

Concrete Conflict:  
An Examination of the Israeli Security Barrier

By

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## **Introduction**

On May 14, 1948 David Ben Gurrion declared the independence of the state of Israel. This event forever changed the climate of the Middle East. Today, the conflict born 64 years ago between Israel and Palestine continues on. Since 1948, the conflict has evolved to become extremely complex, encompassing all aspects of Israeli and Palestinian life. Throughout the years the conflict between the two groups has taken on many shapes. From terrorist attacks to failed peace negotiations the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been the setting for one of the most well-known and controversial battles of the modern world.

In the last decade, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has seen a new obstacle arise in the form of the Israeli Security Barrier, which is being constructed between the state of Israel and the West Bank. The Israeli security barrier was created in 2002 as a response to security threats from the Palestinian entity. Since creation, the barrier has played an incredibly important role in the conflict. It has become a major focus of the Israeli government, the Palestinian population and the international community at large. This paper will investigate the specifics of the Israeli Security Barrier and provide a more profound understanding of this simplistic concrete structure.

The first chapter of this paper will provide information about the security barrier as well as present the major debates that already surround this topic. Furthermore, the first chapter will look at other defense systems that have existed throughout history. This will allow for the establishment of historical relevance as well as comparison throughout the paper. The second chapter of this paper will examine the offensive and defensive nature of the barrier by investigating the debates surrounding the offense-defense theory.

After presenting a concise overview of the current debates of scholars like George Quester and Stephen Biddle, this chapter will attempt to determine whether the barrier is more of an offensive or defensive entity. This chapter will also discuss deterrence and provide a formulated argument against the idea of the wall as a deterrent. The third chapter of this paper will question whether or not the Israeli Security Barrier is actually about security. Using arguments from strategic barrier experts like Brent L. Sterling, this chapter will look at evidence to support the claim that the barrier is more about borders than it is actually about security. Finally, the conclusion chapter will discuss the future implications of the wall on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process as well as the entire conflict.

Developing out of an actual visit to the Israeli security barrier, the topic for this paper will provide insight into one of the most controversial pieces of the conflict to date. The chapters will establish and develop arguments that have not been heavily researched by scholars in the international community. Furthermore, the investigation of the Israeli security barrier presented in this paper will allow for a deeper understanding of the complexity of the current atmosphere surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Ultimately, the goal of this paper is to dissect one of the major issues facing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today while providing insight about the reality in the Middle East.

## **Chapter I: Literature Review**

Israel currently has two security barriers. The first barrier was erected along the border separating Israel from the Gaza strip. It was completed in 1995 and since that time has been nearly 100 percent effective in preventing terrorists from entering Israel from the Gaza Strip (Lochery 24). This fence has not been particularly controversial because it is located on the border and does not involve the “taking” of Palestinian land. Furthermore, the border between Israel and Gaza is settled, since Israel has renounced all claims to the land in Gaza and there is no disputed territory nor do any Israeli settlements exist in the Gaza strip.

The second wall, which will eventually divide Israel from the entire West Bank, has become much more disputed and contested. In June 2002, the Israeli’s Defense Minister at the time, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, cut the ribbon on the first phase of the West Bank Wall near the Israeli village of Salem (Dolphin 6). Over the next three years, the wall headed south through the West Bank, surrounding Jewish settlements on or near the Green Line.<sup>1</sup> The wall then cut an arc around the north, east, and south of Palestinian East Jerusalem and eventually rejoined the Green Line west of Bethlehem.

Once completed, the length of the route will be approximately 500 miles in total. As of late 2010, fifty-seven per cent of the construction had already been completed while nine per cent was under construction and thirty-four per cent had been carefully planned. According to numerous maps and sources, fourteen per cent of the total planned route of the barrier runs along the green line and eighty-six per cent is located beyond the green line (Makovsky 1). The barrier creates a situation in which all inhabitants of the West Bank will be cut off from East Jerusalem.

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<sup>1</sup> Green Line: The armistice border established in 1949 at the end of the first Arab-Israeli war.

Israeli citizens face a severe security threat. Many argue that the wall was built as a response to the major security threat of the second, or al Aqsa, intifada, which was the Palestinian's second national revolt in less than a decade. Unlike the first intifada (1987-1993), the second wave of violence that erupted in September 2000 was not a popular uprising; instead it was a coordinated campaign by members of Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade aimed at bringing down the Israeli government (Palti 1). Suicide attacks took place on buses or in shopping malls, restaurants, and hotels. The majority killed by these attacks were civilians, including women and children. According to the Israel Defense Force (IDF), during the three-year period of the most recent or second Intifada, there were 53 "successful" suicide infiltrations, which killed 472 Israeli citizens; another 70 suicide terrorists infiltrated Israel but were stopped before reaching their targets (Palti 2). The vast majority of these attacks were staged, planned and executed from the West Bank.

Due to the increase in suicide attacks coupled with the loss of innocent lives, the Israeli government was under considerable public pressure to present a workable solution to the security issue. While many of the Israeli Defense Force and Israeli government operations against West Bank terrorist cells are often interpreted to be collective punishment of Palestinians, Israel has a duty to protect its population and ensure its territorial integrity. Thus, basic steps such as checkpoints and roadblocks, in addition to more involved actions such as "Operation Defensive Shield", are necessary. These responses to terrorism were not intended to express Israeli sentiment against the Palestinian people, only against the Palestinian terrorists (Cypel 152). Although these

strategies proved to be somewhat effective, infiltration by suicide bombers were still occurring.

The solution became the Israeli Security Barrier. This plan has proven effective before in Israel's other border areas. Other fences follow the Israeli-Lebanese border, the Golan Heights area and circle the Gaza Strip. The Gaza fence is particularly effective; it is actually a security "system," consisting of a dirt road, followed by a portion of fence, then another road for patrols. It has not allowed a single successful suicide bomber to infiltrate Israel (Elizur 108). This phenomenon provided the Israeli Government with concrete evidence and confidence regarding the potential effectiveness of constructing another security wall with the goal of combating terrorism. The evidence and statistics that have been produced since the establishment of many sections of the wall are impressive.

While the first stage of the wall was under construction between October 2000 and July 2003, 35 "successful" suicide attacks originated from the northern West Bank alone. However, in the first year after the completion of the first stage, only 3 successful suicide attacks have originated from the northern West Bank (Palti 2). In 2004, the Israel Defense Force successfully foiled every suicide bomb attack attempt from the northern West Bank. It is believed that the new barrier has forced terrorists to travel many kilometers to circumvent the fence. This lengthy trip has given the Israel Defense Forces as well as Israeli intelligence more time to locate infiltrators and foil their plans.

An example of the success of the security barrier came in June of 2004, when a terrorist group was exposed by the IDF. The IDF, in conjunction with Israeli intelligence, discovered that Hezbollah was sponsoring and guiding a terrorist group,

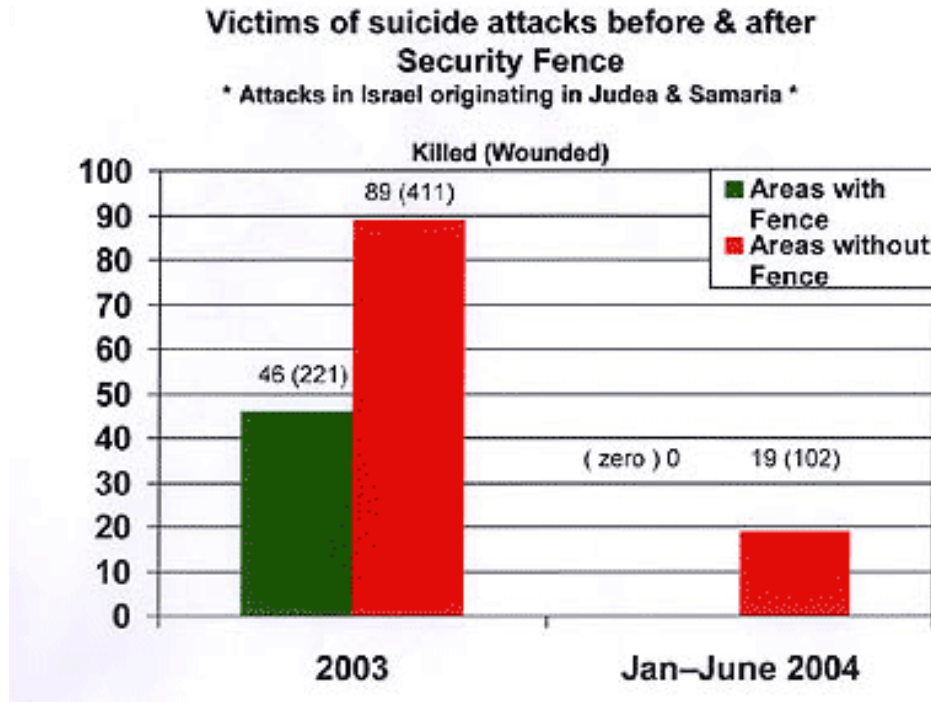
headed by a man named Halil Araisha. Araisha had a long history of involvement with terrorist organizations and was recruiting young men to participate in suicide bombings. One such person was Mahand Karini from a refugee camp in Nablus, a city in the West Bank. The security fence posed a new problem for the exportation of suicide bombers from Nablus to Israel and thus forced the terrorist group to move. Karini was instructed to move a twenty-five kilogram bomb to another village. The IDF became suspicious of this movement and was able to discover the terrorist organization and defuse the bomb. The mobilization of terrorists with bombs over long routes has given the IDF more time to discover attacks and foil them before it is too late (Palti 3-4).

The security zone serves as an obstacle to both vehicles and people. Although the Palestinians may not wish to admit it, one of the effects of the fence is to limit Israel's vulnerability to suicide attacks. The fence is only one part of a broader strategy that has succeeded in lowering the threshold of violence. Interestingly enough, a poll of Palestinian attitudes taken by the Jerusalem Media and Communications center suggests that 36.4 per cent of Palestinians believe that the fence is effective in diminishing attacks (Feron 6).

Although the territory of the West Bank is very complicated, not only because of the large distance covered but also because of the separated Palestinian populations, the building of a security fence will essentially accomplish the same goal that the other fences have: providing more security and diminishing the success of suicide bombers. The following is an analysis of the current debates and issues surrounding the Israeli Security Barrier. The complexity of the situation has created a worldwide conflict with



many different influences. The goal of the information below is to provide context to the conflict that is currently taking place between Israel and the West Bank.



Source: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Peace/fence.html>

## I. The Route

The route of the wall has become the center of much debate and discussion for Israelis, Palestinians and the international community at large. When planning the route, the Israeli government had to evaluate numerous variables, such as topography, population density, and a threat assessment for each area. The end product created a path, that weaved in and out of the West Bank, attempting to follow the Green Line, but inevitably making abrupt turns to encompass Israeli interests and settlements.

The fence was built in stages. Phase A of construction, approximately 85 miles from Salem to Elkana, was completed at the end of July 2003. Phase B, which is about 50

miles, runs from Salem toward Bet-Shean, through the Jezreel Valley and the Gilboa mountains. It was completed in 2004 (Kershner 18).

Phase C of construction incorporates Jerusalem, one of the most highly contested territories in the world. During the al-Aqsa intifada, more than 30 suicide bombings targeted Jerusalem. Between 2000 and 2008, a total of 90 terrorist attacks have killed 170 people and injured 1,500 in the capital (Kershner 19). The original “Jerusalem Defense Plan” approved in March 2003 called for the fence to be constructed around three parts of the capital, which has been the most frequent target of suicide bombers (Elizur 107). This section of the fence was expected to run about 40 miles around the municipal boundaries of the city. However, both Israeli and Palestinian residents in areas along the fence route filed legal challenges that required changes in the construction plan (Cypel 391).

Phase D will span approximately 93 miles from Elkana to Ofer. In addition, several special sections of the fence will protect specific areas and populations. An inside fence of 15 miles will protect the road from the airport to Jerusalem. A fence around the town of Ariel will stretch about 35 miles and a 31-mile section will traverse the road between Ariel and Kedumim. A 32-mile span will go from Jerusalem to Gush Etzion, and another 19 miles will surround Gush Etzion with the purpose of incorporating 10 settlements and approximately 50,000 Israelis. Finally, the fence will continue an additional 58 miles to Carmel (Kershner 20).

There are 630 closures in the West Bank. Closures take the form of checkpoints, partial checkpoints, road gates, roadblocks, earth mounds, trenches, road barriers, and earth walls (Feron 2). This number does not include a weekly reported average of 60-80 flying checkpoints over the West Bank. The government has also created 70 agricultural

“gates” in the wall. These gates are situated in strategic locations of high agricultural productivity. Essentially, Palestinians must cross through these gates in order to reach their farms. In practice, these do not guarantee access of Palestinian farmers to their lands but instead strengthen Israel’s system of permits and checkpoints imposed on Palestinians in the West Bank (Feron 3). The harm to the farming sector prevents Palestinian farmers from gaining additional income and prevents an increase in the number of Palestinians working in agriculture, which is a major sector of the Palestinian economy. The wall will also create a situation in which 125,000 Palestinians will be surrounded on three sides while 35,000 Palestinians will live in closed enclaves (Makovsky 1).



Source:<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/fence.html>

## **II. Wall or Fence**

There is a small debate surrounding the terminology for the new security measures being put in place in Israel. Although the argument does not play an important role in political debate, scholars have argued that it does play a significant role in the psychological effect on the people encountering the barrier's presence. In order to examine this phenomenon, it is first necessary to investigate the construction of the barrier.

It should be stressed that "barrier" will be used as a generic term for a physical separation that will assume different forms in different locations. In places where Jewish and Palestinian population centers are close to each other, it might take the form of a high concrete wall that not only prevents infiltration by terrorists but also gives protection against light arms fire. In other places, the barrier could be an electronic fence.

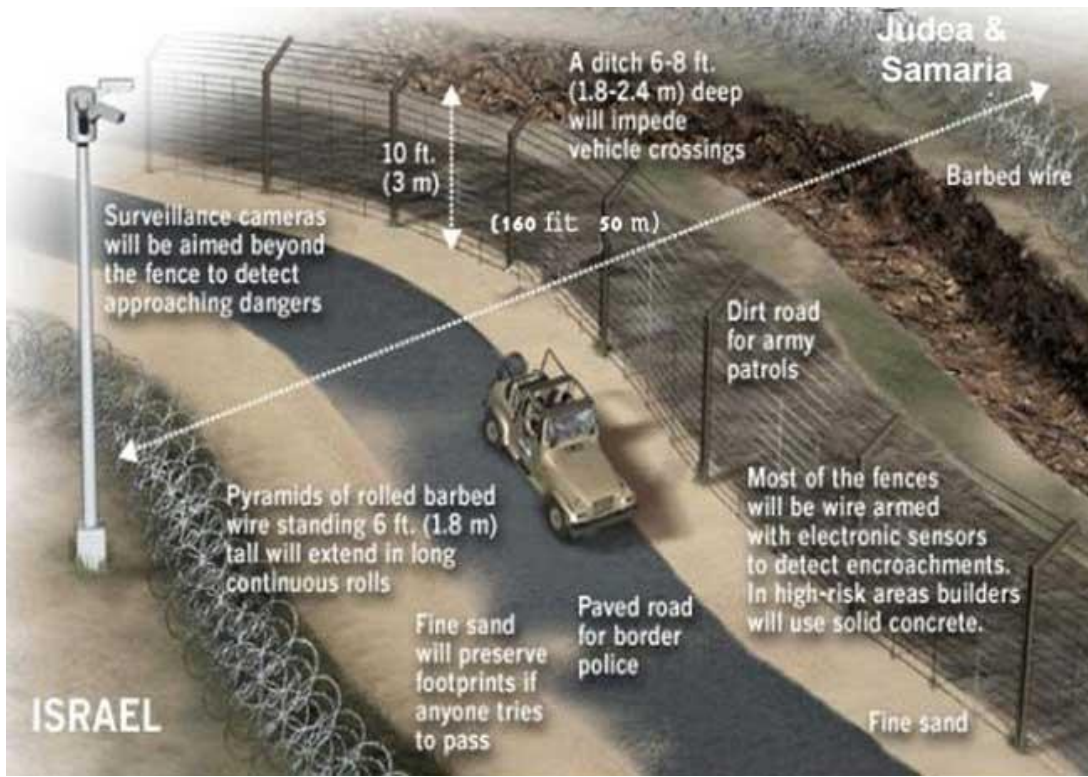
The fence construction is the more frequently used design and is augmented by a number of static security features. On at least one or both sides are paved roads for patrol vehicles that are surrounded by smooth strips of sand to track footprints of intruders. On the Palestinian side there is a ditch or trench to stop vehicles from attempting to drive through the fence. There are also pyramid stacks of sharp razor wire, some two meters tall. With all of these features, the fence construction consumes about 30-70 meters of space. Warning signs are placed on the fences with Arabic, Hebrew and English warnings reading "Mortal Danger, Military Zone. Any person who passes or damages the fence endangers his life" (Dolphin 22).

The wall construction is made of precast concrete sections that are generally 8 feet high. They are used in areas where the threat of sniper fire or gunfire is highly

probable. These concrete walls are also put in places where it is difficult to build a fence for geographical reasons. The concrete walls also include surveillance towers and cameras. Relative to the fence construction system, these walls appear as formidable and oppressive structures (Dolphin 24).

The debate surrounding the fence versus wall discussion does not question either method's effectiveness. In fact, both structures are equally effective and destructive in terms of the security. However, on a psychological level the wall construction is much more devastating. In a study done by the People's Health Movement titled *The Impact of Israel's Separation Wall on Palestinian Mental Health*, 945 citizens of the West Bank were sampled for a psychological study. Those citizens sampled who lived in areas where a concrete wall surrounded them showed much more physical and emotional symptoms than those who lived in villages with fences. The study showed that those who were surrounded by physical walls demonstrated a lack of motivation to perform daily activities, an appearance of paranoia, fear and sadness (PHM 2005). Furthermore, the study explained that the negative impact of the wall on the Palestinian citizen increases everyday because the wall negatively affects the basic physiological needs of the human being, such as the need for security, love, a sense of belonging and the need to feel appreciated which is the main factor for self esteem. Upon a physical look at the Wall, according to the study, Palestinians can see that they are faced a set of blocks of steel and cement surrounded by residential concentrations and closed within iron gates (PHM 2005). These blocks are difficult to break through and in practical terms, people living inside them are isolated from their sources of income (economic isolation), threatening the basic needs in terms of food, drink and medicine. Where as the fence provides some

opportunity to see the other side, and thus possibly feel hope, the wall structure does not provide any such hope for the future (PHM 2005).



Source: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Peace/fence.html>

### III. Legal v. Illegal

The question of the legality of the Security Barrier is one of the most prominent conversations surrounding its construction. Two courts have addressed the legal issues regarding the placement of the security barrier as well as humanitarian impact that the barrier has had.

The first court to adjudicate this matter was the Supreme Court of Israel. The court ruled that when establishing the Security Barrier, the Israeli government has both a legal and moral obligation to all its citizens. By law, the Israeli Supreme Court is a creation of the Israeli legislature and is therefore representative of all people, regardless of religion. Furthermore, the Israeli Supreme Court has a mandate to consider both sides

of the fence dispute. Its job is to balance the security needs of its citizens against the humanitarian needs of the West Bank Palestinians (Dershowitz 101). The Israeli Supreme Court has tried to strike that balance by upholding the creation of a security fence while insisting that the Israeli military authorities give due weight to the needs of the Palestinians, even if that requires some compromise with the security of Israelis. It is important to note that under Israeli law the Israeli Supreme Court is open to all Israelis including Arabs from Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. In fact, the Israeli Supreme Court was, until recently, one of the only courts in the Middle East where an Arab could win a case against his government (Dershowitz 102).

The second court to consider Israel's security barrier was the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague. No Israeli judge is allowed to serve on that court as a permanent member, while several of the judges, like Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf of Somalia, represent countries that do not themselves abide by the rule of law (Dershowitz 103). On July 9, 2004 the ICJ rendered an advisory opinion in the case of the legality of the construction of a wall in the occupied Palestinian territory that was brought before the court by a emergency special session of the United Nations General Assembly. Virtually every democracy in our current world voted against the court's decision to take jurisdiction of the fence case, while nearly every country that voted to take jurisdiction was a tyranny. The court found that "the construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime, are contrary to international law" (ICJ Press Release 2004). This legal decision was made by the ICJ through a series of steps that included: the court establishing its jurisdiction, the court debating the legality of the construction of

the wall and finally, the court providing legal consequences of the violations found (ICJ Press Release 2004). Although an advisory opinion is not binding on the parties to a conflict, such an opinion is highly regarded as it comes from the most distinguished international legal body (Feron 3). From Israel's standpoint, the country owes the ICJ absolutely nothing. It is under neither a moral nor a legal obligation to give any weight to its predetermined decision.

The Supreme Court of Israel and the International Court of Justice have varying opinions on the legality of the wall. The Supreme Court of Israel recognized the unquestionable reality that the security fence has saved numerous lives and promises to save more, but it also recognized that this benefit must not outweigh the material disadvantages to West Bank Palestinians (Dershowitz 104). On the other hand, the International Court of Justice dismissed the idea of saving lives and only focused on Palestinian interests. The advisory opinion coupled with the preference of the ICJ for Palestinian property rights over the lives of Jews demonstrates the one-sidedness of the court (Feron 4).

#### **IV. Economics**

There are two parts to the economic debate over the Security Barrier. The first part deals with economic impacts of the wall within each territory, focusing on how the wall will affect the Israeli and Palestinian economies respectively. The second part of the debate questions the cost of the wall. This question includes a cost-benefit analysis examining the billions of dollars that will be spent on the construction and maintenance of the barrier in relation to its effectiveness.



With regard to the economic impact, on the Israeli side, the terrorist attacks in the more densely populated areas of the country have greatly damaged the Israeli economy by causing a severe downturn in the tourism industry and forcing the government to bar Palestinians from working in Israel. Israeli economic losses have ranged from 10 to 14 billion in shekels, which is a startling sum considering that Israel's annual security budget is 30 to 35 billion shekels<sup>2</sup> (Ross 62). Building the barrier and thereby preventing terrorists from reaching the densely populated areas of Israel would help to revitalize the economy.

For the Palestinians, there is no doubt the completed fence will further impose genuine economic hardships. Palestinian jobs in Israel will be jeopardized by the closures of crossings through the wall. Limited access to Palestinian farms will also have a substantial effect on the Palestinian economy. In many areas, the security barrier has divided farmers from their land. The Israeli Government has granted Palestinians only limited access to these farms and sometimes does not allow the farmers to get to their farms at all. The lack of opportunity outside of the West Bank will cause the needs for jobs to be created inside of the West Bank, which, due to limited resources, will be extremely hard to achieve (Ross 64).

The second economic debate surrounds the cost of the wall. Built at a cost of \$1.6 million to \$2.5 million per mile, the separation barrier is the largest public construction project in either Israel or the Palestinian Territories. It is almost two-thirds complete and the cost of the project has already ballooned from a projected \$1 billion to more than \$2.1 billion (Ross 65). Many have questioned whether the price is actually worth the pay-off

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<sup>2</sup> 1 USD=3.80 Israeli Shekels

and wonder if the upkeep of the wall in the future will hurt the Israeli economy even more.

## **V. Settlements**

The settlement debate is both highly controversial and extremely complex. Since the creation of the first section of the wall, Palestinians, Israelis and the international community have criticized Israel for the way in which it has dealt with Israeli settlements inside the West Bank. A map of the security barrier shows that, for the most part the route follows the Green Line of 1949. However, when the barrier makes a turn into the West Bank, it usually does so in order to keep an Israeli settlement within Israel's de facto borders, often with the consequence of cutting Palestinian villages in half and separating Palestinians from their neighbors as well as their farms.

There are currently 121 Israeli settlements built on Palestinian land in the West Bank. According to international law, all of these settlements are illegal and have been condemned by both the United Nations Security Council as well as the international community at large. A population of some 462,000 Israeli settlers inhabits these settlements. Furthermore, approximately 385,000 settlers in 80 settlements will be located between the Separation Wall and the Green Line if Israel holds to current plans (Palestinian 3). Settlements are built on less than 3 percent of the area of the West Bank. However, due to the extensive network of settler roads and restrictions on Palestinians accessing their own land, Israeli settlements dominate more than 40 percent of the West Bank. The largest settlement Ariel, which has a population of 40,000 and encompasses 1-2 per cent of the West Bank, has been targeted as the most controversial area in the

West Bank because of Israel's commitment to developing the settlement area (Palestinian 3-4).

Over the years there have been numerous settlement freezes as the world continues to put pressure on the Israeli government. In an explanation by the Israeli government, a statement was released stating: "The fear is that erection of the barrier will channel the attacks to these communities, so it was decided to have the fence pass east of these settlements in order to provide protection for them and for the access roads that reach them" (Lochery 86). Israel feels that these citizens need security and that building the wall to surround these areas is the only way the government can succeed in satisfying this need.

Many people in the International community believe that solution to this issue is obvious. Opponents of the settlements argue that Israel needs to disband the settlements entirely and move the settlers into Israel proper. However, this has become a difficult task as the settlers have ideologically committed to staying on their land regardless of what their government or military thinks. Many of these settlers have built their communities in areas east of Israel proper and often east of the wall that encloses the majority of illegal settlements. These settlers are often willing to use violence against both Israelis and Palestinians to have their way, and have stepped up their acts of terror and intimidation throughout the peace process. The settlement debate continues to be a major obstacle surrounding the security barrier and will remain a contested topic until something permanent is done.

## **VI. Demography**

Demography is defined as the statistical study of human population. It is no secret that the world's population of Jewish people is not that large. Even further, the percentage of Jewish people within the borders of Israel, despite the increase in population growth rate and the thousands of immigrants who come to Israel from other areas of the world, is dropping while the number of Palestinians is rising. More and more Israelis have started to realize that if partition does not happen soon, within a decade Jews will be a minority in a "de facto bi-national state stretching from the Mediterranean to the Jordan" (Makovsky 2). Minority status, moreover, would erode the legitimacy of Israel's Jewish government both at home and abroad. Therefore, to remain Jewish and democratic, Israel needs to avoid absorbing areas or population groups that will undermine its Jewish majority. Many have argued that the security barrier is a solution to this issue. Israeli Jews, by constructing the barrier, are putting a physical obstacle in the way of becoming a minority in their own country. This debate has caused a discussion about the future of Israel's borders. This barrier, after achieving its initial goal of security, may act as a new legal border between the state of Israel and the Palestinian entity. Creating such a border will allow the Jewish population of Israel to remain the majority and thus remain in control of the state (Makovsky 2-4).

### **A World of Walls**

Since the beginning of modern civilization, people have always looked for a way to minimize their vulnerabilities. Whether this is a fence around their home, a moat around their castle or a fortification around their country, people's need for tangible security has caused the construction of many different barriers. The Israeli Security

Barrier is not the first of its kind, nor will it be the last. Below is a comprehensive examination of a few other important “walls” that have either succeeded or failed in providing security to other states throughout history.

### **I. Athens’ Long Walls**

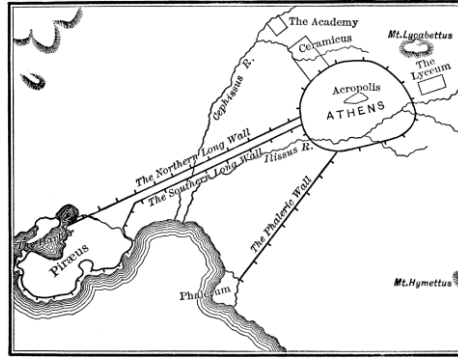
During the fifth century BCE, the miles of open, low-lying land between the upper city of Athens and its key ports on the Saronic Gulf represented the city-states’ primary vulnerability (Sterling 13). Desiring to emphasize naval power despite this intervening gap, the Athenians created a set of walls down to the coastline. Athens’ main adversaries quickly learned about the unwelcome Long Walls. The decisions to build fortified walls developed out of an assessment of Athens’ other options.

One basic option was based around the notion of expanding or improving the army. Athens already possessed an effective and experienced land force that had operated primarily in naval-infantry operations against Persia and other rebellious allies. Although this option was feasible, as Athens had the money and men to increase its forces, it had very little appeal. The Athenians did not regard their own force as deficient and therefore felt no need to improve it. Also, increasing the manpower of the army would ultimately mean a decrease in power of the navy, something most Athenians were not inclined to support (Sterling 15). Another option discussed was the relocation of the city center from Athens to Piraeus. This move would have fit perfectly with the naval-centered strategic outlook favored by most of the city-state. However, no such move occurred, or even was attempted during any time period in Athenian history. After centuries atop the Acropolis, relocating the city was too radical an idea (Sterling 16).

Ultimately, the Long Walls offered the best response from a political psychological and security perspective. Athens could build fortified walls to connect the city of Piraeus with its ports, eliminating the imminent vulnerability posed by an invading army. First, the wall would enable Athens to remain safe miles from the sea while still maintaining the dominance of the navy. Second, adding to the political appeal of the walls was the psychological comfort they would provide Athenians. Moreover, with the Long Walls in place, Athens' could pursue expansion and exploration without the worry that the city would be captured (Sterling 22).

On a security level, and for its time, the Athens Long Walls had everything that a security obstacle should. First, any attempt to scale the walls would prove extremely difficult and result in large numbers of fatalities. Second, Athens' major enemies did not yet employ tunneling to go under walls. Third, strong walls, if constructed properly, could withstand direct assaults, as technologies such as battering rams were not used yet. Finally, bypassing the Long Walls would require a run-in with Athenian navy, which was not a wish of any city-state or enemy of the time (Sterling 44-49).

Unfortunately, not much physical evidence of the Athens Long Walls exists today. However, examining the information about these walls provides us with an idea of why Athens chose to build such a fortification. The construction of the walls removed the final vulnerability of the city-state's most prominent area and allowed Athenians to pursue other endeavors while continuing to strengthen the navy. The Long Walls enabled Athens to survive any siege. No enemy could capture the city as long as it was connected to its ports and controlled the sea.



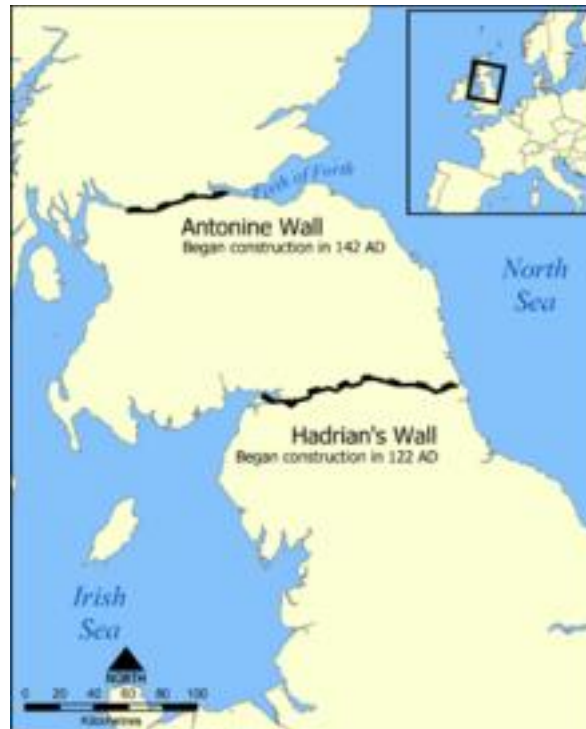
Source: <http://www.utexas.edu/courses/introtogreece/lect11/img32athpiraeslngwlls.html>

## II. Hadrian's Wall

Whereas fifth century BCE Athens was a rising power looking to eliminate its primary vulnerability, Rome in the early 120s CE presented a somewhat different context and challenge. The Hadrianic government, located in Britain, was one of the strongest powers in history and was already extremely well established. However, it struggled to manage and secure new domains after expanding and acquiring new territory. Unlike in Athens, the Hadrianic government's enemy was not a trained and skilled army. Instead, it was British-Scottish tribes who raided and skirmished towns and cities in Northern England (Sterling 68). Essentially, Hadrian's Wall was constructed as a means to control the government's newly acquired frontiers.

The wall, stretching from the North Sea to the Irish Sea, was 80 Roman miles (about 73 modern miles) long, 8-10 feet wide, and 15 feet high (Sterling 70). In addition to the wall, the Romans built a system of small forts called milecastles every Roman mile along its entire length, with towers every 1/3 mile. Sixteen larger forts holding from 500 to 1000 troops were built into the wall, with large gates on the north face. To the south of the wall the Romans dug a wide ditch with six foot high earth banks (Sterling 89). The wall not only reflected the power of Roman empire but it also successfully helped control

immigration, smuggling and customs. Furthermore, Hadrian's Wall successfully reflected the policy of Hadrian which was defense before expansion. The wall enabled the Roman empire to defend itself from invading tribes north of Britain who found it difficult to cross over the blockade. Altogether, the Romans built the most advanced and effective security barrier of the time period.



Source: NormanEinstein, September 20, 2005.

### **III. The Great Wall of China**

The Great Wall of China is the most unique and largest physical security structure that the world has ever seen. It was created and built over hundreds of years and stretches thousands of miles. Built in two stages, the early stage and the Ming Dynasty stage, the wall originally served as a protection barrier to ward off the invasion of different nomadic groups. The wall itself stretches from Shanhaiguan District in the



north-east of China to Nayu Pass in the West of China. The exact measurement of the wall has been debated but the wall is approximately 5,500 miles in length (Sterling 118).

The Early Wall stage began under the rule of Qin Shi Huang and the Qin Dynasty. To protect his newly acquired empire against intrusions by the nomadic tribes to the north, Qin ordered the construction of a wall to connect the remaining fortifications along his new northern frontier. Although there are no historical records, many have concluded that the cost of the wall in people, materials and money was very high because transporting all of these goods to the north took time and resources. However, once created, the wall seemed to be an effective deterrent for nomadic tribes as there was a decrease in both invasions and violence in the northern parts of China (Sterling 130).

Although the Early Wall stage laid the beginning foundations, it was during the Ming Era that the Great Wall was truly constructed. Early on, the Ming Dynasty battled to gain superiority over the Manchurian and Mongolian tribes to the north (Sterling 135). After numerous battles and countless resources used, the Ming developed a new strategy to keep the nomadic tribes from entering their empire: construct a wall. The new wall would be constructed along the entirety of the northern border and would differ from the Qin wall in strength and complexity. The Ming dynasty employed bricks to create the wall and these bricks proved to be stronger and easier to work with than the previous materials of clay, sand, willow branches and reeds. The Mings also chose to place watchtowers and lookout points throughout the wall for the purpose of spotting enemies coming from further away than before (Sterling 142). The Great Wall proved to be effective numerous times especially during the Manchu invasions that began around the

1600s. Although the Manchu's eventually conquered the wall and invaded China it took them 44 years of hard battling to do so (Sterling 148).



Source: <http://www.china-mike.com/china-travel-tips/tourist-maps/great-wall-china/>

#### IV. The Maginot Line

The Maginot Line, which is named after the French Minister of War Andre Maginot, was a wall of concrete fortifications and obstacles aimed at deterring attacks on the country. It was constructed by France along the borders of Germany and Italy after the devastations of World War I (Sterling 206). The idea for the fortification came from the success of defensive warfare that was executed or practiced throughout much of World War I. France realized that it had a vulnerable and unprotected area that was open to attack and attempted to not only fortify this location but also make it an offensive weapon. Furthermore, the creation of such a fortification provided the French army, which took numerous days to mobilize, extra time in the event of an attack (Sterling 211).

After the initial design, military experts concluded that the Maginot Line was a work of greatness, believing it would prevent any further invasions from the east of France, most notably from Germany. According to the French, the Maginot Line was

impervious to most types of attack, and had state-of-the-art living conditions for its troops (Sterling 223). Although the line was state-of-the-art, it came with a steep cost. The line consumed a vast amount of money and subsequently led to other parts of the French Armed Forces being underfunded.

Unfortunately, the Maginot Line did not serve its purpose of providing security to France during World War II. In fact, the invasion plan of the German army during WWII was designed specifically to deal with the line. The Germans sent a decoy force to the line while simultaneously sending a second army group to cut through Belgium and the Netherlands. The Germans were able to avoid direct battle with the forces placed on the Maginot Line and were able to gain entry into France within five days of their first invasion (Sterling 242). Inevitably, the Germans chose to attack the fortifications of the Maginot Line and successfully gained control of the majority of the line. When World War II ended, the use of the Maginot Line did too. The fortification proved ineffective and fairly useless and the French decided it was no longer necessary to spend money on the line (Sterling 251).



source: <http://www.toptenz.net/top-10-greatest-military-blunders-of-world-war-ii.php>

## **V. Other walls**

These are just a few of the security fortifications that have existed historically. Other walls such as the Berlin Wall, the Bar-Lev Line in Israel, the newly constructed US-Mexico border fence, and the wall between India and Pakistan were or have been constructed for a certain reason. Whether for security, separation or dominance these barriers serve a purpose. The Israeli Security Barrier is no different than these other walls, as it too has been built to accomplish a goal.

### **Conclusion**

This literature review has provided insight into the current debates and issues surrounding the Israeli security barrier. Examining these different issues has provided a powerful background to the extremely controversial security barrier. Moreover, reviewing other walls that have existed throughout time has allowed for a greater understanding of the concept behind physical defense systems. The following chapters will employ the debates and issues presented in this literature review to examine two major pieces of the Israeli security barrier. The next chapter of this paper will incorporate the offense-defense theory by exploring the offensive and defensive nature of the barrier and will analyze whether the barrier is an offensive or defensive entity. The following chapter will examine the other political goals behind the Israeli security barrier. This chapter will dissect the reasons for construction of the barrier and work to clarify why the Israeli government decided to build this structure.

## **Chapter II: Offense-Defense Theory**

In the book *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict*, Stephen Van Evera proposed his idea of the offense-defense theory. This theory attempts to discern what factors increase the likelihood that states will go to war. Van Evera offers three hypotheses:

1. War will be more common in periods when conquest is easy, or is believed easy, than in other periods.
2. States that have, or believe they have, large offensive opportunities or defensive vulnerabilities will initiate and fight more wars than other states.
3. Actual examples of true imbalances are rare and explain only a moderate amount of history. However, false perceptions of these factors are common and thus explain a great deal of history (Van Evera 21).

These hypotheses sit at the heart of the offense-defense theory. Through his discussion, Van Evera provides insight into the complexity of the offense-defense relationship. Van Evera is neither the first nor the last person to write about this phenomenon. In fact, many scholars have tackled the issue of the offense-defense balance by examining how different variables affect the military scale. The offense-defense theory is now widely used to explain many aspects of war and conflict. The following is an exploration of some of the most prominent theories surrounding the offense-defense paradox.

### ***I. Offense and Defense in the International System, George Quester***

George Quester has been dubbed as one of the pioneers of the offense-defense argument. His book revolutionized the way in which people viewed offense and defense in the international system. His discussion begins with the claim that the offensive-defensive argument is primarily one about military capability. Quester attempts to solve the dilemma by identifying the “technical, political and social factors that make it

advantageous to strike out offensively at the enemy rather than sitting in a prepared defensive positions waiting for the enemy to strike” (Quester 2).

According to Quester, offenses are favored, and offensive action is far more likely, when a situation is created in which more casualties will occur if attacking first is not the chosen tactic. Therefore, war must be driven by calculations of gain and loss. Quester provides an example of this offense-defense paradigm. He writes, “If a single bomber airplane can use gravity for the destruction of many hostile airplanes that it catches on an airfield below, this is a technological development that favors the offensive. If a well-planned minefield imposes heavy casualties on an army trying to attack a fortified machine-gun nest, this is a technology that discourages taking the offensive and reinforces the defense” (Quester 6). Essentially, Quester is making an argument that the choice to be offensive or defensive derives from predictions about the likely outcome of a maneuver.

Quester becomes more specific when he discusses the use of weapons. Some weapons, according to Quester, might have helped offensive as well as defensive operations, if only they could have been moved along with an advancing army to help it with the battles (Quester 7). However, the inability of certain weapons to move classifies them as only helping the defense. The minefields that Quester mentions above are an example of this, as are anti-aircraft guns or fixed artillery positions along coasts. Since there is an inability to bring these weapons to the enemy, the enemy must come to the weapons. Inevitably, the immobile weapons become “supremely defensive” whenever a conflict is being fought abroad (Quester 8).

Quester argues that this phenomenon makes mobility a strictly offensive value. First, mobility allows a country to invade with power if it can bring all of the deadly vehicles of destruction with it. Second, the ability to move may allow an attacking force to exploit various weak spots or blind spots of the force that is standing in place (Quester 8). Third, the ability to move allows an attacking force to group itself, and regroup itself, when it decides to battle again. Mobility allows the offensive to make sense because of the opportunity to choose the time and place of the battle as well as the odds (Quester 8).

By contrast any weapon that relates to “peculiarities of terrain” will be supportive of the defense. Such natural occurring obstacles like marshlands, mountains, jungles or even our contemporary urban sprawl will favor the defense (Quester 9). This is because the army defending such a region is likely to be more at home with its “peculiarities” than the alien army. Also, these “peculiarities” provide natural defensive obstacles to invading forces. Overall, Quester is making the argument that those weapons that are permanently fixed support the defensive position. On the other hand, if the weapons are mobile, the offense is favored. Finally, Quester argues that shifts in military technology affect the incentives and capabilities for the offensive (Quester 10).

## **II. *Offense and Defense Theory: An Empirical Assessment*, Yoav Gortzak, Yoram Z Haftel, and Kevin McSweeney**

Building on many of the arguments put forth by Quester, these theorists suggests that shifts in the offense-defense balance have a considerable effect on the likelihood of war and crisis in the international system. Gortzak, et al. state, “Factors that increase the ease of offensive operations or that significantly reduce the costs of such operations, relative to defensive operations, are argued to increases the probability of international

war and crisis” (Gortzak et al. 69). These authors explain that the development of new technology and weapons, which favor the offensive, trigger the incentive to enter a conflict with another state. More than this, the current nature of the international system does not allow “states to rely solely on the perceived intentions of their potential rival to ensure their survival” (Gortzak et al. 72). Instead, the authors believe that countries are forced to assume intentions from rivals and act accordingly. Offense dominant states produce behavior through “flexing” technology and weaponry that allows rivals to understand that there is a threat. Defense dominant states communicate a strategy of protection and security. According to Gortzak et al., rivals will act accordingly to these actions and draw conclusions about offensive or defensive intentions (Gortzak et al. 72). The authors conclude that “by adding factors that affect the probability of the success or failure of offensive strategies to existing theories about war and peace, we can greatly increase our ability to explain and predict the likelihood of violent disputes and wars in the international system” (Gortzak et al. 78).

### ***III. Attack and Conquer? International Anarchy and the Offense-Defense-Deterrence Balance, Karen Ruth Adams***

In this work, Karen Adams focuses on the changing nature of the offense-defense balance while simultaneously incorporating deterrence in to the equation. She argues that offense and defense changes over time, meaning that states should be “more vulnerable to conquest and more likely to attack one another at some times than others (Adam 46).” More specifically, Adams provides an explanation of two time periods in



which “offensive operations”<sup>3</sup> and “defensive operations”<sup>4</sup> are more likely to occur (Adams 47).

The first time period, offense-dominant eras, is when offense is easier than defense. This means that defenders’ military forces should be more likely to collapse or surrender in response to offensive military threats. In offense-dominant eras, states should be attacked more often (Adams 48). Moreover, offense-dominant eras provide a heightened vulnerability, which allows states to act on the idea that the best defense is a good offense. The second time period, defense-dominant eras, allows states with “state-of-the-art capabilities” to declare war and then wait to counterattack without hurting their chances of survival (Adams 49). This means that powerful states, during defense-dominant eras, who have superior weaponry and military capability can choose to create a conflict but then wait to be attacked. This will allow the state to employ defensive techniques to protect its interests while simultaneously having the opportunity to destroy a rival. Offense-dominant eras provide security through attacking first while defense-dominant eras provide security through limitation of attacks.

Adams also finds it necessary to distinguish between defense and deterrence. First, she explains that deterrent operations are actions in which “a state prepares to use force or demonstrates its ability to use force to attack another states nonmilitary assets to deter that state from attacking it or to deter if rom further attacks once a war has begun (Adams 52).” From this statement it can be concluded that deterrent operations entail

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<sup>3</sup> Offensive operations: are actions in which a state uses force to attack another state’s military or nonmilitary assets to conquer its territory or compel compliance with policy directives (impose its will on the other state)

<sup>4</sup> Defensive Operations: are actions in which a state uses force against another state’s military assets to repel and limit damage from that state’s attacks to retain control of its territory and avoid having the other state impose its will upon it.

punishment while the defensive operations mentioned above are aimed at limiting damage. Adams provides a nice summary of her theory that states,

...because states are less vulnerable to conquest and less likely to attack one another in defense- and especially deterrence-dominant eras, it is not the case, as offensive realists claim, that states act aggressively to survive. Neither is it the case, as defensive realist suggest, that states act aggressively only when their security is threatened... (Adams 78).

Her comments here point to the idea that she believes defense and deterrence will allow a state to be more comfortable in the international system by providing greater security. At the same time states need to remember that nonaggressive does not equate to safety (Adams 79). Adams' deterrence and offensive-defensive time period argument provides an interesting take on the offense-defense conversation.

#### **IV. *Polarity, The Offense-Defense Balance And War, Ted Hopf***

According to Ted Hopf, the offense-defense balance consists of three elements. The first is the *Technical Offense-Defense Military Balance* concerning the relative military advantages enjoyed by the offense or defense on the battlefield. The second element is the *Cumulativity of Power Resources*. Hopf explains this as the relative availability of the resources that make military capability possible. The third element is the set of *Strategic Beliefs* held by the leaders of great powers regarding their relative concern for their reputation, or credibility (Hopf 477).

More specifically, *the Technical Offense and Defense Military Balance* focuses on the idea that offensive and defensive advantages should be separated into tactical and strategic categories (Hopf 478). Tactical offensive advantage, according to Hopf, is the ability to seize a piece of an enemy's territory at less cost to oneself than it requires for the defender to protect it or retrieve it (Hopf 479). A strategic offensive advantage,

according to Hopf, is the ability to seize and/or occupy as much of an enemy's territory as is necessary to destroy its military potential at less cost to oneself than is required for the defender to protect its territory or retake it (Hopf 479).

The *Cumulativity of Power Resources* investigates the “affect of the availability and extractability of power resources on the offense-defense theory” (Hopf 480).

Available power resources, according to Hopf, are the material elements that constitute military and economic power in a given historical period (Hopf 485). Inevitably, the resources of power and their geographical locations change over time. For example, in the past states may have attacked the industrial sectors of their rivals to weaken their enemies' economic safety. Today, state actors focus more on attacking industries like petroleum and uranium deposits because of the powerful relevance of these resources (Hopf 486). Hopf argues that the greater the relevance of another state's resources to increasing one's own power, the greater the incentive to go to war. This creates a situation in which the lower the costs of occupation and the more readily transferable the resources of power are the greater the instability and thus the higher chance of attack (Hopf 486). Inevitably, an establishment of this situation favors the offensive because it allows a state to gain an advantage and thus have a greater chance of successful attack.

Finally, the *Strategic Beliefs* component discusses that the knowledge possessed by ruling elites of great nations about how the international system operates plays a role in the offense-defense paradigm. According to Hopf, offensive strategic beliefs assume that rulers will be very concerned if they allow another state to gain a military victory anywhere in the international arena (Hopf 488). This victory can cause all actors in the system to “learn lessons about offense and defense” (Hopf 489). First, the rulers of

victorious states will believe that they can successfully challenge the positions of the recently defeated. Second, “the defeated state’s allies will begin to question the advisability of relying on the former’s security guarantees, given its recent record, and hence will tend to bandwagon with rather than balance against, any future efforts at expansion by the recent aggressor” (Hopf 489). The final lesson is that states, which are located in the neighborhood of the recent victor, will “fall like dominoes into the lap of the aggressor, rather than redoubling their efforts to balance against this ascendant threat” (Hopf 489). On the other hand, Hopf argues that defensive beliefs create rulers who are “unconcerned about their credibility, confident that allies will balance, not bandwagon, and that dominoes will not fall after their adversary’s victories” (Hopf 489).

Hopf’s three-element argument about the offense-defense theory continues to build on the original conversation that George Quester began in his book. Hopf’s argument examines a wider range of possible reasons for offensive and defensive decisions made by a state while providing powerful insight into the offense-defense relationship in the international system.

#### ***V. Rebuilding the Foundations of Offense-Defense Theory, Stephen Biddle***

Stephen Biddle’s work on the offense-defense theory is extremely complex because of the uniqueness of his argument. According to Biddle the “offense-defense balance” plays an important role across a wide range of modern international relations theory (Biddle 742). The theory itself has been used to explain the causes of war, alliance formation, arms racing, crisis behavior, the size of states and the structure of the international system. The widespread use of the offense-defense balance is fueled by the appeal that the balance makes sense on a military level. Current theories, like the ones

explored above, focus on “how the military prospects for attack ought to affect the likelihood of aggression or that arms races should be more intense when technology is better suited for attack than defense” (Biddle 743). Biddle argues that these current theories are “underspecified and problematic” (Biddle 743). The previous theories focus entirely on the consequences of the balance, essentially examining what happens when the balance is tipped.

Biddle has proposed a new theory of the offense-defense balance that is designed to overcome what he believes are the two shortcomings of the existing arguments. The first shortcoming is “the current theories exclude a crucial class of causal variables” (Biddle 745). There are strong theoretical and empirical reasons to believe that the existing theories reliance on structural material factors like force size, geography and especially technology is misplaced. Therefore, according to Biddle, the new theory relies heavily on national strategic and tactical choices as the key determinants of the relative ease of attack and defense (Biddle 746). The second shortcoming discusses that the current theories of the “balance-as-effect are indeterminate” (Biddle 747). The broad idea that geography, force size and patterns of diplomatic action can alter the offense-defense balance provides a list of “independent variables”, but there is no mechanism for interrelating them (Biddle 750). Biddle argues that “the technology theory offers no operationally measurable specification: neither defense-conducive firepower nor offense-conducive mobility has unambiguous referents and many technologies simultaneously increase both” (Biddle 751).

Biddle, to counter these weaknesses creates new theory that concludes three major findings. First, his new theory implies that the security dilemma cannot be eliminated

from the offense-defense discussion. Biddle believes that states cannot solely construct “defense-conducive military postures to defend themselves” (Biddle 769). For states, the goal of being strictly defensive is unattainable. Instead, Biddle concludes that states, in order to be secure, must “implement tactics that could also enable successful attacks against neighbors” (Biddle 768). Second, the new theory implies a “higher frequency of future war than orthodox offense-defense theory” (Biddle 769). According to Biddle, this stems from the above idea that the security-dilemma cannot be eliminated. Essentially, the importance of force employment will lead to more situations in which war arises. Finally, Biddle’s new theory implies a “number of new directions for the investigation” (Biddle 770). Biddle believes that the offense-defense theory will expand to explain “a host of important political outcomes” (Biddle 770). He argues that the offense-defense theory will continue to be employed in the discussion of conflict but may also evolve to help explain larger political choices.

Biddle’s argument focuses on the balance part of the offense-defense balance. He provides a more systematic theory to explain the balance, which sheds new light on the wide variety of international relations theories that use it. Biddle’s new theory of balance is important (Biddle 768). He provides a new perspective on the theories of more orthodox positions about technology as the powerful variable in the offense-defense balance. Biddle also argues that offense-defense distinctions do matter and must be taken into account to understand political outcomes. The ability to attack and the ability to defend are not the same; they can and must be distinguished (Biddle 770).

## **The Israeli Security Barrier: Offensive or Defensive**

Before beginning a discussion about whether the Israeli security barrier is an offensive maneuver or defensive structure it is first necessary to briefly review the situation surrounding the barrier. Officially, the security barrier is being built by a state-actor (Israel) to stop a non-state actor (Palestinian's) from infiltrating its borders. Unofficially, the barrier is also being built to create a permanent border between the Israeli state and the non-state Palestinian entity. Either way, the offense-defense theories presented above focus solely on interactions between states in the international system that have the ability to engage each other in modern warfare. Although the situation between the Palestinians and Israeli's is not classified as a war, the conflict has taken on many war like characteristics, which have created an offense-defense struggle between the two entities. Whether it has been Israel invading parts of the West Bank (offense), terrorist organizations bombing buses in Tel-Aviv (offense), or constant patrols by the Israeli Defense Force along the border of Israel, there has been a constant relevance of offense-defense theory throughout this conflict. The new barrier, which has become the ultimate weapon of security for the Israeli state, is no different. Is the Israeli security barrier being built for offensive or defensive purposes? The following provides an answer to this question through an examination of the relationship between the current theories of the offense-defense balance and the major debates surrounding the barrier.

### **I. Barrier Technology**

Many theories surrounding the offense-defense argument focus on technology. Israeli society is famously known for its advancements in military as well as other types of technology. The country's expertise in this area is shown through the incorporation

advanced into the creation of the security barrier. Although the wall appears to be extremely simplistic, it is actually a complex militarized entity that provides intelligence and security to the country. Most offense-defense theories place a large emphasis on the importance of advanced technology. However, the difference between offensive and defensive use of said technology derives from the way in which the technology is employed.

George Quester's argument focuses heavily on the technology aspect and bases the divide between offense and defense on the mobility of weapons (the technology). Immobile weapons, according to Quester, are defensive because an attacker must travel to the weapon instead of having the weapons come to them. Therefore, these weapons are meant to protect the location of their fortified position. To this end, the wall becomes defensive, as there is nothing more immobile than miles of concrete wall and barbed wire fence. If a battle over the wall were to occur it would take place at the wall, bringing the fight directly to Israeli border.

Furthermore, Quester's theory continues by pointing out that defensive strategy also relates to "peculiarities" of terrain. By "peculiarities" Quester is referencing natural occurrences like mountains, rivers and jungle. Although the barrier is not a naturally occurring structure, it can be argued that its construction has changed the natural landscape of the Israeli-Palestinian border forever, making the wall a part of the terrain and environment. It is obvious that this new structure poses a physical security obstacle and thus favors the defensive.

Stephen Biddle also makes an argument for technology. Biddle believes that technology is always an offensive force but should be treated as an insignificant measure



because of the constant development of new technology. More sophisticated technology will always allow for a more powerful offensive maneuver. Israeli technology surpasses the opposing Palestinian forces capabilities by incredible amounts, thus placing the wall in the offensive category. As Israeli technology continues to change over the next few years there will continue to be more offensive gains through the use of this technology.

## **II. The Route**

To date, the route of the Israeli Security Barrier continues to be one of the most contested issues surrounding the wall. The placement of the wall has been extremely strategic and done in a very particular way to secure certain Israeli interests, which include protecting settlements and important geographic locations. For some, the ultimate goal of the wall is to separate the Israeli people from the Arabs in the West Bank, thus securing the Israeli state behind a physical blockade. The route has every intention of accomplishing this goal and makes no concessions to the people living in the West Bank. Deciding whether the route maneuvers are offensive or defensive is not a simple task.

The theory of Ted Hopf would place the careful route planning as an offensive maneuver by the Israeli government. More specifically, Hopf's *Technical Offense and Defense Military Balance* argument states, "...a strategic offensive advantage is the ability to seize and/or occupy as much of an enemy's territory at less cost to oneself that is required for the defender to protect its territory or retake it (Hopf 479)." According to this idea, the Israeli government is strategically removing land from the Palestinian entity because it has both the power and ability to do so. Although the international community believes the land belongs the Palestinians, the Israeli government is offensively claiming

this land as theirs by constructing a barrier on it. Furthermore, the Palestinian entity cannot do anything about this situation through defense, which creates a low cost offensive situation for the Israeli government.

To further prove this, Hopf's theory of *Cumulativity of Power Resources* can also be employed. This theory admits that state actors, who are acting offensively, focus on attacking relevant resources. Moreover, Hopf comments that the more important a resource is the more likely it will be attacked so that power can be removed from the enemy. An examination of the ability of the wall to conveniently cut Palestinian farmers off from their farmland produces a result that supports Hopf's argument. In this instance, the security barrier plays a very dangerous offensive role by eliminating a food staple for the Palestinian population. There is nothing more important or "relevant" than the agricultural staples of a society. In this regard, the security barrier is being used as an offensive entity by the Israeli government by attacking the enemy through the removal of a resource.

On the other hand, examining Karen Adam's theory would place the calculated route in the defensive category. Her discussion of offense vs. defense eras provides evidence that the wall currently sits in a defensive state. This is because Adam's demonstrates that defense choices provide security through limitation of attacks. By limiting access to Israel, the security barrier is working as a defensive tool. Palestinian's must cross through one of the designated border crossings where heavy screening and necessary identification is required to be admitted to Israel. These specifically designed gateways that are placed strategically throughout the barrier enable the Israeli security forces to limit access to the state, which in turn works limit any type of attack.

According to Adams, the ability to remove a threat before it is created would be the ultimate defensive move. The barrier's ability to accomplish this with extreme success provides support for the defensive nature of the wall.

By investigating Stephen Biddle's new theory that relies heavily on national strategic and tactical choices as the key determinants of the relative ease of attack and defense it can also be concluded that the route of the wall employs a defensive tactic. As stated above, the route of the wall is extremely strategic. According to Biddle, strategic and national choices are taken into account when a state is making military decisions. Offensive decisions will be ones that leave the state more vulnerable but ultimately have a high payoff. Defensive decisions will come with less gain but higher levels of security. The route of the security barrier, according to this argument, would thus be a defensive decision by the Israeli state. The barrier accomplishes the state goal of creating stronger security through defensive measures.

### **III. Suicide Terror**

As a non-state actor the terrorist organizations in Palestine have used suicide terror as their main offensive weapon against the Israeli state. To stop these attacks, which have occurred at constant rates in past years, the Israeli government decided to build the security barrier. The barrier allowed limits to be placed on the travel between the West Bank and Israel, which ultimately stopped the flow of terrorists across the border.

Quester's mobility argument that is discussed in his offense-defense theory suggests that the terrorist organizations are using offensive techniques to target the Israeli people. Although the suicide bombs do not fall under the title of conventional warfare

tactics that Quester uses to support his argument, it can still be concluded that the mobility of the terrorist makes the action purely offensive. To combat this offensive tactic used by the terrorist organizations, Israel must employ a defensive policy to remove the threat of attack. Quester, through his discussion of the “minefield” presented earlier in this chapter, provides evidence of how the wall can act as this defensive barrier. He states, “If a well-planned minefield imposes heavy casualties on an army trying to attack a fortified machine gun nest, this is a technology that discourages taking the offensive and reinforces the defense” (Quester 6). Although the wall does not impose death to a suicide bomber, it does significantly stifle the capabilities and success of the attack. The need to cross a concrete barrier that is monitored by cameras, motion detectors and constant soldier patrol creates a figurative “minefield” for suicide bombers that destroys their plans of attack. According to this argument, the once permeable border of Israel is now a fortified defensive entity aimed at defending Israel’s citizens from attacking forces.

To counter the defense argument in this situation, Karen Adam’s would focus on her offense-dominant era theory. This theory’s core message is that forces are more likely to concede as a response to greater military threat from the opposing side. Dealing with suicide bombers is a hard phenomenon to tackle because of the relative ease with which bombers can disguise themselves and their deadly weapons. Prior to the construction of the barrier a bomber had the ability to cross into Israel undetected, making it incredibly easy for their mission to become a success. Today, a bomber is much more likely to concede his mission when faced with an eight foot wall complete with motion sensors and barbed wire. According to Adam’s, the threat of getting caught by the Israeli

Defense Forces coupled with the new challenges and difficulty of navigating an advanced set of barriers provides Israel with an offensive advantage over the attacking bomber. This situation creates the opportunity for Israel to demonstrate its supreme power over the bombers by threatening them with new obstacles.

Another offensive argument about the barriers role in stopping suicide terror can be connected with the theory of Yoav Gortzak, Yoram Z Haftel, and Kevin McSweeney. These theorists argue that when countries “generate incentives for preemptive strikes and preventive measures” (Gortzak et al. 72) there is a shift towards the offensive. From Israel’s standpoint there are numerous reasons to prevent suicide attacks from happening within the country. First and foremost is the necessity of the state to provide security to its citizens. Preemptively removing a threat to the Israeli citizens by hindering the attackers abilities to enter the country is an easy and powerful way to provide security. According to Gortzak, et al. if a suicide bomber does not have the opportunity to detonate his bomb on Israeli soil because of the preventative and preemptive measures in place, the barrier is essentially serving its purpose as an offensive weapon.

## **V. Deterrence**

It is necessary to stop and examine a third idea that deals with neither offense nor defense. Instead, a brief discussion of the deterrence theory will provide additional insight into the strategic point of the barrier. Karen Adam’s discussed the deterrence balance phenomenon in her writings. She provides a definition of what is called a “deterrent operation” as “actions in which a state prepares to use force or demonstrates its ability to use force to attack another states nonmilitary assets to deter that state from attacking it or to deter if from further attacks once a war has begun” (Adams79). The

Israeli security barrier, in some ways, can be seen as a demonstration of Israeli capabilities and thus act as a deterrent to opposing forces. The barrier, regardless of its purpose, is a strong reminder of the superiority of the Israeli economy and military.

In his book “*Do Good Fences Make Good Neighbors?*” Brent Sterling presents an argument about barriers as deterrents. He states that,

Barriers exacerbation of adversary hostility raises the importance of their deterrent potential. In contrast to the more commonly used deterrence by punishment approach of threatening unacceptable retaliation, states aim for strategic defenses to facilitate deterrence by denial through convincing an adversary that its objective is not obtainable, at least not at an acceptable cost or risk (Sterling 315).

According to Sterling’s statement, the Israeli security barrier would be a deterrent to any threats because it denies terrorist the ability to achieve their goal. The ideas put forth in this section from Sterling hold true for the Israeli security barrier. The barrier creates an incredibly difficult obstacle for terrorists who are trying to infiltrate Israel. In fact, the barrier denies terrorist the ability to carry out attacks because of the low probability terrorist have at crossing through the barrier. Figuring out a way to bypass or get through the barrier would cost a lot of time, energy and money. Therefore, the barrier creates unacceptable costs and risks for terrorists who now choose to refrain from attempting suicide terror on the Israeli state.

George Quester provides further support for this deterrent phenomenon when he discusses the effect of World War I on the offense-defense theory. He writes, “...the costs of testing a prepared defensive position were now obviously great; if repeated tests were required before an offensive breakthrough occurred, many nations might lack the desire to attempt these tests in the future” (Quester 114-115). In order for terrorists to successfully gain access to Israel for their attacks they would have to repeatedly attempt

to figure out a possible way to get in to the state. These attempts would result in numerous consequences, including arrest and imprisonment, which may outweigh the rewards of the end goal. Moreover, the time spent working to figure out a solution to accessing Israel may be time better spent figuring out another offensive tactic. These results would ultimately deter terrorists from continuing to attack Israel through suicide terror.

The idea that the Israeli security barrier is in actuality acting as a deterrent adds a new piece to this complicated equation. The deterrent theory, although strong, does not provide enough concrete support to make a viable argument for deterrence as the main military and political goal of the barrier. It is true that the barrier was erected to deter terrorists from committing attacks on Israel. It is also true that the barrier has accomplished its goal in deterring terrorists by placing a major obstacle between them and their target. If the security barrier was only constructed to stop terrorists from entering Israel then deterrence would have applied in this situation. However, it is important to remember that many people believe the barrier is not only about stopping suicide terror. Acknowledging the notion that the barrier has other political goals creates an argument for the structure as an offensive or defensive entity and not a deterrent.

### **Conclusion: Is the Best Defense a Good Offense?**

After examining the current theories surrounding the offense-defense controversy, it is apparent that the Israeli security barrier cannot be classified as solely an offensive or defensive entity. Each aspect of the barrier that has been examined in this chapter can be interpreted using both the offensive and the defensive. For example, the route of the barrier is offensive in nature because its construction near Palestinian farms removes a

relevant resource from the Palestinians. On the other hand, the wall itself has defensive tendencies because of its immobile nature. Furthermore, the evaluation of suicide terror showed an offensive purpose of the barrier through the use of preventative and preemptive tactics. This exploration has provided an illustration that shows how all parts of this barrier are interconnected. Each concrete block or chain-linked fence serves an offensive or defensive purpose.

If the conclusion here is that the barrier is neither offensive nor defensive why does the investigation of this topic even matter? It is necessary to examine the offensive and defensive components of this barrier in order to further understand the decision to create such a wall. Leaving the legality issue out of the conversation, the above investigation provides strong justification for the creation of this security barrier as a means to stop suicide terror. As a state, Israel has the right to defend its borders and citizens. Moreover, Israel has the right to take offensive actions against those who choose to attack its borders. The security barrier accomplishes both while simultaneously limiting the loss of Israeli human life.

The above investigation also provides insight into other motives behind the construction of the wall. A very deliberate point of the wall is to incorporate key settlement blocks and pieces of the West Bank into Israel. This policy, which can be seen as both offensive and defensive, gains more credibility with the employment of the offense-defense theory. Interpreting the decision of the Israeli government to carve out certain sections of the West Bank with the barrier from an offensive or defensive perspective removes criticism about Israel's and establishes a greater understanding of the need for certain choices and decisions to be made. Offensively, the Israeli



government believes that incorporating this land into Israel will further weaken the Palestinian entity and thus provide Israel with a stronger and more powerful nation. Defensively, the Israeli government feels the need to control this land so that it can continue to stop terrorists from violently attacking citizens. In this way, the offense-defense theory is extremely important to the case of the Israeli security barrier and must not be overlooked. The offense-defense theory helps to provide a powerful understanding of the Israel security barrier and the complexity surrounding it.

### **Chapter III: Security or Separation?**

Carl Von Clausewitz, a German military theorist who stressed the moral and political aspects of war, famously wrote, “War is the continuation of policy by other means” (War 2000). The separation barrier built in the West Bank during the past decade undoubtedly serves as part of a war to stop terrorists from infiltrating the Israeli borders. However, is the war on terror the only war in which the separation fence serves to fight? In his book *Do Good Fences Make Good Neighbors* Brent L. Sterling writes that “barriers not only present the least politically painful course of action but they also remove the incentive to pursue changes that would improve long-term security prospects” (Sterling 325). This chapter will seek to confirm or deny this theory in the case of the Israeli security barrier by addressing the notion that the security fence has been built in order to implement other policies of the Israeli government.

#### **I. “Buying Time”**

Brent Sterling’s theory pinpoints an incredibly important topic that surrounds security barriers. In order to fully understand the implications of this theory in the Israeli case it is necessary to first examine the idea behind Sterling’s argument. Sterling argues that strategic defenses cannot completely eliminate an adversarial threat, so decision makers have always sought to reduce their vulnerability by constructing strategic barriers that either “buy time” or allow a state to “operate proactively” in a safer environment (Sterling 324). Although these two ideas make sense, Sterling argues that historical evidence proves that both of these motivations can entail dangerous long-term consequences.

Sterling's research shows that the far more common circumstance by decision makers involves states attempting to "buy time" through the construction of a strategic defense system. Decision makers may seek to "buy time" for contrasting reasons. First, states may desire an accommodation but lack a viable negotiating partner. For example, Israel in the late 1960s had to wait for Egyptian president Nasser's departure from office before a diplomatic resolution of its disputes with Egypt would be possible (Sterling 125). Second, officials may want to undertake an offensive position against the enemy but need to build up strength. Yu Zijun in the early 1740s stressed to Ming emperor Chenghua that the Yansui wall would allow the local area to recover sufficiently to facilitate the much-desired seizure of the Ordos region (Sterling 124). Finally, leaders may just aim to "perpetuate defensive security" (Sterling 325). The French army built the Maginot Line to help protect the northeastern frontier and enable broader security until such a time arrived that alternative defense measures could be employed (Sterling 218).

Regardless of the reason, barriers provide this breathing space by favorably shifting the previously mentioned offense-defense balance while simultaneously establishing a sense of being safe. Such perceptions are critical given that they drive public and elite attitudes and thus, ultimately, policy choice. Sterling writes, "the potential for perceptions of security to deviate sharply from reality exists given the likely significant degree of uncertainty over a state's true security unless actually involved in a military engagement" (Sterling 326). Achieving a sense of safety is a vital component of any political leader's duty and requires a favorable interpretation of the situation on the

ground leading officials to stress, if not exaggerate, barrier strength. These “public relations” campaigns have been a staple of strategic defense efforts (Sterling 325).

The enhanced perception of security produced by the construction of a strategic defense system, however, tends to undermine the pursuit of a fundamental, longer-lasting solution to the adversarial relationship. In particular, unpopular political, economic and military changes are unlikely to occur as the pressure to undertake them is relieved by the barrier (Seguin 7). The Ming dynasty provides the foremost example. The Great Wall, even if not providing perfect security, was sufficient to forgo a politically and culturally unwanted embrace of the concessions necessary for an accommodation with the Mongols or to adopt the major economic and military reforms necessary to obtain better fighting capability. Eventually, this would ultimately prove disasters for the Ming dynasty. The misconception that the Great Wall could prevent full attack caused the Ming dynasty to become complacent with their armed forces. Although the Mongolians never successfully broke through the wall, the Manchus did. The Manchus crossed the Great Wall in 1644 and soon after seized Beijing, toppling the Ming Dynasty and establishing the Qing Dynasty (Sterling 226).

Plato once wrote that “walls...tempt men to relax their guard and to trust to the false security provided by ramparts and bars” (War 2000). Sterling would argue that Plato should have added that the passage “of time exacerbates this effect” (Sterling 326). As a result, the goal of “buying time” with strategic defenses tends to morph into a policy of “muddling through” that entails increasing danger (Sterling 327). Initially, the barrier enhances the security of the state, but over time, it can be argued, that security is broken down and becomes weaker. It can be argued that a highly motivated foe aggressively

searches for counters to the physical, static structure. Eventually means emerge that, along with the fortifications deterioration, decrease a strategic defense's contribution to security. The longer this search takes without aggression or at least successful attacks, the stronger the perceptions of security become among decision makers and the broader public.

According to Sterling, the tendency toward "muddling through" with an increasing sense of security suggests long-term peril of efforts to "buy time." However, rising powers that act more aggressively, feeling liberated by their reduced vulnerability, have also found danger (Sequin 9). As a result of strategic defense systems, decision makers are more willing to take positions and actions with great risk in pursuit of further shifting the power balance in their directions. An example of this is seen through the Athenian's behavior during the Second Peloponnesian War. The Athenian's believed that they were protected well enough to send out a lightweight force of twenty ships on an expedition to Sicily. Lasting from 415 BC to 413 BC, this expedition would ultimately cause a crucial turning point in the Peloponnesian War. Upon arriving in Sicily, the Athenian force was met with crippling attacks. Eventually, Athens sent two hundred ships and thousands of soldiers to aid the suffering men who could not fight the armies in Sicily. This contingency of fighters was mostly lost in a single battle near Sicily. While this battle took place, Athens enemies on land were encouraged to take action, breaking through Athens security defense systems and ultimately destroying the state. Athens false sense of security allowed it to make decisions that would have bolstered the states power if successful but instead the idea of being completely secure caused widespread destruction (Sterling 35-37).

Security defense systems are much more complex than they appear to be. On the surface, these barriers act as agents of security that protect citizens of one state from outside forces of an adversary. While these barriers initially serve the purpose of fulfilling a security niche, overtime the security system creates and dictates other policies. Whether this is a policy of buying time or a policy of separation, security barriers influence the actions of a state. To a similar extent, the Israeli security barrier has evolved. The barrier has now become about borders, not security. The barrier has effectively prevented Israel from making concessions necessary to find a long-term sustainable solution with the Palestinian entity. For Israel, finding a long-term solution to the conflict would result in a better security outcome than any barrier will ever achieve. Israel has not failed to adapt its military or take new unnecessary risks but it has used the security barrier to enforce political goals “in the least politically painful way” (Sterling 325).

### **The Case of the Israeli Security Barrier**

The investigation of the above theories relevance to the Israel security barrier will deal heavily with the discussion of the current route of the barrier. The route of the fence, as approved by the government, is based primarily on the Israeli Supreme Court decision in June 2004, which ruled out the route of the fence West of Jerusalem on the argument that it didn't satisfy the required balance between Israel's security needs and the daily needs of the Palestinian population. To fully explore if the Israeli security barrier is “the least politically painful course of action” for the Israeli government, this section will first examine public opinion surrounding the barrier and then will dissect different Israeli political actions that contradict the main security goal of the barrier.

## I. Public Opinion

Yehuda Ben Meir and Dafna Shaked completed a study in 2007 called *The People Speak: Israeli Public Opinion on National Security*. This study examined numerous issues surrounding Israeli National Security, including the security barrier (Meir 2007). According to the report, Israeli public opinion has been strongly in favor of the barrier, partly in the hope that it will improve security and partly in the belief that the barrier marks the eventual borders of a Palestinian state. According to a *Haaretz* article published in 2005, a survey conducted by the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research at Tel Aviv University found that eighty-four percent of the Jewish population of Israel supports the barrier (Harel 2). Most Israeli's believe the barrier, and intensive activity by the IDF, to be the main factors in the decrease of successful suicide attacks from the West Bank. The proponents of the barrier insist that reversible inconveniences to Palestinians should be balanced with the threats to the lives of Israeli civilians and point out that the barriers is a non-violent way to stop terrorism and save innocent lives (Chen 28).

There are some Israelis who oppose the barrier. The settler movement opposes the barrier, although this opposition has waned since it became clear that the barrier would be diverted to the east of major Israeli settlements such as Ariel (Arieli 2). Many Israelis living in settlements, such as Gush Etzion, oppose the fence because it separates them from the rest of Israel. They argue that building the fence defines a border, and that they are being left out. According to most settlers, all of the West Bank belongs to Israel and separating any of it with a fence is the first step in giving the land away.

Colonel Shaul Arieli, who was the last commander of the Gaza regional brigade of the IDF, also opposes the barrier because he believes that the effects of the barrier will only be short-term. He stated,

The fence provides a partial security response to the terror threats and a good response to prevention of illegal immigration and prevention of criminal acts...but on the other hand in its current format it creates the future terror infrastructure because this terror infrastructure is precisely those people living in enclaves who will support acts of terror as the only possible tool that they perceive as being able to restore them the land, production sources and water wells taken from them (Arieli 3).

Arieli also argues that the barrier is designed to induce the Arabs of the border region to leave so that Israel can expand (Arieli 3).

The barrier has come under large criticism from those who oppose it. On August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2005 the Israeli Newspaper Haaretz said of the barrier “Sharon has tried in vain to describe it as ‘only another counterterrorism measure.’ Nevertheless, it looks like a border and behaves like one, with barbed wire, electronic devices, concrete walls, watchtowers and checkpoints. Its creation set a crucial precedent in the unilateral division of the land, which came to fit Sharon perfectly” (Ben 2005). Yossi Klein Halevy, Israeli correspondent for *The New Republic*, writes of the barrier that “building over the green line, by contrast, reminds Palestinians that every time they’ve rejected compromise—whether in 1937, 1947, or 2000—the potential map of Palestine shrinks... The fence is a warning: If Palestinians don’t stop terrorism and forfeit their dream of destroying Israel, Israel may impose its own map on them... and, because Palestine isn’t being restored but invented, its borders are negotiable” (Halevy 3). This quote by Halevy demonstrates that the intentions of the security barrier are in actuality aimed at establishing a de facto border with the main goal of separating Israel from Palestine.



Regardless of these opponents, the construction of the security fence continues to enjoy massive support among the Jewish population. Indeed, it is hard to find any issue in Israel about which there is so wide a consensus: Eighty percent in 2004, eighty-two percent in 2005, seventy-nine percent in 2006, seventy-six percent in 2007 supported the construction of the fence (Meir 2007). In the context of a question relating to the various proposals on the route of the fence, eighty-one percent in 2005, seventy-five percent in 2006, and seventy-eight percent in 2007 disagreed with the statement that “the fence should not have been constructed at all” (Meir 2007). Respondents were also asked in under certain circumstances (e.g. no possibility of political progress with the Palestinians and a resurgence of terrorism in the territories) would they agree that Israel declare the fence as its permanent border. A clear majority was in favor in 2005 (fifty-seven percent) and in 2006 (sixty percent) (Meir 2007). However, by 2007 the Jewish population was evenly split on the issue: forty-nine percent in favor and fifty-one percent opposed (Meir 2007).

An examination of Israeli public opinion surrounding the security barrier demonstrates the complex situation that is created when building a security system. The massive support for the fence is primarily interpreted as Israeli preoccupation with security concerns and with the need to combat terrorism, specifically suicide bombers. Israel’s initial success in limiting suicide attempts created a sense of complete security amongst Israeli citizens. This allowed the Israeli government to continue to construct the fence with public support. However, the findings above support the claim that the Israeli public understands that the fence now has a deeper, more political meaning. This change signifies that most Israelis have come to realize the answer to the conflict lies in

separation between Israeli and Palestinians. The above findings demonstrate the paradox that has been established surrounding this wall. Public opinion reflects the goals of the state and in this case portrays the understanding that the Israeli government is employing the security barrier as a tool for the establishment of a final Israeli border. More than this, Israeli public opinion shows that even with public controversy over the support of the wall, Israel would rather deal with having citizens who may be against the wall than work towards peace with Palestine. The above findings allow one to conclude that the public understands that the barrier was initially built for security purposes but is now being used for very specific political implications.

## **II. Political Action**

This thesis has shown and proven that the security barrier was initially built as a response to security threat against the everyday lives of the residents of Israel. The personal security of Israeli residents and the low price Israel paid during the first two decades of its control of the territories helped maintain uncertainty regarding the political future of these territories and allowed Israel to avoid establishing definitive borders. The first and second intifadas dramatically changed this and gave rise to the idea of physical separation as part of Israel's political goal for the territories (Arieli 8). Yitzhak Rabin, as prime minister, said that he "regards the separation issue as a central topic" (Benn 1995). Similarly, Ehud Barak saw separation as "a supreme national need of demography, identity and Israeli democracy. Barak coined the concept of "we are here and they are there." In fact, just before Ariel Sharon replaced him as prime minister, Barak stated, "Ultimately, the only path for Israel is separation from the Palestinians—if possible via an accord, and if this turn out to be impossible, the via a measured and proportional

security separation initiative”(Edilist 442). Sharon echoed this sentiment when he stated, “I believed and hoped that we would be able to hold on forever...but the changing reality in the country, in the region and in the world, required me to adopt a different assessment and changes in positions” (Sharon 2005).

The policy regarding the path of the fence is already a complex story. It was Tsipi Livni, serving as minister of Justice, who expressed this in the clearest way possible when she said that the separation fence would constitute “the future border of the State of Israel,” and that “the High Court is drawing the borders of the state via its rulings on the fence” (Chen 36). Barak too, when serving as minister of defense in the government of Ehud Olmert, noted that “when we build a fence it is clear that there are areas that are beyond the fence, and it is clear that in the permanent accord...these areas that are beyond the fence will not be part of the State of Israel” (Radio 2007). Moreover, Prime Minister Sharon, the “father of the route,” claimed in regard to the objective of the fence route “...Palestinians should have understood that what they did not receive today, it might be impossible to give them tomorrow” (Bakor Nir 2003). He also emphasized that “the demographic consideration played an important role in determining the route of the separation fence due to the fear of annexing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who would join the Arab of Israel” (Benn 2005). Olmert, Sharon’s successor, could only reiterate: “The direction is clear, we are moving toward separation from the Palestinians, toward the demarcation of a permanent border of Israel” (Kham 2006). Through these quotes it is made clear that the route of the fence thus has political objectives in regard to permanent borders between the State of Israel and Palestine. Israel’s political goals are reflected as the annexation of the areas beyond the Green Line where most of the Israeli

settlers live, while maintaining the existing demographic proportion between Jews and non-Jews (Chen 40).

Furthermore, the decision about the route of the fence to cross deep into the territory of the West Bank came under fire from the international community at large. In order to defend against these attacks Israel employed the use of the IDF as well as the High Court of Petitions Department of the State Prosecutors office. According to Israeli law, only the IDF, which represents all of the government authorities in the occupied territory, is permitted to violate the basic rights of the Palestinian residents. By defining the fence “as an essential security need” and by issuing temporary “expropriation orders” for land required for building the fence the government of Israel was able to justify building such a wall (Arieli 6). The government sufficed with Sharon’s letter to President G. Bush in which he declared “...the fence is a security barrier and not a political one, temporary and not permanent, and thus will not affect the issues of the permanent accord, including the definition of final borders” (Sharon 2004).

The IDF did not plan the route of the barrier but they did become the party responsible for construction and monitoring. Moreover, it was the IDF’s duty to ensure that the barrier was being created for security purposes and thus that route of the barrier reflected this policy. Initially, the IDF maintained this stance and worked to ensure a strict policy of security (Chen 43). However, the IDF did not remain consistent with this policy and even forfeited its professional view, which establishes that the IDF cannot act in the Palestinian territories for political reasons. The Israeli High Court explains this view in more depth when it states:

In regard to the authority of the military commander to build the security fence in the area, it was determined in accordance with the laws of belligerent occupation

that the military commander is entitled to order, based upon military considerations, the construction of a separation fence in the area of Judea and Samaria . . . This authority arises only when the fundamental reason for building the fence is a security-military one. The military commander is not authorized to order the construction of a security fence if the reasons for it are political. The security fence cannot derive from motives of annexing land from the area to the State of Israel. The objective of the separation fence cannot be the demarcation of a political border (HCJ 2056/04).

The IDF is solely a military force aimed at securing and protecting its citizens. It may work to build a security fence if the purpose is strictly security. According to the court, once the IDF concedes to political motives it is no longer acting under its jurisdiction. In many cases surrounding the barrier the IDF did in fact fail to uphold its professional standards and “subordinated to political considerations that are unrelated to security” (Arieli 7).

More specifically, the IDF was mobilized and politically encouraged to defend the fence route, which served as a component in the battle to implement a policy that was essentially political rather than security-based. The IDF even sacrificed security needs “on the altar of internal political considerations” (Chen 47). For example, Supreme Court President Beinisch ruled in the Bil'in-Modi'in Ilit case:

It seems that in light of the desire to ensure the construction of the eastern neighborhood in the future, the fence route was drawn in a place that has no security advantage. The current route of the fence also raises questions pertaining to the security advantage it offers. It is clear that the route mainly traverses territory that is topographically inferior, both vis-à-vis Modi'in Ilit and vis-à-vis Bil'in. It leaves a number of hills on the Palestinian side and two hills on the Israeli side. It endangers the forces patrolling along the route. Against the background of the security outlook presented to us in many other cases, according to which there is security importance in building the fence in topographically dominant areas, the existing route raises questions. In general, in many cases of planning the fence route, the military commander presents the occupation of dominant hills as a significant security advantage, while in the case before us a route was drawn that is at least partly located in inferior territory in relation to the hills (HCJ 8414/05).

When examining the fence route approved in October 2003, it is evident that the barrier was planned in a way that would include a maximum of Palestinian lands--- without the homes of the landowners (Arieli 8). It is clear that the accumulation of territory came at the expense of the security. The following declaration can be found on the Ministry of Defense's website:

With the goal of enabling agricultural work, maintaining uninterrupted movement between the villages and cities, and ensuring access to municipal, sanitation and social services between the villagers and the district city along the fence, many passages were established for the Palestinians to use. In this framework, 37 gates have been built so far (out of a total of 53) for the passage of farmers who are residents of nearby villages, 34 control points...(MOD 2003)

IDF forces are now employed with the task of operating dozens of these agricultural gates, which allow Palestinians access to their lands that remained beyond the fence. The state itself argued in affidavits submitted to the High court that "every passage point increases the danger of infiltration by terrorist into Israel and constitutes a point of friction that intensifies the risk to the defense forces assigned to the passage point" (HCJ 4289/05). Instead of excluding most of the Palestinian lands from Israel wherever possible, the state separated the lands from their owners. Therefore, they were forced to build many gates that constitute a security threat because of increased movement between Palestine and Israel. This simultaneously tied down the elite forces required to operate these fences (Arieli 10). Furthermore, this new "friction" created more incentive for Palestinian's to defy Israel, essentially motivating the Palestinians to find new ways to fight against the state or overcome the security barrier.

The IDF also contradicted itself by adopting routes that it had completely rejected during earlier route planning stages. It can be argued this was done in order to fulfill the political objective of the route. The most blatant case is that of Ma'alei Adumim (Arieli

10-11). The southern part of the fence route, first published in February 2005, was supposed to include both the settlement of Kedar and the caravan site adjacent to it. During the High Court discussions in this case, state representatives presented “alternatives” for the fence route that had been created by political officials. The IDF, who strongly disagreed with these routes, presented a different route that provided the highest security advantage. An IDF representative described the implications of the alternative route plan that they initially strongly rejected:

If this alternative were to be implemented, it would be necessary to traverse the deep and steep riverbed described above. This crossing would constitute a very problematic route from the operational, security and engineering perspective because it would create a particularly circuitous route with sharp side slopes and longitudinal slopes that are borderline in terms of the criteria for planning a patrol from the security perspective. Part of the route traverses hilly terrain that is also inferior from an operational perspective. Due to the side slopes, the exposed crossing and the bisection of the Abu Hindi valley, there would also be very severe harm to the landscape. In addition, the cost of executing this route would be particularly high ... In light of the above, it was found that from an engineering, security and operational perspective, this alternative cannot be accepted (Chen 50).

The High Court, in 2005, did not rule on the case and asked the IDF to resubmit a proposal.

After a year and a half of delays in submitting a new plan for the route, the IDF returned with a proposal that completely matched one of the state created “alternatives” that it had “examined” and rejected in 2005 (Arieli 11). In the state’s written response in December 2006, backed by a security affidavit from the chief of staff of the Central Command at the time, an IDF representative addressed the implications of this alternative and stated that bisecting the Abu Hindi valley that separates Kedar and Ma’alei Adumim would in fact give the IDF a security advantage in this area (Arieli 11). Without question, this decision came after major Israeli political figures placed large amounts of

pressure on the IDF. This case demonstrates the heavy political influence surrounding the wall. The IDF, which acts as the main security entity for the state of Israel, altered its expert opinion so that the political goals of land inclusion could be attained.

Moreover, Israel employed security arguments to justify the political fence route that ended up being completely false. One extreme example of this was the contradiction between the state's response to the petition against the fence route in Gush Etzion and the response to the petitions against the "permits regime" (Chen 52). In the first petition, the state's representatives sought to defend the fence route, which enclosed five Palestinian villages in the area between Gush Etzion and Jerusalem by exempting their 20,000 Palestinian residents, and all others in the West Bank, from the need for entry and exit permits, because they assumed that the High Court would not allow them to operate the "permits regime"<sup>5</sup> in such a large area and for such a large population. The petition stated that, "It should be emphasized and declared that the entry of any person to the Gush Etzion area will not be prevented (even people who have security restrictions), subject to a security check. This entry will not require an entry permit [...]," the state promised (Arieli 12).

Less than four months later, the attorneys already wrote the opposite when instructing the IDF:

There is a rational and direct connection between closing the territory of the seam zone and establishing a permits regime, on the one hand, and the security need, on the other hand. Restricting entry only to those who have a real personal connection to this area and making this entry conditional on receiving a permit that requires an individual security check, very significantly limits the possibility of terrorists crossing the security fence and subsequently entering Israel to carry out attacks (HCJ 639/04).

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<sup>5</sup> The permits regime required a Palestinian who wished to enter or stay in the seam zone (the area between the fence and the Green Line) to present a permit from the Civil Administration based on proof that he is a resident of the place or owns land or a business in the seam zone.



In the first petition, the attorneys attacked the proposal by the Council for Peace and Security, which proposed an alternative fence route. The state's representatives argued that "the Palestinians who cultivate the fields in these lands would be forced in practice to transition to a permits regime. It is clear that this entails a drastic change for the worse in the daily lives of these residents" (HCJ 639/04). In the second petition, the permits regime does not in fact cause a "drastic change for the worse." According to the petition, the great benefit in closing the territory, while establishing a permits regime in parallel, is proportional in regard to the difficulties that are caused to the local residents. In the first petition, the defense establishment showed generosity and announced, "goods from the east and the south of the fence" could move into the Gush Etzion. And in the second petition, it explained why this exact same thing, as requested by the petitioners, could not be implemented (HCJ 639/04). Although the second petition may seem security based in nature it does in fact represent a transition from concern with security to a concern with Palestinian gains. While the first petition gives Palestinian's some freedom, the second petition removes these freedoms by claiming that the security of the state is at risk. In actuality, the Israeli government is attempting to politically limit the abilities of the Palestinians to move [freely] into Israel.

Through speeches, court cases, and petitions, it has become extremely clear that the barrier is about much more than security. There is a large amount of political complexity surrounding the construction of this barrier. Israeli politicians, army personnel and state-sponsored lawyers have all openly admitted that this barrier represents a separation from those on the other side. The information above provides

concrete evidence to support the fact that Israel has established a powerful political barrier.

### **Conclusion**

“...Barriers not only present the least politically painful course of action but they also remove the incentive to pursue changes that would improve long-term security prospects” (Sterling 325). Statistics dictate that the security barrier is in fact making Israeli citizens safer. The decline in terrorist attacks over the last ten years is astonishing as there have been close to zero successful attacks within the state since the completion of large parts of the wall. However, is the Israeli security barrier only about security?

The above information directs the answer, undoubtedly, to be no. According to both Israeli public opinion and an examination of Israeli political action since the creation of the barrier, it seems that the Israeli political system has used the security “excuse” to essentially cover up for other motives behind the wall. Besides security, the barrier seems to be acting as the “least politically painful course of action” for the Israeli government. Instead of politically separating themselves from the West Bank through comprehensive negotiations, Israeli policy makers have chosen to hide behind what some argue is a “separation wall.” The information above makes it clear that the barrier has much deeper political meaning, which includes the possibility of the barrier acting as a final border for the Israeli state. Moreover, the barrier is removing any and all possibilities of an improvement of “long term security prospects.” The only way to ensure the citizens of Israel are completely safe is to come to a peace arrangement with the Palestinians. The Palestinian governing entity has made it extremely clear that the barrier must not continue to be erected if the Israeli’s wish to come to a peace agreement. Construction of

the barrier has stifled any negotiations for peace, especially dealing with a conversation about a two-state solution, making “long term security prospects” an unattainable goal. The security barrier has been established by the Israeli government as a failing substitute for comprehensive bilateral agreements between Israel and Palestine as well as the establishment of a peace treaty between the two entities. The ability of the Israeli government to remove the possibility of normal relations will inevitably have consequences for both Israel and Palestine. Palestinians, who see the wall as unjust and illegal, will continue to struggle as they are cut off from the rest of the world. More importantly, frustrated Palestinians may indeed turn to violence as a solution to their problems. Palestinians will look for ways to bypass the barrier and use terror and violence when they arrive on the other side. In fact, the very barrier that was constructed to stop violence against the state of Israel may actually increase it. The state of Israel has masked their political goals behind a security barrier that stands for much more than it may seem. It is clearly apparent that the “security” barrier is becoming less about security and more about “separation.” As the wall approaches the final construction stages, the political goals of the barrier are becoming more and more clear. Whether the end result is the “least politically painful course” or the removal of “the incentive to pursue changes that would improve long-term security prospects”, Israel has been successful in creating a barrier that not only accomplishes its goal of security but also enforces irreversible Israeli political decisions.

## **Conclusion**

The Israeli Security Barrier pops up out of nowhere. I know this because I've been there. In 2010, while studying in Israel for 6 months, I had the opportunity to spend two days learning about the security barrier first hand. On the Israeli side, I spoke with the family of victims of terrorist attacks who emotionally described how they wish the barrier had been constructed sooner. On the Palestinian side, in the West Bank, I spoke with barrier protestors who painfully described how much the wall has changed their lives. I walked along the wall on both sides. I felt the concrete that separated two sides of the most complex conflict in our world today. I dissected the powerful graffiti drawn by artists, supporters and opponents. I watched the Israeli-Defense Force patrol and enforce its new security policy. I learned about the barrier in a way that no book or article could teach. This experience was the beginning of an investigation that has provided a greater understanding of the issues surrounding the Israel security barrier. From the research done for this paper, I have drawn several conclusions.

### **I. Suicide Terror**

Almost all of the current commentary on the Israeli security barrier mentions or focuses on the phenomenon that the barrier was Israel's response to a rise in suicide terror. The Israeli government has confirmed and supported this to defend itself against attacks from the international community. In actuality, the barrier has done an incredibly impressive job at removing the threat of suicide terror to Israeli citizens. It is necessary to reiterate that since construction of the wall commenced terrorist activities within the state of Israel have completely ceased. The Israeli Defense Force has worked effectively to utilize the barrier as a terrorist stopping entity. By limiting access to the country,

increasing patrols and stepping up security, the government of Israel has successfully accomplished its goal.

Removing the threat of suicide terror has been one of the greatest successes for the Israeli government throughout the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. All governments throughout the world have the responsibility to keep their citizens safe. Israel realized that their citizens were in danger everyday and did something to protect them. It is hard to critique Israel for creating a security structure with the goal of protecting human life. There is large support, as there should be, for the barrier as a true security tool. I strongly agree with the choice by Israel to establish this barrier to stifle terrorism. In this regard, Israel has acted properly and is just in its actions to construct the wall.

## **II. Offense-Defense**

The Offense-Defense theory discussed in Chapter II is something that must be paid large attention to in the next few years of the barriers existence. My conclusions in Chapter II stated that the barrier does not currently provide an offensive or defensive stance. In fact, the Israeli government has used the security barrier to accomplish both offensive and defensive goals. This equilibrium between offense and defense has allowed the balance to remain even. Although this status quo has been the case thus far for the security barrier, it is extremely necessary for the international community to continue to focus on the offense-defense balance surrounding the barrier. Keeping a close examination on the balance will ultimately allow the international community to get a advantageous understanding of Israeli intentions. Offense and defense intentions will be made clear by the Israeli government through their actions regarding the wall. If Israel mobilizes more armed personnel to the barrier as well as places more advanced weaponry

along the route, offensive intentions may be concluded. If Israel creates tighter border controls and further limits the flow of people across its borders, defensive intentions may be concluded. There been little attention paid to the offense-defense phenomenon in the case of the Israeli security barrier but the research in this paper provides support for the importance of focusing on this balance in the future. I would argue that the offense-defense balance must be given more attention as it evolves into a greater part of this conflict. Furthermore, I would also argue that the Israeli government should only take defensive actions vis a vis the wall. Offensive actions will not help the Israeli government make any gains in the peace negotiations nor in their mission to create a stable environment in the Middle East.

### **III. Not a Temporary Barrier**

A few years ago many people believed that this barrier was a temporary fix for the conflict between Israeli's and Palestinians. The wall would be built until a more definite solution could be reached. The research done for this paper has shown that this wall is by no means temporary. The Israeli government is spending millions of dollars to construct this wall and is literally cementing it in to place. The confirmation that the barrier is not temporary will have enormous effects on the conflict.

As the barrier continues to cause social and economic hardships on the Palestinian citizens, more and more unrest will begin to occur. The Palestinians will continue to come to terms with the idea that they are essentially trapped in an enclosed area with no way out. This may cause further frustrations in the West Bank leading to heightened violence and resistance against the Israeli power.

The permanent barrier will also pose new challenges to Israel in the future. The barrier, and the upkeep necessary for it to remain a powerful security tool, will place large strains on Israel's economy. Since the beginning of construction the cost of the barrier has ballooned from \$1 billion USD to \$2.1 billion USD. It is estimated that every kilometer of the barrier costs \$2 million USDs to construct. Israel must prepare itself to make increased economic investments in to the barrier if they want it to continue to be effective. The interesting piece here is whether or not the cost of up keeping a permanent barrier will outweigh the positive gains the wall is making. In my opinion, the wall will become an enormously large economic burden for the Israeli government, which will cause a decrease in support for the wall. As the appearance of suicide terror decreases, Israeli society may no longer favor a security system that costs more than it is actually worth. Furthermore, as Palestinian terrorists develop new ways to circumvent the barrier, the Israeli government will be faced with new costs that include strengthening the security system. Solidifying this barrier as a permanent part of the Israeli security system is absolutely going to create major issues for the Israeli government and will remain an important fixture in the conflict between security and border control.

#### **IV. Political Motives**

Chapter III of this paper focused on the other political motives behind the creation of the security barrier. I confirmed in that chapter that the wall is intertwined with numerous Israeli policies that range from border definition to demographic balancing. The enforcement of political goals via the wall is something that should not astonish people. Countries often use actions camouflaged by broad policy statements to accomplish more sensitive political goals. Israel is no different. However, I believe that

the sensitivity of the conflict between Israel and Palestine has caused Israel to come under large scrutiny and criticism from the international community. Israel must combat this by coming to terms with the exact purpose of the barrier. As Israel continues to neglect international judicial rulings as well as recommendations from allies, it will constantly have a difficult time justifying the reasons for the barriers existence. Israel must establish more transparency with the international community and present viable and credible reasons for continuing to construct and support the barrier.

## **V. The Future**

Historically, walls created by state entities have always been destroyed. The Athens Long Walls were destroyed in 404 BC as part of a peace treaty after the Peloponnesian War. The Long Walls were dismantled only to be rebuilt and than dismantled again by the Macedonians in 323 BC (Sterling 52).

Hadrian's Wall fell after the emperor died. The new emperor, who replaced Hadrian, abandoned the wall leaving it to crumble. Eventually, in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, the Romans lost control of Britain and the walls were left to become the remains of an empire that once stood strong (Sterling 89.)

Today, much of the Great Wall of China still stands. However, the Wall became obsolete as a defense system when China's borders extended beyond the Wall and the threatening Mongolians were annexed into the country. Due to this phenomenon, construction and repair were discontinued (Sterling 142).

The Maginot Line became extinct after World War II. The rise of the French independent nuclear weapons system coupled with new advancement in technology caused the Line to become an unnecessary expense that the government could no longer



afford. The ultimate result for all of these defense structures was destruction (Sterling 238). Whether this destruction was caused by political motives, economic weakness or physical actions, these walls have typically served to fill only a short-term security goal. Will the Israeli security barrier serve the same destiny?

Most information will confirm that the Israeli security barrier is going to remain a piece of the Israeli landscape for many years to come. Although economic burden, which was mentioned above, is a factor in the future of the barrier, Israel has a strong economy that has always been committed to spending on security. Unlike security defense systems in the past, the barrier will undoubtedly be supported by the Israeli economy as it continues to secure the state. Moreover, the Israeli barrier does not face a major threat from a militarized state. Hadrian's Wall, the Great Wall of China and the Athens Long Walls all fell because they were either destroyed by a powerful threat or were no longer needed to protect against that threat. The Palestinian entity does not have the ability to attack the barrier in a manner that would cripple it. Small weapons and arms are no real match for the power of the Israeli Defense Force and the wall poses too great an obstacle for the current Palestinian abilities.

With the removal of economic and military threats, it can be concluded that the only way the barrier will fall is via politics. The downfall of previous security walls throughout history has been a result of militarized action, economic failure or neglect. If the Israeli security barrier were to fall because of the influence of politics it would be extremely historic. In my opinion, domestic Israeli politics will not be the catalyst for the tearing down of the Israeli security barrier. Instead, international politics and a push for an Israel-Palestinian peace solution by outside forces will be the ultimate reason for a

destruction of the barrier. It is obvious that the barrier has forever changed the nature of the conflict. If Israel ever wishes to come to an agreement with the Palestinian Authority they must first come to a solution about the existence of the barrier. The Palestinian Authority has claimed numerous times that it will not negotiate with the Israeli government if the barrier continues to exist and the settlement issue is not dealt with. The Israeli government has clearly shown that it will not take down the barrier nor will it freeze or remove settlements. This stalemate is currently one of the main reasons behind the halt in negotiations between the two sides.

The only solution to re-energize the non-existent conversation between the two sides must come from the international community. International action by powerful actors like the United States will be the only way a possible, agreed upon, and feasible solution can be developed. However, this too seems to be a very distant goal with no real chance of ever becoming reality. Studying the Israeli security barrier has shown that the world, as a whole, is currently in a border securing phase. In fact, the United States has too been working on constructing an extremely technologically advance barrier between the U.S. and Mexico border. This fence has been designed to limit the amount of illegal immigrants and drugs flowing into the United States. Other countries, too, are working on tighter border controls to combat security issues like terrorism. These security measures represent a large global change. Globalization once allowed borders to disappear, making free movement across countries a very common event. Now, with the appearance of new security threats, countries are beginning to combat globalization with security structures along their borders. The international community, and specifically the

United States, will have a hard time placing pressure on Israel to take down its barrier when these countries are building up their own borders.

Israel's security fence is here to stay. The overall effect the barrier has on the security of the nation coupled with the lack of detrimental reasons for the Israeli's to remove the barrier will allow the structure to remain in place for an indefinite amount of time. Unfortunately, the existence of the wall does not leave room for much hope for peace between the Israeli's and Palestinians. In fact, I believe that as long as the wall exists, so too will the conflict. There is no possible way for the two entities to come to a peace agreement while one side, the Israeli's, continue to construct and support a structure that has violated human rights as well as disobeyed international rulings. There is also no way possible for peace to be reached if the other side, the Palestinians, continue to attack the Israeli citizens with suicide and other forms of terror. Both sides must come to realize that they are committing acts that are counterproductive to a peace goal. If this does not happen, peace will never occur.

One day, traveling between the West Bank and Jerusalem may only involve presenting passport credentials. For now, a maze of border crossings, credential checks and struggles is reality. The Israeli security barrier is a concrete reminder of the climate in the Middle East. The security barrier will remain between the West Bank and Jerusalem, between peace and conflict. In a place of extreme beauty and religious power, stands a modern day reminder of the complexity of our world. The monstrous concrete walls, the barbed wire, the constant patrols, and the conflict that surrounds it all provides a powerful examination of the complexity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as the major issues facing the world today.

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