

Israel: Global NATO's 29th Member

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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As the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is pressuring its 28 member states and dozens of partnership affiliates on five continents to contribute more troops for the war in Afghanistan, the Jerusalem Post reported on January 13 that "Israel is launching a diplomatic initiative in an effort to influence the outcome of NATO's new Strategic Concept which is currently under review by a team of experts led by former United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright." [1]

NATO is crafting its updated Strategic Concept to replace that last formulated in 1999, the year of the military bloc's expansion into Eastern Europe and its first full-fledged war, the 78-day bombing campaign against Yugoslavia.

Madeleine Albright, arguably the individual most publicly identified with orchestrating both NATO's absorption of three former Warsaw Pact members, including her native Czech Republic, and in launching Operation Allied Force, co-chairs NATO's Group of Experts with Jeroen van der Veer, CEO of Royal Dutch Shell until June of 2009.

In addition, "To ensure close coordination between the Group of Experts and NATO Headquarters, the Secretary General has designated a small NATO team lead by Dr. Jamie Shea, head of Policy Planning Unit, to function as a secretariat and staff support." [2] Shea was NATO spokesman in 1999 and is now Director of Policy Planning in the Private Office of the Secretary General at NATO Headquarters.

Last October 1 NATO and Lloyd's of London ("the world's leading insurance market" in its own words) co-organized a conference in London to unveil and promote the new Strategic Concept. Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen of NATO and Lloyd's chairman Lord Peter Levene delivered the major addresses.

Host Levene conjured up "a myriad of determined and deadly threats" that required NATO intervention worldwide and Rasmussen itemized no fewer than eighteen of those - none remotely resembling a military attack on or challenge to a single member state. [3]

Recently Madeleine Albright has been traveling to several European capitals to preside over a series of seminars on the updated Strategic Concept and the latest of those, in Oslo, Norway on January 13, was attended by officials from the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

In preparation for the above meeting "Several weeks ago, a former senior Israeli diplomat met privately with Albright to discuss Israeli interests in the concept that is under review." [4]

The same source added the following background information:

“Israeli-NATO ties have increased dramatically in recent years. Chairman of the Military Committee, Admiral Giampaolo Di Paola visited Israel in November, and the Israeli Navy has announced plans to deploy a missile ship with Active Endeavour, a NATO mission to patrol the Mediterranean Sea....

“Israel is also seeking to receive an upgraded status following the conclusion of the Strategic Concept review that will enable Israeli officials to participate in top NATO forums....Israel is a member of the Mediterranean Dialogue, which was created in 1994 to foster ties with Middle Eastern countries like Israel, Jordan, Egypt and Morocco.” [5]

By 2000 NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue had expanded to include seven nations in the Middle East and Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

1994 was the same year that the North Atlantic bloc launched the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. Both partnerships were inaugurated only three years after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the breakup of the Soviet Union left not only Eastern Europe but the Middle East, Africa and Asia open to Western military penetration and expansion.

The Partnership for Peace has included all fifteen former Soviet and all six former Yugoslav federal republics as well as all non-Soviet Warsaw Pact members. Twelve of those – Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia – became full NATO members in the decade ending last year after passing through the PfP.

In addition, the program takes in all former neutral, non-aligned states in Europe except for Cyprus: Austria, Finland, Ireland, Malta, Sweden and Switzerland. Malta withdrew from the PfP in 1996 but was reabsorbed in 2008. Pro-U.S. parties in the Cypriot parliament are waging an all-out campaign to drag their nation into the program.

Except for Malta, only recently reentering the PfP, the six nations listed above have sent troop contingents of varying sizes to Afghanistan to serve under NATO command. The only countries in all of Europe (excluding the microstates of Andorra, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco, San Marino, and Vatican City), including the Caucasus, that have not offered troops for the Afghan war front to date are Russia, Belarus, Serbia, Malta, Moldova and Cyprus.

At its 2004 summit in Istanbul, Turkey the largest single expansion of NATO in its history occurred as seven states were brought in as full members, all in Eastern Europe and including the first former Soviet and former Yugoslav republics recruited as full members of the Alliance.

The Istanbul summit also lent itself to another, similarly ambitious, project: The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). [6] The ICI purposed to elevate the seven Mediterranean Dialogue partners to a status analogous to that of the Partnership for Peace and to consolidate military ties with the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Since Algeria joined the Mediterranean Dialogue in 2000, Montenegro became an independent state in 2006 and joined the Partnership for Peace the same year, and Malta rejoined the latter two years later, every Mediterranean littoral and island nation except – for the moment – Cyprus, Lebanon, Libya and Syria is either a NATO member or partner. The Mediterranean Dialogue also allows NATO to stretch down the Atlantic Coast of Africa to

Morocco and Mauritania.

If the accession of new members and the Partnership for Peace provided NATO with outposts on Russia's borders (Azerbaijan, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine) and on China's (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative has allowed for the further encirclement of Iran by moving Alliance influence and military presence into the Persian Gulf.

Of the thirteen Middle Eastern and African nations targeted by it, Israel is the one that most immediately and substantively seized on the opportunity the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative offered.

The enhanced status of the Mediterranean Dialogue led within months of the Istanbul NATO summit to Israel engaging in Alliance activities for the first time.

On February 24, 2005 Jaap de Hoop Scheffer became the first NATO secretary general to visit Israel and the next month "Israel and NATO conducted their first ever joint naval exercise in the Red Sea, signalling a strengthening of relations." An Alliance naval group visited the Israeli Red Sea port of Eilat for a week-long visit, "which included a joint exercise with the Israel Navy." [7]

As Britain's Jane's Defence Weekly reported, "The novelty in the exercise was the fact it was conducted with NATO ships, which operate regularly in the Mediterranean, but rarely visit the Red Sea." [8]

In May of the same year it was announced that "Israel plans to stage three military exercises with NATO during 2005.

"Israeli officials said the government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has submitted a plan to NATO that would include the staging of three exercises with Israel's military over the next 10 months. They said the exercises would take place at NATO headquarters in Brussels...."

An Israeli official was cited as saying, "We have no doubt that Israel will gain immensely from closer ties with NATO, and we also believe that Israel has much to offer NATO in return." [9]

In the same month a planning conference for "NATO-led military exercises in the framework of the Partnership for Peace" program was held in Macedonia and was "attended by representatives of over 20 countries, including, for the first time, two countries from the so-called Mediterranean Dialogue - Israel and Jordan." [10]

Jane's again: "Whereas Israel's geopolitical location could offer an 'external base' for the defence of the West, NATO's military and economic status could provide added security and economic benefits for the host state.

"In a rapidly changing strategic environment, Israeli policy makers are recognising definite advantages, especially in security affairs, in developing closer ties with NATO. The present Israeli government's enthusiasm for this project can be seen in an ambitious set of proposals submitted to the Alliance," which included "joint military training [and] future joint development of weapons systems." [11]

In June "The Israeli navy participated for the first time in a NATO submarine exercise in the

Gulf of Taranto off the Italian coast,” Sorbet Royal 2005. “Israel was seeking to extend its strategic alliance with NATO beyond what is offered to its Mediterranean cooperation group, even up to full membership of NATO.” [12]

According to an Israeli account before the war games began, “14 nations and about 2,000 forces are to spend the next three weeks hunting for four submarines resting on the ocean floor....” [13]

In July of 2005 Israeli ground troops participated in a NATO military exercise for the first time, a 22-nation training mission in Ukraine that lasted for two and a half weeks. “The drill dealt mainly with antiterrorism combat and low-intensity conflict, but it also symbolized an increasing participation of Israeli forces in NATO.”

Israeli Colonel Alon Friedman said on the occasion that “There have been senior commanders who have gone to NATO events as well as consultants, but never combatants like this.” The Jerusalem Post reported that “Friedman said he was not privy to the diplomatic moves to get the IDF [Israeli Defense Forces] more involved in NATO, but he understood the initiative came from NATO.” [14]

By the following year the level of collaboration between the world’s sole military bloc and Israel had increased further. A column appeared at an Israeli news site on February 1 called “Is Israel headed for NATO?” authored by Uzi Arad. Arad established the Atlantic Forum of Israel in 2004 and still chairs the organization. The Atlantic Forum is the main vehicle for promoting NATO-Israel integration on the Israeli side. It’s website, currently under construction, features a Star of David side-by-side with the NATO symbol. [15]

Uzi Arad has an interesting biography, both before and after the founding of the Atlantic Forum. He was the Foreign Policy Advisor to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from 1997-1999 “on secondment from the Mossad, in which he served for more than two decades, culminating in his tenure as Director of Research (Intelligence).” [16] He has also been Advisor to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

Complications developed last year when he was “designated to become chairman of the National Security Council under Netanyahu,” but “The press in Washington...reported that Arad had been refused permission to enter the country” [17] because of “his alleged contacts with Pentagon analyst Larry Franklin, who has been convicted of passing information to Israel.” [18] By the end of last March the Obama administration nevertheless approved his visa application for discussions in Washington on Iran.

An Israeli newspaper described his major project: “Working closely with NATO, the Atlantic Forum of Israel seeks to promote and enhance Israel’s relations and standing with the Atlantic Alliance and has played an important role in advancing this relationship.” [19]

In the aforementioned article of Arad’s in February of 2006 he wrote “For the past two years, cooperation between Israel and NATO has become closer, to a certain degree – both on a multilateral level, within the Mediterranean Dialogue, and on a bilateral level, directly with NATO.”

He added that “Last year, Israeli Ambassador [to the European Union in Brussels and envoy to NATO] Oded Eran submitted an official proposal for increasing cooperation, and since the visit of NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer to Israel last June, NATO and Israel

have been negotiating over completing the multilateral cooperation plan.

“Israel consented, and announced its willingness to participate in Operation Active Endeavor, which is being conducted in the Mediterranean Sea as part of the alliance’s counter-terrorism effort. It also took part in three military exercises and hosted a conference of air force commanders from NATO and its partners.” [20]

A feature in the Wall Street Journal a few days after Arad’s article appeared, “NATO, Israel Draw Closer,” quoted Arad as asserting: “The only thing worse than Israel being a member of NATO may be Israel not being a member of NATO.” It also mentioned another prime mover in fostering the Israel-NATO nexus, one on the U.S. (and European) end. “Ronald Asmus, a senior State Department official during the Clinton administration who is credited by Mr. Arad with being an ‘intellectual godfather’ of closer NATO-Israel links, says arguments against membership remind him of the initial opposition to NATO enlargement to former Soviet bloc states or the alliance assuming its first missions beyond Europe.” [21]

The German Marshall Fund of the United States website provides this background information on Asmus:

“Dr. Asmus is currently Executive Director of the Brussels-based Transatlantic Center and responsible for Strategic Planning at the German Marshall Fund of the US.

“[He was] Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs from 1997-2000 and has been a senior analyst and fellow at Radio Free Europe, RAND and the Council on Foreign Relations. He has been a pioneering voice in the debate over post-Cold War European security and NATO’s transformation. He has published widely and is the author of *Opening Nato’s Door*.

“For his ideas and diplomatic accomplishments, he has been decorated by the U.S. Department of State as well as the governments of Estonia, Georgia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.” [22]

The Washington Post published his article “Contain Iran: Admit Israel to NATO” on February 21, 2006 which contained these recommendations:

“The best way to provide Israel with that additional security is to upgrade its relationship with the collective defense arm of the West: NATO. Whether that upgraded relationship culminates in membership for Israel or simply a much closer strategic and operational defense relationship can be debated.”

“Several leading Europeans have called for NATO to embrace Israel, but this debate will not get serious until the United States, Israel’s main ally, puts its weight behind the idea. The time has come to do so.” [23]

Earlier in the month he co-authored a lengthy piece called “Does Israel Belong In the EU and NATO?” with Bruce P. Jackson. Jackson was the founder and head of the U.S. Committee on NATO/Expand NATO and the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq set up four months before the invasion of the nation and is on the Board of Directors of the Project for the New American Century. Asmus and Jackson wrote that “what some Israeli strategic thinkers are starting to discuss – and what we are addressing here – is...an upgraded strategic relationship between Israel and EuroAtlantic institutions like NATO and the EU that would lead to increasingly closer ties and could include eventual membership.” [24]

The third leg of the Israel-NATO integration stool is Ivo Daalder, until recently Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution and now the new U.S. administration's ambassador to NATO where he has a free hand to implement his projects.

In the September/October issue of *Foreign Affairs*, published by the Council on Foreign Relations, he and co-author James Goldgeier, Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote an article called "Global NATO" which included this excerpt:

"With little fanfare – and even less notice – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has gone global."

What Daalder had in mind had been adumbrated two years earlier when he wrote "We need an Alliance of Democratic States. This organization would unite nations with entrenched democratic traditions, such as the United States and Canada; the European Union countries; Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Australia; India and Israel; Botswana and Costa Rica." [25]

NATO will be the framework for a new U.S.-led global order with the United Nations reduced to a mere handmaiden and cleanup service.

In March of 2006 James Jones, then military chief of the Pentagon's European Command and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe and now U.S. National Security Adviser, commented on another advance in NATO-Israeli military integration, the first deployment of NATO AWACS to Israel for a military exercise "apparently as a signal to Iran":

"We've had NATO AWACS deployed to do some demonstrations in Israel, and we do have an active dialogue with the Israeli defense force in terms of interoperability, and particularly as it regards the security of the Mediterranean basin at sea." [26]

In May eight NATO warships docked in the Israeli port city of Haifa "which the military said was an indication of strengthening ties between Israel and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation" preparatory to the Israeli Navy "tak[ing] part for the first time in a NATO naval exercise in the Black Sea in June...." [27] That month the Israeli navy missile ship *Achi Eilat* left Haifa with its NATO counterparts to join in Operation Mako, "a ten-country joint training exercise in the Black Sea led by NATO-Mediterranean Dialogue countries." The war games also included ships from "Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, France, Albania, Algeria, Georgia, the United Arab Emirates and others." The event marked "the first time that an operational unit of the IDF will fully participate with NATO in a military-like operation." [28] (By way of follow up, on January 11, 2010 Focus News Agency in Bulgaria revealed that the Israeli Air Force plans to use bases in that country for training exercises.)

NATO reported on the exercises, especially in reference to the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, that "over 2000 personnel and some 25 ships from NATO and Partner countries are rehearsing joint operations at sea in and around Constanta, Romania" where the U.S. and NATO have subsequently acquired a strategic military base.

"Nine NATO countries are taking part (Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom), four Partner countries (Albania, Azerbaijan, Croatia and Georgia) as well as two Mediterranean Dialogue countries (Algeria and Israel).

"In addition, for the first time, the exercise is being observed by a country from NATO's

Istanbul Cooperation Initiative - the United Arab Emirates.” [29]

“The purpose of the exercise [is] to create better interoperability between the Israeli Navy and NATO naval forces. Israel was invited to participate in the exercise as a member of NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue.” [30]

In the same month the Israeli Defense Ministry acknowledged that “In a move intended to further bolster ties between Israel and NATO, the IDF is putting search-and-rescue forces on standby so they can be immediately dispatched to participate in NATO global operations.”

In addition, it was announced that “Israel might also be willing to send field hospitals to NATO peacekeeping forces stationed around the world” and “The IDF has also decided to dispatch a high-ranking navy officer to Naples in the coming months, where he will participate in NATO’s...Operation Active Endeavor.” [31]

Toward the end of June a U.S. Congressional committee “unanimously approved a resolution that calls for enhancing Israel’s relationship with NATO.”

“The resolution recommends upgrading Israel’s affiliation to a ‘leading member of NATO’s Individual Cooperation Program,’ a promotion the bill says ultimately will lead to Israel’s full membership in the alliance.” [32]

The Individual Cooperation Program was a provision made available to Mediterranean Dialogue members within the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. On October 16, 2006 NATO and Israel concluded an Individual Cooperation Program agreement.

“Israel and NATO have approved a long-term plan for cooperation in 27 different areas” and “Israel is the first non-European country, and the first in the Middle East to cooperate with NATO and reach a bilateral agreement with the organization.” [33]

Indeed, it is the only country (excepting Iceland) outside of Europe that is included in the U.S. European Command’s area of responsibility. (As neighboring Egypt is the only African nation not in Africa Command.) The rest of the Middle East, like Egypt, is covered by Central Command. For NATO’s purposes Israel – like the South Caucasus states of Armenia and Georgia if not Azerbaijan – is for all intents a European nation.

As the country’s minister of foreign affairs Tzipi Livni said at the NATO’s Transformation, the Mediterranean Dialogue, and NATO-Israel Relations seminar in Herzliya on October 24, 2006, “The alliance between NATO and Israel is only natural....Israel and NATO share a common strategic vision....[T]hreats, aimed at Israel and the western-valued moderate community, position Israel more than ever before on the Euro-Atlantic side. In many ways, Israel is the front line defending our common way of life.” [34]

The two-day conference was organized by the Atlantic Forum of Israel and the NATO Public Diplomacy Division and occurred only two months after the end of Israel’s second Lebanon war, which displaced 900,000 Lebanese, a quarter of the nation’s population.

Delivering her address at the meeting, Livni acknowledged “it is...no secret that Israel preferred the involvement of the forces of NATO in Lebanon....In meeting these strategic threats, NATO is most essential.” She also said “Israel will be glad to cooperate and participate in positive NATO regional and local initiatives, among them: the Mediterranean Dialogue; the like minded global partnership; and the inclusion of Israel in the PFP

(Partnership For Peace) NATO program.” [35]

NATO was represented by Deputy Secretary General Alessandro Minuto Rizzo, whose keynote address included:

“We have recently agreed [upon] an individual cooperation programme – or ICP. This programme is the first of its kind in the Mediterranean Dialogue....Just a few weeks ago, an exchange of letters between NATO and Israel set the stage for an Israeli contribution to Active Endeavour....This will be the first contribution from a Mediterranean Dialogue nation and represents another truly significant step forward for both NATO and Israel.

“The posting of an Israeli Liaison Officer to the NATO Command in Naples is a further indication of the vitality of our cooperation, as was the demonstration of a NATO AWACS plane in Israel. And, last but not least, over the course of this year, Israel has participated in two major NATO/PfP military exercises in Romania and Ukraine.” [36]

A retired Israeli intelligence officer told an American news agency that the Individual Cooperation Program with NATO “allows for 2,000 joint activities – thrice the volume open to the countries involved in the Mediterranean Dialogue.” [37]

The previously mentioned Oded Eran, Israel’s representative at NATO headquarters, alluding to the Alliance’s military assistance clause, was quoted by the same source as saying that what had been achieved was “a multilateral umbrella....We don’t necessarily need article 5. The very fact we’re members of such an organization gives...a sort of guarantee.” [38]

By the end of 2006 Israel-NATO military integration had proceeded to the stage that:

The Jewish state was granted a partnership agreement with the Western military bloc more advanced than any accorded any other nation outside of Europe.

The nation’s foreign minister publicly called for her country’s inclusion in NATO’s Partnership for Peace program, which has recently successfully groomed twelve other states for full membership in the bloc.

Calls were being made in the West and Israel alike for the latter’s full membership in NATO.

Extending Article 5 protection, hitherto limited to full member states, to Israel was being advocated with the inescapable implication that a coalition of most of the world’s most powerful military nations, led by the self-designated world’s sole military superpower, would retaliate against Iran if it responded to an Israeli first strike attack. As the U.S. stations hundreds of nuclear warheads at NATO bases in Europe, including in Iran’s neighbor Turkey, invoking NATO’s war clause could provoke a nuclear conflagration.

The nation was being promoted as the linchpin of a new Global NATO as now U.S. ambassador to the Alliance Ivo Daalder openly proclaimed it.

In 2007 a Russian analyst warned of the consequences of the above developments:

“By admitting Israel Washington plans to use the alliance as an instrument for exerting pressure on Arab states and strengthening its position in the Middle East....Washington has no plans to restrict the expansion only by admitting Israel. The alliance desires to attract India, Japan, Australia and Singapore....The continuation of NATO expansion is undoubtedly

an alarming and dangerous idea that could split the world into groups of countries that oppose each other....According to the NATO Charter, an attack on a member state is considered as an aggression against all the members of the alliance [and] any conflict of Israel with its neighbours could become a source of a large-scale regional conflict that could turn into a global war." [39]

Undeterred by such grave considerations, even the threat of world war, Washington, Brussels and Tel Aviv continued their joint military collaboration.

In April of 2007 six NATO warships - from Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain and Turkey - docked in the Israeli Red Sea port of Eilat "for joint drills with the navy's Red Sea Task Force." [40] NATO had in effect extended its comprehensive Mediterranean Sea naval surveillance and interdiction operation, Active Endeavor, to the Red Sea and would later establish a permanent presence in the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea.

"Six NATO frigates commanded by a Turkish admiral arrived...in Haifa for a joint drill with Israeli Navy missile boats.

"Israel has been shoring up ties recently with NATO as part of preparations for any future showdown with Iran." [41]

Following the signing of the Individual Cooperation Program (ICP) the preceding November, in June NATO's Assistant Secretary General for Defence Policy and Planning John Colston visited Israel and invited the nation to provide troops for international Alliance missions. "We welcome very strongly the interest of a whole range of partner nations in participating in NATO-led operations around the world. There are currently seven to eight thousand troops from non-NATO nations participating in missions and further such contributions are always welcome." In Colson's words, troop and other contributions - presumably to Afghanistan in the first case - would "fill the ICP framework with practical cooperation."

The NATO official confirmed his organization's plans to "add Israel to NATO's 'operational capabilities concept' with the goal of creating better cooperation between the militaries...that would lay the groundwork for potential Israeli participation in NATO-led missions."

What such missions would entail was indicated by Colson's announcement that "We agreed to share lessons from Afghanistan with Israel to gain and benefit from one another." [42]

NATO Deputy Secretary-General Claudio Bisogniero visited Israel in October for two days of meetings arranged by the Atlantic Forum of Israel. "Bisogniero and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni are set to address the second annual NATO Israel Symposium at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya on Monday night, to be followed the next day by a seminar on NATO's role in the Middle East," a follow up to the 2006 two-day affair also addressed by Livni and by Bisogniero's predecessor, Alessandro Minuto Rizzo. Bisogniero arrived only three weeks after taking up his post and his trip marked the first anniversary of Israel's Individual Cooperation Program with NATO.

The Atlantic Forum's Uzi Arad said of the event "There is an evolving process of Israel and NATO drawing together. NATO is constantly transforming itself. As it looks at its role outside of Europe and in the Middle East, it looks into the prospect of closer Israel-NATO relations." [43]

The most significant comment at the symposium came from a (once and future) Israeli head of state: "Addressing the Atlantic Forum's symposium in Hertzliyah...former prime minister Netanyahu urged NATO to accept Israel as a 'full partner' by the year 2010." [44]

The next month the chiefs of general staff of Israel and Egypt (which followed Israel in entering into an Individual Cooperation Program) participated in a meeting of all 26 of their counterparts from NATO member states. In fact, "Chiefs of Defence of more than 60 Countries together with NATO's Supreme Allied Commander for Operations and NATO's Supreme Allied Commander for Transformation attended, at various levels, the NATO Military Committee Meetings." [45]

In December an Indian news source revealed more about NATO's increased cooperation with Israel within the context of building an Asia-Pacific and beyond that a Global NATO. "India will join North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) countries, as well as Israel, Japan, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand at the Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada in the United States in June-July 2008 for the Red Flag wargames for the first time." [46]

Israeli warplanes also participated in the 2009 Red Flag exercises.

This came against the backdrop of Israeli Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Strategic Affairs Avigdor Lieberman (current Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister), then past and future U.S. presidential candidates John Edwards and Rudolph Giuliani, former Spanish prime minister Jose Maria Aznar and other major Western figures demanding full NATO membership for Israel.

New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, who wrote two articles as far back as 2001 urging NATO to take over the Palestinian Gaza Strip and West Bank, in 2003 advocated that not only Israel but Egypt and (post-invasion) Iraq be welcomed as NATO member states. Incidentally, Friedman's call for NATO to subjugate Palestine was echoed in differing degrees by James Jones when he was U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Security and by Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft in 2008. The Jerusalem Post wrote early in that year about Jones, previously supreme commander of NATO and now the Obama administration's National Security Adviser, that "The United States is reviewing the feasibility of deploying a NATO force in the West Bank as a way to ease IDF security concerns....The plan, which is being spearheaded by US Special Envoy to the region Gen. James Jones, is being floated among European countries, which could be asked to contribute troops to a West Bank multinational force. [47]

Another news source described the plan in franker terms: "James Jones, a former Marine Corps general and NATO military commander from 2003-2005, has been assigned the task of preparing a plan to take over the military occupation of the Occupied Territories of Palestine on behalf of Israel's security interests.

"The plan for the West Bank will try to draw from the experience made by the deployment of the UNIFIL-forces, led by NATO-countries, but engaging African and Asian troops as well in southern Lebanon." [48]

NATO plans reach far beyond contingencies for patrolling Israel's borders with Gaza and the West Bank and even occupying and subjugating Palestinian territories.

A former George H.W. Bush administration State Department official (in the Bureau of

Politico-Military Affairs), Bennett Ramberg, wrote an article for a major U.S. newspaper almost two years ago bearing the title "An Israeli-NATO pact." It presented a scenario for military confrontation with Iran and overcoming Russian air defenses in that nation. The writer's suggestions included:

"As NATO expanded its international reach beyond the European theater in recent years, Israel's association has become a matter of discussion in Brussels....Israel's integration into NATO, possibly with a separate American security guarantee, would provide Israel with the defense in depth it has yearned for....[S]hould the United States consent to provide F-22 stealth fighter-bombers, Israel's capacity will increase. Equally impressive are the American-supplied bunker-buster bombs the aircraft may carry." [49]

In November of 2008 Israeli Chief of the General Staff Lieutenant General Gabi Ashkenazi attended a NATO meeting in Brussels in which he "set out the strategic threats to Israel and appeal[ed] for increased cooperation...."

Ashkenazi addressed the military chiefs of staff of all twenty six NATO states at the time and "presented the various threats to the State of Israel, the strategic challenges in the Middle East and the rise of global terrorism, as well as the need for increased cooperation between Israel and NATO members in order to confront the shared threats." [50]

The following month, December, with Israel's Operation Cast Lead assault on Gaza only weeks away, NATO expanded and enhanced its Individual Cooperation Program with Israel. "The agreement allows for an exchange of intelligence information and security expertise on different subjects, an increase in the number of joint Israel-NATO military exercises and further cooperation in the fight against nuclear proliferation.

"It also paves the way for an improvement of collaboration in the fields of rearmament and logistics and Israel's electronic link to the NATO system."

Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Livni was present for the signing of the pact and said, "Israel's security capabilities are a household name and we see the strengthening of cooperation between Israel and the international security body as a strategic objective that reinforces Israel.

"Israel is a power within the international index when it comes to the army and its capabilities in the fight against terror; the whole world recognizes this and the expansion of cooperation between Israel and NATO as it was expressed this morning is important proof of this." [51]

On December 8 NATO hosted a delegation from the Atlantic Forum of Israel at its headquarters in Brussels.

On December 27 Tel Aviv began its relentless attacks in Gaza, replete with reports of the use of white phosphorous bombs and depleted uranium weaponry.

The president of the United Nations General Assembly at the time, Nicaragua's Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, criticized the offensive as a breach of international law and said, "Gaza is ablaze. It has been turned into a burning hell." [52]

A week and a half into the attacks a Russian news source wrote that "American planners want to carry 3,000 tonnes of ammunition from the Greek port of Astakos to the Israeli port

of Ashdod” and “An even larger shipment of arms, which included laser-guided bombs, arrived in December.” [53]

In the middle of the assaults and carnage NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer arrived in Tel Aviv to deliver a speech to the Atlantic Forum highlighted by his contention that “This is a new NATO.” In a feature with that title, Israel’s Haaretz newspaper printed remarks by Scheffer which included:

“NATO has transformed to address the challenges of today and tomorrow. We have built partnerships around the globe from Japan to Australia to Pakistan and, of course, with the important countries of the Mediterranean and the Gulf.”

“[The] Alliance is projecting stability in Afghanistan, in Kosovo, in the Mediterranean (with Israeli support), and elsewhere – including fighting pirates off the Somali coast – without in any way diluting our core task to defend NATO member states and populations. Finally, we are looking at playing new roles, as well, in energy security and cyber defence....”

“In 2005 and in 2006 Israel participated in two NATO military exercises. In addition, the NATO-Israel Agreement on the Security of Information allows us to share intelligence....In 2006 Israel decided to contribute to NATO’s...Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean....”

“Israel has been the first country to finalize with NATO, in October 2006, a very detailed individual cooperation program, which had been revised and upgraded last November.” [54]

Scheffer met with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Foreign Affairs Minister Tzipi Livni, and Livni and Scheffer “discussed means of cooperation between Israel and NATO with regard to the war on terror and methods of preventing smuggling into the Gaza Strip” even as the fighting continued.” [55]

Olmert assured Scheffer that “Israel stands behind NATO and fully supports its struggle against terrorism, just as we expect that you will understand us in our struggle against terrorism....” He also “discussed with him the situation in southern Israel and the Gaza Strip since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead.” [56]

The NATO website reported that Scheffer also met with Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak and now prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In his Atlantic Forum address he said, “Israel has been a most enthusiastic Mediterranean Dialogue partner and that tells me that this country knows full well about the Dialogue and about the benefits that it brings”. [57]

In March Livni returned the favor by flying to Brussels to meet with Scheffer.

The next month the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung office in Jerusalem released the results of a study it commissioned on Israeli attitudes towards NATO intervention in the Gaza Strip and full membership in the military bloc. Dr. Lars Hansel, the head of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Israel, was quoted by the Jerusalem Post:

“[T]he German marines deployed on the Lebanese coast...are seen (by Israelis) as a welcome development. We are clearly sensing a shift in discourse in Israel about this.” [58]

A poll conducted by an Israeli research group demonstrated how successful the efforts of Uzi Arad’s Atlantic Forum and its allies have been.

"[A] majority of respondents (54%) supported outright Israeli membership in NATO (33% did not). Support rose to 60% when only Jewish responses were counted. Almost two-thirds of Israeli Jews support sending NATO troops to the West Bank in a peacekeeping capacity....Israeli Jews supported the presence of NATO peacekeepers in Palestinian areas by 62 percent to 34%, the study found. But that support was not shared among Israeli Arabs, who opposed the idea by 44% to 24%." [59]

As an indication that words may soon be translated into action, Haaretz wrote last April that "The possibility of an Israeli attack against a nuclear Iran...will be a test of the willingness of NATO's member states to implement Article 5 of the treaty's convention...." [60]

An analysis published by China's Xinhua News Agency last July, "Israel pushes for major upgrade in relations with NATO," stated "Reports in the Israeli media this week suggest that Israel is looking forward to participation in several key exercises and operations with NATO and individual NATO members during the remainder of 2009.

"However, this seems to be only part of plans for a much broader gradual integration into NATO by Israel."

It added "Some reports suggest Israel's desire to cooperate with NATO and to up its operational exercises is Israel's further preparation for any attack on Iran." [61]

The same news agency also reported in July that "the IAF [Israeli Air Force] will take part later this year in a joint aerial exercise with a NATO-member state, which is yet to be identified," quoting "Israeli defense officials as saying that the overseas exercises would be used to drill long- range maneuvers." The source also mentioned that "In 2007, Israeli warplanes bombed a suspected nuclear site inside Syria.

"Last summer, over 100 IAF jets flew over Greece in an exercise widely seen as a test-run for a potential air raid on Iran's nuclear facilities." [62]

Late last autumn as the U.S. and NATO prepared to increase troop strength in Afghanistan to over 150,000, the full reciprocity and the geographical range of Israeli-NATO military cooperation were revealed.

The Chairman of NATO's Military Committee, Admiral Giampaolo Di Paola, paid a two-day visit to Tel Aviv to meet with leaders of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and "to study the tactics and methods of the IDF" and "was studying the IDF in order to gain a better understanding of how to deal with the ongoing war in Afghanistan." [63]

A senior Israeli defense official spoke of a meeting between the head of NATO's Military Committee and Israeli Chief of the General Staff Lieutenant-General Gabi Ashkenazi: "The one thing on NATO's mind today is how to win in Afghanistan. [Di Paola] was very impressed by the IDF, which is a major source of information due to our operational experience."

Di Paola "noted that NATO and the IDF were facing similar threats - NATO in Afghanistan and Israel in its war against Hamas and Hizbullah." [64]

Israel has trained Czech helicopter crews in a desert base for deployment to Afghanistan and has supplied and offered its Heron drones to Canada, Germany and other NATO states for the war in that nation.

As another portent of what Brussels and Tel Aviv are jointly anticipating – if not planning – NATO sponsored a three-day course in Haifa in November that provided “emergency management professionals with training on staff teaching and preparation methods in the face of mass casualty situations.

“These situations include all emergencies causing a large number of casualties that require special organisation and response by local, regional and national medical and other services.” [65]

Earlier in the month NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander and U.S. European Command chief Admiral James Stavridis arrived in the Israeli capital to meet with “Chief of the General Staff, Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Maj. Gen. Benjamin Gantz and several other commanders. The Admiral [was] accompanied by other EUCOM commanders.” [66]

The occasion was the last day of the two-week Operation Juniper Cobra 10, the most recent and by far the largest of biennial joint U.S.-Israeli military exercises. Last year’s was on an unparalleled scale, in fact the biggest-ever joint war games between the two nations. 1,400 American troops and seventeen warships participated in what is probably the most ambitious layered, integrated missile defense exercises ever staged anywhere. [67] “An unprecedented number of American generals, along with 1,400 U.S. army soldiers, are participating with top IDF brass in the high-level Juniper Cobra military exercise that one U.S. Navy commander said is aimed at ‘specific threats.’” [68]

The unprecedented drills came shortly after the current U.S. administration announced plans to cancel the ground-based midcourse missile project of President George W. Bush in Eastern Europe in favor of what President Barack Obama on September 17 affirmed were “stronger, smarter, and swifter defenses of American forces and America’s allies.” Reports had surfaced earlier that the U.S. and NATO were to abandon the project of basing ground-based interceptor missiles in Poland and a complementary radar installation in the Czech Republic and instead deploy far more mobile, often non-detectable missile interceptor components to Israel, the Balkans, Turkey and the South Caucasus. [69]

Last year’s Juniper Cobra exercises were the opening salvo for the new plan, clearly prepared for long in advance.

The official purpose was to protect Israel from possible Iranian missile attacks, but the truth is far different. More than a year before, the Pentagon’s European Command, whose top military commander is also NATO’s supreme commander, installed a missile shield radar base in Israel’s Negev Desert, near the host country’s nuclear program at Dimona. The American Forward Based X-Band Transportable Radar has a range of 2,900 miles [4,300 kilometers], far more than what would be required for Iran but sufficient to cover all of western and much of southern Russia.

120 U.S. military personnel were assigned to the base, the first foreign troops to ever be stationed in Israel. Juniper Cobra was the testing phase for U.S. global interceptor missile deployments in the Middle East and beyond. The new American plans have been described by the White House and the Pentagon to be fully integrated with NATO to encompass all of Europe, and Israel’s role in those designs is pivotal. Last autumn’s U.S.-Israeli missile exercises helped “the United States craft its European missile shield...Featuring in the...maneuvers is Aegis, a U.S. Navy anti-missile system that the administration of

President Barack Obama plans to deploy in the eastern Mediterranean as the first part of a missile shield for Europe announced last month.” [70]

As a U.S. Army officer present for Juniper Cobra stated at the time, “On a wider perspective, what the Americans learn from these complex exercises will help shape a NATO defense shield for Europe.” [71]

Earlier this month Israel announced that it has successfully tested what it calls its Iron Dome short- and medium-range anti-missile system, which consists of the newly-developed Arrow 2 and David’s Sling interceptor missiles. The first Arrow “was deployed in 2000, and Israel and the United States have since conducted a joint, biennial missile defense exercise, called Juniper Cobra, to work on integrating the weapons, radars and other systems of the two countries.” [72]

Last May in the “first meeting of senior Israeli defense officials with the Obama administration’s new staff at the Pentagon,” the Director General of Israeli Ministry of Defense, General Pinchas Buhris, and American counterparts in Washington, DC it was announced that the U.S. will fully fund a \$100 million advanced Arrow 3 missile defense system.

“Israel and the United States are also developing David’s Sling – a missile defense system for medium-range missile with a range between 70 and 250 kilometers. The Arrow 3 will be a longer-range version of the Arrow defense system currently in IDF operation. It will be capable of intercepting incoming enemy missiles at higher altitudes and farther away from Israel.” [73]

In July the Pentagon’s Missile Defense Agency worked with Israel to test the Arrow system at a U.S. range in the Pacific Ocean.

The head of the U.S. Missile Defense Agency, Army Lieutenant General Patrick O’Reilly, said regarding the Pacific drills that “the test will allow Israel to measure its advanced Arrow system against a target with a range of more than 620 miles (1,000 km), too long for previous Arrow test sites in the eastern Mediterranean.

An unnamed U.S. Defense Department official was quoted by Reuters as saying “The upcoming test...provides us the opportunity to have the Patriot system, the THAAD [Terminal High Altitude Area Defense] system and the Aegis system all interacting with the Arrow system so that we’re demonstrating full interoperability as we execute this test.” The same four interceptor missile systems were used jointly in the Juniper Cobra exercises in October and November. [74]

Other NATO states are also assisting the missile and general military buildup for a potential catastrophe in the Middle East, most notably Germany, which will double the amount of Dolphin submarines it has provided Israel. Dolphins are considered capable of carrying Israeli nuclear cruise missiles for any future conflict with Iran. “A bigger Dolphin fleet could allow Israel the option of basing some in its Red Sea port of Eilat, providing a short-cut to the Gulf. An Israeli submarine crossed the Suez Canal for an exercise off Eilat last July, the first such deployment.” [75]

On January 11 Haaretz wrote that “The U.S. Army will double the value of emergency military equipment it stockpiles on Israeli soil, and Israel will be allowed to use the U.S.

ordnance in the event of a military emergency....” Citing the U.S.-based Defense News, the Israeli newspaper added, “an agreement reached between Washington and Jerusalem last month will bring the value of the military gear to \$800 million.

“This is the final phase of a process that began over a year ago to determine the type and amount of U.S. weapons and ammunition to be stored in Israel, part of an overarching American effort to stockpile weapons in areas in which its army may need to operate while allowing American allies to make use of the ordnance in emergencies.”

It also revealed that “The deal allows Israel access to a wider spectrum of military ordnance, and the U.S. [is] considering which forms of military supplies would be added to stores in Israel. Missiles, armored vehicles, aerial ammunition and artillery ordnance are already stockpiled in the country.” [76]

The U.S., Israel and NATO are preparing for momentous events in the Middle East. They will not be peaceful ones.

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