

# **POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN ISRAEL**

**IRE215**

**SPRING 2019**

**Session 8**



**Maya Hadar**

# On The Agenda



2

- **Israeli Foreign Policy**
  - Foreign Policy makers
  - Diplomatic relations
  
- **International Relations And Foreign Policy**
  - The Evolution of Israel's Regional & International Relations
  - Israel and the US

# Israel's Foreign Policy



## Foreign Policy Makers =>

- The **inner cabinet** (the prime minister, minister of foreign affairs, minister of defense, and other selected ministers) is responsible for formulating Israel's major foreign policy decisions
- **Prime minister** => **Main decision maker**
- **Ministry of foreign affairs** => **Policy implementation**
  - The **Director General** is the **face** of the ministry, make public statements and respond to queries from ambassadors
  - The **Assistant Directors General supervise** the implementation of policy
  - Legal + political **advisers** have **consultative** (not operational) **roles**

# Israel's Foreign Policy



## Foreign Policy Makers =>

- The influence of **ambassadors** depends on their **status** within the diplomatic service and the **importance of the issue** at hand
- The **Foreign Affairs & Security Committee of the Knesset** (26 members) is **less independent** compared to the foreign affairs committees of the US Congress
  - Its role is to **legitimize Government policy choices on controversial issues**, not initiate new policies
  - Members of the committee **frequently complain** that they **do not receive detailed information** during briefings by government officials- government spokesmen replies that committee members tend to leak briefing reports to the media ...

# Israeli Foreign Policy



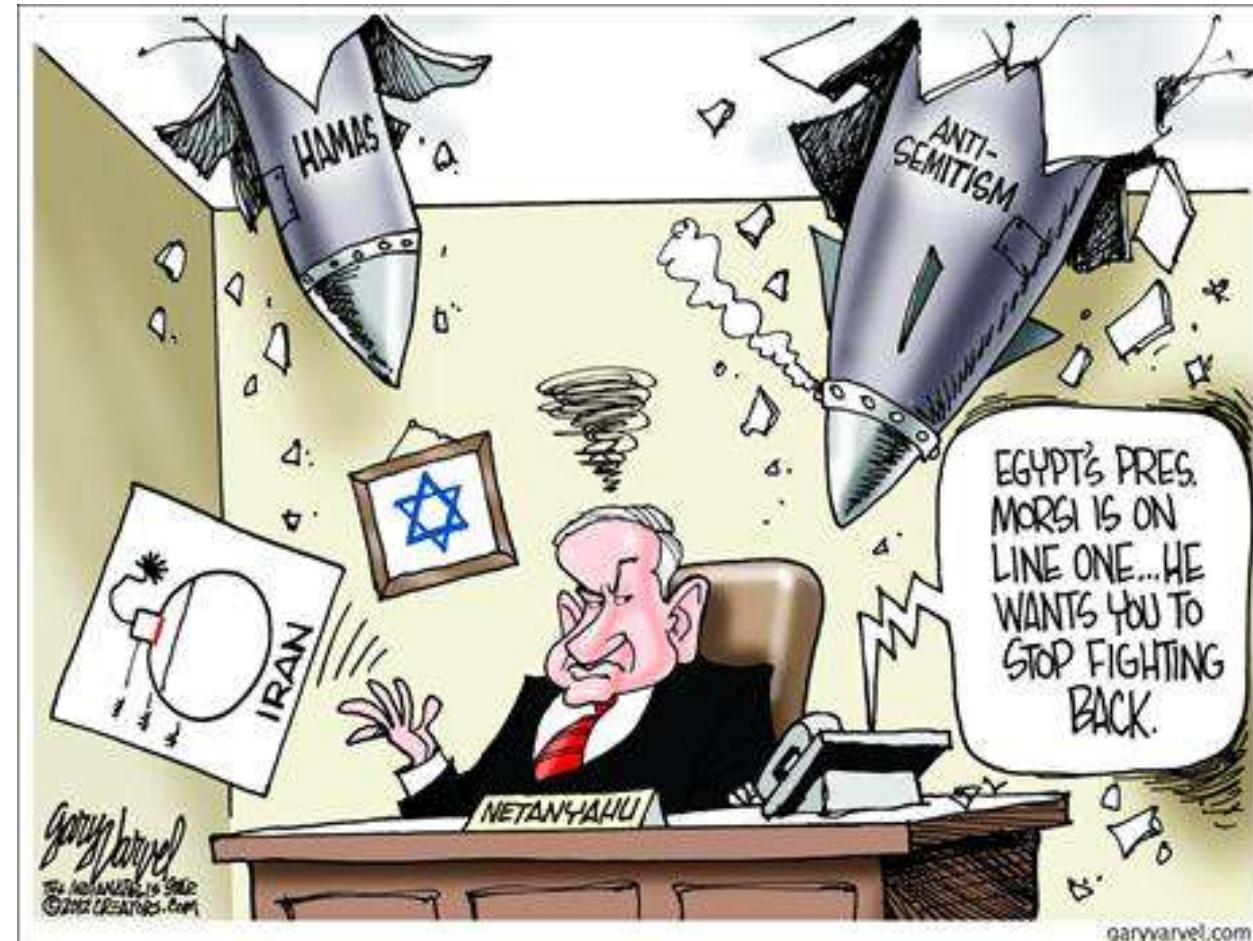
- **Israeli foreign policy** is mainly influenced by:
  - Israel's **strategic situation**
  - The Arab-Israeli **conflict**
  - The **rejection of Israel** by most of the **Arab states**
- **Goals** =>
  - To **overcome diplomatic isolation**
  - To **achieve recognition + friendly relations** with as many nations as possible (in the ME and beyond)
  - To foster increased **Jewish immigration** to Israel and to **protect vulnerable Jewish communities** in the **Diaspora**



# Israel's Foreign Policy



- Israel has simultaneously practiced both **open and secret diplomacy** to further its FP goals
- Examples:
  - Military procurement
  - Exporting arms & military assistance
  - Intelligence cooperation
  - Commercial trade
  - Importing strategic raw materials
  - Exchanges of prisoners of war

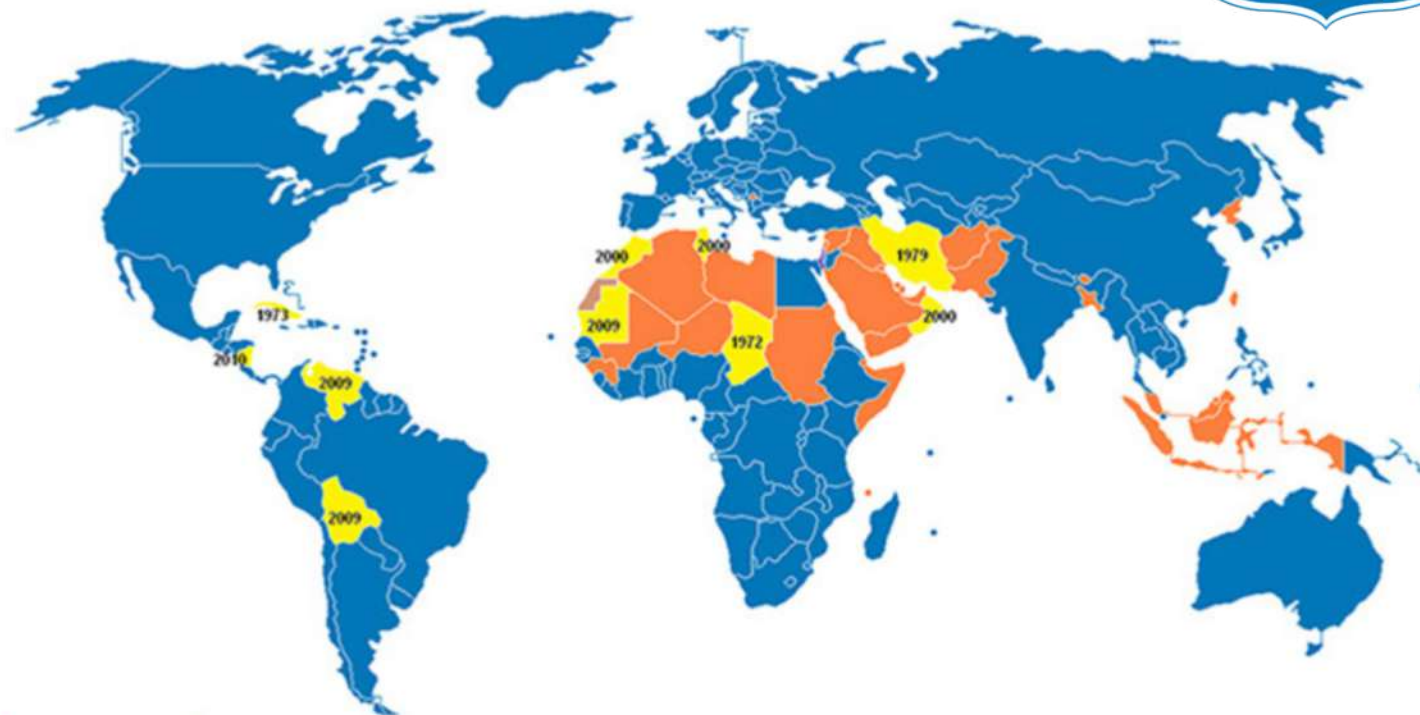




# Israel's Diplomatic Missions Abroad

## Status of relations =>

- 160 countries with which Israel maintains diplomatic relations (/195)
- Morocco, Tunisia, Qatar and the Sultanate of Oman **do NOT recognize Israel** or maintain diplomatic relations with it



### Legend:

- Countries which maintain diplomatic relations with Israel
- Countries which have never had diplomatic relations with Israel
- Countries which maintained relations with Israel in the past but have severed relations

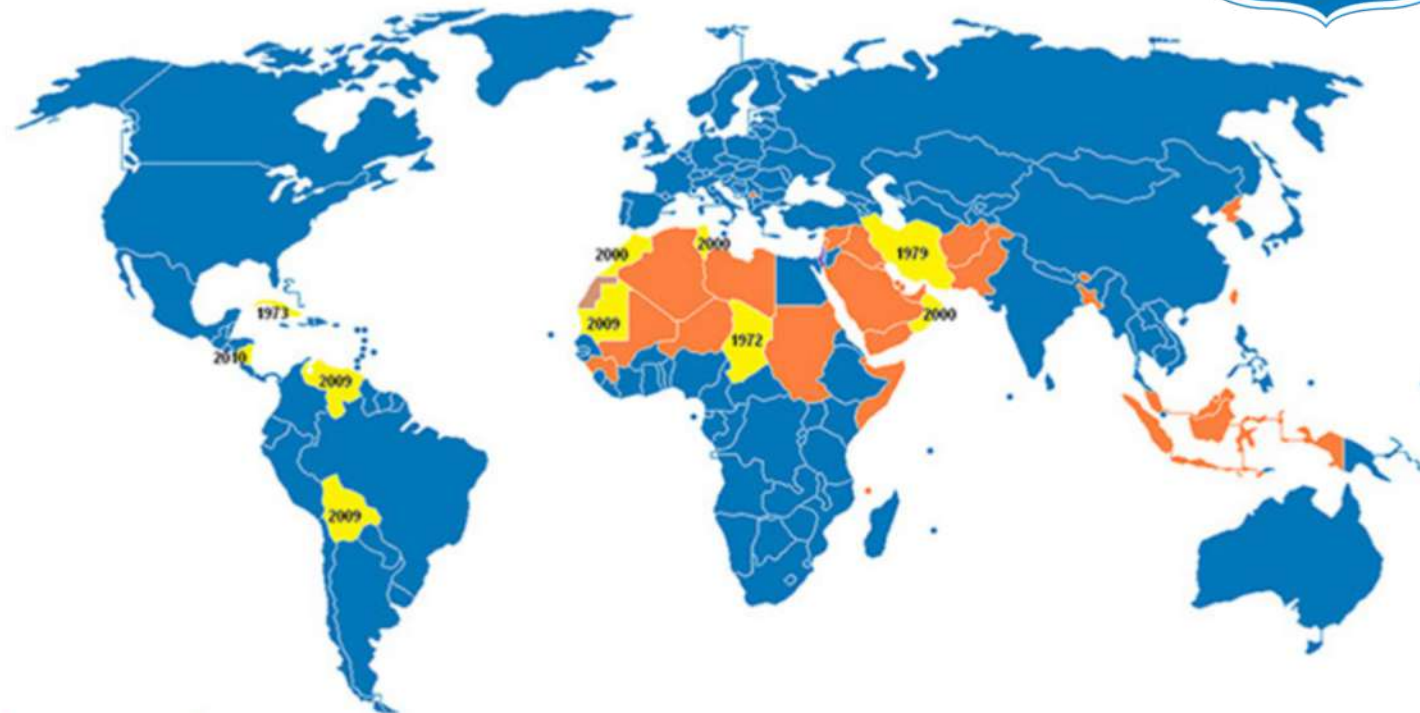




# Israel's Diplomatic Missions Abroad

## Status of relations =>

- Venezuela, Bolivia & Mauritania **severed diplomatic relations with Israel in 2009** (following IDF's operation against Hamas in Gaza)



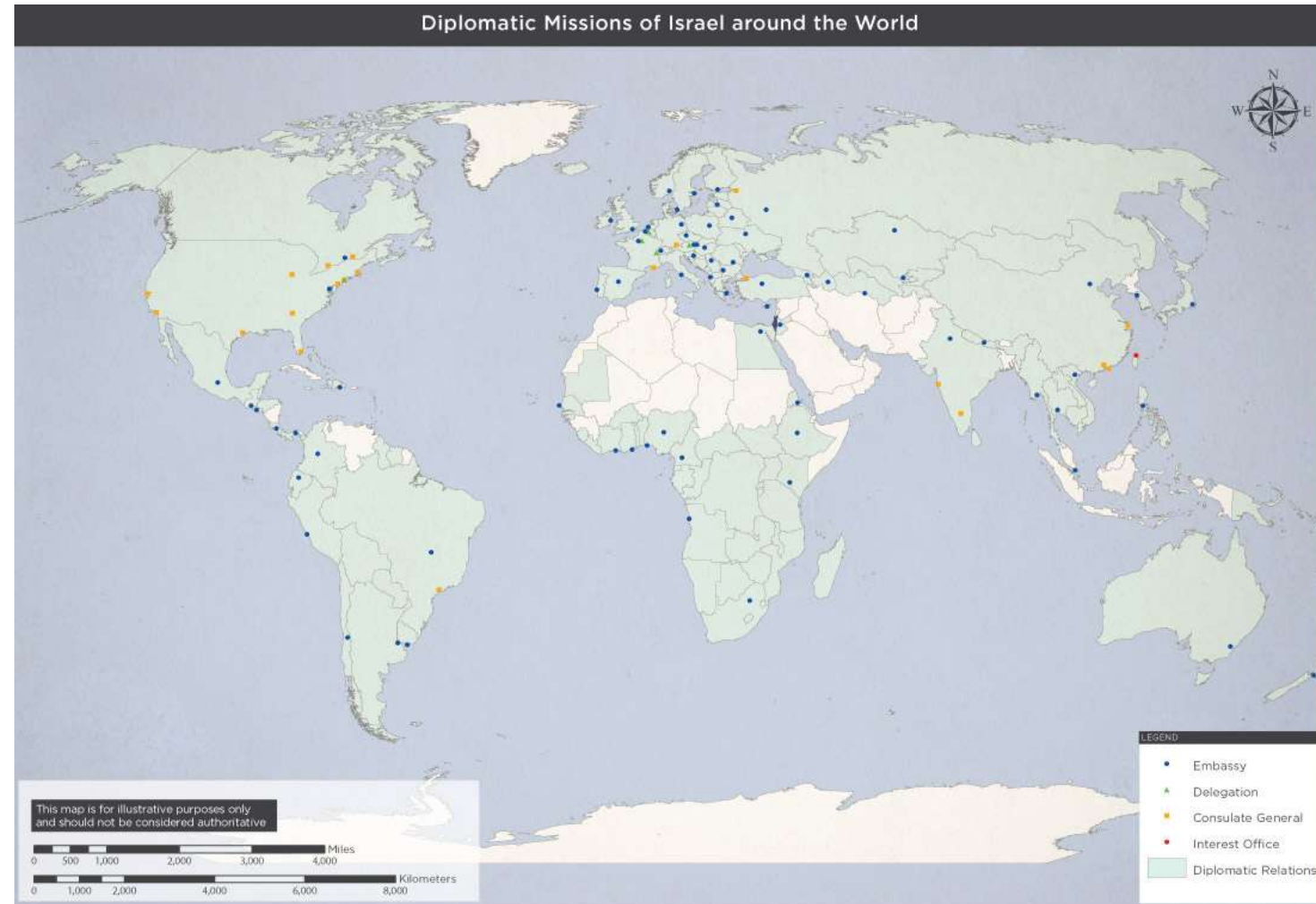
### Legend:

- Countries which maintain diplomatic relations with Israel
- Countries which have never had diplomatic relations with Israel
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# Israel's Diplomatic Missions Abroad

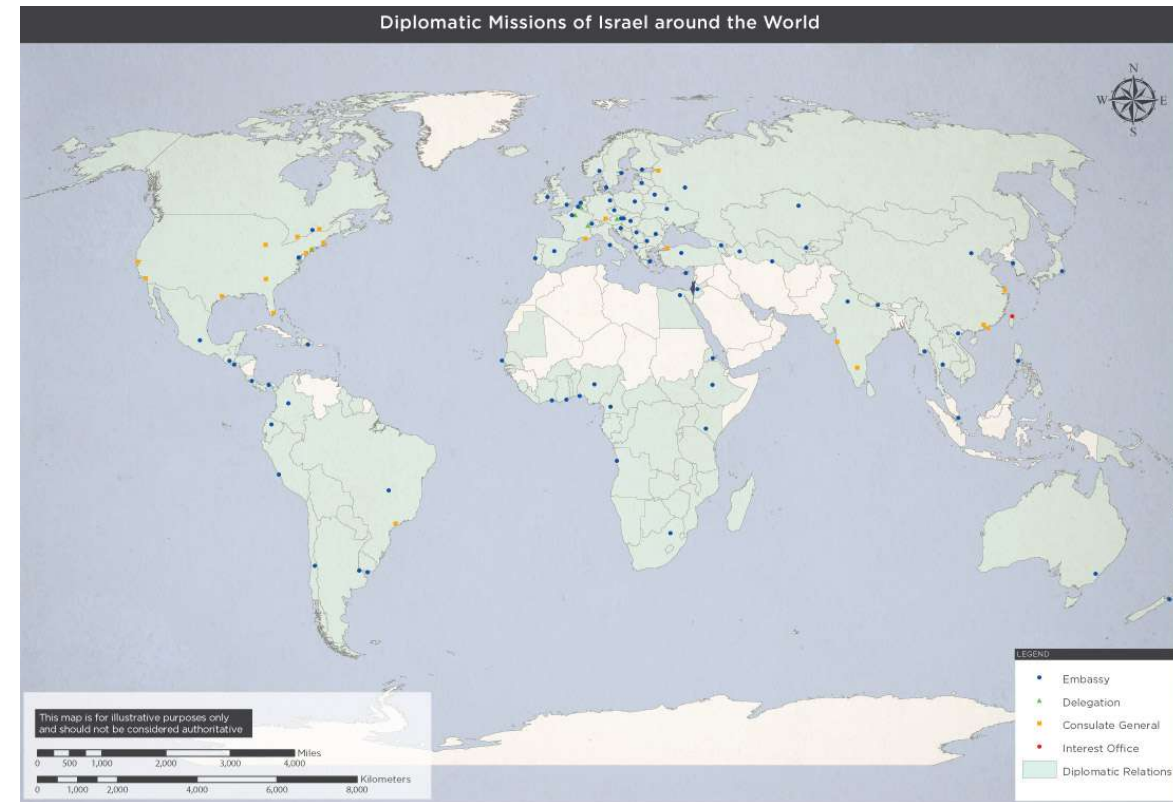
- 103 diplomatic missions
- Israel has been providing **humanitarian & professional** assistance to many developing states
  - Agriculture & water management
  - Development
  - Emergency medicine
  - Disaster relief ...



# Israel's Diplomatic Missions Abroad

## Status of relations =>

- Israel also maintains **missions** to:
  - The United Nations (New York)
  - The United Nations institutions in Geneva
  - The United Nations institutions in Paris
  - The United Nations institutions in Vienna
  - The European Union (Brussels)
- 79 resident embassies
- 22 consulates general
- 6 special missions



# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## The “periphery doctrine”/ “Alliance of the periphery”

- A foreign policy strategy developed by Israel’s first Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion
- Targeting **Turkey**, pre-revolutionary **Iran** & (predominantly Christian) **Ethiopia**
- **Essence** => Israel should develop **close strategic alliances with non-Arab Muslim states** in the Middle-East
- **Goal** => to **counteract** the united **opposition of Arab states** to the existence of Israel

Northern Africa and the Middle East



# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## The “periphery doctrine”/the “Alliance of the periphery” =>

- 1948-1977 => **repeated wars** with the surrounding Arab states + high degree of **international isolation**

### Exceptions:

- Israel’s “periphery” **alliances with Iran, Turkey, Ethiopia, the Iraqi Kurds** and other primarily **non-Arab states** + ethnic groups on the geographic/demographic margins of the Middle East
- Close strategic **relationship** with **global powers** => the Soviet Bloc (briefly, 1948), the UK, France and the US (since 1967)



# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## The periphery doctrine mostly failed =>

- **Iran** => the Shah of Iran fell in 1979
- **Lebanon** => Israel invaded it in 1982
- **One success:** Peace with Egypt (1977-1979)  
=> a beginning of peace with the Sunni Arab core surrounding Israel
  - Evidence to the Arabs that Israel could survive their prolonged siege



Camp David, 1979

# Regional & International Strategic Relations

- **Primary strategic objectives** => Peace with the Arabs + acceptance by the region
- **Peace treaties** => Egyptian-Israeli peace, the Oslo accords (Palestinians), peace with Jordan
- The **collapse of the Soviet Union** opened the door to relations with several major powers => Beijing, Delhi and Moscow
  - Expansion of Israel's **international diplomatic** and **commercial reach**
  - **Integration** of Israel's robust post-industrial economy into **global trade**
  - Massive **immigration** to Israel from the former Soviet countries (have granted Israel **demographic critical mass**)

# Regional & International Strategic Relations

- Classic Israel-Arab **wars** ended in 1973, replaced by **asymmetric conflicts** (Intifadas, terrorism, etc.) + **Iranian nuclear threat**



## 21<sup>st</sup> century =>

- **Peace** with Egypt and Jordan
- **Instability + dysfunctional nature** of many **Arab regimes** => a coalition of Arab countries fighting Israel together isn't likely for the foreseeable future
- The **Palestinian issue** is very much in the **consciousness** of the **international community** (widespread media coverage) => **domestic problem**

# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## Netanyahu Leverages the Arab Revolutions to Develop New Strategic Relationships

- 2011 => “**Arab Spring**” => emergence political + militant Islam in former periphery
- **Revolutions** in Syria and Egypt: potential threats to Israel by IS Sunni Islamists, al-Qaeda ( Hamas + Hezbollah)
- Threat perceptions **shared** by Egypt and Jordan => border Syria
- The revolution in **Libya** caused the dispersal of a **huge arsenal of arms** to Islamists in Sinai and the Gaza Strip



# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## Netanyahu Leverages the Arab Revolutions to Develop New Strategic Relationships

- **Civil war in Yemen =>** a danger to **shipping** through the Bab al-Mandeb Strait-affecting Israeli and Egyptian interests
- **Turkey =>** increasingly **Islamist government**
- **Iran =>** a **nuclear threat**
  - 2015: Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)/Iran nuclear deal
  - 2018: Trump opted out
- **Israel is again surrounded by hostile states and entities** (close: Islamists in the Levant, the Gaza Strip and Egyptian Sinai, far: Turkey and Iran)



# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## New and dynamic dimensions in Israeli strategic security policies (2016-) =>

- Enhanced **clandestine strategic relations** with **Sunni Arab “core” neighbors**
- A new **“periphery”** to balance & deter Sunni/Shiite Islamist threats:
  - **New military + economic strategic depth** in the eastern Mediterranean
- **Expanded strategic relations with major powers** (e.g. China, India, Russia: share Israel’s concerns regarding militant Islam)



# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## New and dynamic dimensions in Israeli strategic security policies (2016-) =>

- In parallel =>
  - **Tensions** with the US during the Obama administration
  - Israel's key **economic** and **strategic ties to Europe** are **threatened** due to the **Palestinian issue**



# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## The Mediterranean: Anti-Islamist and Economic Strategic Depth =>

- December **2016** => Second **summit** of the year of the **Israeli, Greek** (indebted financially to its EU partners) and **Cypriot** heads of states
  - **Shared security concerns** regarding the problematic **neighbors** (Islamizing Turkey, Iran's Hezbollah proxy force in Lebanon, and ricochet from the war in Syria)
  - The **prospect** of exporting **natural gas** via Cyprus to Greece from Israel's Leviathan discovery in the Mediterranean.
  - **Joint military exercises** (a sign of an intimate strategic relationship)





# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## The Mediterranean: Anti-Islamist and Economic Strategic Depth =>

- December 2016 => Israeli, Greek & Cypriot summit
- **Unprecedented** => Greece + Cyprus were traditionally considered **pro-Arab** (they needed **Arab oil**)
- Have **readjusted** their **perspective** due to the **chaos** generated by Arab revolutions + availability of **alternative energy sources**



# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## The Mediterranean: Anti-Islamist and Economic Strategic Depth =>

- December 2016 => Israeli, Greek & Cypriot summit
- Problems:
  - **Difficult logistics** of laying a seabed **gas pipeline** from Israel's Leviathan gas deposit to Greece (100km)
  - **Turkey** (patched up relations with Israel in late 2016) **wants the gas** => easier to transport it there
- Benefits for Israel =>
  - Since 2011, **Greece** (specially since it became a home to a million Muslim migrants and refugees) & **Cyprus needed Israel** as a **buffer against Turkey** and the militant Islam generated by the Arab revolutions

# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## The Mediterranean: Anti-Islamist and Economic Strategic Depth =>

- Further benefits for Israel =>
  - **Needs friends in the EU:** increasingly critical of its behaviour toward the Palestinians
  - **Dealing with Turkey:** 2016: Israeli Turkish reconciliation (in 2010 Turkey attempted to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza)
- **Turkish- Israeli economic relations never suffered, both leveraged Arab chaos** for their mutual benefit
  - Impossible for **Turkish goods** to be transported safely via Syria & Iraq to Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf, Turkish container trucks **transited in Israel:** arrived to Haifa (by sea), exited via the Israel-Jordan border

# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## The Mediterranean: Anti-Islamist and Economic Strategic Depth =>

- In return, **Turkey allowed Iraqi Kurdish oil** to transit its territory for **passage** (by sea) to **Israel**
- Also **interested in Israeli gas** =>
  - **Egypt** (was fighting ISIS in the Sinai Peninsula + Egyptian heartland: needed **security cooperation** with **Israel against militant Islam**)
  - **Russia** (implanted on Syria's Mediterranean coast)
  - **Post-war Syria** would look for Gas in the Mediterranean; Russia (Syria's patron power) could ensure maritime harmony between Israeli and Syrian gas fields

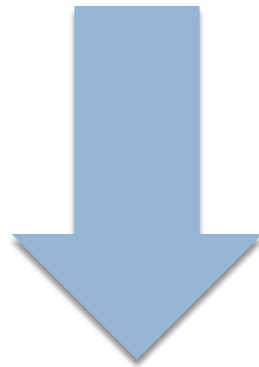




# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## The Mediterranean: Anti-Islamist and Economic Strategic Depth =>

- Early **2017** => Israel was **doing well on its western front** (Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Egypt and Russia)



A direct consequence of the **need for cooperation against the spillover effect** of “**Arab spring**” revolutions (Syria and Lebanon) + **gas considerations**

# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## East Africa and Central Asia

- Netanyahu's **success** in **leveraging Arab chaos** was **NOT** confined to the area west of Israel
- July **2016** => Netanyahu met **six heads of states** in **East Africa** (Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Rwanda and Tanzania)
- Signed **security agreements** providing for Israeli support in countering Islamist terrorism (presumably from Sudan, Somalia and Yemen)
- The **first African visit** by an Israeli prime minister in 30 years



# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## East Africa and Central Asia

- Late **2016** => Netanyahu visited **Azerbaijan** and **Kazakhstan**
  - In Baku, President Aliyev **noted publicly** that his country **purchased** nearly \$5 billion worth of **Israeli weapons** + the **Israeli Iron Dome** anti-rocket missile system (purchases mostly **paid for in** shipments of **oil**)
- Unlike the Mediterranean instance, this meeting **did not evolve** due to the outbreak of Arab revolutions
- The two countries' **shared concerns** about the **threat projected from south of Azerbaijan** by **Iran's militant Shiite Islam**



# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## The Arab Core

- 2016=> Netanyahu was boasting of Israel's enhanced strategic ties with Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates
- **Unprecedented level of security cooperation** achieved since 2011 due to the **threat posed by militant Arab Islamists** (Arab upheavals) and by **Iranian power projection** and its proxies in the Levant



President of Chad, Nov 2018

# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## The Arab Core

- The **Saudis** and **Emiratis** have **no formal ties with Israel**
- By 2017, the strategic relationship had developed sufficiently for all sides to **acknowledge it openly**
  - Implementing  
in the  
shadows



OCTOBER 31, 2018, 12:43 PM

### **Secret no more: Israel's outreach to Gulf Arab states emerges into the open**

Miri Regev's tears during UAE judo tournament and Netanyahu's public visit to Oman were unthinkable not long ago, but have been enabled by common Iranian threat



# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## The Eurasian Powers =>

- Rationale: A **shared** perception of a **militant Islamist threat**, Sunni and Shiite => close **intelligence** + **operational cooperation** overshadowed considerations of “traditional” **enmity**
- After 2011 Israel was also able to **leverage** the **Islamist threat** as a means of **developing strategic relationships** with three major world powers => Russia, China and India
- **Each has issues with militant Islam:**
  - **Russia**: Caucasus and Volga-Kazan
  - **China**: Western province of Xinjiang
  - **India**: vis-à-vis Pakistan



# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## The Eurasian Powers =>

- Experienced a **rise in Islamist terrorism** in recent years
- **Sought Israeli expertise and intelligence** => enhanced economic & strategic ties
- **Syria => A crucial area of cooperation with Russia**
  - When Russians arrived in Syria (2015), Netanyahu was the **first foreign leader** to meet with Putin to discuss military coordination in Syria
- Not simple!
  - Israel needed **freedom of action** in the air of southern Syria to continue **intercepting Syrian arms shipments** to Hezbollah in Lebanon



# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## The Eurasian Powers =>

- **Russia** arrived to **rescue the Syrian regime** that, in coordination with Iran, was arming Hezbollah
- From Israel's standpoint, **Russia** was now **a friendly country with shared interests** (unlike during the Cold War)
- Israel adjusted to the **Russian military presence in Syria** across its north-eastern border
  - **Avoided** extensive military involvement in Syria
  - **Successfully coordinated** limited military action with the Russians

# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## The Palestinian Issue =>

- Israel had **powerful friends + meaningful ties** that enabled it to **defend** its **interests** against crumbling **Arab neighbours** (e.g. Syria + militant Sunni/Shiite Islamists)

### Three geo-strategic levels:

1. The Arab heartland
  2. The “periphery” surrounding the Islamist Middle East
  3. The Asian and Eurasian powers
- Another motive for Israel’s weaving such ties- the **unsolvable Palestinian problem**

# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## The Palestinian Issue =>

- 2017 => **50th anniversary of the June 1967 occupation** of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and Golan Heights
  - Arab leaders (not only) were **blaming Israel for the absence of solutions**
- Golan Heights: Israel could point to the anarchy in Syria, **territorial importance** + good that Israel didn't do a territories-for-peace deal with the Assads
- Israel **wants the world to recognize** its' 1981 annexation of the **Heights** within the framework of post-war Syria

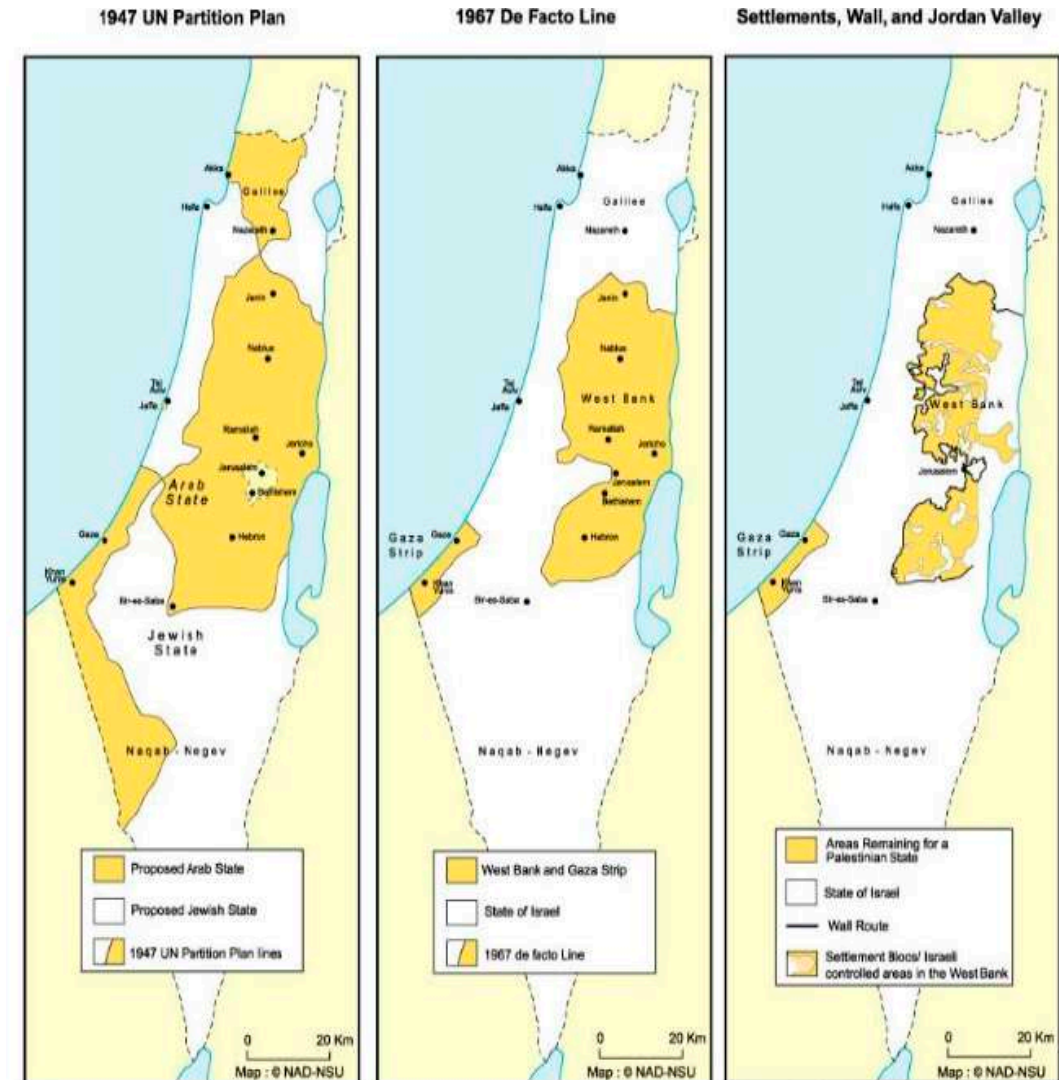




# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## Two states' solution?

- Fading concept of a **separate Palestinian state** on the West Bank due to:
  - Repeated **Palestinian rejection** of Israel's negotiating offers
  - **Palestinian** political & geographic divisions
  - Ramifications of a **growing Israeli Jewish settler population**



# Regional & International Strategic Relations

- Israeli political right + many from the political center:
  - **Hopeless of peace**
  - Recognizing the **increasing irreversibility** of the West Bank and East Jerusalem **settlement project** (over 10% of Israeli Jews now reside)

## 2002 Arab Peace Initiative

- The Saudi- sponsored and Arab League-endorsed **Arab Peace Initiative** (API) offered Israel peace, security benefits + normalization with all Arab states if it first resolved the Palestinian + Golan issues

As Advertised In:

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION

# The New York Times

## National

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2008



# Peace is Possible

## More Than 50 Arab and Muslim Countries Agree...

- "To end the Arab-Israeli conflict"
- "To establish normal relations with Israel"
- "To live in peace and good neighborliness with Israel."

These commitments are based on achieving just, comprehensive and permanent peace between Israel and her Arab neighbors.

"This is the language of the Arab Peace Initiative, based on the proposal of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. It has been adopted by the Arab League summit in Beirut 2002, supported by the 57 member nations of the Organization of Islamic Conference in 2005 and has been reiterated by the Arab League at its summit in Riyadh in 2007.

The vast majority of Israelis and Arabs want to live in peace. The two sides are close to final agreement, but for peace to become a reality, it requires strong dedication by American, Israeli, Arab and world leaders.

## Let us not miss this opportunity

Center for Middle East Peace, 1050 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036 - www.centerpeace.org - S. Daniel Abraham, Chairman

We wish to thank all of the thousands of people, Christians, Muslims and Jews who have worked tirelessly, selflessly in the cause of peace and reconciliation between people and nations.



MALDIVES MALI MAURITANIA MOROCCO MOZAMBIQUE NIGER NIGERIA OMAN PAKISTAN  
PALESTINE QATAR SAUDI ARABIA SENEGAL SIERRA LEONE SOMALIA SUDAN SURINAME SYRIA  
TAJIKISTAN TOGO TUNISIA TURKEY TURKMENISTAN UGANDA UNITED ARAB EMIRATES UZBEKISTAN YEMEN

# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## Israel's newfound strategic partners =>

1. Necessary exercise in **realpolitik** prioritizing
  2. **Acknowledgement** that some Arab countries were **fed up with the Palestinian leadership** and its **insistence on impossible conditions** (e.g. the “right of return” to Israel of all 5 million 1948 Palestinian refugees and their descendants)
- **Israel: no longer is a Palestinian solution the necessary predecessor to normalization with the Arab world**
    - **Quite the opposite:** better strategic ties with the Arab world would make it **easier** to solve the Palestinian issue (friendly Arab states would contribute security guarantees and refugee solutions)

# Regional & International Strategic Relations

- Israel proposed that the sequence be reversed (ties => peace)
- **NO serious takers for Netanyahu's new reverse paradigm of Israel-Arab peace**

Israel “used to say that as soon as peace breaks out with the Palestinians, we can achieve peace with the entire Arab world. I am increasingly convinced that the process can work in the other direction too, and that normalization with the Arab world can help us to advance toward peace between us and the Palestinians”

July, 2106



# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## Western attitudes towards Israel =>

- **France, Britain and Germany** were fed up with Netanyahu's West Bank settlement expansion + no negotiation with the Palestinians
- **US under President Obama-** repeatedly **warned Israel** that settlement expansion would doom it as a **Jewish and democratic state**
  - Netanyahu disrespected the office when he insisted on appealing directly to Congress to stop the Iran nuclear deal (March 2015)
- 23 December 2016 => **Western anger** + int. community's ongoing **commitment to the Palestinians** led to **UN resolution 2332**, unanimously condemning Israel's settlement expansion (the US abstained)



# Regional & International Strategic Relations

## Conclusions =>

- **Netanyahu's campaign** to acquire strategic allies regionally + globally at the expense of the Palestinian issue **had registered successes and failures**
  - Netanyahu's gamble on **minimizing the Palestinian issue** through **cooperation against militant Islam** + enhanced **security cooperation** + **Israeli arms** and cyber sales **did NOT** make the **Palestinian issue** disappear (specially in the west)
- 2017 => US President **Trump**
  - Do not oppose the settlements
  - Recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital- also the Golan Heights?
- **Long term effects remain to be seen**

# Israel and the US



## Why are Israel and the US close allies?

- Israel is the **regional policemen** (+ strategic importance) => fights terrorism, share intelligence with the US
- **Jewish lobby in the US:** political and business ties
- Share **similar values** (democracy, freedom, free market)
- **Historical ties** (during the cold war)



# Israel and the US



## US policy towards the region (1945-1990) was centered on:

1. National security strategy (**anti-terrorism**)
2. **Superpower rivalry** (vs. the USSR)
3. Establishing special relationships with **key countries** (like Iran until 1979 & Israel)

**Eisenhower Doctrine (1957):** Part of US policy of **containing Soviet influence** in the ME + **securing American interests**. Associated with American willingness to employ forces at the request of states in the region in the instance of armed aggression

# Israel and the US



## These policies were required for:

1. Eliminating competitors in the region an **assure US indisputable supremacy**
  2. Until 1990 => to form a massive **regional alliance** directed **against the Soviet Union** and its local allies
- The US was willing to resort to **military means** to pursue these goals (e.g. the Gulf War 1990-1991)
    - US' role during the **Suez Crisis** of 1956 – 57
    - 1978 – 79 **Camp David Accords**: Between Israel & Egypt under the sponsorship of US President Jimmy Carter

# Israel and the US



## Post cold war era =>

- US policy towards the ME was centered around the idea of **“Hegemonic re-building”** in the region
- **1991** => US President George Bush initiated the **Middle East Peace Conference** in Madrid (PLO-Jordanian joint delegation, Syria and Israel): **Gaza-Jericho agreement/ Cairo Agreement**

**“Cairo Agreement”** (1994) was signed between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).

**First time- autonomous Palestinian Authority** in the West Bank (in the Jericho area) and the Gaza Strip



# Israel and the US



## Post September 11=>

- 2002: Bush articulated the idea of **failed states** and **Axis of Evil**

## US Global Strategy manifested in three priorities during that time:

1. The US would lead the world in the **battle against terrorism** and against **aggressive regimes** seeking weapons of mass destruction
2. Commitment to **peace through diplomacy**

# Israel and the EU



## The Barcelona Process (1995) =>

- Launched by the **Ministers of Foreign Affairs** of the then, **15 EU members** and **14 Mediterranean partners**
- Framework of **managing bilateral and regional relations**
- Parties: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, **Israel**, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestinian Territories, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey



# Israel and the EU



## The Barcelona Process (1995) =>

- Innovative alliance based on the principles of **joint ownership, dialogue** and **co-operation**, seeking to create a Mediterranean region of peace, security and shared prosperity
- The partnership was organised into three **main dimensions** (remain today):
  - **Political and Security Dialogue**
  - **Economic and Financial Partnership**
  - **Social, Cultural and Human Partnership**



# Israel and the EU



## The Barcelona Process (1995) =>

- **Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial meetings** were held in order to establish **political commitments** which drive cooperation and activity across sectors
- **European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)** in 2004 => the **Barcelona Process** essentially became the **multilateral forum of dialogue and cooperation** between the EU and its **Mediterranean partners**
  - Complementary bilateral relations are managed through **\*Association Agreements** signed with each partner country

\*An **association agreement** is a legally binding **agreement** between the EU and third countries. It is one of three special types of international **agreements** and is aimed to foster **close relationships** between the EU and countries on a wide range of topics.

# Israel and the EU



## The Barcelona Process (1995) =>

- Expanded and evolved into the **Union for the Mediterranean (2008) => Euro-Mediterranean Partnership** launched by the EU
  - Aimed to forge closer ties with the Middle East and with North Africa
- Bringing together the 27 EU members and 16 other countries (Israel, Turkey, Syria, etc.), the new forum covers nearly 800m people



# Next Session...

50



- Immigration to Israel
- Minorities' politics





**Thank You For Your Attention!**

**Questions???**