

ISRAEL'S CONCEPT OF CUMULATIVE DETERRENCE: WILL IT BRING PEACE TO THE REGION?

MANMOHAN BAHADUR

The subject of deterrence is fascinating. Why is it that there are no clearly defined yardsticks that predict the outcome of deterrent situations between adversaries? How is it that David did not get deterred to take on Goliath despite his towering strength? Or, how is it that the military might of America did not deter the North Vietnamese in persevering in their efforts to unify their country? Classical deterrence theory did not deter the nineteen Al Qaeda hijackers of four American aircraft from crashing two of them into the World Trade Centre and bringing in a new term in the English lexicon—9/11. Why do movements or groups like Hamas and Hezbollah periodically launch armed action against Israel knowing full well that their armed might is no match for the technological and military prowess of the Israelis? Why?

Even as deterrence has been debated extensively over the years, new “versions” or models have appeared on the strategic easel. What started with the writings of Bernard Brodie, Thomas Schelling and Herman Kahn during the nuclear Cold War age has now mutated into debates that deal with compartmentalised versions of deterrence. Thus, there is recessed

Air Vice Marshal **Manmohan Bahadur** VM (Retd) is Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi.

Unlike the classic deterrence theory, where start of armed action by any party is taken as a failure of deterrence, Israel has resorted to disproportionate kinetic action (on failure of classic deterrence) to add to the aura of its military power that it advertises as its deterrence capability unique to its military and diplomatic posture. Just as one augments one's money in a bank for security in times of need in future, Israel has been "banking" the results of its military engagements in a cumulative manner to buttress its deterrent stance and image.

deterrence, long-term or general deterrence, immediate deterrence et al. One amongst the list is what the Israeli-Hamas "engagement" in Gaza in November 2012 brought to fore—a variant of the deterrence doctrine that Israel is trying to implement and perfect in the past decades, in fact, ever since its birth in 1948—cumulative deterrence (lately through exclusive use of air power). Unlike the classic deterrence theory, where start of armed action by any party is taken as a failure of deterrence, Israel has resorted to disproportionate kinetic action (on failure of classic deterrence) to add to the aura of its military power that it advertises as its deterrence capability unique to its military and diplomatic posture. Just as one

augments one's money in a bank for security in times of need in future, Israel has been "banking" the results of its military engagements in a cumulative manner to buttress its deterrent stance and image. According to this doctrine, writes Dr. Eitan Shamir, head of department in the division of National Security Doctrine at Israel's Ministry of Strategic Affairs, "the outcome of every round of violence should leave no room for interpretation. The victorious should be undisputed and the price paid by the vanquished in prestige and material should be sufficiently heavy that they lose their appetite for another round in the foreseeable future ... *after a few rounds* (emphasis added) with exclusively negative outcomes for Israel's adversaries, the Arabs would understand that they

had reached a strategic impasse and thus desist.”¹ These were the thoughts of David Ben Gurion (quoted by Dr. Shamir), the founder and the first Prime Minister of the state of Israel,² which translated into the doctrine of cumulative deterrence—that is, adding to the power of deterrence with each additional round of fighting. Uri Bar-Joseph, a professor in the Department for International Relations of the School for Political Science at Haifa University has studied Israeli cumulative deterrence and terms its aim as, “... convincing the Arab world that the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot be solved militarily at an acceptable cost, not only in the foreseeable future but also in the long run, and thus to persuade Arab political and military elite to end the conflict by political means.”³

Theoretically, deterrence is structurally viable in the Israel-Palestinian conflict as both adversaries lay claim to the same piece of land. Since there is this commonality of interests, the environment is conducive for its application for, as Thomas Schelling wrote, “The deterrence concept requires that there be both conflict and common interest between the parties involved; it is as inapplicable to a situation of pure and complete antagonism of interest as it is to the case of pure and complete interest. Between these extremes, deterring an ally and deterring an enemy differ only by degrees.”⁴

It is against this backdrop that the objective of this essay is to examine whether “cumulative deterrence” of the type practised by Israel is succeeding

To coerce an adversary’s thought process and actions to one’s own advantage is the end-game of any confrontation, kinetic or otherwise. To be deterred or to deter is also a game, albeit psychological, indulged in by adversaries. Deterrence is one part of coercion, the other being compellence.

-
1. Eitan Shamir, “Israel’s Future Wars: Universal Lessons of a Peculiar Case,” *Strategic Insights*, vol. 10 special issue, Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey, October 2011, p. 129, available at www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a554475.pdf accessed December 10, 2012.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Uri Bar-Joseph, “Variations on a Theme: The Conceptualization of Deterrence in Israeli Strategic Thinking,” *Security Studies* 7, no. 3 (1998), p. 148.
 4. Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 11.

in its aim of deterring its adversaries and whether it would bring in lasting peace.

THE DETERRENCE CONSTRUCT

To coerce an adversary's thought process and actions to one's own advantage is the end-game of any confrontation, kinetic or otherwise. To be deterred or to deter is also a game, albeit psychological, indulged in by adversaries. Deterrence is one part of coercion, the other being compellence. Compellence, when introduced, is an active process unlike deterrence, as Thomas Schelling postulated;⁵ it implies that deterrence, which is slightly abstract in nature and does not require a visible response on the part of the deterred, is a more acceptable method to a rational entity (as he has a veil of plausible denial), than compellence wherein a retraction involves a loss of face. Their sum total, coercion, is not necessarily of the military kind only; in fact, economic and political sanctions, along with a host of other measures, constitute the "set" of actions that can be brought to bear on an adversary's decision making prowess. The Israelis have added a "social" factor in their unique fight against suicide bombers, that of "social persuasion," which some may call blackmail (this would be covered in detail later). But deterrence as theory and strategy by itself has been under a cloud, with regard to the low efficacy shown in the 1970s and 1980s and later when new nuclear weapon states came into being.⁶

In simple terms, deterring is persuading an adversary not to take a step that he is contemplating and if he does that (to test the deterrer's resolve), then commence *limited* action to confirm the resolve and to act as a threat of further actions to come—all this, while the main military body is kept in reserve as the deterrent force to prevent the adversary from expanding the scope of the conflict.⁷ Compellence is the *actual* application

5. Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 72.

6. T. V. Paul, "Complex Deterrence" in T. V. Paul, Patrick M. Morgan and James J. Wirtz (eds.), *Complex Deterrence Strategy in the Global Age* (Cambridge University Press India Ltd., 2009), pp. 3-4.

7. Glenn H. Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense* (New Jersey: Princetown University Press, 1961), p. 11.

of sufficient force to make an adversary *do* something or stop and/or retrace his steps if he has already commenced doing what he was being warned against.⁸ There is, thus, inherent passivity in deterrence but affirmative action in compellence. These two diverse actions form the root cause of many decisions taken by adversaries that may be termed irrational, bringing into question the factor of rationality required for deterrence and compellence to follow the “designated” sequence. There is, however, a differing view too, as will be covered later, but the presence (or absence) of rationality has a bearing on the application of cumulative deterrence and its efficacy in preventing conflict.

What causes deterrence? It is not necessarily the power to cause damage that deters an adversary; it is the *belief* that the deterrer has the capability to cause damage that deters. Additionally, governments often assume that possession of military ability confers on them a deterrent capability;⁹ this is a patently wrong understanding of the potency of the power to hurt. While the possession of the means is important, the acceptance of the deterrer’s intent to use the means by the target of the deterrence is the crucial determinant. Thus, what is of relevance is the factor of *credibility*—it is the credibility as perceived by the target of deterrence of the availability of means with the deterrer *and his (the deterrer’s) willingness to use those means*, which acts (or does not act) as a deterrent.¹⁰

While the possession of the means is important, the acceptance of the deterrer’s intent to use the means by the target of the deterrence is the crucial determinant. Thus, what is of relevance is the factor of *credibility*—it is the credibility as perceived by the target of deterrence of the availability of means with the deterrer *and his (the deterrer’s) willingness to use those means*, which acts (or does not act) as a deterrent.

8. Daniel L. Byman, Mathew C. Waxman and Eric Larson, “Airpower as a coercive instrument (1990)” (Washington DC, Rand) http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1061.html accessed August 25, 2013.

9. Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 15.

10. *Ibid.*

Are there different shades of deterrence and is it possible to have an environment that has an intangible called cumulative deterrence? If yes, then the very fact that an increment in power and authority of cumulative deterrence is possible only post a breakdown of classic deterrence leads to the inference that “disobedience” by the adversary is an integral part of its existential chain. A further deduction is that true deterrence (where violence is prevented) can be deduced to be a myth. As long as there is a *perceived* asymmetry in power equations of the adversaries, one of the antagonists would attack if he *perceives* himself to be in a position to inflict some damage on his adversary;¹¹ this is irrespective of whether he is actually superior, materially or psychologically, to affect or “influence” the outcome. To prevent an antagonist from nurturing such a perception of superiority, the other party may arm himself further, thereby bringing in instability in the deterrence equation (thus, a state of mutual deterrence is itself an unstable situation,¹² perhaps in perpetuity, resulting in a destabilising arms race).

The fairly regular occurrence of violence in West Asia is indicative of the fragile security environment in the area and a breakdown of classic deterrence. It is an established fact that the Israeli military and technological might is eons ahead of what its adversaries can muster—this is especially true when Israel is ranged against the relatively primitive capabilities of non-state actors and “movements” like Hamas, Hezbollah and Fatah. So, why do these organisations take on such a militarily strong opponent while established Westphalian states like Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan have reconciled to, if not “peace” then to a “no war no peace” state with Israel? What do these “movements” see as “victory?” For, if they view each ceasefire as a proof of their success, as has been the norm after each engagement,¹³

11. Anthony Kenny, *The Logic of Deterrence* (London: Firethorn Press, 1985), p. 43.

12. Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 20.

13. For instance see Ben Wedeman, “After 8 days of fighting, calm returns to Gaza,” available at <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/11/22/world/meast/gaza-israel-strike/index.html> accessed September 23, 2013. The journalist writes, “For impoverished Gaza, whose 1.7 million residents were massively outgunned by Israel’s military, to survive was to triumph. “I think people feel now that the only way to push Israel to give concessions is resistance,” said Ghazi Hamad, a senior Hamas official, who cited Israel’s agreement to Wednesday’s ceasefire as vindication of Hamas’ struggle.

then this cycle of violence would continue. It thus calls into question the credibility of the Israeli concept of cumulative deterrence for, no matter how much it (Israel) feels it accumulates deterrent power with every skirmish/engagement, periods of peace will be followed by an episode of violent action at some point of time. What Israel is achieving, as this essay will show later, are longer durations of peace before cumulative deterrence breaks down and a new cycle of violence is followed by a ceasefire and then a spell of relative calm reinstated—but that cumulative deterrence would break at some point of time is not in doubt. So, Israel has to over-arm and *demonstrate* in an overwhelming display of its conventional capability (as against nuclear capability) to hurt, each time, in order to achieve enhanced credibility.

ROLE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The strategic world is awash with studies and literature on how nuclear weapons were prime sources of deterrence during the Cold War. The demise of the Cold War has not changed the threat from nuclear holdings of USA, Russia and other countries, despite exhortations and statements to move towards nuclear disarmament (the numbers have reduced but not the destructive threat they convey). These weapons continue to hold a special place in deterrence postures of countries that have this capability. However, Israel's skirmishes and engagements with its opponents have been numerous during this phase itself, a period during which it has been credited as having gone nuclear. So, did its nuclear capability not give it any measure of deterrence in view of the fact that, besides the multiple engagements with Fatah and Hezbollah, the 1973 Yom Kippur war, the 1982 Syrian conflict and the two intifadas were thrust on it? It has been argued that the nuclear status of Israel was not intended, right from the beginning, to be in the Israeli calculus of engagements with its adversaries, including established states. In the late 1960s, Israel shifted from a posture of nuclear ambiguity to nuclear opacity, a posture maintained till date. Some even feel that Israel's nuclear opacity is not an issue of uncertainty regarding its capabilities but rather, "the result of a political, even cultural, refusal to

incorporate its (Israel's) nuclear status into its ongoing political and military practices and thinking."¹⁴ So, in its policy of cumulative deterrence, Israeli nuclear weapons have no role to play whatsoever. Its adversary, however, has an unconventional weapon in its arsenal—the suicide bomber.

THE SUICIDE BOMBER

In the contemporary world, the *Kamikaze* pilots of Japan in World War II heralded the "suicide attack." Since then, there have been a spate of suicide bombers, who have exploded themselves in crowded places to cause maximum casualties. Israel has been at the receiving end of suicide bombings in a big way. However, in the recent past, say about a decade or so, there has been a marked decrease in such attacks. Maj. Gen. Dorong Almog, an Israeli Army Commander, writing in 2004 in the US Army War College journal, *Parameters*, brought out interesting statistics on the suicide bombing campaigns being faced by the Israelis. Quoting an official website of the Government of Israel he has written that since the start of the second Palestinian intifada in September 2000, Israeli authorities had prevented more than 340 suicide bombings from advancing beyond the planning stages. In addition, they had intercepted 142 would-be bombers, most of whom were en route to destinations deep within Israel.¹⁵ Quoting from personal knowledge (as he puts it), General Almog narrates what he calls a true story:

In early 2003 an Israeli agent in the Gaza Strip telephoned Mustafa, a wealthy Palestinian merchant in Gaza, to inform him that over the previous three months his son Ahmad had been preparing for a suicide bombing mission in Israel. Mustafa was told that if his son followed through with his plans, he and his family would suffer severe consequences: their home

14. Avner Cohen and Benjamin Frankel, "Opaque Nuclear Proliferation" in Benjamin Frankel (ed.), *Opaque Nuclear Proliferation: Methodological and Policy Implications* (Portland: Frank Cass, 1991), p. 25. Quoted in Nuclear section of Nuclear Threat Initiative available at www.nti.org/country-profiles/israel/nuclear/ accessed December 7, 2012.

15. Dorong Almog, "Cumulative Deterrence and the War on Terrorism," *Parameters*, Winter 2004-05, pp. 4-19, available at www.carlisle.army.mil/USAWA/Parameters/Articles/04winter/almog.htm accessed December 10, 2012.

would be demolished, and Israel would cut off all commercial ties with Mustafa's company. Neither he nor the members of his family would ever be permitted to enter Israel again. Faced with this ultimatum, Mustafa confronted his son and convinced him that the cost to his family would far outweigh any possible benefits his sacrifice might have for the Palestinian people.¹⁶

So, has Israel found a method to pre-empt and/or reduce attacks of this "foolproof" method of assault? If true, this would indeed be a breakthrough in modern warfare, against an adversary who is considered impervious to coercion. Ahmad, in Almog's article, may have got convinced by his father Mustafa in the case quoted, and based on the statistics furnished by the author there may well have been others, but parallel studies show that plain threats to induce deterrence may not work. Harvard political scientist Jessica Stern, who has interviewed terrorists and their sponsors in wars with an underlying religious base, writes that, "Holy wars take off when there is a large supply of young men who feel humiliated and deprived; when leaders emerge who know how to capitalise on those feelings; and when a segment of society is willing to fund them. They persist when organisations and individuals profit from them psychologically or financially. But they are dependent first and foremost on a deep pool of humiliation."¹⁷

There was a similar situation in Iraq, post the publishing of photographs of the humiliation of prisoners in the Abu Ghraib prison. Scot Atran, writing in *The Washington Quarterly*, says that motivation comes from values and small-group dynamics that override rational self-interest and whose violation leads to moral outrage and seemingly irrational vengeance. Atran says that "Adherence to sacred values, which provides the moral foundations and faith of every society or sect that has endured for generations, ultimately leads to perceived moral obligations that appear to be irrational, such as martyrdom." When Atran's research team interviewed

16. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

17. Jessica Stern, "Beneath Bombast and Bombs, a Caldron of Humiliation," *Los Angeles Times*, June 6, 2004, available at <http://articles.latimes.com/2004/jun/06/opinion/op-stern6>. Accessed on September 7, 2013.

In classic deterrence theories, deterrence and compellence require both sides to have “rational” reasoning, where gaming forms the basis of decision making. Thus, a challenger in a situation of being deterred weighs the losses or “punishment” that he would endure were he to take actions contrary to what the deterrer wants. This is for a rational adversary, but what if he is very deeply motivated instead by reasons that override the fear of threatened reprisals? Instrumental and value rationality are conflicting in nature; while in the former, events are governed by rationalisation, the latter has intangibles like dignity, respect, culture and ideological issues dictating the flow of events, without any thought of the end result.

would-be suicide bombers and those who support them, questions such as, “What if your family were to be killed in retaliation for your action?” or “What if your father were dying and your mother discovered your plans and asked you to delay until the family could recover?” almost always received answers like, “although duty to family exists, duty to God cannot be postponed.” Atran writes that the typical response to the question “What if your action resulted in no one’s death but your own?” is, “God will love you just the same.”¹⁸

So, in a way there is research to show that strongly held values override deterrent threats in many situations; a recent poll in Israeli occupied areas brought out that 40% Palestinians support suicide bombings.¹⁹ However, the fact remains that suicide attacks in Israel have reduced substantially though not died down. So, something seems to have worked to bring down the

success rates of suicide bombings, as brought out by Dorong Almog in his article; a possible answer will be discussed later in this essay.

18. Scott Atran, “The Moral Logic and Growth of Suicide Terrorism,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2006, p. 138.

19. *The Jerusalem Post*, February 15, 2013 available at <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Poll-40-percent-of-Palestinians-support-suicide-bombing-311779> accessed September 23, 2013.

PREREQUISITE OF RATIONALITY FOR DETERRENCE—REALLY?

In *classic* deterrence theories, deterrence and compellence require both sides to have “rational” reasoning, where gaming forms the basis of decision making. Thus, a challenger in a situation of being deterred weighs the losses or “punishment” that he would endure were he to take actions contrary to what the deterrer wants. This is for a rational adversary, but what if he is very deeply motivated instead by reasons that override the fear of threatened reprisals? Instrumental and value rationality are conflicting in nature; while in the former, events are governed by rationalisation, the latter has intangibles like dignity, respect, culture and ideological issues dictating the flow of events, without any thought of the end result.²⁰ Additional contributors to this decision making could be many and may include other intangibles like perceived persecution at the hands of the adversary or religious reasons. Historically, states faced with imminent defeat or those that are subject to significant punishment from stronger rivals do not do a rethink on the costs that they are being subjected to. Similarly, highly motivated political leaders or those that have taken an inflexible stand dig in their heels even in the face of overwhelming military odds. Thus, irrationality to some does not find place in the *classic* deterrence theory and brings in an element of ambiguity in charting or forecasting the future turn of events.

There is another view, however, that questions the requirement of rationality as a prerequisite for deterrence. Patrick Morgan, writing in his book *Deterrence Now* says that, “Deterrence theorists have assumed rationality as a given and gone ahead to make the theories. But the assumption of rationality on the part of the challenger (attacker) and the deterrer is flawed”—hence, during the cold war, the superpowers maintained a disproportionately large arsenal hoping to deter an even *marginally* rational

20. T. V. Paul, “Complex Deterrence” in T. V. Paul, Patrick M. Morgan and James J. Wirtz (eds.), *Complex Deterrence Strategy in the Global Age* (Cambridge University Press India Ltd., 2009), p. 7.

It appears as if rationality goes through stages, i.e., extended “peace” causes Israel’s opponents to gradually become “irrational” causing a break in deterrence and when rationality about the impact of Israel’s military response starts hurting them, compellence kicks in and drives them to take a rational decision to accept a ceasefire, and other demands; a few stats of the recent engagements would support this viewpoint.

opponent²¹—put in another way, to deter a marginally *irrational* opponent. This was then an irrational act of over-arming to deter an assumed marginal irrationality of the adversary—the recipe was thus tailor-made for an arms race.

Is this applicable to cumulative deterrence of the kind practised by the Israelis? History of the past two decades shows that the threat of massive retaliation by Israel has not deterred the Palestinian movements from threatening and then targeting Israel with unguided rockets and suicide bombers, while the nation-states have maintained peace and in fact have entered into treaties with Israel. Thus, are the Arab states rational while the non-state actors (like Hamas) fall in

the category of irrational? By using overwhelming force and retribution on a disproportionate scale, Israel attempts to make the Hamas et al. do a cost-benefit analysis and weigh the costs of continuing to harass Israel, i.e., introduce rationality in their thinking. The attacks continue till the assessed military capability reduces drastically, indicated by a drop in the number of rockets fired into Israel. Compellence now steps in and the Palestinians are expected to stop all attacks as well as renounce their usage in future. The attacks stop, but only after talks between the two sides through an intermediary; it also boils down to the threshold levels of pain and grief that can be endured at that given period by the adversaries before they agree to suspend kinetic action. As covered earlier, having been pushed into a

21. n. 9, pp. 45-46. He writes further, “It seems impossible to associate deterrence solely with rationality—it is not only rational actors that have to be deterred and can deter, it is not only among rational actors that deterrence works, it is not always better to be rational in deterrence situations, and there is probably no consistent link between what works in general and in individual instances,” p. 65.

corner militarily, no religious or ideological leadership, especially one that is fighting for its survival, can cave in to the opposition's demand. It appears as if rationality goes through stages, i.e., extended "peace" causes Israel's opponents to gradually become "irrational" causing a break in deterrence and when rationality about the impact of Israel's military response starts hurting them, compellence kicks in and drives them to take a rational decision to accept a ceasefire, and other demands; a few stats of the recent engagements would support this viewpoint. The first intifada is generally considered to have lasted from December 1987 till the Oslo accord was signed in 1993; the casualty count was 1,491 Palestinians and 421 Israelis. In the second intifada (September 2000 to end-2005) the Palestinian lost 4,000 dead and 30,000 injured while the Israelis claimed that 1,000 of their citizens had died and 6,000 were injured.²² In the last major skirmish that started with the targeted assassination on November 14, 2012 by Israel of Ahmed al-Jaabari, the head of Hamas' military wing, 163 Palestinians died and 1,225 were wounded in the wake of 1,500 Israeli strikes. Additionally, like in the earlier engagements, Israel mounted repeated air attacks to destroy the arsenal of Hamas and the underground tunnels from Egyptian Sinai into Gaza that are used to smuggle in goods and arms. So this cycle is a periodic one, with no end to this war seemingly in sight.

ETHICS OF CUMULATIVE DETERRENCE

In war, a guiding code for use of force and violence is the principle of proportionality. However, Israel's cumulative strategy calls for discriminately higher force, with the quantum increasing with each break in deterrence.²³ This is the crux of increasing the power of cumulative deterrence, i.e., it feeds on its own failure to be applied the next time in a disproportionately higher mode. Israel is also following a principle of collective punishment—

22. Casualty counts of both sides vary greatly depending on the source of information. For example see http://aic-background.conflix.org/index.php/the_first_and_second_intifada; also see a BBC timeline of the intifada at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3677206.stm both accessed September 23, 2013.

23. See n. 1.

ethically, is it justified?²⁴ Another view on ethics is one which Anthony Kenny asks in his book, *The logic of Deterrence*. Talking of nuclear deterrence he queries, "Those who wish to defend deterrence while opposing use therefore have to be prepared to maintain that it can be legitimate to threaten what it would not be legitimate to do. Is this a defensible ethical position?"²⁵ But there is a contradiction here: Israel defends its policy of cumulative deterrence and also uses its instruments of deterrence in times of need; so, as per Kenny's statement, does that make Israel's use of force ethical?

Sometimes, to live up to the stated intentions and to carefully cultivated public profiles, countries themselves get coerced into taking kinetic actions resulting in a break in deterrence. The recent publicly declared "redline" of the use of chemical weapons, purportedly by Syria, put enormous pressure on the American President to live up to his statement of punishing use of chemical weapons. Earlier, "... nuclear deterrence did not prevent wars in all cases, whatever its success in the cold war. In fact, profound concerns for maintaining credibility to keep deterrence effective actually helped stimulate the Vietnam War."²⁶ Similarly, Israel finds itself in an unenviable position of having to live up to its stated policy of resorting to heavy kinetic action every time a Palestinian strike takes place, thus breaking a cumulative deterrence induced state of relative, though temporary, peace. This disproportionate response has been a norm even if the initial Palestinian action had not been a major strike—can this use of disproportionately heavy force, just to live up to a stated policy, be classified as ethical?

THE PROGNOSIS FOR CUMULATIVE DETERRENCE

So, where is cumulative deterrence taking Israel in its endeavour to live in sustained peace? Examining the difficult and extremely tenuous relationship that exists between "high strung" and proud nations, Henry Kissinger in his book *Diplomacy* wrote that "nations cooperate for long periods only

24. Threat of collective punishment is amply clear in the example by Dorong Almog about the pressure brought on Mustafa, the father of Ahmad, to dissuade his son from a suicide mission. Both the Intifadas and the November 2012 engagement were witness to large-scale destruction of infrastructure used by families and communities of Palestinian militants.

25. Anthony Kenny, n. 1, p. 47.

26. n. 9, p. 40.

when they share common political goals and that ... policy must focus on these goals rather than on the mechanisms used to reach them."²⁷ He further adds that, "(though), a functioning international order ... should attempt to reconcile them, it must never wish them (the mechanisms) away."²⁸ So, do the Palestinian-Israeli skirmishes that occur with certainty every few years, point to the fact that the world tends to forget the existence of this problem once peace returns—and the fact that to bring the problem back to centre stage the "marginalised" Palestinians resort to rocket attacks and suicide bombings, knowing full well that the retaliation from Israel would be swift and brutal, as per its declared state policy? These violent activities from

the Palestinians are, as covered earlier, due the sense of accumulated humiliation down the decades and the feeling of disenfranchisement of territories which they claim to be rightfully theirs. The present state though is that both parties are focusing on the methods (violence and counter-violence) and not on the goal (peace with dignity) of their exertions. This is a sure recipe for continuation of the conflict as it is also exactly the antithesis of the Westphalia Treaty principle (that ended the Thirty Years War in Europe in 1648) which was "benefit of the other."²⁹ The further implication of this continuation of a hostile environment is that deterrence would break periodically, as has been happening over the past six decades; the response from Israel would increase in its intensity under the impression that each engagement, more devastating in its effects than the previous, would help

The present state though is that both parties are focusing on the methods (violence and counter-violence) and not on the goal (peace with dignity) of their exertions. This is a sure recipe for continuation of the conflict as it is also exactly the antithesis of the Westphalia Treaty principle (that ended the Thirty Years War in Europe in 1648) which was "benefit of the other."

27. Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks), ch. 24, p. 616.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Pierre Beaudry, "The Economic Policy that made the Peace of Westphalia," available at www.schillerinstitute.org/strategic/treaty_of_westphalia.html, accessed September 8, 2013.

strengthen its deterrence; this is an impression doomed to failure. Thus, cumulative deterrence may increase the periods between breakdown of deterrence, but it would be ineffective in establishing a state of permanent peace—which is the ultimate aim of war. There are other explanations which uphold this deduction.

Robert A. Pape a political scientist at the University of Chicago and James Feldman, a former professor of decision analysis and economics at the US Air Force Institute of Technology and the School of Advanced Airpower Studies, have studied the relationship between suicide bombings (a weapon of the technologically challenged adversary) and occupation by a foreign power in their book, *Cutting the Fuse: The Explosion of Global Terrorism and How to Stop It*. A review of the book states that, "... extensive research (by the authors) points out that after the United States occupied Afghanistan and Iraq, suicide attacks worldwide rose dramatically—from 300 between 1980 and 2003 to 1,800 from 2004 to 2009. More than 90 per cent of the attacks were anti-American. Indirect occupations, in which the United States helps lead an occupation without committing troops, such as in Pakistan, have the same impact as direct occupations and explains the rise of suicide terrorism there."³⁰ Pape and Feldman's research found that in each of the countries where suicide terrorism flourished, it was used to combat an occupying force. While occupation may sometimes be necessary to achieve immediate foreign policy goals, it does so at the risk of stimulating a suicide terrorist campaign against the occupier's homeland. This is the dilemma an occupier faces, they noted, since when the threat of occupation was removed, suicide terrorism stopped substantially. After Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000, for instance, Lebanese suicide terrorist attacks against Israel ended, the authors pointed out. After Israel withdrew militarily from Gaza and portions of the West Bank, suicide attacks came down 90 per cent.³¹ Thus, the drop in suicide

30. Review of Robert Pape's book, *Cutting the Fuse: The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It*, available at <http://news.uchicago.edu/article/2010/10/04/how-end-suicide-bombings-new-book-argues-problem-not-islam-lengthy-military-occup> accessed September 8, 2013.

31. Ibid.

bombings in Israel during this period credited by Dorong Almog to success of their policy of cumulative deterrence may be suspect—the reduction could have also been due the withdrawal of the occupying Israeli forces from Lebanon and portions of the West Bank, as researched by Pape and Feldman.

Uri Bar-Joseph talks about cumulative deterrence being breached due to Arab motivation, strong dissatisfaction with the status quo and the fact that the Arabs had little to lose from Israeli retaliation. Sometimes the strong Israeli retaliation added to the problem and in the final analysis, according to Bar-Joseph, cumulative deterrence was not successful due to Arab motivation and Israeli rigidity till mid-1980, after which it started taking effect. However, “deterrence not accompanied with sufficient reassurance, reward and concessions was unreliable as long as this kept the Arabs deeply unsatisfied.”³² Building of new settlements on occupied territory, besides being a coercive act on the part of Israel, is also a cause of a feeling of helplessness among the Palestinians in many respects. Many rounds of fighting between the two adversaries has resulted in Israel making new settlements which have been controversial, to say the least. So, is this act also a demonstration to the Palestinians that every armed engagement would cause a further reduction in lands that are “disputed?” In the long term this would be a de-stabilising act on the part of Israel, as more Palestinian land gets usurped by permanent Israeli structures. Israeli occupation of occupied territories, especially the act of constructing settlements on them, will continue to fuel Palestinian humiliation and anger.³³ While its security wall and persistent surveillance (through satellite and UAVs) will contain infiltration, the reaction and response would come in other forms, say

32. Uri Bar-Joseph, n. 3, pp. 145-181 quoted in Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 157-58.

33. It goes against the realisation reached after the first intifada—“from the viewpoint of Amram Mitzna, Head of the Israeli Defence Forces (1986-1990), this was Israel’s first real challenge to their authority and the realisation that it will be impossible to occupy the disputed territories without a permanent peace solution. Whilst there was violence on both sides this Intifada was also a turning point for the PLO who, under Yasser Arafat, altered their ambitions and now accepted the need to find a permanent solution to peace: a Two State Solution—one for an independent Israel and one for an independent Palestine”—<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/the-first-intifada-and-palestinian-consciousness/10216.html>.

The security situation that Israel finds itself in is indeed unique. Hemmed in from all quarters, its policy of cumulative deterrence gives it periods of relative peace while living in a continuous high state of year round alert. So, in the final analysis, the violence resorted to by it has failed, and will continually fail, to give it its much yearned permanent peace.

through aerial means, subterranean route or attacks in third countries. The Iron Dome air defence system of Israel may provide a high measure of physical security but is such "tripwire" protection successful in the long term?

Have any steps been taken to remove or reduce the triggering factors in the West Asian conflict? The answer unfortunately is in the negative and the divide is still very vast. In an amazingly frank 2012 documentary made by an Israeli film maker Dror Moreh, "The Gatekeepers," six ex-Chiefs of Shin Bet, the Israeli internal security agency say that the occupation by Israel is taking their country nowhere and that they

may be winning the battle but are losing the war. Philip French of *The Observer* in his review of the documentary says that as per the six Shin Bet heads, "... there has been 'no strategy, only tactics.'" "Forget about morality," one of them says. "But that's only a short-term policy in a seemingly hopeless conflict where the intransigence of both sides and the increasing pig-headedness of politicians have ensured that Israel may end up winning every battle but losing the war."³⁴ Similarly, another reviewer writing in *The New Yorker* says that the six ex-Shin Bet Chiefs are convinced that Israel, "... is on the wrong track and that the future is dark."³⁵ This is indeed a very damning assessment of the policy of cumulative deterrence seen from

34. Philip French's review in *The Guardian* of the Dror Moreh directed documentary, "The Gatekeepers" is available at <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2013/apr/14/the-gatekeepers-review> accessed September 9, 2013. Excerpts of the documentary are available on YouTube.

35. David Denby's review of "The Gatekeepers" in *The New Yorker* of November 29, 2012 available at <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/culture/2012/11/the-gatekeepers-directed-by-dror-moreh.html>, accessed September 9, 2013.

a macro-perspective—it is failing to provide the necessary long-term security to Israel, as assessed by its own internal security Chiefs.

The security situation that Israel finds itself in is indeed unique. Hemmed in from all quarters, its policy of cumulative deterrence gives it periods of relative peace while living in a continuous high state of year round alert. So, in the final analysis, the violence resorted to by it has failed, and will continually fail, to give it its much yearned *permanent* peace. The politics of the region are so complicated and stakes involved so high that the resultant human suffering (mostly of the Palestinians) will always override the threat and pain of individual and collective punishment threatened by Israel as part of its policies based on cumulative deterrence. The path to peace was shown by the signatories at Westphalia where the principle of “benefit of other” prevailed and brought in lasting peace in Europe—such a statesman-like approach is the only way forward.