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NATO: peacekeeping in the Holy Land? A feasibility study

by Florence GAUB¹

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In 2000, President Clinton suggested the presence of an international force to oversee security following an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement². This could be a NATO force, according to Thomas Friedman. His idea was revived in 2008 by President Obama's National Security Advisor James Jones³. The suggestion of a NATO presence in the Middle East sparked a debate that up to now has revolved around a multitude of aspects: the pros and cons, the timing, the actors of such a NATO involvement⁴, the possible preconditions and consequences, and has also triggered a debate in Germany on whether the conduct of patrols in the vicinity of Israel would be reconcilable with Germany's past⁵. However, practical questions of feasibility, campaign objectives and security implications were never raised, as if these issues would solve themselves once the missing peace agreement was on the table. But things are not as simple as that, and as Afghanistan has taught us, securing a possibly hostile area, separating antagonists and building a

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² PLO Negotiations Affairs Department, "The Clinton Parameters", http://www.nad-plo.org/inner.php?view=nego_nego_clinton_nclintonp&title=Security

³ Thomas L. Friedman, "How About Sending NATO Somewhere Important?", *New York Times*, September 4, 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/04/opinion/foreign-affairs-how-about-sending-nato-somewhere-important.html>; Kevin Peraino, "NATO in the West Bank", *Newsweek*, December 6, 2008, <http://www.newsweek.com/id/172638>

⁴ Robert Kagan, "Can NATO Patrol Palestine?", *Washington Post*, April 18, 2002, <http://www.newamericancentury.org/kagan-041802.htm>; Amir Oren, "Divided they stand", *Haaretz*, December 3, 2006, http://www.nato.int/med-dial/articles/english/2006/061203_en_riga_israel_haaretz.pdf; Robert Dreyfuss, "NATO in Palestine? Not A Good Idea", *The Nation*, December 17, 2008, http://www.thenation.com/blogs/dreyfuss/390581/nato_in_palestine_not_a_good_idea. Ted Galen Carpenter, "NATO's West Bank Nightmare", *National Interest*, February 20, 2008.

⁵ Zeit Online: Nahost-Konflikt: Deutsche Soldaten für Gaza-Friedenstruppe? January 8, 2009, <http://www.zeit.de/online/2009/02/gaza-deutsche-soldaten>



Source: http://amideastchangeofcourse.org/482px-Palestine_Map_2007.gif

state are businesses that NATO is still learning about. This paper argues that such a mission would struggle to be successful, and is very likely to fail. Although the idea is attractive to some who would like to prove NATO's global peace-enforcing capacity, the chances are that this endeavour would turn bad and tarnish NATO's image in more ways than one. NATO is not currently ready to take on this kind of mission, and might never be.

Careful analysis of its implications for a possible NATO stabilisation force in Palestine (excluding possible engagements on the Golan or in Lebanon, because they would go beyond the scope of this paper) – since, as the fol-

lowing analysis argues, a mere peacekeeping force will not do - is crucial for success; misunderstandings and badly drawn conclusions can be catastrophic. Thus, this paper attempts to shed light on the operational feasibility (not to say dangers) of such a mission, and whether it can be accomplished with a reasonable number of troops in a reasonable timeframe, and comes to a negative conclusion. On the assumption that success would be the only option if NATO wants to get involved in the resolution of a conflict that is older than itself, the analysis focuses on the operational rather than political feasibility. The reason for this is not disregard for the political aspects, which are obviously crucial: the purpose of this paper is an operational one, and there are already numerous publications covering the political framework of peace in the Middle East.

THE BEST THINGS COME IN THREES: PRECONDITIONS TO FULFILL

In January 2009 the former NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer reiterated that three preconditions would have to be fulfilled before even thinking about a role for NATO in Palestine. These are a comprehensive peace agreement, the consent of the parties and a UN mandate - not to mention NATO consensus⁶. While it is true that the prospects are bleak that these conditions might be fulfilled anytime soon, or ever, it is nonetheless valid to take the discussion a step further and picture a situation in which they are fulfilled and NATO accepts such a mission. What would this situation look like?

⁶ Speech by NATO Secretary General at an event jointly organized by the Institute for National Security Studies and the Atlantic Forum of Israel, January 11, 2009, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-FA832B39-70CC352E/natolive/opinions_49673.htm?selectedLocale=en



For the purposes of analysis, this paper is built on the assumption that the Oslo Accords as well as the Road Map are the points of departure for a two-state solution. The many moving parts in this highly complex scenario have to be fixed to some extent in order to allow a reasonable analysis. In practice, this means that this paper assumes a situation in which (aside from the aforementioned pre-conditions elaborated by the former Secretary General) the following is the case: a) Israel withdraws completely from West Bank and Gaza; b) the Israeli settlements, as they are today, are frozen yet remain for the time being; c) there is one united Palestinian government; d) the borders between the two states are open and people can, and will, move freely between Israel and Palestine. The analysis is based on this framework and leaves out other possible elements (e.g. the dismantlement of settlements, the complete closure of the border, the return of refugees) for the simple reason that past agreements either postponed their resolution or opted not to mention them. The resolution of these issues would not impinge upon NATO's role. However, leaving them out of this analysis does not imply that they are not important issues.

This framework is not necessarily the definite and most probable structure, but fixes a point of departure that is based on faits accomplis rather than pies in the sky. In a nutshell, the objective of the mission would be to monitor a peace agreement and eventually supervise the creation of a stable Palestinian state alongside Israel that can take charge of its own security. The Golan Heights, as well as the disputed Shebaa farms area, are excluded from this analysis.

BEST CASE, WORST CASE SCENARIO

A NATO mission in Palestine could face a best case, and a worst case scenario – with a range of options in between, interlocked with a minimalist and a maximalist territorial scale. The best case scenario would assume a rather peaceful environment following a peace agreement, including a friendly population and the abstention from violence from Palestinian militia groups. Such a permissive environment would entail minor challenges.

The worst and more probable case scenario, however, is often discarded from the discussion because it is assumed that a preceding peace agreement would effectively exclude it. This is dangerous, considering the fact that in the past peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians have broken down at sensitive points in spite of previous accords. The derailment of the peace process could lead to a decidedly hostile, semi-permissive environment, including the possibility of a subsequent series of attacks and a third Intifada that NATO could not simply stand by and watch if its troops were deployed. Getting involved against Palestinians could seriously affect the mission's acceptance on the ground. Furthermore, the terrain in Palestine could make a semi-permissive environment much more dangerous in many ways: not only is much of the territory dense and urban, there are also perfect conditions for arms smuggling, caches, and recruitment of combatants. Militant organisations with vast experience in irregular warfare know the area, and how to fight within it, much better than NATO. Thus, a realistic NATO mission would have to be prepared for both scenarios (and everything that is in-between) or it is doomed to fail.

MAXIMAL VERSUS MINIMAL

The best case and worst case scenarios must also be considered in the context of two divergent territorial sketches, a minimalist and a maximalist one. The minimalist approach would cover merely West Bank and Gaza; the maximalist one would add the territory of Israel to that. Naturally, opting for the maximalist would require more troops and entail a more complex situation. The maximalist approach is politically improbable because Israeli agreement to such a mission seems unimaginable.

Counter-intuitively, however, the maximalist approach would ensure a tighter security network, especially in preventing possible clashes between Israeli security forces, Arab Israelis and Palestinians, and thus contribute to achieving the mission's objectives. Although the maximalist approach is politically rather unlikely, we will elaborate the two options hereinafter, simply because Israeli and Palestinian security are so intertwined that it is impossible to consider one without the other.

Depending on the territorial scale of the mission as well as the environment's permissiveness, the tasks of the NATO forces would be rather diverse. One way or another, the situation would be interdependent for the simple reason that Israeli security and Palestinian security have been, and will continue to be, very much interconnected. In a permissive, friendly environment, the mission's tasks would include, in the minimalist approach, supervising the withdrawal of Israeli forces, patrolling the newly established borders of Palestine (467km land border), acting as gendarmerie, preventing insurgencies, assisting the Palestinian security forces and ensuring the security of the Israeli settlers in the West Bank. In itself, the minimalist

solution thus contains some elements that NATO is familiar with – such as border patrol and assisting local forces. This scenario would imply policing tasks that would include the provision of a security blanket under which Palestine could develop its own security structure and establish itself as a state. NATO would establish, or maintain, law and order, protect the population and ensure freedom of movement, and possibly demobilize paramilitary units. It would help monitor border crossings, checkpoints, ports and the possible corridor between West Bank and Gaza. Also, it might possibly oversee the dismantlement of Israeli settlements, if that is decided.

However, the minimalist solution in a hostile, semi-permissive environment could entail an insurgency or other extreme endangering of the newly established peace. Such a scenario would endanger not only the existing tasks, but add counterinsurgency to that list. While NATO can draw on experiences in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina when it comes to post-conflict peace enforcement, it has no experience when it comes to a possible flare-up of violence between two factions it is supposed to separate, in this case Israelis and Palestinians or Palestinians and Palestinians. Granted, NATO saw moments of violence in Kosovo between Albanians and Serbs, yet the relative strength and amplitude of violence is not comparable to the situation in Israel/Palestine. Although there is a structural similarity with Bosnia, NATO never had to crack down on violence between the warring factions and thus has no experience in such a situation. Although arguably constituting the very worst possible scenario, the potentiality of being crushed between two antagonist groups has to be taken into account and militates against the selection of NATO as a force provider in this setting.

In the case of a maximalist approach and a permissive environment, NATO's role on Israeli territory would entail, in addition to the tasks mentioned above, joint patrolling as a measure of visible security, and possibly the joint securing of Israeli settlers in the West Bank.

However, the situation could take a turn for the worse in a semi-permissive environment. One should not simply assume that a peace treaty would end all violence in the first place; on the contrary, the Oslo accords for instance did not earn undivided support on the Palestinian or the Israeli side, and attacks on Israelis continued after the signing in 1993 and ongoing negotiations⁷. The situation today, even further away from accords like the Oslo ones, looks rather gloomy, with 38.9% of Israelis and 32.2% of Palestinians declaring that they are opposed to the two-state solution, which could result in political violence once this solution is in place⁸.

Suicide attacks in Israel have in the past accompanied political mood swings and led to a breakdown of peace talks at several times. Their likelihood can not be ruled out for several reasons. These include the experience of the second Intifada, during which suicide attacks were a widely used tool – 140 such attacks between 2000 and 2007 resulting in 542 deaths of individuals in Israel alone and seriously hampering the peace process⁹ - and were perpetrated by Arab Israelis inside Israel as well as Palestinians. Hence, even a complete closure of the border

cannot be considered a security guarantee against suicide attacks.

Furthermore, open borders as they were before the second Intifada resulted in more than 150,000 Palestinians working daily in Israel and the settlements¹⁰. Although this number today has dropped to 10,000, it would be expected to increase after a peace agreement in order to contribute to the economies of Palestine and Israel and further promote peaceful relations. The two economies were, and are, strongly intertwined. However, this situation would increase Israel's potential exposure. This coming and going, coupled with a possible political mood swing – e.g. negative perception of the peace agreement, disappointment in developments since the peace treaty, etc. – or general disagreement with the settlement in the first place, would obviously impact on security within Israel and not just in the Palestinian territories.

What is more important, repeated suicide attacks in the past seriously affected public opinion in Israel and effectively brought the peace process to a complete halt. Hence, the prevention of these attacks would be rather high on NATO's agenda in the framework of such a mission. A maximalist, hence comprehensive and broader approach, would be more recommendable because it would give NATO the chance to counter such attacks more effectively and to act credibly as an impartial agent between both parties.

⁷ Examples are the Beit Lid Massacre at a junction in Israel in 1995, killing 21 people, which was applauded by the Palestinian public, or the Dizengoff Center attack (in front of a mall) in 1996.

⁸ Harry S. Truman Institute for Peace: Israeli-Palestinian Poll N. 28 June 2009, <http://truman.huji.ac.il/polls.asp>

⁹ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Suicide and Other Bombing Attacks in Israel since the Declaration of Principles (Sept. 1993), <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-%20Obstacle%20to%20Peace/Palestinian%20terror%20since%202000/Suicide%20and%20Other%20Bombing%20Attacks%20in%20Israel%20Since>

¹⁰ International Monetary Fund: West Bank and Gaza: Economic Performance and Reform under Conflict Conditions, Washington 2003, p.14 <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/med/2003/eng/wbg/wbg.pdf>

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

The potential Area of Operations for a NATO mission is extremely complicated. Essentially, the mission would have to cover two, possibly three very divergent areas: Gaza and the West Bank in the case of a minimalist scenario, and Israel in addition to the other two in a maximalist scenario. All three parts demand very different planning. The free movement of peoples would contribute to the complexity of the situation. In a nutshell, the territory is complicated by a) intermingled populations of Israelis and Palestinians, and Arabs and Jews, all over the territory, b) large refugee camps and c) large cities.

To begin with, Gaza has a population of 1.4 million Palestinians, more than one third of whom, i.e. 500,000, live in refugee camps. The five biggest camps alone are the size of European cities like Calais or Exeter, accommodating between 60,000 and 110,000 people. The population density is one of the highest in the world, Gaza being twice the size of Liechtenstein with 40 times its population¹¹. There are no more Israeli settlers in Gaza. The West Bank contains 2.4 million Palestinians, of which approx. 8% (190,000) live in camps the size of small cities, with up to 23,600 people¹². Scattered all over the West Bank, 300,000 Israeli settlers live in 150 settlements which account for 12.5% of the total West Bank population. Of the

se settlements, five have more than 10,000 inhabitants¹³. In the past, settlers have been the object of Palestinian attacks¹⁴, and vice versa, perpetrators of attacks against Palestinians. In 2008 alone, 290 settler-related violent incidents took place in the West Bank¹⁵. Two security-related aspects emerge from Israeli settler presence in the West Bank - assuming they are not immediately dismantled in the framework of an agreement. First, securing the Israeli settlements would be of high priority in order not to affect Israeli public opinion concerning the peace agreement. Secondly, Israeli extremists have to be prevented from conducting attacks on Palestinians.

The intermixture of people does not end there. Israel, the largest of the three territories that might need to be covered, is interspersed with Arab population. It has 7.2 million inhabitants, of whom 20%, i.e. 1.45 million, are of Arab-Palestinian origin. 52% of these are clustered in Israel's hilly Northern district, while the rest live in other localities throughout Israel. Nazareth for instance comprises roughly 40,000 Arabs and 25,000 Israelis. A large presence of Arabs is also to be found in Haifa¹⁶. The populations of Israel, like that of the West Bank, are thus very much intermingled and difficult to separate. The only area that is largely homogeneous in terms of population is Gaza, which however presents other security concerns.

¹¹ <http://www.un.org/unrwa/publications/Gaza.html>; <http://www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/gaza.html> Gérard-François Dumont: "De la population de Gaza a une prospective géopolitique", *Outre Terre, Revue française de la géopolitique*, 2009/2, n. 22 pp.123 – 131.

¹² <http://www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/westbank.html>

¹³ Foundation for Middle East Peace (2008): http://www.fmep.org/settlement_info/settlement-info-and-tables/stats-data/settlements-in-the-west-bank-1; Haaretz: IDF: More than 300,000 settlers live in West Bank, July 27, 2009 <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1103125.html>

¹⁴ Washington Post, "Young Settler Killed in West Bank Attack", April 3, 2009. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/04/02/AR2009040200469.html>

¹⁵ United Nations: Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, January 1 – December 31 2008, General Assembly

Official Records, Sixty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 13, New York 2009, p. 3. <http://www.un.org/unrwa/publications/index.html>

¹⁶ Central Bureau for Statistics: Israel in Figures, 2008 http://www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/cw_usr_view_Folder?ID=141

The presence of large and long-term established refugee camps within Gaza, and to some extent also in the West Bank, deserves special attention. Because of their fragile and essentially provisional structure, refugee camps are generally first in line when violence, crime and lawlessness take over. Where a state is not functioning properly, refugee camps can turn easily into safe havens for criminal activity, arms caches and recruitment of armed groups. Armed groups can blend easily with the camp population, making a separation difficult. This is especially the case in Palestinian camps that not only are enormous in size, but have constituted the primary form of living for presently 18% of Palestinians. Low living standards coupled with unemployment – 42% of Gaza inhabitants are unemployed¹⁷ - make refugee camps the perfect recruitment locale for extremist groups who could attempt to derail the peace process. Thus, these camps constitute a potential source of concern for any security force in place.

This is further aggravated by the extreme population density in Gaza, combined with single-storey housing, which makes it difficult for security forces to move through the narrow, twisted streets. This, and lack of familiarity with the ground, makes it difficult for outsiders to distinguish possible members of armed groups from the local population.

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY

Cities are generally a matter of particular military concern due to their complex terrain, the historically high number of casualties during operations on urban terrain, the need for a higher number of soldiers to cover a smaller area, and the multiple possibilities for hideouts for insurgents and weapons.¹⁸ This is especially true in the case of Gaza where urban guerrilla warfare has been the predominant form of warfare in the last decade.¹⁹ Possible insurgents know their tools, and their area, while NATO forces have limited experience in urban guerrilla warfare and little military intelligence concerning Palestinian or Israeli cities. NATO would either have to rely on Israeli sources or establish a network of informants itself, which seems impractical and costly.

Israel has 14 cities of over 100,000 inhabitants, of which at least five have over 200,000. Jerusalem is a special case; comprising 750,000 inhabitants, it is divided between East and West, Arabs and Israelis, and has constituted one of the most difficult bones of contention in past negotiations. 65% of its inhabitants are Israelis, living mostly in West Jerusalem, although East Jerusalem now comprises 190,000 Israelis as well.²⁰ Gaza City has over 410,000 inhabitants; in Gaza there is also Khan Junis, with 180,000 inhabitants. Three cities in the West Bank have between 120,000 and 166,000 inhabitants.

¹⁷ United Nations: Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, January 1 – December 31 2008, General Assembly Official Records, Sixty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 13, New York 2009, p.2 <http://www.un.org/unrwa/publications/index.html>

¹⁸ Robert F.Hahn II & Bonne Jezior: "Urban Warfare and the Urban Warfighter of 2025", *Parameters*, Summer 1999, pp.74 – 86.

¹⁹ 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*, Vol.28, No.1, February 2005, p. 57.

²⁰ Foundation for Middle East Peace (2007): http://www.fmep.org/settlement_info/settlement-info-and-tables/stats-data/settlements-in-east-jerusalem

What do these figures suggest? A NATO force could not act merely as a passive wall between two formerly warring parties. Habitations are intertwined, with the exception of the Gaza strip, and will continue to be so even after a peace agreement. Also, there are over 19 cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. In total, 4.2 million inhabitants in the area live in cities of this kind, with more than half a million living in refugee camps. This itself implies two things: first, arms caches are difficult to locate without local knowledge, and arms smuggle is facilitated greatly. Disarmament measures would be even more difficult to enforce than they already are under friendlier circumstances. Second, in the case of a third Intifada (e.g. if the rest of the peace process does not develop as hoped) urban operations, or operations in refugee camps, require a knowledge that NATO forces have just started to acquire, and is still very much underdeveloped.²¹ The Israeli forces are probably the only ones roughly prepared for insurgencies in Palestinian cities and refugee camps, but their harsh crackdown has frequently triggered even more violence. The toughest nut to crack would be Jerusalem – no matter what the final outcome of negotiations is on the status of the city, some will be discontented. Thus, Jerusalem itself would require a rather large preventive force – which in turn could face significant resentment from some Israeli settlers in East Jerusalem.

The situation could be further aggravated by the large presence of NGOs and UN organisations expected after a possible peace agreement. On top of that, NATO would have to patrol the borders of the new Palestine, which account for 404km of West Bank land border (307km with

Israel and 97km with Jordan) and 63km for Gaza (11km with Egypt, 52 with Israel). This does not include the corridor that might possibly link the two territories and would be between 30 and 50km long (60 – 100km if there are two), depending on its location. This corridor could be, according to different scenarios, a tunnel, a bridge or a closed road – either option implies high security sensitivity as it can be blocked easily, closing the line between the two halves that would make Palestine.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NATO

Several conclusions can be drawn from the facts depicted above. First, the territory, although small in size, is politically extremely sensitive and typically exhibits immediate reactions to security disturbances. Past peace attempts in Israel/Palestine failed primarily because of security concerns. It is in this context that the vicious cycle would have to be broken. As experience has shown, it is unlikely that one all-encompassing peace agreement would be achievable; rather, a gradual solution that proceeds with a step-by-step advancement of peace seems the most probable. Thus, there would be a particularly dangerous transitional phase due to security vulnerabilities.

Hence, there would be little room for occasional failure. A series (or even just a handful) of successful attacks would probably derail the peace process, as has happened in the past. It has to be recognized that a NATO mission in Palestine could easily be taken hostage by militant groups and that absolute security is unattainable, despite being a politically extremely important goal on both sides of the

²¹ Gerald T. Sajer, "Control: A Strategy for Urban Counterinsurgency", Of Interest, Strategic Studies Institute, February 14, 2008.

fence. Thus, there is very little leverage when it comes to staffing, funding and choice of equipment. Essentially, NATO in Palestine would have to be considered as a mission wherein the implications of failure are even greater than those of almost any other mission. This is an important consideration to keep in mind when looking at the following recommendations.

SIZE MATTERS

The first question to ask is what size a suitable force would have to be. Attempting to get by with the barest minimum would be a prescription for failure. Lessons from cases such as East Timor, Kosovo, and Bosnia-Herzegovina have shown that the key variable here is neither the size of the territory nor the number of potential opponents, but the population on the ground.²² In successful operations in the past at least 1,150 soldiers and policemen per 100,000 inhabitants (1,000 soldiers and 150 international police),²³ have been deployed, while some studies suggest 2,000 per 100,000 inhabitants.²⁴ When NATO entered Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995, its forces amounted to 2,260 soldiers per 100,000 inhabitants, and its numbers fell only after five years to the ratio of 1,000 soldiers per

100,000 inhabitants. In Kosovo, that ratio rose to 2,100 soldiers and in East Timor to 1,100 in the first year.²⁵ Successful missions have, in the past, always had sufficient staffing for at least five years. Although it is clear that numbers alone do not make or break the security, it is obvious that understaffing the mission could seriously jeopardize its success. Although some NATO nations might be more accepted than others in this particular setting, it would probably be advisable to have a wide range of different nations participating in the mission.

While it is obvious that the number of men needed would depend also on the local security structures, this section will assume that the Palestinian security forces initially will need more time and training before they can assume full responsibility for internal security in an independent Palestine as agreed on in the Gaza-Jericho agreement of 1994.²⁶ Although there are now officially 30,000 security forces under the Palestinian authority as agreed to in Oslo II, their record in the past has been marked by corruption and human rights abuse, occasional siding with the Fatah and clashes with Hamas.²⁷ Although 1,600 of these men have been trained in the recent past by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada,²⁸ this extent was

²² James T. Quinlivan, "Force Requirements in Stability Operations", *Parameters*, Winter 1995, p.60.

²³ Seth G. Jones / Jeremy M. Wilson / Andrew Rathmell / K. Jack Riley, *Establishing Law and Order after Conflict*, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation 2005, p. 202.

²⁴ James T. Quinlivan, "Burden of Victory: The Painful Arithmetic of Stability Operations", *Rand Review*, Summer 2003, Vol 27 N.2, <http://www.rand.org/publications/randreview/issues/summer2003/rr.summer2003.pdf&ei=42jwSs6uM5KGsAbUKYHBBg&sa=X&oi=nshc&resnum=1&ct=res&cd=1&ved=0CAcQzqQoAA&usq=AFQjCNHKPZdU6j4F4w3gtUlyQwuQL7bDTw>

²⁵ James T. Quinlivan, "Force Requirements in Stability Operations", *Parameters*, Winter 1995, p.60. Seth G. Jones / Jeremy M. Wilson / Andrew Rathmell / K. Jack Riley, *Establishing Law and Order after Conflict*, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation 2005, p. 202.

²⁶ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, May 4, 1994, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Main%20Points%20of%20Gaza-Jericho%20Agreement>

²⁷ Husam Madhoun: "The Palestinian Security Services: Past and Present", May 30, 2006. [Miftah.org](http://www.miftah.org), The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy, <http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=10400&CategoryId=21>

²⁸ Naseem Khuri, "An Enhanced Engagement: Moving Beyond Security Training for the Palestinian Authority", Policy Memo, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, July 2009, http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/19512/enhanced_engagement.html. See also Ethan Bronner: U.S. Helps Palestinians Build Force for Security, *The New York Times*, February 27, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/27/world/middleeast/27palestinians.html>. "U.S. Security Coordinator Keith Dayton, Address Detailing the Mission and Accomplishments of the Office of the U.S. Security Coordinator, Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Washington, 7 May 2009", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol.38, No.4, Summer 2009, pp.223 - 229.

limited and additional training would be needed after the establishment of a fully independent Palestine. It is worth noting that the target number of 30,000 is high by international policing standards, which account for around 200 men per 100,000 inhabitants in a stabilised state – the highest estimates deem 25,940 police sufficient.²⁹

The establishment of internal Palestinian security structures is a key element not only to any successful peace stabilisation mission, but also to the exit strategy of NATO or another international force. The capability of Palestinian security forces should not be measured only in numbers, but also in quality—of which training is a key factor.³⁰ In the case of Palestine the problem is not so much to recruit men, but rather to train and equip them, and to dismiss those who do not meet standards or are superfluous.

Approximately 10,000 police officers and 15,000 men comparable to armed forces are currently present in Palestine, although other figures show much higher rates.³¹ These statistics do not include militias like Hamas or the Al Aqsa Brigades. This means that the ratio of population to security forces in Palestine stands at 6.08 men per 1,000 inhabitants (although there is not enough data available to break it down for Gaza and the West Bank respectively). Also, it is not clear which of these local forces are reliable, the Palestinian police having reputation for corruption and bias. Part of NATO's mission would have to provide a security umbrella under which Palestine would have the opportunity to train, and build up, its own security forces

as agreed in the Gaza-Jericho Agreement or any other agreement leading to a NATO mission.

LESS IS NOT MORE, LESS IS LESS

Independently from the local security forces, the NATO force in Palestine (hence the minimalist version) would, if it follows the example of the successful cases of Bosnia and Kosovo, need forces ranging from 43,700 to 76,000 men, including the police forces. Of these, between 16,100 and 28,000 would patrol Gaza, and between 27,600 and 48,000 the West Bank.

Not counted in these numbers are the men who would possibly go on joint patrol with Israeli forces. Israel has an armed force of 176,000, as well as 30,000 police men and 70,000 civil guards. This brings the ratio of army to civilians to 24, and the ratio of police to civilians to 13.8. Both numbers are rather high by international standards and imply that a strong NATO force would not be needed. However, joint patrols signalling the presence of NATO and its commitment to the mission would certainly impact positively on public opinion on both sides. Suggested additional men for the territory of Israel would bring the number of a NATO force to a minimum of 50,000 and a maximum of 80,000 men. In comparison, NATO's International Security Assistance Force has approximately 81,000 troops in Afghanistan, so the key question would be not only the willingness of the Allies to provide these troops, but also their availability. It is questionable whe-

²⁹ The RAND Palestinian State Study Team: Building a Successful Palestinian State, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation 2007, p. 48.

³⁰ However, the debate over what kind and length of training is deemed appropriate still goes on. East Timor, for instance, had all its officers trained after three years while in Kosovo it was 90%.

³¹ International Monetary Fund: West Bank and Gaza: Economic Performance and Reform under Conflict Conditions, Washington 2003, p.92 <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/med/2003/eng/wbg/wbg.pdf>

ther the necessary numbers would be available from Allies parallel to ongoing missions in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia and Iraq. Already there is criticism over the decrease of time between deployment and re-deployment, since it is burdening not only quality of work and life, but also budget.³² Current theatres of operations would have to be reduced in size before a suitable size NATO mission in Palestine would be available without introducing longer deployments – something many Allies would like to avoid.

WHO DUNNIT?

Stabilisation missions are largely infantry missions. This is topped in our case by the fact that in a worst case scenario, the tasks would entail urban warfare and counterinsurgency, which are also infantry heavy tasks.³³ Furthermore, our case would require not only infantry, but also constabulary forces to a large extent. As past cases suggest, gendarmerie or paramilitary police are much better equipped for the type of internal security situation likely to exist initially in an independent Palestine as well as the tackling of crime in the absence of sufficient local security structures. According to some estimates, 57,000 of the 76,000 men would preferably be international civilian police or gendarmerie. This rate of 150 international police officers per 100,000 inhabitants seems however very difficult to provide, yet it is critical - in year two after conflict, East Timor had a ratio of 151, while Kosovo had one of 234. However, only eight of NATO forces have gendarmeries, namely Italy, France, Bulgaria, Portugal, the

Netherlands, Romania, Turkey and Spain. Of these, only a few have experience in a post-conflict setting. It is thus doubtful that NATO would be able to come up with such a large gendarmerie.

TIME IS MONEY

Any successful mission would need to remain for at least 5 years, if not longer. The reason is simply that relapse into conflict is the highest in the 5 years following its end. As the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina has shown, this period can easily take longer. It is important to highlight that the length of this mission would be, aside from other factors, a key in its success or failure. Premature departure could jeopardize the establishment of peace; by the same token, lengthy missions are costly. Aside from the costs for the mission itself, additional costs can be expected, due to the training of the Palestinian police, building infrastructure and providing equipment. Some estimates calculate between \$9.61 billion and \$16.72 billion per year, not calculating reconstruction efforts, which in the case of the recommended 5 years would result in a total number between \$ 48.05 billion and \$ 83.6 billion.³⁴ Although it is highly unlikely that NATO itself would be responsible for the economic and governance aspects of nation-building in an independent Palestine, many of its members contribute the bulk of the funding to international organizations expected to pay for these efforts, such as the EU and UN, thus these costs are a valid consideration.

³² James T. Quinlivan, "Force Requirements in Stability Operations", *Parameters*, Winter 1995, p. 64.

³³ International Institute for Strategic Studies: *The future of urban warfare*, Strategic Comments, 1 March 1999.

³⁴ Robert E. Hunter, Seth G. Jones: *Building a Successful Palestinian State: Security*, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation 2006, p. xi.

IN A NUTSHELL

NATO's mission in Palestine would have slim chances of success, and a high probability of failure. One should not be blinded by perceptions of a historical opportunity and embark on an endeavour that could cost NATO credibility, prestige, money and lives simply because it seems to be a politically symbolic chance in a lifetime to establish NATO as a global security provider.

The territory involved presents aspects that would cause any campaign planner nightmares – densely populated, urban areas with highly intermingled conflicting populations, a volatile political ambiance where the tides can turn any second, and a very experienced opponent if it ever comes to counterinsurgency. Thus, this mission would need thorough preparation, careful planning, sufficient staffing and funding, a significant amount of political will, and would leave a very narrow margin for success. At the current stage, and with its other operations ongoing, it seems irresponsible to hasten NATO into a mission that has all the ingredients to turn into a quagmire that equals the Alliance's involvement in Afghanistan.