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## Getting Perspective: The 2000-2005 Palestinian Armed Rebellion

A.E. Stahl

In spite of the differing characteristics it embraces, the varying shapes that it takes on, and the differing parlance or speculations that are applied to it, all violence fought for the ends of policy represents “war”. War will continue shifting and shaping society; it will influence all political entities; it will create new communities whilst aiding in the collapse of others; it will destroy peace but it will also construct an even better era than had previously existed — all of which is a result of the use of force for policy ends, as this is what war is, why warfare is waged, and this has always been war’s purpose.

Despite the historical treasure chest of evidence and knowledge about war and warfare, the development of ineffective — even unrealizable — military doctrine and the constant invention of terminology have caused many to stray.<sup>1</sup> It can be argued that new doctrine, taxonomies, and terminologies are not a result of the changing character of war but rather represent a type of disagreement over what constitutes war, as well as a disagreement over what warfare is supposed to do. Rather than utilizing history to make today’s case, there seem to be attempts at redefining what war is, what it should be, and resultantly how warfare should be waged. Even agreeing on a definition of war continues in earnest, despite a near-perfect observation made in the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

A prime case where typological error is in abundance is in the description of violence between Israelis and Palestinians between 2000-2005. The purpose of this article is to bring greater clarity to the violence of 2000-2005, to both academics and military professionals. For the military professional, it is vital not to avoid being taken in by buzzwords but rather to stay on the path that over 2,500 years of history has offered. For academics, it is important to refrain from being hyper-analytical, which can result in the teaching of incorrect information about war and warfare. The key is to focus less on entertaining the invention of new terms and focus more on examining what is known, understood, and that which has stood the test of time.

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<sup>1</sup> “An actor-centric theory of war” is one of a number of recent terms and phrases. Sebastian Gorka and David Kilcullen, “An Actor-centric theory of War: Understanding the Difference Between COIN and Counterinsurgency.” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 60, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2011. [http://www.ndu.edu/press/lib/images/jfq-60/JFQ60\\_14-18\\_Gorka-Kilcullen.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/press/lib/images/jfq-60/JFQ60_14-18_Gorka-Kilcullen.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> “War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.” Found in Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, (Howard/Paret edition), Book I, Chapter 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), page 75.

The five-year period of violence between Israelis and Palestinians has been allotted numerous labels. Such labels have caused confusion in academia and have lead military professionals down a path that could be regarded as unconstructive. The fact is that the violence of 2000-2005 was an armed rebellion, which is simply an age-old type of war. The Palestinian Armed Rebellion (PAR) of 2000-2005 is also known as the *al-Aqsa* or Second *Intifada*, though this paper specifically refers to the violence as the PAR. This article will first briefly explain war, warfare, and armed rebellion. The article proceeds to challenge other terminology that has been used to characterize the violence of 2000-2005. Ultimately, this article holds that by understanding the violence as “war” and/or “armed rebellion” one can get perspective on this period of belligerence.

## War

Regarding war and warfare, problems that have arisen and will continue to arise due to a lack of definitional consensus cannot be overstated. Consequentially, there is currently a myriad of terms that confuse rather than clarify what is, *conceptually*, a straightforward subject. Resultantly, policymakers and military professionals are marching to the beat of buzzwords rather than applying historical terms that easily stand the test of time. From these varying terminologies and taxonomies (perhaps, “speculations” is a better term) emanate numerous and contrasting policy and military approaches and solutions, ultimately culminating in a wealth of mass bewilderment. It can be argued that the entrance of new terminology into the realm of strategic thinking has caused the term “war” to be relegated to a quasi-anachronistic status.

It is well understood that there are many ways to view and/or define war, and as such this article recognizes and respects that there are serious complexities involved. For example, there are subsets of war that are often treated as something separate and distinct from war. It must be understood that subsets of war are simply types of war, not something other than war. The purpose here is to aim to remove those complexities by restating what war is and what war and warfare are supposed to do. This article maintains that war is any organized violence fought amongst or between communities for the purpose of the distribution and redistribution of power over and amongst society, which is to say politics. This definition of politics is, for the most part, based off both Harold Laswell’s and Max Weber’s views on politics.<sup>3</sup> One can find a number of works by current scholars and practitioners that utilize these two definitions to describe politics and importantly how it is connected to war and warfare. Moreover, war subsumes “both conflicts for total success or for those seeking marginal advantage.”<sup>4</sup> The idea that politics is the central factor in war is not a Clausewitzian invention, though it is often most attributed to him over most others. Both Sun Tzu and Machiavelli, to name but two, saw “the primacy of politics as the driving force of war.”<sup>5</sup> One of the best examples in recent history of how and why the “primacy of politics” in war is both necessary and that it works can be found in the first Gulf War (1990-1991) – from pre-war planning to post-war activity. Spearheaded by President George H. Bush,

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<sup>3</sup> Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation.” This was a speech at Munich University in 1918. English translation found at: <http://media.pfeiffer.edu/Iridener/DSS/Weber/polvoc.html>; Harold Laswell. *Politics: Who gets what, when, how*, (Peter Smith Publishing, Inc., 1990).

<sup>4</sup> Hugh Smith, *On Clausewitz: A Study of Military and Political Ideas*, Part IV: The Levels of War, chapter 8, (Palgrave Macmillan: New York 2004), page 96.

<sup>5</sup> Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought*, (Routledge: Abingdon Oxon 2010), Page 4.

he was able to “achieve a delicate balance between political control on the one hand, and sufficient freedom of action for the military on the other.”<sup>6</sup>

War is a collection of elements and actions interacting simultaneously. It has been accurately described as a wrestling match, a duel, or personal combat (*zweikampf*) on a prodigious scale that includes the utilization of force and a competition of wills in pursuit of political objectives.<sup>7</sup> War is a palpable phenomenon, a human activity, a synergy of physical and psychological force, and ultimately it is an occurrence that materializes and climaxes in a set of interconnected events perpetrated by a mélange of actors and their conduct, violent or by other means.<sup>8</sup> War is also the realm where humans continue to physically effectuate the violent capabilities of politics. Importantly, perceiving war solely in the ‘state versus state’ framework is an erroneous approach to the study of war and strategy. War amongst and between communities has been an integral element within human history, occurring millennia prior the founding of the modern nation-state. Moreover, war has never changed as a result of an inalterable nature, which encompasses “the sum of the fundamental cause-and-effect relationships, or laws” that defines war.<sup>9</sup> This is not to infer that war is not dynamic. Yet, it is the *character* of war, not its *nature* that has changed. The nature of this unique human phenomenon has remained unaltered and there is no evidence to suggest that the nature of war will change. Since war’s nature remains unalterable, it is what makes the Great Jewish Revolt against the Roman Empire (66-70 C.E.) the same as the 2000-2005 Palestinian Armed Rebellion (henceforth, PAR).<sup>10</sup> The latter, though separated by nearly two millennia from the former, were all violent wars that encompassed the engagement in both regular and irregular warfare with all actors attempting to influence and compel the other by the use of force in order to reach political objectives.

War and warfare are not synonymous, yet all too often the two are used interchangeably. While war is ultimately “an act of violence”, warfare is the “technique of applying that violence” and it is this critical distinction between war and warfare that allows for the simultaneous existence and interplay of two opposites: war’s immutable nature and its dynamic character.<sup>11</sup> As the British tactician Jim Storr notes, “Its main tenet is that, although war currently appears to be dominated by technology, warfare is fundamentally a human issue.”<sup>12</sup> It is the actual fighting, the tactical level of war, conducted by men and women. It should be noted that warfare is as political as war itself. There are thinkers that have purported that “War once begun has always tended to generate a politics of its own...to erect its own political purposes,” including wars based off passion rather than reason.<sup>13</sup> This has been true at times. However, at its root, war is political and thus combat should always be subservient to the political powers and/or policy elements set forth.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Michael I. Handel, page 13.

<sup>7</sup> Op. Cit. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*.

<sup>8</sup> Colin S. Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations: An Introduction to Strategic History*, (UK: Routledge, 2007), in Chapter One: “Themes and Contexts of Strategic History.”

<sup>9</sup> Antulio J. Echevarria, II, *Clausewitz and Contemporary War*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford 2007), page 61.

<sup>10</sup> LTC. William T. Sorrells. “Insurgency in Ancient Times: The Jewish Revolts Against the Seleucid and Roman Empires, 166 BC-73 AD”, *School of Advanced Military Studies United States*, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Op. Cit. Antulio J. Echevarria, II, page 57.

<sup>12</sup> Jim Storr, *The Human Face of War*, (Continuum: UK 2009), page 1.

<sup>13</sup> Russell Weigley, “The Political and Strategic Dimensions of Military Effectiveness”, Quote from Williamson Murray and Alan R. Millett, *Military Effectiveness*, Volume 3, *The Second World War*. (Allen & Unwin, Boston 1988), page 341.

Importantly, fighting for political objectives — the tactical level of war being subservient to policy — does not refer solely to states. The suicide attacks during the PAR or the firing of rockets and mortars into Israel-proper prior to and during the 2008-2009 Gaza War were perpetrated with clear policy objectives emanating from the leadership of various Palestinian militant organizations, chiefly Hamas. That is, violence carried out by Palestinians was not void of political purpose; in fact, it was saturated in politics. During the violence of 2000-2005, policy objectives permeated any bullet or rocket fired, any bomb detonated, any missile launched, any knife wielded, any act of lynching, or any other means or even threat of means of organized political violence.

### *Armed Rebellion*

An armed rebellion, which is a subset or type of war, is distinct and definable in that it is representative of a population or community seeking to alter the political power that resides over them, which *must* be underpinned by the use of force. The history of warfare contains thousands of examples, from antiquity to the present. From 2,380 B.C.E. in the Sumerian city of Lagash, to the Battle of the Bagradas; from Spartacus' Revolt during the Third Servile War to the countless rebellions in the Middle Ages in Europe, and to the most recent wave of rebellions in the Middle East in 2011. Even the attacks of 11 September 2001, while clear atrocities intentionally committed against non-combatant targets in New York City, government institutions in Washington D.C., and a failed attack that resulted in the downing of flight 93, were part of a larger conflict, an armed rebellion to be precise. Al-Qa'ida perceived itself as speaking for the Muslim downtrodden, and resultantly members rose up against what they perceived to be the forced political power over them. One of the many acts of their violent, albeit abhorrent, political expression occurred on 11 September 2001, which was executed against the Saudi regime's chief military ally. Removing the awesome psychological impact of 9/11 and examining the core, those attacks were no different from the attacks on Romans during Spartacus' three-year revolt; attacks by the Stern Gang (LEHI) against British targets in Mandated Palestine and abroad; or Palestinian attacks in Israel-proper, the Occupied or Disputed Territories (e.g. Judea and Samaria or "West Bank"), or trans-regional Palestinian attacks against Israeli interests. Between 2000-2005, this is precisely what the Palestinians were engaged in: organized political violence seeking to alter the political power that resided over them at that time and in that specific context.

### **Challenging Terminology**

#### *Intifada*

The violence between Israelis and Palestinians from 2000-2005 was an armed rebellion, which is to say that it was a type of war. However, the armed rebellion of 2000-2005 is most commonly known as the *al-Aqsa Intifada* or Second *Intifada*. In regards to the study of war and strategy, *Intifada* represents at best an unavailing term; at worst, it is irrelevant. Words matter and in the realm of life and death activity, *Intifada* offers no genuine worth to the student or practitioner of war and strategy. It has a connection to war and warfare only in that it has been adopted by the mainstream. Whereas other terminology, such as 'war' and 'armed rebellion' has resulted in the formulation of specific military doctrine, contain legal meanings, and are steeped in history,

*Intifada* offers none of these. In its literal translation, the term derives from the infinitive *nafada*: “shake off.” Therefore, *Intifada* is a verb that means, “to shake off.” It was first introduced with the outbreak of the “First Intifada” that began in late 1987, also an armed rebellion. One should not be confused into thinking *Intifada* is how armed rebellion is defined in Arabic. Armed rebellion in Arabic is translated as *Tamurud Muslah*. It is also not synonymous with armed conflict or war. In Arabic, armed conflict is *Ser`a Muslah* and war is *harb*.

In English, however, the violence of 2000-2005 should be viewed as an armed rebellion against an occupying power, which is, at root, war. As the eminent strategist and Professor Colin S. Gray has expressed, “The Intifada was war, which means it was politics, albeit war waged far along the spectrum of military to non-military means, privileging the latter, including suicide bombing as a prominent feature in the theatre of violence.”<sup>14</sup> Importantly, the responses by the IDF between 2000-2005, as will be shown, were specific responses to armed rebellion, or what the International Law Department (ILD) of the IDF deemed rather broadly as “armed conflict”.<sup>15</sup> The ILD’s use of “armed conflict” allotted the IDF a much freer hand in dealing with Palestinian militants. Nonetheless, almost every major study on the PAR utilizes the moniker *al-Aqsa Intifada* or Second *Intifada*.<sup>16</sup> One conclusion that can be drawn from writers choosing to utilize the term is that following the mass media’s widespread use of the word others adhered to it for the purposes of simplicity and conformity, similar to the use of “The Troubles” in Northern Ireland. Ultimately, the term *Intifada* has no inherent worth in the study of war and strategy.

### *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*

The 2000-2005 PAR has also been labeled an insurgency, which in essence is nothing more or less than an armed rebellion. That is all an insurgency is. However, at present, as is common with myriad terms in the realm of war studies, insurgency is riddled with definitional contestability. There was a point in history when the term “insurgency” and its counterpart, “counterinsurgency” carried very specific meanings; that is no longer the case. In the main, this is due to the adoption of “population-centric counterinsurgency” (POP-COIN) as is defined in the U.S. Army and Marine Corps Field Manual (FM 3-24) “Counterinsurgency”, which is official doctrine based off of very little historical evidence. Perhaps the one place where POP-COIN theory has succeeded is in forcing a state of near-uselessness on the very term insurgency itself. Yet, it has not only been claimed that the armed rebellion of 2000-2005 was an insurgency (and with it, COIN) but to add further to that complexity new subsets of insurgency have also been employed, all of which arguably stymie productive strategic thinking.

“Extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof” and no claim of the ‘PAR as insurgency’ (or any subset of insurgency) or ‘Israeli action as COIN’ holds up under scrutiny. For example, the PAR has been labeled a ‘low-intensity insurgency’, an erroneous description considering that the PAR was, in fact, an armed rebellion, and greatly differing from the “First *Intifada*” in 1987, the

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<sup>14</sup> Correspondence with Colin S. Gray. 20 December 2010.

<sup>15</sup> By utilizing “armed conflict”, and subsequently labeling the Palestinians militants as “combatants” allowed Israeli security forces greater flexibility in military methods that were to be used. Interview with former Head of IDF International Law Division, Col (Res) Daniel Reisner, Tel Aviv, Israel, 18 March 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Persons who have utilized the term *Intifada* are numerous. However, the major military studies on the PAR utilizing the term include, *inter alia*, the works of Ahron Bregman, Ami Pedahzur, Sergio Catignani, Anthony Cordesman, and T.X. Hammes.

PAR's tempo and intensity skyrocketed to the point where the death ratio became three Palestinian deaths for every one Israeli death, compared to 25:1 in the first armed rebellion.<sup>17</sup> Stones and Molotov cocktails were replaced with everything from suicide bombers, to snipers, IEDs, the use of automatic weapons, anti-tank rockets, mortars, and various other weapons. The PAR was anything but 'low-intensity'. In addition, it has been argued that Israeli military action during the PAR was that of counterinsurgency, a practice the Israeli military has not engaged in in at least 30 years.<sup>18</sup> Following the military occupation of Judea and Samaria in 1967 (presently the Disputed Territories or Occupied Territories), Israel did engage in various economic initiatives in an attempt to better the lives of the occupied, including financing economic development, which "by the end of 1970 Arab unemployment dropped from 12% to 3%."<sup>19</sup> Moreover, in 1972 more than 50,000 Palestinians crossed the so-called 'Green Line' every day for employment in Israel-proper and in 1973 nearly 15,000 Arabs "were working in local administration in the West Bank."<sup>20</sup> Economic policies initiated by Israel in the Territories were fairly successful, but only in the short-term in pacifying the Arabs in the Territories, which assisted in "detering the local population from aiding the guerrillas."<sup>21</sup> According to Beitler, "for the first few years of occupation, both the Israelis and Palestinians benefited from the economic policy. Agriculture improved, markets with Jordan remained open, and tourism to the Territories brought more money to local businesses."<sup>22</sup> Additionally, Israel's planning approach for the newly occupied areas in the late 1960s "was to initiate development for the future in the whole region for the local inhabitants, together with a gradual economic growth which might create an interrelationship with Israel's economy in many aspects."<sup>23</sup>

At the very latest, with the start of the first armed rebellion in 1987 — and even this is a generous estimate — came the end of the so-called strategy of "winning hearts and minds". This practice did not, in any way, shape, or form, reappear. That is the end of anything resembling Israeli COIN practices in the Territories and to suggest otherwise represents an inaccurate approach to Israel's strategic history regarding the Palestinians.

Notwithstanding, others continue to view the PAR through COIN lenses. For example, the 'PAR as insurgency' is found in the employment of a peculiar description, "terrorist insurgency", which is found in an Israeli-written monograph.<sup>24</sup> The monograph is only one of many examples of how and why deep confusion has entered into the realm of Israel and insurgency/COIN study,

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<sup>17</sup> Sergio Catignani, "The Strategic Impasse in Low-Intensity Conflicts: The Gap Between Israeli Counter-Insurgency Strategy and Tactics During the Al-Aqsa Intifada", *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Volume 28, Issue 1, February 2005, page 2. Statistics found in Steven R. David, "Fatal Choices: Israel's Policy of Targeted Killing," *Sadat-Begin Center for Strategic Studies*, ISSN 0793-1042, September 2002, page 5.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with senior analyst Colonel (Ret) Yonatan Fighe, *International Institute for Counter-Terrorism*, 20 July 2010 in Herzliya, Israel.

<sup>19</sup> Martin Gilbert, *The Routledge Atlas of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition, Found in "The West Bank Under Israeli Military Administration, 1967-", (Routledge: Abingdon, Oxon, 2008), page 74.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. Martin Gilbert, *The Routledge Atlas of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, page 74.

<sup>21</sup> Ruth Margolies Beitler, "The Intifada: Palestinian adaptation to Israeli counterinsurgency tactics." *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Volume 7, Number 2, page 54.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. Ruth Margolies Beitler, "The Intifada: Palestinian adaptation to Israeli counterinsurgency tactics." Page 54.

<sup>23</sup> Elisha Efrat, *The West Bank and Gaza Strip: A geography of occupation and disengagement*, Found in "First steps in the physical planning of the West Bank", (Routledge: Abingdon, Oxon: 2006), pages 23-24.

<sup>24</sup> Yaakov Amidror, "Winning Counterinsurgency War: The Israeli Experience", *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, 2007.

as well as studies on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in general.<sup>25</sup> In the monograph, a number of terms are utilized interchangeably and incorrectly to describe insurgency and COIN within the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, including an attempt at redefining the term “army.”<sup>26</sup> The monograph also defines an insurgency as a “general term for many types of asymmetric warfare, including terrorism”<sup>27</sup>. This is not accurate. An insurgency is an armed rebellion, not a type of warfare. Further, every war is asymmetrical and terrorism is a tool — an act of violence that breaks laws in a specific time and place. This is not pedantry; there is usefulness in questioning such statements. Moreover, the monograph states, “It would be preferable if the army would not term the fight against terror a ‘limited conflict’, but rather employ its proper name, ‘war on terrorism’, in the literal sense.”<sup>28</sup> As stated, words matter in the realm of life and death and the monograph seemingly suggests the engagement in a war against a word that can only exist as a legal definition. Rather, the monograph should have stated that Israeli force was utilized in order to counter violent actors that had risen up to alter the political power over them who engaged in the use of a number of violent means; terrorism is simply one of many tools that Palestinians utilized within a specific period of time, against a specific opponent, and within a specific geographical and geopolitical region.

In strategy circles, there are common assertions that the IDF does not “do” strategy, does not do strategy well, that Israel is strategically aimless, or even strategically inept. Rather, it is held that the IDF engages in and executes tactics exceptionally well. Much of this belief can be traced to deficiently Israeli-written studies on war and strategy. Other incorrect conclusions regarding Israeli strategy are drawn from other works, such as views regarding the IDF as counterinsurgents — a term that in no form fits the IDF.<sup>29</sup> In fact, there have been no useful publications on ‘the PAR as insurgency’ or Israeli military action as COIN. The reason, as can be deduced, is simply that the armed rebellion of 2000-2005 was not an insurgency — not in its current use of the word — and Israel’s military response in no way, shape, or form resembled COIN — also not in the current use and understanding of the word.

Plainly stated, the following were *not* elements of the PAR: the support of the population is always the focal point – the prize to be won, the hearts and minds (e.g. Palestinian noncombatants); the enemy (e.g. Palestinian militants) cannot be given the same level of importance as the population, which is to say that protecting the population takes precedence over breaking the will of the enemy; and so-called “stability operations” and nation-building (e.g. reconstruction, assistance in reforming electoral processes, and various socio-economic initiatives). In point of fact, and as unpleasant as it is to affirm, it is not “stability operations” but rather physical attrition, which offers the most effective means of bringing the peace, at least according to the history of warfare and in particular, according to the history of Israeli military action. In fact, one of the authors of FM 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* recently admitted that “the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid. Amidror, Yaakov.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Amidror. Page 6.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. Amidror. Page 6.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. Amidror. Page 9.

<sup>29</sup> Op. Cit. Sergio Catignani, “The Strategic Impasse in Low-Intensity Conflicts: The Gap Between Israeli Counter-Insurgency Strategy and Tactics During the Al-Aqsa Intifada.”

manual ‘overcorrected’ on the ‘kill-capture — drink-tea spectrum’” and that it “may lean a bit too heavily toward the tea drinking.”<sup>30</sup>

More importantly, physical attrition against an armed opponent in pursuit of peace is what the Israelis were attempting, not COIN in pursuit of a friendly population in the hopes of keeping the fish out of the sea. Rather, Israeli forces, for the most part, ignored the sea and went after the fish no matter where they were swimming. While there was never any intent to kill noncombatants, it must be noted that when they were killed it never undermined Israeli policy, at least not enough to alter the policy. Further, the Israelis were not in pursuit of a “battlefield decision in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict” as a result of Israel’s “strategic doctrine” being designed for “linear conventional threats”, as has been claimed.<sup>31</sup> “Strategic doctrine” does not exist because doctrine is what is taught, is normally connected to tactics and, as policy begets strategy, every new policy will require a new strategy. The term “linear”, for all intents and purposes, is an ostentatious way of referring to conventional threats posed by regular forces (e.g. so-called regular warfare). Yet, in point of fact, the IDF is rooted in irregularity and has always engaged, to varying degrees, in irregular forms of fighting. This is true for every war in which the IDF has ever participated since 1948. Irregular warfare is simply warfare differing from the conventional techniques of fighting in a specific space and time due to the differing actors involved. It is not, as is commonly viewed, warfare conducted by the weak against a stronger opponent or vice versa – there is nothing extraordinary and certainly nothing state or nonstate-centric about so-called “Fabian tactics”. Combatants in various theaters of armed conflict throughout the ages have engaged in “nonlinear warfare”. The reason is that it works.

Moreover, the Israelis have never given precedence to protecting Palestinian noncombatants over breaking the will of Palestinian militants to continue engaging in violence. Breaking the will of Palestinian militants through various strategies has always been the preeminent goal of the Government of Israel. The fact that Israelis do not engage in a “hearts and minds” strategy should itself be enough to render the ‘IDF action as COIN’ debate irrelevant. From 2000-2005, the only connection the IDF had to counterinsurgency is that the IDF countered insurgents by killing or capturing them.

Israeli security forces’ methods for countering Palestinian violence do not fit proposed models of counterinsurgency and Israel itself does not have a COIN model or COIN doctrine.<sup>32</sup> The fact that checkpoints, anti-riot activity, and military patrols and raids increased in number during the PAR has nothing to do with COIN. These are standard military operations. The same goes for the demolition of Palestinian homes. Even though house demolitions, arguably, produce a negative strategic effect, Israeli forces have been involved in house demolitions since the early 1950s, similar to British house demolitions against Palestinians in the 1920s, as well as against the Boers and the Irish. House demolitions can also be found in Arab military action during the First Arab-Israeli War; in the Qing Dynasty (for a variety of offenses); the Franco-Prussian War

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<sup>30</sup> Thomas Rid, “Trail Running with John Nagl”, *Kings of War*, 27 March 2011, <http://kingsofwar.org.uk/2011/03/trail-running-with-john-nagl/#comments>

<sup>31</sup> Op. Cit. Sergio Catignani, “The Strategic Impasse in Low-Intensity Conflicts: The Gap Between Israeli Counter-Insurgency Strategy and Tactics During the Al-Aqsa Intifada.”

<sup>32</sup> Examples include the Basilan Model, Diamond Model, Population-Centric COIN, which is at the center of the U.S. Army and Marine Corps Field Manual (FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency) and the SWORD model. None apply to Israeli security during the PAR or Gaza War.

(1870-1871); the Americans in Vietnam and the Soviets in Afghanistan; and Turkish forces against members of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). A strategy of demolition, even though it increased between 2000 and 2005, has no unique connection to insurgency and/or COIN and house demolitions represent the antithesis of winning hearts and minds. Ultimately, if there is no attempt to win hearts and minds, no socio-economic activities, and no focus on the population over the enemy, none of which existed during the PAR, then current counterinsurgency theory as applied to the PAR is as stable as a house of cards.

### *Terrorism/Counterterrorism*

This article does not attempt to cover or criticize the literature on the armed rebellion through terrorism/counterterrorism (CT) lenses. Simply put, the literature on this area of study is too vast. The objective is to explain what terrorism and CT represent. These explanations should make it clear why viewing the PAR as a ‘war on terrorism’ and/or Israeli military action solely as CT is incorrect.

Counterterrorism is a strategy in that it is representative of the use of instruments of state power conducted against those that utilize terrorism against the state. It is not a policy, as far too many have claimed but rather it must follow a wider policy set forth by a state and it must be able to be perpetrated in viable tactics. While CT can be taught in an academic setting, it cannot be divorced from the wider subject of warfare. The sheer volume of literature regarding the PAR and terrorism/CT is both numerous and widely varying in explanations — some such as Dr. Boaz Ganor and Professor Daniel Byman have written extremely authoritative, informative, and persuading works on Israeli CT in which they approach the issues more holistically; other writers have bordered on the vacuous.<sup>33</sup> Adding to this confusion are statements by counterterrorism experts that purport the Israeli government continues to lack an “unambiguous and official doctrine for countering terrorism.”<sup>34</sup> As previously stated, counterterrorism is a strategy. Strategy cannot have a doctrine, as it is that which bridges ends and means (policy and tactics) and customarily, doctrine refers to tactics. The misuse of critical terminology (e.g. “doctrine”) only adds confusion to an already complex subject.

Similar in how COIN subsequently emanates from the application of the term “insurgency”, so the inference of Israeli counter-action as counterterrorism (CT) follows the application of the terms “terrorism” and/or “terrorists” to armed Palestinian organizations. While viewing Israeli security as counterterrorists is to a degree understandable given the vast array of literature on the subject, this perspective poses issues. The reason, arguably, is that counterterrorism is not a subject that lends itself to clarity and guidance. First, “terrorism” is a term that can only exist as a legal definition. According to whichever definition a state holds terrorism to be, an act *of* terrorism is usually expressed by killing, maiming or the destruction of property, all being illegal activity. For example, in late 2000, following the eruption of the PAR, the Israeli military inquired about how to counter those rebelling. Prior to any strategic or tactical planning, the first move of top IDF officials was to approach lawyers at the International Law Department of the

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<sup>33</sup> Boaz Ganor, *The Counterterrorism Puzzle: A Guide for Decision-Makers*; Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services & The Struggle Against Terrorism*, (Columbia University Press: New York 2010); Daniel Byman, *A High Price: The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*; Amos Guiora, *Fundamentals of Counterterrorism*.

<sup>34</sup> Op. Cit. Pedahzur. Page 3.

IDF, not strategists or tactical design teams. More specifically, following the death of Dr. Thabet Thabet in the West Bank, it was lawyers such as Colonel Daniel Reisner that, on request from then-IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon, designed the legal outlines (a 'legal opinion') for what became known as Israel's strategy of targeted killings.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, when attacks were perpetrated, such as suicide attacks at nightclubs in Tel Aviv or sniping attacks on Israeli drivers, the areas where the activity occurred were not declared warzones or "terrorism zones" but rather crime scenes, similar to the town of Lockerbie and its surrounding areas after the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988 or even "Ground Zero" on 11 September 2001. In essence, that is what CT represents: criminal investigation. It cannot be anything else, as terrorism is an activity that breaks the law. Moreover, it can only be (or should only be) the criminal investigation process that seeks to kill, apprehend, and/or adjudicate those participating in or suspected of terrorism.

This leads to further issues, such as defining who is a terrorist and what precisely a terrorist organization is. A terrorist organization, the activities that it undertakes, and the partaking actors will be dependent on time, place, and jurisdiction, as terrorism is ultimately action that breaks the laws of specific states or territories. Therefore, a definition of terrorism can only apply within a specific time relevant to legislation and place relevant to jurisdiction. Interestingly, Israel does not have an official definition for terrorism but it does have a number of legislation regarding CT.

From an Israeli perspective, Palestinian militant activities were attempts to murder and maim Israelis and destroy infrastructure for the distribution and redistribution of political power — violence in pursuit of policy objectives. Israel's response was the killing, apprehending and/or adjudicating of those partaking, supporting or inciting in such illegal activity. CT, therefore, is best described as a strategy, rooted in criminal investigation, which utilizes a multitude of tactics in an attempt to counter illegal activity. It is not, despite countless arguments to the contrary, a way of countering a unique form of warfare. CT is simply strategy of a state that occurs within a wider armed conflict. The armed rebellion of 2000-2005 was that wider armed conflict.

## Conclusion

The date most often applied to the outbreak of the 2000-2005 Palestinian Armed Rebellion is 28 September 2000. It is true that violence did begin on that day. However, only days following the initial outbreak of violence, Palestinian militants began to use organized violence on a large scale as a means to reach their political objectives. More specifically, it was by 3 October 2000 that sniping and outright gun battles on settlers replaced large street demonstrations and assaults on various IDF posts and locations.<sup>36</sup> It was also on this date that Hamas declared this new spate of violence a "second *Intifada*", a declaration that no doubt revived deep emotional feelings amongst Palestinian society.<sup>37</sup> At the start of the rebellion, the Israelis were adhering to a strategy of restraint, a strategy that met a quick end by 10 October. Following an outbreak of

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<sup>35</sup> Interview with former Head of IDF International Law Division, Col (Res) Daniel Reisner, Tel Aviv, Israel, 18 March 2008. Also see, A.E. Stahl, "The Evolution of Israeli Targeted Operations: Consequences of the Thabet Thabet Operation", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Volume 33, Issue 2, 2010, Pages 111 – 133.

<sup>36</sup> Arie O'Sullivan, "How far can the Palestinians go?", *Jerusalem Post*, 3 October 2000

<sup>37</sup> Op. Cit. Lamia Lahoud.

gunfire in Hebron, Israel initiated a major incursion that included the use of tanks and bulldozers into the Gaza Strip. It marked the first time that the IDF “initiated offensive measures outside of its Gaza posts” by razing infrastructure from where gunfire was emanating: the Palestinian “Twin Towers”, a factory, and a Palestinian police station.<sup>38</sup> War — not something other than war — had begun.

The only element of counterinsurgency to be found during the PAR was the killing or capturing of militants. There was no “hearts and minds” strategy, as there were no hearts in mind. Further, the PAR was far more complex than the common “terrorism/counterterrorism” framework. In point of fact, it was a classic case of armed force against armed force — a five-year period comprised of acts of force intended to compel each side to the other’s political will.

The following five years would see Israel’s security apparatus using “force on a scale that only a few years earlier would have made its commanders shake their heads in disbelief.”<sup>39</sup> In an effort to counter Palestinian violence, with Hamas representing the chief threat, the Israelis utilized everything from F-16s, Apache combat gunships, drones, tanks, bulldozers, and even the navy. However, this was not iron-fisted military force against sticks and stones. These five years saw violence perpetrated by Palestinians on a scale that in turn shocked Israelis. Palestinian militants utilized American-manufactured M-16s, American-manufactured RPGs, IEDs, anti-tank missiles, high-end explosives, mortars, and variations of explosives for suicide attacks. In fact, by the time the 2008-2009 Gaza War broke out, Hamas had 81mm mortars<sup>40</sup> and according to other reports,<sup>41</sup> 4,000 RPGs, APCs (possibly BRDM-2s, which could be a variant) at least 120 tons of high explosives,<sup>42</sup> (possibly the S5K air-to-ground missiles<sup>43</sup> (though this specific model has not been confirmed), and it alleged that Hamas received MANPADS<sup>44</sup>

Ultimately, the violence of 2000-2005 was an armed rebellion, which is simply an age-old type of war. The warfare conducted within this period of violence is highly comparable to that found in the Soviet-Afghan War or the Vietnam War. This was not some simple “popular uprising”. This was warfare based on a section of a population seeking to alter the political power that resided over them in a specific space and time and it was fully underpinned by the use of force in order to reach policy objectives. This was a five-year period competition of political will carried out via armed force against armed force. In order to get perspective on the violence of 2000-

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<sup>38</sup> Amos Harel, “Skirmishes in territories continue over Yom Kippur”, *Haaretz Daily*, 10 October 2000.

<sup>39</sup> Martin van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive: A Critical History of the Israel Defense Force*, in Preface, (Public Affairs, 2002).

<sup>40</sup> Yossi Melman, “Robbing Sderot of defense from rockets”, *Haaretz*, 7 February 2010

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1147465.html>

<sup>41</sup> Tim Butcher, “Hamas fighters now a well-organised force”, *Telegraph*, 5 January 2009

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel/4127074/Hamas-fighters-now-a-well-organised-force.html>

<sup>42</sup> “Three more IDF soldiers killed in fighting in Gaza Strip”, *Haaretz*, 9 January 2009,

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1053805.html>

<sup>43</sup> Note, this is a possible unreliable source due to the inability to confirm certain aspects of the article: Tzi Ben Gidalyahu, “Hamas Terrorists Attack with Russian Anti-Tank Missiles”, *Israel National News*

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/134834>

<sup>44</sup> “Israel, Gaza: Heavier Fighting Around Gaza City”, *Stratfor Global Intelligence*, 11 January 2009; “To the report of possible MANPADs manufacture by terrorist organizations”, *Civil Research Council*, January-February 2006 <http://www.civilresearch.org/pdf/8.pdf>

2005, the armed rebellion must not be understood as something other than what it really was. Otherwise, one is subjected to great confusion to what is otherwise a conceptually straightforward contest of force between opponents.

*A.E. Stahl is the co-founder and publisher of the strategy magazine, Infinity Journal. He is a Research Fellow at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT, Israel) and a doctoral candidate in War Studies at King's College London.*

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