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- Israeli Arabs increasingly affiliate with the Palestinians and at the same time are undergoing a rapid increase of Islamization. This creates ripple effects between Israeli Arabs and Palestinians, both of whom have tapped into the regional Islamization to challenge the existence of Israel through terrorism. Thus the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has evolved from a territorial dispute to a religious-ideological one that is intractable.
- Most of Israel's Arab citizens are still seeking greater integration with the Israeli Jewish population. Although some Israeli Arab politicians vociferously oppose the idea that Israeli Arabs should participate in a national service program-in lieu of serving in the military-Israeli Arabs are volunteering to join. More than 70 percent of Israeli Arabs favor national service so as to gain equal footing with Israeli Jews and Druze, who serve in the army. However, countervailing trends draw parts of the Israeli Arab community away from Israel and toward some of its sharpest adversaries.
- Too often the international community focuses on the Palestinians without considering Israeli Arab elites' contributions to their decision-making process on policy toward Israel. Israeli Arab leaders are increasingly becoming involved in what would seem to be purely Palestinian affairs. A reason for Israeli Arab involvement in Palestinian affairs is that they perceive Israel's conflict with the Palestinians as an extension of their own conflict with Israel.
- Combined nationalist and religious trends have caused Israeli Arab spokesmen to seek to undermine Israel's identity, aiming for it to become a state of its citizens. Civil and economic disparities between Israeli Jews and Arabs can be overemphasized as a central cause of increased radicalization and Palestinianization. The radicalization appears to be a regional phenomenon and not unique to Israel.
- To mitigate the situation, Israel must embrace the concept of civil society and governance that accompanies an increasingly globalized world. This would serve a dual function: to create networks that offer alternative identities to the dominant Palestinian identity of Israeli Arabs, and to separate the Israeli Arab and Palestinian populations from one another.

The relations between the Israeli government and the Israeli Arab minority are undergoing a process of internationalization from what was traditionally a purely local affair. The issue is increasingly being transferred from the internal Israeli arena to the domain of international organizations where Israel is subject to criticism regarding its relationship with its Arab minority. This trend is facilitated by Israeli Arabs having become more vocal in their aspirations to cultivate a separate identity from the Jewish state. This demand is inextricably linked not simply to the aspirations of the Palestinians but also to Islamism, which is on the ascent in the region.

At the beginning of 2001, Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) reported that 18.7 percent of Israel's population, including East Jerusalem, was Palestinian ("Arab"). Muslim Arabs, excluding Bedouin, constitute about 70 percent of Israel's Arab population. They are not required to serve in the Israeli military.¹

Most of Israel's Arab citizens are still seeking greater integration with the Israeli Jewish population. Although some Israeli Arab politicians vociferously oppose the idea that Israeli Arabs should participate in a national service program-in lieu of serving in the military-Israeli Arabs are volunteering to join. Prof. Sammy Smooha, a sociologist at Haifa University, believes that according to new public opinion data, more than 70 percent of Israeli Arabs favor national service so as to gain equal footing with Israeli Jews and Druze, who serve in the army.²

However, countervailing trends draw parts of the Israeli Arab community away from Israel and toward some of its sharpest adversaries. Globalization and the Internet provide Israeli Arabs easy access to hostile propaganda. Sheikh Ra'ed Salah, a former mayor of the Israeli Arab town of Umm al-Fahem, now heads the northern branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel, essentially a local conduit for the worldwide Muslim Brotherhood. He exemplifies the changes that part of the Israeli Arab community is undergoing. He sits on the Board of Trustees of the Union of Good, an international Islamic charity that funds Hamas and is headed by Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi, spiritual head of the Brotherhood.³ It is now not uncommon to find Israeli Arab leaders visiting Lebanon or Syria to make contacts with other Islamist movements.

Despite the growing international links, Israel sees the issue of the Israeli Arabs' political-legal status as purely domestic. Even the PLO did not have a formal status as representing the Israeli Arabs during the Oslo process. During the 1999-2001 negotiations for a permanent status agreement, Israel asserted that the Israeli Arabs were citizens of the state and hence Israel was their sole representative.

More recently, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni said the future Palestinian state would provide a solution to Palestinians worldwide-

including Israeli Arabs-in terms of national expression.⁴ Although this is the best-case scenario, it does not consider alternatives that may better fit the context of globalization and networked identities.

Israeli Arabs increasingly affiliate with the Palestinians and at the same time are undergoing a rapid increase of Islamization. This creates ripple effects between Israeli Arabs and Palestinians, both of whom have tapped into the regional Islamization to challenge the existence of Israel through terrorism. Thus the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has evolved from a territorial dispute to a religious-ideological one that is intractable. Israel should seek to mitigate the sense of homogeneity between Israeli Arabs and Palestinians without reverting to long-held axioms that economic prosperity can resolve all tensions. The alternative is increased pressure by the international community to address Israeli Arabs' demands regarding Israel's Jewish identity. This would undoubtedly entail a public relations disaster for Israel.

There is an increasing trend within the international community toward recognizing the Israeli Arabs as a national minority with unique rights within Israel. Foreign diplomats have been meeting continuously with Israeli Arab representatives. In May 2005, the European Parliament held a discussion on the topic of Israeli Arabs and, at the instigation of the Mossawa organization, an Israeli Arab advocacy group, determined that the issue would be addressed in every EU political discussion with Israel.

In December 2004, the report of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network criticized Israel's relations with its Arab citizens. The Adalah organization, which also has published critical reports in this vein, has been recognized by the United Nations as an advisory organization that can participate in the Socio-Economic Council. The UN Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women questioned Israel about the rights of Israeli Arab women in April 2004. At the beginning of 2005, the Adalah organization presented this commission with an alternative report by NGOs working in Israel, which differed from those provided by Israel. Israeli Arab organizations have also sent two reports to the UN Commission for Human Rights, one regarding the Citizenship Law and another regarding the policies of the KKL (Jewish National Fund). The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination called for the annulment of the Citizenship Law.⁵

Formal Cross-Fertilization of Israeli Arab and Palestinian Identities

Israel has also been subjected to local pressure by Israeli Arab organizations who intend this pressure to be picked up by supranational bodies abroad. The "Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel," a document by the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee and the Committee of Arab Local Council Heads published in December 2006, manifests an increased sense of homogeneity among Israeli Arabs who number over one million, over 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza, over two million Palestinians in the West Bank, over a quarter of a million residents of East Jerusalem west of the separation fence, and millions of refugees in the Palestinian diaspora.

"Future Vision" defines Israel as an ethnocracy "trying to preserve the hegemony of the Jewish majority" and "the marginality of the Arab minority."⁶ The document also calls for a "consensual democracy" and participation in the government. These demands constitute a major attack on the foundations of the Jewish state since capitulating to them would entail a "binational state."⁷

The authors assert that Israel is severing "the link in identity between the Palestinian Arabs and the other parts of the Palestinian nation."⁸ Israel is also preventing "the maintenance of physical and spiritual ties with their *brothers* in Jerusalem, on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, and with the Palestinian refugees [in the diaspora]"⁹ (emphasis added). "Future Vision" mentions the unity of the Palestinian people and demands an end to the occupation and the establishment of a Palestinian state in the territories. Its main thrust, however, is recognition as a *national minority* since the Israeli Arabs are "the original natives of the country."¹⁰

Similarly, a proposed constitution written by the Israeli Arab advocacy center Adalah classified Israel as a "bilingual and multicultural" country rather than a Jewish state.¹¹ The proposal, titled "The Democratic Constitution," also calls for majority and minority groups to split control of the government in a way that will strengthen the Arab minority on issues relating to the character of the state. The document's motive in promoting Israel becoming a "state of its citizens" is that Israel should cease to be a Jewish state, which for Israeli Jews is its *raison d'être*.

To this end, Adalah's proposed constitution seeks to counter the Law of Return, which grants automatic citizenship to people with at least one Jewish grandparent. Instead the Israeli Arab leadership recommends that Israel grant citizenship for humanitarian reasons, regardless of religion. The document states that the "internal refugees"-Arab residents and their descendants expelled in 1948 and whose number is estimated at about a quarter of today's Israeli Arab citizens-will return to the area where they used to live and receive compensation. The introduction demands that Israel recognize its responsibility for the "historical injustices that it caused the Palestinian nation in its entirety,"¹² withdraw to the 1967 boundaries, and recognize the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

Adalah's document envisions that all official publications, court rulings, and media reports would be in both Hebrew and Arabic. Every cultural group, whether religious or ethnic, would be able to run its own institutions, and national minorities would choose their own representative body at the state's expense.

This grassroots pressure to erode Israel's Jewish identity is reinforced by statements of Arab Members of Knesset (MKs) who openly affiliate with the Palestinians. MK Ahmed Tibi declared, "I miss Yasser Arafat very much. I do miss his charisma, his power, leadership, his status as a symbol of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause, his pragmatism."¹³ Indeed, during the 1990s MK Tibi presented himself as an Arafat adviser. Similarly MK Azmi Bishara stated, "I am a Palestinian from Nazareth."¹⁴ Over the years numerous declarations by Arab MKs have demonstrated hostility to Israel's Jewish identity and sometimes have even been anti-Semitic in content.

In the recent war in Lebanon, Israeli security services suspected that MK Bishara went further by providing Hezbollah with intelligence information that would undermine the Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) operations. Furthermore, Bishara advised Hezbollah to "deepen the strike against Israel."¹⁵ This is not the only incident of Israeli Arabs being accused of treason. Another, Ra'ed Mazareb, was arrested for providing Hezbollah with detailed information as to where Katyusha rockets it fired had fallen as well as information about IDF troop movements. After the air force struck the Hezbollah stronghold of Dahiya, a neighborhood of Beirut, Mazareb gave information on the IDF's methodology of using blimps to locate targets.¹⁶

Ma'an'an Mohammed Khalaila, an Israeli Arab, was arrested for buying and transferring weapons to Hamas terrorists.¹⁷ Mohammed

Khalaf was convicted of aiding the enemy in wartime, contacting a foreign agent, and purchasing chemicals to aid Palestinian Authority (PA) terrorists in producing explosive devices.¹⁸ Four Israeli Arab men from the A-Ram neighborhood of Jerusalem were indicted for financially supporting terror organizations. They were accused of receiving at least 1 million NIS from the "Justice Fund," Hamas's Saudi-based financial wing, and transferring it to Hamas accounts in Jerusalem where it could be used to fund terror activity.¹⁹

Following the publication of the "Future Vision" document, Israel's General Security Service (GSS) chief Yuval Diskin was quoted as warning the Prime Minister's Office that Israeli Arabs were rapidly becoming a "strategic threat." The GSS report said the threat of Arab irredentism exceeded that of any external danger including Iran,²⁰ and that Israel's Arab population was a "genuine long-range danger to the Jewish character and very existence of the State of Israel."²¹

In 2005, the GSS identified a significant rise in Iranian attempts to recruit Israeli citizens as spies. The security establishment has dealt in recent years with cases of Israeli Arabs suspected of maintaining contacts with Iranian intelligence. Some of the Israeli Arabs worked in jobs in which they had access to sensitive information.²² Jaris Jaris, an Israeli Arab convicted of spying for Iran, had been recruited by Iran and was asked to use his political contacts to infiltrate the corridors of power by making efforts to be elected to the Knesset on the left-wing Meretz ticket.²³

Furthermore, the then GSS director Avi Dichter told the Israeli cabinet in 2004 that the Arab population in East Jerusalem "represents today the largest reservoir for terror attacks within the Green Line."²⁴ He noted that terror perpetrated by East Jerusalem Arabs shared the same ideological roots as terror attacks by Palestinians from the territories, the only difference being the logistical capability to act. Dichter said that 4 out of every 1,000 Arabs aged 17 to 45 in East Jerusalem were involved in terror.²⁵ In 2005, for instance, the GSS uncovered seventeen Israeli Arab terror cells involving twenty-two Arab citizens. In 2006, the respective numbers rose to twenty-one and twenty-four.²⁶ (In comparison, a Scotland Yard adviser estimated that 5-9 percent of British Muslims "proactively" supported suicide bombers.)

Similarly, Gideon Ezra, minister for internal security at the time, said: "Since September 2000 we have seen a significant connection, in terrorist attacks, between Arabs from the West Bank and Gaza and Israeli Arabs."²⁷ In 1999, two attacks were perpetrated by Israeli Arabs. In 2000, there were eight; by the Second Intifada in 2001 it had risen to thirty; and in 2002 the number jumped dramatically to seventy-seven. This trend reflected Israeli Arabs' increasing affiliation with the Palestinians.²⁸

For example, on September 9, 2001, an Israeli Arab citizen committed a suicide bombing against soldiers and civilians disembarking from a train in the Nahariya station, killing three and wounding ninety.²⁹ There have even been cases where Israeli Arabs have aligned themselves with global jihad after exposure to Islamist material on the Internet. Two Israeli Arabs from the town of Jaljulya in northern Israel were arrested for planning al-Qaeda-inspired attacks against Israeli military targets. The two had learned al-Qaeda philosophy from the Internet as well as how to produce an explosive device and had conducted several chemical experiments.³⁰

Traditional Nebulous Identities and Threats to Israel's Jewish Identity

Historically the Israeli Arabs have a nebulous overlap of four identities: Israeli, Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim. Their Israeli identity was short-lived, superficial, and subject to the geographic/national landscape they found themselves in. Thus during Israel's initial decades, Israeli Arabs attempted to assimilate into Israeli society merely because they were cut off from the rest of the Arab world. Even then the Israeli Arabs sought to cultivate a separate identity and wanted a separate educational curriculum in Arabic emphasizing Arab history, Arabic language, and Islamic religion.

After 1967, when the Green Line became more fluid in terms of access, the Israeli Arabs' psyche broadened to encompass that of the increasingly politically conscious Palestinians. The United Nations' recognition of the transnational PLO terrorist group in the 1970s contributed to further eroding Israeli Arabs' Israeli identity and increasing their affinity with the Palestinians.

Since 1976, Israeli Arabs within the Green Line have observed Land Day to commemorate four Israeli Arabs killed in that year while protesting Israeli expropriation of land in the Galilee. The phenomenon manifests conflicting pressures felt by Israeli Arabs who found themselves oscillating between the Israeli and Palestinian worlds. Land Day is also commemorated by Arabs in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza to identify with their Palestinian brethren in Israel, and is a homogenizing agent between these communities. In December 1987, at the start of the First Intifada in which rioting spread through Gaza and the West Bank, two PLO members, Mohammed and Majid Labani, sought to bring the disturbances to Jerusalem. They recruited and positioned activists throughout Jerusalem and initiated citywide riots.

Raphael Israeli has observed that the PLO's references to Land Day focus on "the resilience of our oppressed Palestinian people on both sides of the 'green line.'"³¹ This has clearly been a PLO attempt to foster homogeneity. The fundamental Palestinian documents view Israeli Arabs as a part of the Palestinian nation who are under Israeli control. The draft constitution of the Palestinian state implies that Israeli Arabs will have a political-judicial status in this state and the option to vote, be elected, and right to representation.

In 2000, a poll published by the Israeli daily *Yediot Ahronot* showed 66 percent of Israeli Arabs saying they would support the Palestinians in any confrontation with Israel, while only 13 percent would support their own country.³² Even before the Second Intifada, a 1999 survey by the Institute for Peace Research at Givat Haviva found only 32.8 percent of Israeli Arabs saying the description "Israeli" was "appropriate to their self-identity."³³

There were other notable trends as well. An Israel Democracy Institute (IDI) poll showed that 75 percent of "Israeli Arabs would support a constitution that maintained Israel's status as a Jewish and democratic state while guaranteeing equal rights for minorities."³⁴ The IDI hailed this as a huge success for the Israeli Arabs' integration even though there were implications of countervailing attitudes in the poll.

Although the majority of the Israeli Arabs still wrestle with the question of Israel's Jewish character, their Knesset representatives harbor a far deeper animosity toward the state's identity. Balad faction chair Jamal Zahalka stated that "in Balad we have always opposed the definition of Israel as a Jewish state."³⁵ Hadash's chairman MK Mohammed Barakeh said, "This is a new stage in our firm stand."³⁶ The Ta'al faction met with lead PA negotiator Ahmed Qureia and demanded that the PA not recognize Israel as a Jewish state.

Tawfiq al-Khatib, an MK and a leader of the Islamic Movement, declared during a religious dialogue with Israeli Jews that "there is a

precedent for Muslims accepting non-Muslim rule. But in Palestine, the Holy Land? Only Muslims can rule here."³⁷

West Bank Palestinians often reinforce Israeli Arabs' positions. The PLO is currently in a process of reorganization to include allocation of seats in the Palestinian National Council to Israeli Arab representatives so that it will encompass the entire Palestinian people. This in itself will intensify the growing affinity between Israeli Arabs and Palestinians. According to the draft agreement, the council will include 350 seats, 188 of which will be allocated to the "Palestinian Diaspora." Some of the latter will go to Israeli Arab representatives. It is yet unclear whether this representation will be full-fledged or merely symbolic.

Too often the international community focuses on the Palestinians without considering Israeli Arab elites' contributions to their decision-making process on policy toward Israel. Israeli Arab leaders are increasingly becoming involved in what would seem to be purely Palestinian affairs. Israeli Arab groups met in Cyprus with PA representatives, and Amir Makhoul, head of the Ittijah umbrella group of Israeli Arab organizations, called on the PA to include Israeli Arabs in any PA referendum on peace talks with Israel. "If there's going to be a Palestinian referendum, it has to be a collective referendum and include the Arabs in Israel, like every other part of the Palestinian people."³⁸

Representatives of the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee met PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas and asked him to create conditions for resuming talks between Fatah and Hamas.³⁹ Israeli Arab leaders' involvement in Palestinian policy matters extends to the diplomatic sphere with attempts to undermine the Bush administration's endeavor at conflict management. Amir Makhoul said Israeli Arab groups would warn Abbas that the PA should not discuss a permanent deal with Israel at this time, asserting that Abbas "is cut off from the Palestinian people and does not have the strength and support of the people."⁴⁰

Aims to undermine U.S. attempts at peacemaking are invariably linked to attempts to increase anti-Americanism among the Palestinians. To this effect, Balad decided to launch a campaign against the Middle East conference at Annapolis, Maryland. Party secretary Abad al-Fatah told the Hebrew website NFC, "The conference is an Israeli-American attempt to eliminate the Palestinian problem and get rid of its content."⁴¹ Al-Fatah charged, "The United States wants to cause a fight within the Arab community... Nothing will come out of the Annapolis conference, and the main damage will be the deepening of the disagreements in the Palestinian movement."⁴²

A reason for Israeli Arab involvement in Palestinian affairs is that they perceive Israel's conflict with the Palestinians as an extension of their own conflict with Israel. Similarly, Palestinian aspirations and concerns are synonymous with their own. This symbiotic relationship was summed up by Dr. Assad Ghanem, professor of political science at Haifa University. Ghanem was troubled that Abbas was cooperating with Israel and the United States by appearing to accept a "partial solution" for the millions of foreign Arabs claiming the "right of return." For Ghanem, if Abbas were to recognize Israel as a Jewish state "it would deal a serious blow to our chance to change the Israeli regime in the future, which is our aspiration."⁴³

Just as Israeli Arabs seek to erode Israel's Jewish identity, the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee sent a document expressing its refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish state to Abbas, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Arab governments, and international organizations.⁴⁴ Subsequently Abbas said to reporters in Saudi Arabia, "From a historical perspective, there are two states: Israel and Palestine. In Israel, there are Jews and others living there. This we are willing to recognize, nothing else."⁴⁵ Such statements impede progress in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Furthermore, often it is not merely Israeli Arabs who are conscious of the plight of their Palestinian brethren, but the latter who take initiatives and make declarations undermining Israeli identity on behalf of Israeli Arabs at their behest.

The Higher Arab Monitoring Committee has raised alternative strategies to counter Israel's Jewish identity. Whereas parties such as Balad believe the committee must express a principled disapproval of such a definition,⁴⁶ the Hadash party seeks to express its disapproval in the context of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Thus when the international community pursues Israeli-Palestinian peace initiatives, it must bear in mind that intractable Palestinian positions can stem from the influence of Israeli Arab MKs. It will not be long before these MKs wish to be included in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. A recent position paper of the Reut Institute even warned that a change in Israeli Arab public opinion could limit the PA representatives in negotiating with Israel. Thus it prescribed that Israel incorporate Arab citizens in its negotiations with the PA and PLO.

But that is harder to do when a correlation exists between increased levels of Islamization among Israeli Arabs and their hostility to Israel's Jewish character. A Tel Aviv University workshop revealed that "in the past 15 years, the number of mosques in Israel has increased four and a half times, from 80 in 1988 to 363 in 2003."⁴⁷ During this time the Arab population has increased only by one and a half times, indicating that the Islamization of Israel's Arab population grew 300 percent.⁴⁸ Muslim Israelis have the highest birthrate of any group: 4.0 children per woman as opposed to 2.7 for Jewish Israelis, a natural reproduction rate of 3 percent compared to 1.5 percent. Around 25 percent of the children born in Israel today are Muslim.⁴⁹ The Muslim population is mostly young: 42 percent of Muslims are children under the age of 15, compared to 26 percent of the Jewish population. The median age of Muslim Israelis is 18; that of Jewish Israelis is 30. The percentage of people over 65 is less than 3 percent for Muslims compared to 12 percent for the Jewish population.⁵⁰

According to forecasts, the Muslim population will grow to over two million, or 24-26 percent of the population within the next fifteen years. They also will constitute 85 percent of the Israeli Arab population in 2020 (up 3 percent from 2005).⁵¹

Similar to Islamists who seek to establish a caliphate that will liberate the masses from corrupt secular leadership, the Palestinians apply this model to Israel's Jewish identity. Thus the PA aims that Palestinian self-determination and nationhood should both reflect and contribute to the attempt to foster a wider Islamist upheaval in the Arab world. Both Fatah and Hamas have tapped into the Islamist revival across the Muslim world and shown increased willingness to utilize its symbols. In classical jihadist sloganizing, Abbas has continuously identified with the courage displayed by "martyrs" whether in his election campaign or his willingness to extend financial support to their families. In his election campaign Abbas prayed, "Mercy on the souls of all the martyrs. Mercy on the soul of Marwan Zaloum,"⁵² the Hebron leader of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades who was killed by Israeli forces in April 2002. Israel held him responsible for a suicide bombing and shooting attacks.

In line with Abbas's statements, Hamas's manifesto advocates an Islamic state in the entire territory of "Palestine."

The Relationship between Two Trends

The tensions between the Israeli Arab and Israeli Jewish cultures were largely concealed during the Oslo process. Zionism has consistently been anathema to Israeli Arabs. MK Tibi stated, "...we are not loyal to the Zionist ideology. We are victims of Zionism and the Zionist ideology, mainly the confiscation of lands from Arabs in 1948, and after that, giving it to Jews. That is to say no, we are not loyal to the ideology."⁵³

At pivotal moments of crisis, Arab-Jewish tensions within Israel have surfaced anew. Examples abound including the riots after the Second Intifada began in September 2000, and the current Israeli construction work around the Mughrabi Gate. This led recently to an inflammatory statement by Sheikh Ra'ed Salah that "the time has come...to start an Islamic Muslim Intifada...in support of Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque."⁵⁴

In the late 1980s, the Israeli Arabs' Islamist affiliation was more subtle. The Mufti of Jerusalem would call upon the people to show "resilience." More recently the Islamist declarations by Israeli Arab leaders have become even more overt and brazen. Salah has warned supporters that Israel poses a heightened threat every day to the Al-Aqsa Mosque-Islam's third holiest. He has confidently pronounced that Israel "will not survive another 20 years"⁵⁵ and Jerusalem will soon be transformed into the world capital of Islam. In 2003, Salah was arrested on suspicion of raising millions of dollars for Hamas.

Prof. Elie Rekhess, director of the Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Studies at Tel Aviv University, remarked, "If there were a poll run today to establish who is the most popular leader in Israel, he would be up there....He certainly sees political Islam as a major factor in the formulation in the coming years in Israel, and he sees his party as having a strong say."⁵⁶ Sheikh Kamal Khatib, second in command to Salah, expressed his aspiration that Israel would soon be replaced by an Arab state run by shari'a law as part of a greater Islamic caliphate. He asserted, "We are on the threshold of a new stage," and "the future belongs to Islam and the Muslims."⁵⁷

Already a government member who is an Israeli Arab expresses radical views based on religious affiliations. Culture Minister Ghaleb Majadele told the Knesset that Israel's Antiquities Law did not apply on the Temple Mount because "between my religion and the considerations of a minister, the consideration of my religion and my nationality takes precedence."⁵⁸

Although this is not a novel development for Arab MKs, Majadele represents the moderate fringe of the Israeli Arab community. Whereas the overwhelming majority of Israeli Arabs vote for sectoral Arab parties, Majadele belongs to Labor, one of the main Zionist parties.

Issues Affecting the Israeli Arabs

Combined nationalist and religious trends have caused Israeli Arab spokesmen to seek to undermine Israel's identity, aiming for it to become a state of its citizens. Civil and economic disparities between Israeli Jews and Arabs can be overemphasized as a central cause of increased radicalization and Palestinianization. There is no direct causal relationship between those trends and a lack of representation in the administrative and public organs of the state. The radicalization appears to be a regional phenomenon and not unique to Israel despite the charges of the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee and the Committee of Arab Local Council Heads.

It is also reasonable to view the Palestinianization within the Green Line as a symptom of regional Islamization. There is no empirical evidence that this trend could be ameliorated by granting the Israeli Arab population a sense of effective representation in state administrative and public organizations. Promoting such policies in an attempt to reduce Israeli Arab radicalization would be merely speculative. It is in Israel's interest to adopt the *regional-macro approach* of the Bush doctrine that advocated promoting democracy and liberty throughout the Middle East rather than a symptomatic, *state-micro approach* to Islamization among Palestinians and the violence generated by an autocratic PA. This symptomatic approach has accompanied a vision of statehood that has continuously eluded the Palestinians because of their own unwillingness to foster the infrastructure and civil society that come with a democratic mindset. The United States' regional approach would consider the increased claims of discrimination as *symptomatic of broader, macro-regional dynamics* whereby authoritarian regimes seek to undermine economically liberal and democratically stable states.

It is commonly suggested that there is a correlation between poverty and radicalization. Infrastructure Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer considers that the government's continued neglect of Israeli Arabs may lead to an "internal intifada" or rebellion against Israel.⁵⁹ Although it is important to have an infrastructure plan for a minority, there is no evidence that this would quell nationalist or Islamist trends among Israeli Arabs. Samuel Huntington maintains that increased affluence of a group can lead to resurgent cultural and religious affiliation. Examples include the movement of Iranian populace from rural to urban areas leading to heightened Islamization. It is also important to remember that the 9/11 perpetrators did not come from impoverished backgrounds but rather from upper-middle-class and even affluent ones.

Despite the high poverty levels among Israeli Arabs relative to Israeli Jews, a recent research by Sikui, an NGO dedicated to advancing Israeli Arabs, found that Arabs as a group have the highest home ownership in Israel: 92.6 percent compared to 70 percent among Jews.⁶⁰ "Israeli Arabs are also relatively much better off economically than neighboring Arabs."⁶¹ Thus, rather than having a mitigating effect, unduly emphasizing Israeli Arabs' economic predicament can reinforce the nexus between Palestinianization and Islamization. Instead economic and financial incentives should be used to *facilitate* an approach that focuses on cultural separation between Israeli Arabs and Palestinians along with reconciliation between Israeli Arabs and Israeli Jews.

Focusing on Israeli Arabs' Distinct Identity

To maintain Israel's identity as a Jewish state, Israel has traditionally rightfully refused to recognize the Israeli Arabs as a national minority possessing collective rights apart from specific cases such as in the education system. This educational approach allowed for the potential of Israeli Arabs cultivating a separate national identity. This, in turn, fostered among Israeli Arabs a sense of being peripheral, and a cultural attitude that sometimes was the antithesis of the values Israel sought to embody.

To remedy this, Israel must not merely monitor the formal educational curriculum. Israel must also be attentive to mosque sermons and a myriad other sources of information and opinion, especially since Israeli Arabs' information sources often resemble the culture permeating the Arab and Islamic world. An example is the politicization of the Holocaust through its denial. A poll by Prof. Smootha revealed that 28 percent of Israel's Arab citizens deny the Holocaust's occurrence. Among high school and college graduates the figure is 33 percent.⁶² Smootha suggested that through denying the Holocaust, many Israeli Arabs understand that they are

expressing opposition to Israel's existence.

Future Israeli educational policies toward the Israeli Arab minority should emphasize the Israeli Arabs' distinct features from the Palestinians. Such a curriculum would also promote an interpretation of Islam that is consonant with a Jewish state whose religious identity is complemented by its democratic features. This novel Islamic approach would differ from its radical variants that currently exploit the Palestinian issue and bind Palestinians and Israeli Arabs together. This trend is gaining regional preponderance. The status quo between Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs would be reinforced if both were to include in their educational curriculum a greater emphasis on their mutual histories, cultures, and religious ethos. This would mean focusing on how an Islamic culture can complement the state's Jewish features and how the dominant identity of the state can advance an Israeli Arab variant of Islam.

Israeli Arabs, the Palestinians, External Arab Governments, and Domestic Affairs

The rise of Hamas and even al-Qaeda in the Palestinian territories and Israel was in part due to the new mode of transnational conflict. This has been sponsored by Iran and its proxies, Hezbollah and Hamas, vis-à-vis the Palestinian political discourse and, in turn, the Palestinian populace.⁶³ This Islamist trend was facilitated by Palestinian disillusionment engendered by the systemic corruption of Fatah. Invariably, this was a factor contributing to the Islamization of Palestinians, making the old paradigm of conflict management centering on territorial grievances obsolete. In turn, this has affected the Israeli Arabs. External Arab and Islamic governments such as Syria and Iran, which sponsor wider religious radicalization in the region, are providing financial and logistical support to the religious radicalization of the PA.

The regional Islamist trend poses an enormous challenge to Israeli democracy. Sheikh Ibrahim Sarsour was reported to have supported the eventual establishment of a worldwide caliphate that would by definition lead to the replacement of Israel with an Islamic government. Yet Sarsour sought to run for the Knesset in the March 2006 elections. He subsequently argued that he was misquoted, and the Central Elections Committee permitted his list to participate.

The Sarsour case illustrates, however, that the Western democracies must not acquiesce to the participation of movements that seek their ultimate overthrow. Ironically, both Israel and the UK permit the procaliphate party Hizb ut-Tahrir to operate openly even though Pakistan, Jordan, and Egypt have banned it as a potentially violent threat. Some in Israel may have trouble realizing that it will have to disqualify radical Islamist movements from taking advantage of Israel's democracy. But Israel's readiness to set such clear red lines will help stem the radicalization process and support the solidification of civil society.

Civil society, with its stress on voluntary, noncoercive participation in pluralistic social institutions, is a prerequisite for democratic participation. The concept of civil society has traditionally been found primarily in European political discourse. The United States has only recently adopted this approach; whereas the 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy made no mention of promoting civil society, the 2006 version included the concept. Thus having entered the mainstream policy discourse, the international community should shift its focus to fostering a decentralized civil society among the Palestinians and Israeli Arabs that could lead to decreased religious radicalization.

It would be important to separate and duplicate the networks of governance and civil society for Israeli Arabs so as to mitigate the increasing homogeneity between Israeli Arab and Palestinian political movements. This would decrease Palestinianization among Israeli Arabs as the Palestinian identity would not be centralized but would become more diffused and incoherent thanks to the numerous cross-societal organizations that could be fostered. These could range from being career based to trade unions that could facilitate their greater integration within Israel's workforce. This would also link them with their Israeli counterparts and create a greater affinity between different sectors of Israeli society. Similarly, a woman who is involved with an NGO that deals with women's rights will have greater affinity with those of her gender who are both Jewish and Israeli Arab rather than affiliating with Palestinian nationalism and Islamism.

In turn, the Islamist/Palestinian-identifying Israeli Arab leadership could be diluted by the emergence of cross-societal civil institutions, strengthening moderate leadership among Israeli Arabs.

As noted, in attempting to cultivate civil society among Israeli Arabs it has been proposed that, given their exemption from military service, they would participate in an Israeli national service program. Israeli Arabs would volunteer in hospitals, community centers, drug rehabilitation centers, schools, clinics, and so on. By promoting Israeli Arabs' integration into Israeli society, this could facilitate the growth of a civil society that is disconnected from Palestinian society as the consciousness of Israeli Arabs could shift to more social issues such as gender and occupational matters at the expense of a Palestinian nationalist identity.

Identifying with Palestinian nationalism is currently the sole alternative for Israeli Arabs identifying with the Jewish state of Israel. Israeli Arab community leaders have recently informed Ruhama Avraham, the minister in charge of the celebrations for Israel's sixtieth anniversary, that they are planning to boycott the events planned for the Arab sector. Furthermore, the Israeli Arab leadership does not merely feel alienated but actively flirts with subversive rhetoric. Sheikh Salah and MK Zahalka held a rally threatening Arabs who agree to take part in any Israeli national service that they "will be treated like a leper, and will be vomited out of Arab society."⁶⁴ Salah said, "More than anything, I fear that national service will cause internal strife among Israeli Palestinians that could eventually destroy our community."⁶⁵

Similarly, Sheikh Abdullah Nimr Darwish, founder of Israel's Islamic Movement, said Israeli Arabs would never agree to national service because it would call into question their loyalty to the Palestinian cause. He continued, "Any type of national service, no matter what it is, would be perceived by the Palestinian people as military service."⁶⁶ "He [the Israeli Arab who volunteers for National Service] would be seen as an enemy to the Palestinian people."⁶⁷ "To prove his loyalty to the Palestinian cause, he would be forced to join the Palestinian resistance movement against Israel."⁶⁸

Nevertheless, Prof. Smootha pointed out that for some Arabs national service offers a kind of "escape hatch" from the Arab villages, enabling them to form ties with society in general and enabling young Arab women to achieve gender equality.⁶⁹ Thus despite the opposition voiced by Israeli Arab leaders, the National-Civilian Service Administration noted that the number of Arab youths who volunteered for national service in 2007 was double that of the previous year. By the end of October some six hundred Arabs had volunteered for it compared to around half that number in all of 2006.⁷⁰

Another factor working in Israel's favor is the Israeli Arab reaction to the chaos and corruption reigning in the PA. Although the 1995

Oslo II Interim Agreement allowed East Jerusalem Palestinians to vote in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections, their actual turnout has been small. More recently, East Jerusalem Palestinians have strongly opposed suggestions that Palestinian neighborhoods in Jerusalem be turned over to the PA. Concurrently there has been a sharp increase in the number of East Jerusalem Palestinians seeking Israeli citizenship. There has also been strong Israeli Arab opposition to the suggestion that Arab villages in the Triangle area be turned over to Palestinian jurisdiction. Indeed, a poll of Israeli Arabs in late 2007 found 78 percent opposing the idea.⁷¹ In short, Israel may not have to make a great effort to draw the Israeli Arabs away from Palestinianization.

Finally, the "juridical wall approach" of creating a disassociation between Israeli Arabs and Palestinian political actors can be reinforced by counteracting the fluidity of borders that has in the past led to increased migration and intermarriage between the Palestinian and Israeli Arab communities. The cultural affinity of Israeli Arabs with Palestinians that threatens Israel's dominant identity is complemented by the demographic reality on the ground. In March 2002 it was reported that 153,000 Palestinians had already illegally moved into Israel: seventy thousand into Jerusalem, seventy thousand into the Little Triangle area, and thirteen thousand into the southern Bedouin communities.⁷²

In March 2003 it was reported that since the Oslo signing in 1993, more than one hundred thousand Palestinians had received citizenship.⁷³ The then interior minister Eli Yishai cited "security" grounds for the decision to pass the marriage law in 2003 that canceled the automatic citizenship hitherto accorded Palestinian spouses of Israeli citizens but not foreigners marrying Israelis.⁷⁴ This has resulted in increased Palestinianization among Israeli Arabs. Ensuring that the two economies are not inextricably linked, and that Israeli Arabs constitute a separate constituency from the Palestinians, increases the likelihood that occurrences among one grouping will not resonate with the other. One important by-product of the West Bank security fence will be to halt this unregulated flow of Palestinians to the Israeli Arab sector and their resulting impact on the Palestinianization of Israeli Arab identity.

Israeli Considerations when Responding to the Multilateral Bodies

Reinforcing the security fence's separating the two populations, Israel must openly declare a strategy to provide Israeli Arabs civic and economic equality along with equality of opportunity. It must be made clear, however, that the growing unrest among Israeli Arabs is symptomatic of deeper subcurrents of Islamization in the Palestinian territories and the region at large. Supranational bodies must address this issue within the context of the Bush administration's approach of democracy promotion. At present, however, Israel's political establishment is mistakenly treating the Israeli Arab issue as separate from the region's Islamization.

A hierarchy of agenda setting must be established. The Defense Ministry can primarily provide the overall framework of what ultimately will constitute Israel's national security aims. The Foreign Ministry would function as the Defense Ministry's executor by expressing to the multilateral bodies such as the United Nations and the European Union that Israeli Arabs' increased Islamization not only challenges Israel's Jewish character but also its Western, democratic character. The Foreign Ministry would demand that the multilateral bodies take a regional approach to counter the causes of Islamization among Israeli Arabs and Palestinians. This can be complemented by a lower layer of cooperation between the education and communication ministries on crafting an effective educational curriculum that can help foster a more generic cultural milieu.

Ultimately the process of actively challenging Israel's Jewish identity is likely to continue even after the establishment of a Palestinian state and the signing of a permanent status agreement. The Palestinian Phased Plan is likely to include using Israel's Arab citizens as a proxy to continue the struggle against Israel. Given the Islamist aim of annihilating Israel, third parties such as Iran, Syria, and groups such as Hezbollah and al-Qaeda are likely to use Israeli Arabs as an ongoing subversive presence in Israel regardless of the establishment of a Palestinian state. Ironically, Israeli Arabs undermine the potential for the Palestinians to create a state by intervening in their policy processes and ensuring that the PA will make impossible demands like the "right of return" and refuse to recognize Israel as a Jewish state.

To mitigate these eventualities, Israel must embrace the concept of civil society and governance that accompanies an increasingly globalized world. This would serve a dual function: to create networks that offer alternative identities to the dominant Palestinian identity of Israeli Arabs, and to separate the Israeli Arab and Palestinian populations from one another. Furthermore, in the international community's aspiration to establish a Palestinian state, it is irresponsible for the endless rounds of shuttle diplomacy conducted by the United States to ignore the Israeli Arabs' current alignment with the Palestinians and the reciprocal impacts.⁷⁵ This alignment creates negative ripple effects that both sectors generate, in turn enhancing vulnerability to Islamism.

* * *

Notes

1. "Table B/1.-Population, by Population Group," *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, vol. 52, April 2001,

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4. Yoav Stern, "FM Livni's Remark on Palestinian State Angers Arab MKs," *Haaretz*, November 19, 2007.

5. All these examples have been cited in Reut Institute, "Internationalization of the Issue of Israeli Arabs," June 14, 2005, <http://reut-institute.org/Publication.aspx?PublicationId=535>.

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7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Yoav Stern, "Israeli Arab Group Proposes New 'Multi-Cultural' Constitution," *Haaretz*, February 28, 2007.
12. Ibid.
13. "Q&A with MK Ahmed Tibi," *Jerusalem Post*, November 5, 2007. On December 26, 2007, thousands of Israeli-Arab university students at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan, and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Beersheva openly affiliated with Palestinian nationalism by commemorating Keffiyeh Day, the third anniversary of Arafat's death, by demanding national rights. The students held large demonstrations that bore the motto: "We Demand Recognition as a National Minority in Israel." Hillel Fendel, "Israeli-Arab Students Commemorate Arafat's Death," *IsraelNationalNews.com*, December 23, 2007.
14. Azmi Bishara, "Why Israel Is after Me," *Los Angeles Times*, May 4, 2007.
15. Reflecting former MK Azmi Bishara's identification with Hizbullah and the Palestinians, a poll conducted by the Berl Katznelson Fund's Educational-Ideological Center revealed that 56 percent of Israeli Arabs did not want former MK Azmi Bishara to be put on trial. Only 13 percent wanted to see Bishara tried, and 31 percent had no opinion. "Most Israeli Arabs Oppose Bishara Trial," *IsraelNationalNews.com*, June 22, 2007. Resembling the attitudes of Israeli Arabs, both Hamas and Hizbullah issued statements in support of Bishara.
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17. "Israeli Arab Bought Weapons for Hamas Terrorists," *IsraelNationalNews.com*, August 13, 2007.
18. "Israeli Arab Citizen Sentenced for Treason," *IsraelNationalNews.com*, September 11, 2007.
19. "Arab Israelis Indicted for Funneling Money to Hamas," *IsraelNationalNews.com*, June 18, 2007.
20. "Israeli Intel Terms Israeli Arabs a Greater Strategic Threat than Iran," *World Tribune.com*, March 21, 2007.
21. Hillel Fendel, "GSS: Israeli Arabs Are Existential Danger to Israel," *Israel National News.com*, November 12, 2007.
22. "Israeli Arab Convicted as Iranian spy" *Jerusalem Post*, November 21, 2006.
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31. Rafi Israeli, "The Arabs in Israel: A Surging New Identity," *Jerusalem Letter*, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, January 1, 1989.
32. Cited by Eric Rozenman, "Today's Arab Israelis, Tomorrow's Israel," *Policy Review Online*, no. 106, April-May 2001, <http://www.policyreview.org/APR01/rozenman.html>.
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35. Israel Harel, "They Have Crossed All the Lines," *Haaretz*, November 22, 2007.
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37. Yossi Klein Halevi, "Who Is a Muslim?" *Jerusalem Report*, September 14, 1998.
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41. "Arab MKs Call for Anti-Annapolis Conference," *IsraelNationalNews.com*, October 23, 2007.
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63. The relationship between the Palestinianization and Islamization of Israeli Arabs is reinforced by regional trends of increasing Islamism. It is no coincidence that Zawahiri's promotion of Islamism was accompanied by declaring, "there is no cause more mobilizing than Palestine which is a rallying point for all Arabs whether or not they are believers." Ayman al-Zawahiri, "Knights Under the Prophet's Banner," *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 2001.
64. It has recently been proposed to provide an alternative national service in place of military service for Israel's Arabs. Currently many Bedouin and Druze Arabs serve in the IDF, but Muslim Arabs have never been required to do so. See Ezra HaLevi, "Israeli Arab Leaders Warn against National Service," *IsraelNationalNews.com*, December 23, 2007.
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66. Matthew Wagner, "Darwish: Israeli Arabs Won't Do Civil Service," *Jerusalem Post*, December 17, 2007.
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69. Yuval Azoulay, "Number of Israeli Arab National Service Volunteers Doubles," *Haaretz*, December 20, 2007.
70. There are currently a total of some twelve thousand volunteers in the national service, most of them women.
71. Daniel Pipes, "The Hell of Israel Is Better than the Paradise of Arafat," *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2005; Daniel Pipes, "Palestinians Who Prefer Israel," *Jerusalem Post*, January 2, 2008.
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73. Justin Huggler, "Palestinian-Israeli Couples Will Be Forced to Leave or Live Apart," *The Independent*, August 1, 2003.
74. Jonathan Cook, "Israel's 'Demographic Demon in Court,'" *Middle East Report Online*, June 1, 2006, <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero060106.html>.
75. Ripple effects between groups are more discernable in the globalized reality of the information age where networks are formed between constituencies and interest groups at ever-increasing momentums. While geostrategy is all too aware of the way in which transnational terrorism exploited globalization, policymakers often overlook the way in which conflict-management measures

advanced between Israel and the Palestinians are often influenced by Israeli Arabs and have regional repercussions. In this manner policy is approached through a prism of a preglobalized world where relations were not networked to the degree they are today.

* * *

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