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Building a Successful Palestinian State

Security

Robert E. Hunter, Seth G. Jones

Supported by a gift from David and Carol Richards

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Summary

This monograph examines the requirements and key options for external security following the conclusion of an Israeli-Palestinian peace accord and the creation of a Palestinian state. It is presented in association with the RAND Corporation study, *Building a Successful Palestinian State* (The RAND Palestinian State Study Team, 2005). Internal and external security arrangements for a Palestinian state are inextricably related. Examples include the effectiveness of Palestinian policing and the nature and extent of security arrangements along the Palestinian-Israeli border, counterterrorism efforts, and intelligence functions. Thus, the discussion in this study necessarily overlaps the issues presented in the broader study. It focuses primarily on security issues that involve borders and direct interaction between Palestine and its neighbors. We also assume that whatever agreement is reached will be consonant with the so-called two-state solution.

At the same time, this study is designed to describe, analyze, and discuss key issues related to the external security of a Palestinian state following the achievement of peace between Israel and Palestine. It thus does not seek to examine all issues in light of the negotiating history, since that history may or may not have an impact on the situation prevailing during a state of peace. Thus, possibilities for security arrangements that have so far proved to be unacceptable to one party or the other might be viewed in a different light during peacetime. This study seeks to present a series of useful and reasonable steps, but not to evaluate how "negotiable" they might be in future circumstances that obviously cannot be accurately forecast. Similarly, while referring to some important past ideas, this study does not attempt to review the full history of discussions, debates, and negotiations on security issues between Israelis and Palestinians, and there have been many such. For a historical account, the reader is invited to see the literature on the subject. This includes, for example, works by past U.S. negotiators William Quandt (during the Carter administration) and Dennis Ross (1988–2000).[1] Furthermore, Appendix B contains the text of the proposals made to the Israelis and Palestinians by President Bill Clinton in December 2000.

[1] See, in particular, Quandt (2001a); and Ross (2004).

In recent months,[2] the prospects for peace between Israel and a potential Palestinian state have taken a positive turn. Following the death of Yasser Arafat in November 2004, elections for a new president (Mahmoud Abbas) of the Palestinian Authority were held in the Occupied Territories in January 2005. Israel has withdrawn from Gaza and a few Israeli settlements in the northern West Bank. The second Bush administration recommitted itself to the pursuit of peacemaking and sent Lieutenant General William Ward to assist with Israel's disengagement from Gaza and to help train, equip, and advise Palestinian security forces. The people of Lebanon have risen against Syrian occupation, and Syria has been required to withdraw its forces and intelligence apparatus. And there is broad international support, including by the so-called Quartet (the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, and the Russian Federation) for renewed peace efforts based on the Roadmap.[3] Of course, this does not mean that a peace agreement is imminent. But it does mean that considerations about the requirements for implementing such an agreement—including requirements for the external security of both Israel and a Palestinian state—have gained new saliency. Further, while it is not the objective of this study to analyze or prescribe alternatives for actual peace negotiations, the issues discussed here will certainly be germane to those negotiations and can help inform decisions to be made by the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Ideas presented here need to be evaluated as possible elements of a settlement that itself would have to be agreed upon for these ideas to come into play. What we describe are the conditions for success if the "possible" does become possible. Indeed, at such moments, forethought becomes particularly important as a tool of statecraft, helping opportunities to be seized.

This study offers several general conclusions:

- *Primacy of Security:* Security trumps all else. Without it—as demonstrated by several decades of experience in Arab-Israeli peacemaking, including every agreement between Israel and one or more of its neighbors since 1949—nothing else is likely to succeed in Israeli-Palestinian relations. Security considerations, therefore, must come first.

- *Security Is Indivisible:* Internal and external security issues for Israel and Palestine are inseparable, and both must be considered, organized, and implemented together. In addition to material contained here on internal security, readers are thus invited to refer to the companion document, *Building a Successful Palestinian State.*

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[2] This study was completed in August 2005.

[3] See U.S Department of State (2003b).

- *Permeable Borders:* Assuming implementation of critical security measures, the Israeli-Palestinian border should be permeable, with checkpoints and inspections managed jointly by Israel and Palestine. If both parties agree, performance of these tasks could usefully be assisted by a U.S.-led international force.

- *International Force:* Following a peace settlement and subject to agreement by Israel and Palestine, a U.S.-led international peace-enabling force should be deployed along the Palestinian borders with Egypt, Jordan, and Israel—including along potential borders in Jerusalem. Its objectives should include supervising the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian territory, helping to monitor and patrol border crossings, supervising further measures of de-escalation after a peace settlement, and engaging in other duties agreed upon by all parties. This force could be limited in size (perhaps ranging from 2,500 to 7,000 troops).[4] It must have clear and precise rules of engagement; and it should have an open-ended mandate, but with the goal of being limited in duration.

- *NATO's Role*: If Israel and Palestine agree, this U.S.-led international force could usefully be based on NATO and also include forces from other countries, pursuant to a formal UN Security Council mandate.

- *Peace First*: A peace settlement should be a precondition for deploying this force. While logic could argue for such a force to be created to buttress security following Israeli withdrawal from Gaza or to test principles and practices of an international force in this limited sphere, potential contributing countries would be unlikely to become engaged, at least with more than the European police on the Gaza-Egypt border, until there is an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement.

- *Cost:* RAND estimates that the cost of a peace-enabling force might range from $550 million per year for a force of 2,500 soldiers, to $1.5 billion for 7,000 soldiers. Over ten years, these costs could range from $5 billion to $15 billion.

- *Palestinian Military Force*: Palestine should agree not to constitute regular military forces, certainly at first, although it should have border guards, police, and other domestic security forces. An increasing number of security responsibilities should be devolved upon the Palestinian government and its security forces over a five-to-ten-

[4] Estimates of troop levels in this study depend on assumptions about the security environment, rules of engagement, objectives, and operational tasks of the forces, and thus are included for the purpose of giving some sense of the magnitude of the obligations to be assumed. See later discussion. The number could be considerably larger under different assumptions.

year period, depending on proved competence and Israeli confidence. Whether Palestine should be permanently "demilitarized" is an issue to be considered at a later point, depending in part on events and on the nature of Israel-Palestine relations.

- *Israeli Settlements:* In order to maximize security, Israeli settlements within the borders of a Palestinian state should be withdrawn, except in territories that are contiguous to Israel proper and agreed upon in negotiations (e.g., potentially through land swaps).

- *Dispute-Resolution Mechanisms:* Joint Israeli-Palestinian dispute-resolution mechanisms will be a critical part of promoting security, possibly with international participation.

- *Jerusalem*: The status of Jerusalem is largely a political question. From a security perspective, Jerusalem can be the capital for both Israel and Palestine. Again, from a security perspective, there could be international aspects, especially in regard to the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif, with either mixed Israeli-Palestinian control or participation of outsiders.

- *Regional Security Environment:* Security for Israel and Palestine will depend to a critical degree on what else is happening in the Middle East. An overall Arab-Israeli settlement will be important. The United States has now taken on primary responsibility for reshaping the region and for developing long-term stability. Others, including NATO, the European Union, and the United Nations must also play useful and supportive roles.