminate reprisals on the Israeli side. The view on each side seems to be that, since the other is not responding to "our" peaceful overtures, they leave us no choice but to use violence, "the only language they understand."

The Israeli public's ambivalence has contributed to the electoral victories of Ariel Sharon, to support for the Gaza disengagement, and to support for Kadima's proposals for unilateral withdrawal and separation from the West Bank. The idea of unilateral disengagement was particularly attractive to many Israelis because it responded to both sides of the public mood: the desire to end the conflict and the belief that there is no credible negotiating partner. With respect to the latter, of course, unilateralism is bound to create a self-fulfilling prophecy.

On the Palestinian side, the public's ambivalence contributed to Hamas's electoral success. Mahmoud Abbas's earlier landslide victory in the presidential elections was due, in large part, to the public's desire to accelerate the peace process and belief that he was committed to that goal and in the best position to advance it. Abbas's inability, despite his good efforts, to progress toward negotiations and to bring improvements to the conditions on the ground contributed to many voters' decision to choose Hamas over Fatah candidates in the legislative elections. Hamas also benefited from the widely held view that its armed resistance was largely responsible for Israel's decision to disengage from Gaza. In a way, the turn toward Hamas can be interpreted as a form of Palestinian unilateralism.

The political changes of 2006, along with the military events, have made it even more difficult for the parties to return to the negotiating table. On the Palestinian side, Hamas's central role in the government — even in the context of a unity government — represents an additional obstacle to negotiations.[4] Hamas has so far been ruled out as an acceptable negotiating partner by Israel, the United States and Europe, unless it accepts certain preconditions, including recognition of Israel's right to exist. Both Hamas and Fatah have a strong interest in developing a formula by which the unity government could meet these conditions, in order to permit not only a return to negotiations, but also resumption of economic aid to the Palestinian Authority. I believe that such a formula could be crafted, but it would require extensive intra-Palestinian negotiations to make it both acceptable to the outside parties and not inconsistent with Hamas's basic ideological tenets.

On the Israeli side, the current government, in statements by Ehud Olmert and especially by Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, has been affirming the need to return to negotiations on a two-state solution. But, at least as of now, Olmert seems to lack the political strength and ideological will to make the necessary bold moves toward the negotiating table. In the meantime, the intra-Palestinian conflict and the difficulty of the Palestinian unity government in gaining acceptance as a negotiating partner have taken some of the pressure off Israel to commit itself to serious negotiations.

OVERCOMING THE DILEMMA

I have argued that, after the events of 2006, a return to negotiations is more imperative than ever, while the obstacles to doing so have, if anything, increased. How can that dilemma be overcome? I propose two broad strategies which, I believe, need to be employed simultaneously.

I start with the assumption that an early return to final-status negotiations is not very likely. The recent meetings between Mahmoud Abbas and Ehud Olmert, convened by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, are important steps in the direction of negotiations, particularly in that they signal American engagement in the effort to move the process forward. But the meetings also demonstrated how far the parties are from serious final-status negotiations.

What is needed, therefore, is a two-pronged strategy, a "pincers movement" that eases the way to final-status negotiations from both "below" and "above": on the one hand, a gradualist strategy of *inching toward negotiations,* involving a variety of steps that gradually pave the way and create a dynamic for final-status

negotiations; on the other hand, a visionary strategy of *looking beyond negotiations,* calling for the development and dissemination of a vision of the post-negotiation future that can energize public opinion in support of negotiations by providing a positive, reassuring frame for these negotiations.

THE INCHING-TOWARD STRATEGY

A key feature of the "inching-toward" strategy is to make it possible to gradually bring Hamas into the process, both by making negotiations more acceptable to Hamas, and by making Hamas more acceptable to the Israelis. I include two types of activities under this strategy: "short-term" negotiations, and exploratory or pre-negotiation talks.

By *short-term negotiations* I mean negotiations on concrete issues of immediate concern, designed to improve security and quality of life for the two societies. Such negotiations could focus on such issues as a cease-fire, preventing escalation, the release of prisoners, facilitating movement of people and goods, meeting the basic needs of the West Bank and Gaza population, or eliminating hateful language in education and the media. Such negotiations would contribute both to improving conditions on the ground (a worthy goal in its own right) and to creating a supportive atmosphere as well as habits, precedents and cadres for final-status negotiations. In both these ways, such short-term negotiations could serve as a bridge to the resumption of final-status negotiations. These issue-oriented negotiations should be conducted without conditions and with the participation of whatever persons or agencies are relevant to the resolution of a particular issue. Participa-

tion in these negotiations does not confer broader legitimacy on the persons or agencies involved.

The second type of activity under the rubric of an inching-toward strategy involves *exploratory and pre-negotiation talks*. The activities I have in mind have no official status and are not intended to produce binding agreements. They are not negotiations in themselves, but they are designed to explore the possibilities and requirements for entering into negotiations.

Possible starting points for such exploratory talks are the various feelers that have been put out by each side, indicating a readiness to talk to the other under given conditions. Examples of such feelers are an op-ed piece by Ahmed Yousef, a senior advisor to Prime Minister Ismail Haniya,[5] and Ehud Olmert's speech at a memorial ceremony for David Ben-Gurion.[6] Both are important documents containing new ideas that merit attention. The offers they make are clearly insufficient from the other side's point of view. Each, in effect, asks the other side to make a fundamental commitment in return for a partial, open-ended offer: an immediate end to the Israeli occupation in return for a *hudna* (ceasefire), without a Palestinian commitment to end the conflict; and recognition of Israel by the Palestinian government in return for dialogue with Abu Mazen about "an independent and viable Palestinian state." But, while these feelers do not provide a sufficient basis for negotiation and a final agreement, they do contain advances, hints, openings and language that are worth exploring and clarifying.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to the renewal of official negotiations between Israel and a Palestinian unity government that includes Hamas is the demand that the Palestinian side accept Israel's right to exist from the outset. There is no way Israel would or should sign a final agreement without some such recognition: acceptance of Israel within recognized borders as a Jewish-majority state with the right to live in peace and security, along with a declaration that the agreement marks the end of the conflict. At the same time, recognition of Israel's right to exist is not something that Hamas can deliver (especially in the absence of Israeli reciprocity), nor is it necessary at this stage.

There are three important considerations to keep in mind with regard to the conditions for exploratory, pre-negotiation talks. First, talks are not the same as negotiations and need not be governed by the same conditions. Beyond that, the conditions for *starting* even official negotiations need not be the same as the conditions for *concluding* negotiations with a final agreement. Third, at all stages, the conditions for engaging with the other party must be based on the principle of reciprocity. Thus, at whatever point and in whatever terms Palestinians are expected to accept Israel's right to exist, Israelis must be expected to accept the Palestinians' right to establish an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza living in peace and security alongside Israel. A useful exercise in setting this and other conditions — such as renunciation of violence and adherence to previous agreements — for Palestinian interlocutors is to check whether parallel conditions are being set for the Israeli side.

With these three considerations in mind, there is a need to pursue all possible avenues for exploratory, pre-negotiation talks between the two parties, including

representatives of a Hamas point of view on the Palestinian side. As time goes on, such talks can "escalate" by increasingly moving to the official level. Exploratory talks could begin with proxy talks that include Palestinians who are not affiliated with Hamas but are closely familiar with and able to present its point of view. They may move on to entirely unofficial track-two efforts, such as the problem-solving workshops that my colleagues and I have organized over the years;[7] back-channel negotiations, carried out with the knowledge of officials but under conditions of deniability; and talks under the auspices of third parties — governments, international agencies, academic organizations — that may include official representatives from the two sides.

These different varieties of exploratory talks could productively focus on the kinds of steps that are necessary and possible for reviving the working trust and sense of possibility that would encourage the parties to return to final-status negotiations. In this context, they could address such questions as these: What does each side need to hear from the other? What can each side offer to the other? How can the gap between what each side needs to hear from the other and what the other can offer it be narrowed and closed?

THE LOOKING-BEYOND STRATEGY

The visionary strategy of looking beyond negotiations is directed to public opinion and seeks to address the ambivalence I have described: Both publics endorse a two-state solution and yet are not ready to give wholehearted support to negotiations because of profound distrust in the ultimate intentions of the other side. I

argue that, to energize public opinion toward final-status negotiations at this point, it is necessary to go beyond the pragmatic approach exemplified by the Oslo agreement, the Geneva accord, or the People's Voice initiative. Pragmatism was essential to the considerable progress that has been made and continues to be essential to shaping the terms of a final agreement. But it is insufficient to the task of overcoming the current level of mutual distrust. It is unrealistic to expect the publics to accept painful concessions (especially on such existential issues as the right of return and Jerusalem) on the grounds that there is no other option, at a time when they are not persuaded that the other side can be trusted to live up to its commitments. To overcome the mutual distrust, the publics must be assured that it is possible to negotiate a solution that is fair, safe and conducive to a better future.

To this end, I propose that pragmatic proposals for a negotiated agreement need to be complemented and framed by a joint vision of a *principled peace*, based on a historic compromise that meets the fundamental needs of both peoples, validates their national identities, and allows them to declare an end to the conflict consistent with the requirements of attainable justice. If such a framework is constructed through a joint Israeli-Palestinian process, it can reassure the two publics that the agreement is not jeopardizing their national existence and that it promises mutual benefits that far outweigh the risks it entails.

A jointly constructed framework for a principled peace, as I see it, would contain the following components:

- Mutual recognition of the other's national identity and acknowledgment of

both peoples' historic roots in the land and authentic links to it. Ideally, from my point of view, the framework would start with the proposition that the land — the entire land — belongs to both peoples. If the framers are not prepared to endorse such a strong departure from ideological positions, they could negotiate a softer formulation, e.g., that the land is claimed, with some legitimacy, by both peoples and that both are deeply attached to it.

• Acknowledgment that the pursuit of the two peoples' national aspirations on the basis of their conflicting claims has led to decades of violent, destructive conflict and expression of regret for the suffering that each people has caused the other in the course of this struggle.

• Recognition that neither people can prevail by military means at an acceptable cost and that continuation of the present course may well lead to mutual destruction. Therefore, instead of pursuing a military solution to the conflict, the parties need to end it with a historic compromise, whereby the two peoples agree to share the land to which both are so deeply attached in a way that allows each to fulfill its national aspirations and express its national identity in a state of its own within the shared land, in peaceful coexistence with the neighboring state of the other.

• Affirmation that the logic of the historic compromise carries implications for the way in which certain core issues — issues that engage each people's national narrative — need to be resolved in order to enable each people to maintain its national existence and express its national identity in its own state. In particular, there can be no Israeli settlements with extraterritorial rights within the Palestinian state; the number of Palestinian refugees returning to

the state of Israel has to be limited; and Jerusalem has to serve as the capital of both states with neither side exercising exclusive sovereignty over the holy places.

• Development of a positive vision of a common future for the two peoples in the land to which both are attached and which they have agreed to share — and of the future of the shared land itself: a vision that contemplates a secure and prosperous existence for each society; mutually beneficial cooperation in various spheres (e.g., economic relations, public health, environmental protection, telecommunications, cultural and educational programs, tourism) between the societies; regional development; and stable peace with ultimate reconciliation. Positive expectations for the future would begin to compensate the two populations for the losses inevitably entailed by a historic compromise. In this vision of a common future, the extent and speed of the institutionalization of cooperative activities, and the possibility that they may culminate in an economic union or even a confederation, conceivably including Jordan as a third partner, would be left to future developments and depend on how the relationship evolves over time.[8]

A bold statement of the positive vision of a common future might call for a united country with divided sovereignty. This concept, drawing on various earlier proposals for Jerusalem as a united city with divided sovereignty, emerged out of discussions in an Israeli-Palestinian problem-solving workshop in 1982. I introduce this concept, not to suggest that a framework for a principled peace needs to adopt this precise language, but to point to some of the possibilities for envisioning a positive common future for the two peoples in the

country they share. The concept differentiates between state and country and allows both Israelis and Palestinians to maintain their attachment to the land as a whole while claiming "ownership," in the form of independent statehood, over only their part of the land. To lend reality to this concept, the vision requires a range of cooperative activities that would benefit each state and its population, as well as the country as a whole. It would also require free movement across state borders so that citizens of the Palestinian state could visit Jaffa (and appreciate or even write poems about it), and Israeli Jews could come to worship at Abraham's tomb in Hebron. Such cross-border attachments would not be threatening to the other side in a context in which both sides acknowledge that each is attached to the entire land but relinquishes claims to ownership of the part that constitutes the state of the other people. A vision of a united country with divided sovereignty might enable the two communities to build toward a new, transcendent identity alongside their separate national identities, such that sharing the land would not be seen as equivalent to losing the land.

The pursuit of a looking-beyond strategy would be greatly facilitated by visionary leadership on one or both sides, such as that offered by Nelson Mandela or Anwar Sadat. Until such leadership emerges, the initiative for constructing and disseminating the framework for a principled peace that this strategy calls for rests largely with track-two efforts. A track-two approach like interactive problem solving[9] can contribute to such efforts by providing a joint process of "negotiating identity." In such a process, each side can acknowledge and accommodate the other's identity — at least to the extent of

eliminating negation of the other and the claim of exclusivity from its own identity — in a context in which the core of its own identity and its associated narrative are affirmed by the other.[10] Ideas that emerge from such an interactive process can then be injected into the political debate and the political culture of each society.

The strategy proposed here, by looking beyond negotiations and developing a positive vision of a common future, represents a significant step toward reconciliation. But it is a strategy designed not to sidestep or jump *over* negotiations, but to jump *ahead* of negotiations precisely in order to enable the parties to return to negotiations. The prospect of reconciliation has the potential for energizing the two publics and eliciting their wholehearted support for the process and expected outcome of negotiations. The looking-beyond strategy is visionary, but — by offering a principled peace, steps toward reconciliation, and a vision of a better future for the two peoples in the land they share — it may well be the most realistic option available to the two leaderships.

POSTSCRIPT

In the few months since this article was written, the political landscape in the occupied territories has undergone some significant changes, with Hamas's violent takeover of Gaza, followed by President Abbas's dissolution of the unity government. The new political situation has created some promising opportunities for moving the peace process forward, but it also presents the potential danger that the process may undermine the perceived legitimacy of the Palestinian negotiators. Negotiations of both short-term and permanent-status issues cannot succeed if

they address the problems of the West Bank at the expense of Gaza, nor can Hamas (which enjoys wide support in the West Bank as well as in Gaza) be totally excluded from the process.

The dual strategy advocated in this article thus continues to be relevant to the new situation. An inching-toward strategy is required to pave the way to final-status negotiations that will take advantage of the new opportunities while avoiding the danger of splitting the Palestinian community.

Gradually bringing Hamas into the process remains a key feature of this strategy. A looking-beyond strategy is required to offer the publics reassurance and a positive vision of the future so that they will give wholehearted support to negotiations toward a historic compromise. Such public commitment to the process on the Palestinian side may confront Hamas with the choice of joining the national consensus or becoming politically irrelevant.

[1] R. Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2007).

[2] Y. Peri, "Generals in the Cabinet Room: The Military and Israel's Policy in the War in Lebanon" (a lecture to the Middle East Seminar at Harvard University, November 15 2006.)

[3] See H.C. Kelman, "The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process and Its Vicissitudes: Insights from Attitude Theory," *American Psychologist* (2007), Vol. 62, No. 4, pp. 287-303.

[4] This article was written prior to Hamas's violent takeover of Gaza and President Abbas's dissolution of the unity government. See the Postscript.

[5] A. Yousef, "Pause for Peace." *The New York Times*, November 1, 2006.

[6] "PM Olmert Reaches Out to Palestinians at Ben-Gurion Memorial" (S. Boker, trans.), November 27, 2006. Retrieved Februrary 23, 2007, from the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs web site: http://www.mfa.gov.il/ MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2006/PM+Olmert+reaches +out+to+Palestinians+at+Ben-Gurion+memorial+27-Nov-2006.htm.

[7] See, e.g., H.C. Kelman, "Interactive Problem Solving in the Israeli-Palestinian Case: Past Contributions and Present Challenges," in R.J. Fisher (ed.), *Paving the Way: Contributions of Interactive Conflict Resolution to Peacemaking* (Lexington Books, 2005), pp. 41-63.

[8] M. Ma'oz, G. Khatib, et al. (Joint Working Group on Israeli-Palestinian Relations), "The Future Israeli-Palestinian Relationship," *Middle East Policy*, (2000), Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 2-24.

[9] See footnote 7.

[10] H.C. Kelman, "The Role of National Identity in Conflict Resolution: Experiences from Israeli-Palestinian Problem-solving Workshops," In R.D. Ashmore, L. Jussim, & D. Wilder (eds.), *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction* (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 187-212.