

## Keeping Hamas and Hezbollah Out of a War with Iran

The endgame in the decade-long global confrontation over Iran's nuclear program is arriving. If the Islamic Republic and the P5+1 (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and United States as well as Germany) fail to achieve agreement soon after the U.S. elections in November 2012, a military confrontation between Iran and Israel, and conceivably the United States, may soon materialize. According to recent statements by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, if further talks do not produce concrete results by the spring of 2013, Jerusalem will face the decision of whether to exercise a military strike in order to stall the Iranians or to pivot to a containment strategy vis-à-vis Tehran.<sup>1</sup> This will, in turn, force Washington to decide whether to approve a military option by Israel, prevent it, or attack Iran itself.

One crucial element that the Obama or Romney and Netanyahu administrations must consider is what kind of regional response a preventative strike might provoke. Since the early 1980s, when the Iranian Revolutionary Guard played a crucial role in creating Hezbollah to counter the Israeli presence in Lebanon, Iran has built a powerful, self-proclaimed "Axis of Resistance" meant to promote Iranian interests around the Middle East. Hezbollah's and later Hamas' gain in power, and Syria's movement into the Iranian orbit after Bashar Assad assumed control following his father's death in 2000, all gave Iran a strong deterrent to its chief enemies, the United States and Israel. Iran's alliances no

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doubt emboldened the regime to continue to pursue nuclear technology, despite continual international demands and increasingly harsh sanctions since 2005.

For most of those seven years, the prevailing assumption among Israeli and American intelligence agencies has been that an Israeli attack on Iran would trigger a coordinated response from Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas, resulting in a full-blown regional war and mass

casualties in Israel as well as among American troops stationed in the Middle East. (The response from Syria was less clear as Damascus has also long used Hamas and Hezbollah as its proxies to hit Israel, rather than risk directly igniting or involving itself in a war it was sure to lose.) This assumption was at the heart of former Mossad Chief Meir Dagan's analysis and his ultimately public recommendation that Israel refrain from a military strike.<sup>2</sup>

But at the very moment when Tehran may be counting on its decades of investment in the two Islamist militant groups to pay its largest dividends, the upheaval in the Arab world has shuffled the deck. The current strife in Syria has sent ripple effects from the Mediterranean Sea to the Strait of Hormuz, destabilizing the Axis of Resistance and nominally placing Hamas and Hezbollah on different sides of the fissures that have blown open in the Arab and Muslim worlds. This geopolitical reorientation presents an opportunity for Israel and the United States to reclaim the upper hand in regional deterrence—if they are willing to act quickly and modify their own regional strategies.

### **Hezbollah's Calculations**

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The extent to which non-state militant groups are susceptible to deterrence strategies depends on five main factors: the group's ideology; organizational structure; elements of statehood (including political authority, territorial control, and ties to a dependent population); external support; and inter-factional competition. In the wake of the extraordinary changes in the Middle East over the last year, an examination of Hamas and Hezbollah utilizing these factors yields diverging results when it comes to a possible confrontation with Iran.

Hezbollah's ideology and organizational structure are closely tied. It is a Shia Islamist group which preaches allegiance above all others to the *wali-al-faqih*, or the person who is both Shia jurist and Shia theologian. Currently, that person is Supreme Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Hezbollah may be a Lebanese party, as it always insists to its domestic audience, but its ideology compels it to

“unconditionally follow” the religious rulings of the *wali-al-faqih*, as Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah said in 1987.<sup>3</sup> Among many other similar statements, the Hezbollah chief added in 1997 that “the decision of peace and war is in the hands of the *wali-al-faqih*.”<sup>4</sup> Though those statements are more than a decade old, and political considerations have constrained Nasrallah’s pro-Iran rhetoric, he has never contradicted those fundamental ideological proclamations. Thus, if Khamenei orders Hezbollah to war, its cadres are religiously bound to obey that directive.

Hezbollah is also tied to Iran beyond a mere ideological element: Hezbollah owes its very existence to Iran. Without Iran’s initial support from 1982–1985, the group of clerics and militants that originally formed the Party of God—the literal meaning of Hezbollah—may not have succeeded in breaking off from the older and more established Shia faction, Amal, during the Lebanese Civil War. In the wake of Israel’s ill-fated 1982 invasion of Lebanon, around 1,500 men from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard set up training camps in the Bekka Valley. The Bekka is where Hezbollah recruits were first indoctrinated to Khomeini’s vision of political Shiism and trained to resist what he perceived as the hegemonic order that the United States, with Israeli assistance, was attempting to establish in the region. In the 30 years since, aid from Iran to Hezbollah has increased, as Hezbollah proved exceedingly adept at fighting Israel in a war of attrition; providing for the social welfare of Lebanon’s long-underprivileged Shia population; and gaining public support in the state as a result of both. According to Israeli Defense Forces officials familiar with the most recent intelligence, Iranian aid to Hezbollah is now estimated at around \$700 million per year.<sup>5</sup> Without that financial assistance supporting Hezbollah’s web of social-religious institutions, military hardware transfers, and continued training of Hezbollah fighters in Iran, Hezbollah could likely not have succeeded in driving the Israeli army out of Lebanon in 2000, fought the IDF to a draw in 2006, or risen to become the most powerful political faction in Beirut.

Hezbollah prides itself on establishing a “society of resistance” among its supporters.<sup>6</sup> A key source of the Party’s strength is its ability to retain that support in the wake of extensive death and destruction perpetrated upon Lebanon by the IDF over the years (particularly in 1993, 1996, and 2006), and refocus popular anger back at Israel. Indeed, after each round of fighting, Hezbollah was able to grow stronger both in its military capabilities and its political influence within Lebanon, despite the criticism leveled by its domestic opponents that it needlessly provoked harsh Israeli military action at the expense of the Lebanese people.

But Hezbollah does have its weak spot in the deterrence equation: its affinity with and responsibility for Lebanese civilians—particularly the Shia population. After the 2006 war, even as he claimed “divine victory” against Israel on behalf

of Hezbollah, Nasrallah was forced to concede that he had miscalculated. If there was even a “one percent” chance, the Hezbollah chief said, that he thought Israel would have meted out such extensive punishment on Lebanon—over 1,000 Lebanese killed and between \$7-15 billion in damage during the 2006 war—he would not have ordered the kidnapping operation that triggered the war.<sup>7</sup> In that statement, surprising for its candor, Nasrallah tacitly admitted the dilemma in which Hezbollah finds itself: with the Party’s political ascendancy, the one-time Islamist guerilla fighters are now responsible for the welfare of the Lebanese people to a degree which they never were before. And with Israel out of southern Lebanon, whenever the Party’s decisions cause suffering among the people—even among those that claim to be willing to endure it—the group has a much harder time convincing the Lebanese public that its actions are justified in the name of resisting Israel and the United States.

More than any other reason, Hezbollah experts say this is why the Party of God, which is religiously pledged to resist Israel until Judgment Day, has remained so quiet since the 2006 war. This attitude is clearly reflected in an interview I conducted in Tel Aviv with the recently retired IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi in May 2012: “I think foreigners are not understanding the level of destruction that we did in 2006, and the price that the support base of Hezbollah in the south and in Beirut paid was enormously high, way higher” than in previous operations, he told me. “[The Lebanese] people started to ask, ‘Why are we doing it? The Israelis left Lebanon. We have a military. Why is Hezbollah dragging us into this war? Because [it] kidnapped [IDF] soldiers? That’s not serving the Lebanese interests.’” Indeed, by needlessly provoking Israeli action, Hezbollah risks losing domestic support, especially if the damage and death toll climb too high. More than anything else, this has kept Hezbollah relatively quiet since 2006.

Since that war, Israeli deterrence against Hezbollah has proven totally reliable within the region, contrary to initial post-war assessments. Nowhere was that deterrence proven more effectively than during Israel’s 2008–09 war with Hamas, when Hezbollah only allowed a few token rocket launchings by Palestinian groups in southern Lebanon. After a fierce internal debate on whether to involve itself in the war, Hezbollah took no action of its own against the Jewish State, despite the pounding Gaza suffered from the IDF. Additionally, after Hezbollah’s chief of external security, Imad Mugniyeh, was killed in Damascus in 2008, presumably by Israel, the group’s only responses have come in other places around the world, such as in Bulgaria, Thailand, and India. Hezbollah has not fired a single rocket at Israel since the end of the 2006 war.

Since Hezbollah no longer has any domestic competitors in its resistance campaign against Israel, and its organizational structure is both hierarchical and geared toward carrying out whatever decision its leadership sees fit, it is logical

to conclude that its ideology, external support, and elements of statehood will be the three determining factors in whether it can be deterred from entering the fray of an Iran–Israeli/American war.<sup>8</sup> Though Israel has deterred Hezbollah since 2006, a mixed picture has emerged regarding whether Israel could deter Hezbollah’s entry in case of a war with Iran. On a religious level, the group simply cannot disobey Khamenei if he ordered it to attack. And on a strategic level, though by now the Party would likely remain viable in Lebanon without Iranian support, it could not hope to sustain the same level of power it currently enjoys without that backing.

During an April 2012 trip to Australia, Lebanese President Michel Suleiman said that Lebanon, including Hezbollah, would not attack Israel during a war with Iran unless Israel struck Lebanon first.<sup>9</sup> Such a statement seemed oddly placed, as no one other than the top Hezbollah leadership ever speaks for the Party on matters of policy. More likely, it was an attempt by Suleiman to pressure Hezbollah to avoid the potential conflict altogether, and thus spare Lebanon another round of crippling war.

In his own comments on the subject, Nasrallah said in February that the Iranian leadership would “not ask Hezbollah to do anything” if a war broke out with Israel. “On that day, we will sit, think, and decide what to do,” he said.<sup>10</sup> Whether, in fact, Khamenei would refrain from ordering Hezbollah into the war is probably known only to a few people in the world—none of them outside the innermost circles of Iranian and Hezbollah leadership. Still, even if Khamenei did order Hezbollah to attack, Nasrallah would likely publicly insist that Hezbollah acted of its own accord to resist Israel, in order to mitigate domestic political criticism.

Such criticism would likely include the decades-old charge that Hezbollah is an Iranian proxy at its core, rather than an independent Lebanese party as its leadership insists. Hezbollah’s vulnerability in this regard is now greater than ever, given its preeminent position in Lebanese politics. “If Hezbollah loses support of the Shia [in Lebanon], it doesn’t matter how much Iran gives them, they are doomed,” I was told in May by Nicholas Blanford, a Beirut-based journalist and author of a recent book on Hezbollah’s 30-year war against Israel.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, in previous confrontations with Israel, Hezbollah could count on billions of dollars of Iranian cash to aid in the reconstruction process in Lebanon. But with Iran suffering from international sanctions and, in the event of a war, needing to rebuild for its own people, such cash deliveries may not be forthcoming.

All of this has set up a “damned if you do, damned if you don’t” scenario for Hezbollah that is probably Nasrallah’s worst nightmare. If it does not join the fight against Israel, it could lose the crucial support of Iran in financing its social-religious institutions, and arming and training its fighters. But if it *does*

**Analysts are divided about Hezbollah's likely behavior in the event of a war.**

join the fight, Hezbollah could lose the support of a majority of its power base within Lebanon. Those conflicting influences are why analysts on opposite sides of the Israel–Lebanon border largely come to different conclusions about Hezbollah's likely behavior in the event of a war. While Hezbollah watchers inside Lebanon generally believe the Shia group will refrain from entering the fray, almost all of the security establishment inside Israel is convinced the Party of God will attack.

Hezbollah's stance on the current Syria crisis may yield a glimpse of the Party's potential thinking vis-à-vis an attack on Iran. Unlike Hamas, which backed the aspirations of the Syrian people and closed its Damascus headquarters, Hezbollah has come to the aid of the Bashar Assad regime. This resulted in a plunge in support in the Arab Street for the once-revered organization, but also retained Syria, at least for the time being, in the Axis of Resistance. It is a trade-off that Hezbollah apparently feels is in its best interests.

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### **Hamas' Divergent Considerations**

The situation with Hamas—also known as the Islamic Resistance Movement—is vastly different. To begin with, Hamas is Sunni rather than Shia, and therefore recognizes no single religious authority. This allows religious clerics within the movement (and within the international Muslim Brotherhood, of which it is a branch) to debate and decide for themselves what actions are consistent with its religious precepts. Subsequently, over the course of its history, the Islamic Resistance Movement has found religious justification for basically every course of action which it found to be expedient at the time. For example, in 1996, it used Islam to justify its partial boycott of the Palestinian Authority elections, while in 2006 it turned about-face and used religion to justify its political participation.

The ideology of Hamas does revolve around violent resistance to Israel, as its heretofore unamended charter and numerous statements from its leaders make clear. But encoded in the Muslim Brotherhood DNA is a patience and steadfastness which privileges long-term goals and deliberate methods over short-term objectives and reactionary thinking. Thus, as Sheik Mahmoud Musleh, a co-founder of Hamas in the West Bank, told me in September 2011: “Using force is not an end, it is a means, and therefore Hamas looks at it in such a way.”

Hamas has connections to Hezbollah, and by extension Iran. The relationship began in 1992, when Israel expelled hundreds of Hamas leaders and activists to Lebanon during the middle of winter. Cared for at the time by Hezbollah, the Hamas leaders eventually met with Iranian Revolutionary Guard representatives in Lebanon and later in Tehran. Only then did Iran and Hezbollah begin funding, equipping, and training Hamas.<sup>12</sup> (It is no coincidence that the first successful suicide bombings perpetrated by Hamas came in the beginning of 1994, after the group received instruction from Hezbollah.)

These relationships grew over the years of the Oslo Accords—a time when Iran, Hamas, and Hezbollah, along with other factions like Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), jointly attempted to torpedo the mutually threatening Israeli–Palestinian peace negotiations. By the time the second Palestinian *intifada* erupted in 2000, Hezbollah was actively aiding Hamas as well as PIJ, and encouraging Palestinians to use its own example of violent resistance in order to drive Israel out of Palestinian lands. Hamas drifted further into the Axis of Resistance after Hezbollah’s 2006 war with Israel, when the Palestinian Islamists looked to Hezbollah as a successful example of how to wage war against the IDF.

Despite the shared history, Hamas’ relationship with Hezbollah and Iran was more a marriage of convenience than true ideological kinship. For example, Hamas operated differently in its regional relations than Hezbollah, cultivating relationships with the Sunni world in a way that Hezbollah never could or would. As a result, Hamas could, at times, receive support from countries like Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Sudan, and even Jordan. In the end, a common Sunni bond remained between Hamas and the rest of the Arab world, even when Hamas found itself on the opposite side of the political divide, pitting American-aligned Arab states against Iran, Syria, and their proxies. This common bond was strong enough that when the Arab people rose up in 2011 to confront their ossified governments, Hamas aligned itself with those mass movements.

In Egypt, the decision to side with the people was easy: Hosni Mubarak had proven himself a stalwart enemy of Hamas. However, making this decision in Syria was much more complicated. After being expelled from Jordan in 1999, Hamas found a very accommodating home for its external headquarters in Damascus. The Assad regimes—father and son—were only too happy to host the Islamic Resistance, utilizing the group as a means of applying pressure on Israel to return the Golan Heights and to thwart American ambitions in the region. Hamas’ decision in December 2011 to pack up its office and abandon Bashar

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Assad brought a stinging rebuke from Iran and a marked decrease in financial support. (Whether Iran fully stopped funding to Hamas or not remains unclear, as statements by Hamas and Iranian leaders, and intelligence assessments by foreign security agencies, leave room for interpretation.)<sup>13</sup> Despite visits to Tehran by Gazan Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh and other Hamas leaders since then, Hamas–Iran relations seem unlikely to return to their formally strong state any time soon.

Additionally, dissolving the Damascus bureau scattered Hamas' external political and military leaders around the Middle East. Now lacking a headquarters outside of Gaza, the Islamic Resistance Movement is looking to cut deals with a Sunni world which largely finds itself siding against Iran, or at the very least not siding with it. Hamas is playing quiet with Israel for the time being, likely in order to get in good graces with the likes of Turkey, Egypt (where the Muslim Brotherhood was elected to control the parliament and presidency), Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

Unlike Hezbollah, which has a single chain of command stemming from Hassan Nasrallah, Hamas' organizational structure is highly complex and its decision-making process is opaque. In 1989, Musa Abu Marzouk gave Hamas its current organizational structure after Israel arrested nearly the entire Hamas leadership, and differences within the group—between more moderate and extreme members, between the political and military branches, or between the internal and external leadership—have almost always been kept in-house and resolved based on Hamas' procedure of consultation and consensus for all major decisions. But in the last year, that unified front to the outside world collapsed. Following outgoing Politburo Chief Khaled Mishal's February power-sharing agreement with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who disapproves of violence against Israel, the Gaza-based Hamas leadership said it was not consulted by Mishal and indicated it would not implement the accord in its current form. Since then, Haniyeh and Abu Marzouk have both reiterated Hamas' right to violently resist Israel under any terms it sees fit.

That rhetoric notwithstanding, the actions of Hamas in Gaza tell a much different story about its current attitude toward violence against Israel. Following Israel's disengagement from Gaza in 2005, Hamas' electoral victory in 2006, and the group's military takeover of Gaza in 2007, Hamas now has territorial and political control of Gaza and is fully responsible for the welfare of its inhabitants. These responsibilities have, as in the case with Hezbollah, placed the Islamic Resistance Movement in a difficult position. If it acts in a manner which provokes a tough Israeli response, it risks the welfare of Gaza's population as well as its own control of the territory. Moreover, Hamas fared far worse in its 2008–2009 war with Israel than did Hezbollah in 2006. Hamas accomplished none of its stated goals, which included kidnapping Israeli soldiers, killing hundreds of

IDF personnel by utilizing waves of suicide bombers, and terrorizing Israeli civilians. Due to the Israeli-Egyptian blockade of Gaza, Hamas was also unable to rebuild damaged infrastructure and compensate residents as Hezbollah did.

The result is that Hamas has been significantly deterred since the beginning of 2009. Rocket attacks from Gaza against the Jewish state have decreased by at least 75 percent since before the Gaza war.<sup>14</sup> Those attacks that are launched against Israel from Gaza almost always come from other militant groups in the territory. In essence, Hamas is effectively refraining from violence against Israel, even as its leaders maintain the right to do so. Additionally, Hamas' popularity in Gaza has plunged to depths not seen since the mid-1990s. "The burden is big on the shoulder of the government. The resistance might cost you a lot once you are trying to build the infrastructure for the Palestinian life," Ahmed Yousef, a long-time political adviser for the Hamas leadership, told me in Gaza in September 2011. "Resistance and trying to focus on building the infrastructure of Palestinian life . . . can't go hand in hand."

The inter-factional competition Hamas experiences in Gaza, along with the group's more horizontal organizational structure (its military wing has from time-to-time acted on its own without consulting the political echelons), are probably what account for the difference between the total deterrence established by Israel against Hezbollah in-theater and the partial-but-strong deterrence established against Hamas. Nevertheless, the combined result of Israeli deterrence against both Islamist movements lends significant credence to theories contending that bringing certain types of militant movements into politics can moderate their actions, even if it cannot moderate their ideology.

Taking stock of these factors for how Hamas will act in the event of a war with Iran, it seems much more likely that Israel can maintain deterrence against Hamas than against Hezbollah. Inter-factional competition with PIJ as well as others, and the possibility that more extreme elements in the military wing may act independently of the central decision-making body of the organization, leave open the potential for some action by Hamas, or by other groups in Gaza. But the Palestinian Islamist group will not be religiously compelled to act with Iran; its independent relationship with Teheran is far weaker than Hezbollah's; and Hamas is desperately trying to rebuild popular support in Gaza after its multi-fold failures during the 2008–09 war with Israel and afterward.

## Breaking Off Hamas

In the end, Israel or the United States can do little to keep Hezbollah from siding with Iran in a potential conflict, other than clearly signaling the consequences. A string of senior IDF personnel have warned Hezbollah that any attack on Israel would precipitate an Israeli response far more severe than that of

2006—one in which numerous villages in southern Lebanon would be leveled. Operating according to the “Dahiyeh Doctrine,” named after the devastation the IDF meted out in 2006 upon the neighborhood in south Beirut that is Hezbollah’s stronghold, senior IDF officials describe a strategy based on reacting “sharper, harder, and in some ways very violent,” to use the words of Brig. Gen. Herzi Halevy, commander of the IDF’s 91st Division.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the warnings, if Khamenei orders Hezbollah to join the fight, it will. The same cannot be said of Hamas. Currently, Hamas’ potential course is a source of disagreement within the group. While Prime Minister Haniyeh told *Reuters* that “Iran is not in need of [Hamas],” Foreign Minister Mahmoud al-Zahar told the Iranian semi-official Fars news agency that Hamas would respond “with the utmost power” against Israel if it attacks Iran.<sup>16</sup>

Given the terrifying casualty numbers and extensive destruction of infrastructure that Israel and U.S. forces in the Middle East could suffer in the scenario of a regional war (which would include Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, Israel

and the United States), it behooves Washington and Jerusalem to attempt to firmly remove Hamas from the Iranian sphere of influence.<sup>17</sup> Doing so would benefit the P5 + 1 at the negotiating table as well. As Iran sees its once formidable Axis of Resistance dwindle down to only itself and possibly Hezbollah (given Bashar Assad’s own problems, Syria may not be in a position to act), the Iranian regime will be forced into new calculations regarding what price is worth paying

to maintain its nuclear program. Israel should therefore consider negotiations with Hamas.

Since 1988, prominent leaders within Hamas, like its late founder Sheik Ahmed Yassin and al-Zahar, have publicly offered Israel a long-term ceasefire of 10-30 years, based on an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders and a return of Palestinian refugees to pre-1967 Israel. Those are terms even the most left-leaning Israeli leader cannot accept. However, the situation on the ground has changed dramatically over the last three years, and Hamas has changed with it. Entering into negotiations now may yield better results.

In order to mitigate the threat from Hamas, Israel should offer Hamas a medium-term ceasefire, on the order of five years or so. In exchange for this period of quiet, during which Hamas would firmly crack down on the other militant factions in Gaza (which they proved capable of doing during a 2008 Egyptian-brokered ceasefire with Israel), Jerusalem should be willing to dramatically loosen its blockade of Gaza. The Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian army could help to negotiate such an arrangement and incorporate it

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into a security package governing both Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula, the latter of which has seen a dramatic reduction in security since the fall of Mubarak.

A deal along those lines stands to benefit Israel, Hamas, Egypt, and the United States. Israel locks in a period of quiet with Hamas, placing pressure on Iran in its nuclear negotiations, and guaranteeing a quiet southern front in the event of a military altercation with Iran. Hamas finally gets the opportunity to prove that it can govern (or the opportunity to fail on its own, depending on one's perspective). The Muslim Brotherhood, which is already holding talks with Israeli and American officials, gains international legitimacy at a time when it is seeking to prove to the world that it can lead a responsible government in Egypt. And the United States maintains Egypt in its sphere of influence, or at least mitigates it turning into an enemy, at an important inflection point of Middle East history.

### **A Brief Window of Opportunity**

Israel's recent history is one of failing to make strategic agreements during times of relative strength. Instead, it has reacted to developments once it is backed into a corner. For example, it was compelled to lighten the blockade on Gaza after the IDF killed nine people in the May 2010 flotilla incident. Rather than remaining comfortable with the strategic situation as it currently stands with Hamas, Israel should recognize that, in its history, the Islamic Resistance Movement has bounced back from far worse predicaments than the current one. Israel should therefore take the initiative and lock in favorable terms with Hamas while Jerusalem holds the stronger hand.

This is an extraordinarily rare moment of political alignment between Israel, the United States, and the Sunni Muslim world. No Arab or Muslim government, save perhaps Syria, wants Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon. This has led to unprecedented cooperation between the likes of Israel and Saudi Arabia, even if it is mostly out of the public eye.<sup>18</sup> Reaching a deal now with Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, which could produce five years of quiet, might go a long way toward détente between Israel and Sunni Muslim states, the latter of which are in the process of rewriting their political playbooks. It would provide cover for the American-aligned governments of the region to cooperate with Jerusalem and Washington against Teheran more overtly. And it would give millions of people in the Arab world that are, by and large, extremely hostile to Israel the opportunity to see the Jewish state in a different light.

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But the time to act is now, because once the first shot is fired against Iran, the cards will shuffle again and all bets will be off.

## Notes

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