Geocultural Aspects of the Security Policy of Contemporary Israel

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ABSTRACT

The article shows how the symbolism contained in the image of the Jewish state influenced, especially recently, the vectors of Israel's security policy. Attention is paid to these aspects aimed at protecting national identity. The author tries to substantiate the influence of the cultural factor on Israel's security policy. The research is based on historical analysis, source analysis, and descriptive narrative. The instruments and tools used by the state in the implementation of the aforementioned tasks are presented – from the basic laws and compatible legal acts regulating the social life of Israeli citizens to the policy of cultural and ethnic isolation and separation carried out by the armed forces. In the Middle East emphasizing one's own individuality is a strategic goal, but the price of internal a conflicts can be high.

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> The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people.
> Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped.
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Introduction

The Israeli Basic Law, passed in July 2018, called *Israel as the Nation State of the Jewish People*, defines Israel as the nation-state and historical homeland of the Jewish people, in which their natural, religious and historical right to self-determination comes true, so that "Jewishness" sets the cultural codes, also present in security policy.[1]

The threats faced by contemporary Israel, both external and internal, are largely generated by the clash of cultural codes, especially as the state remains an "unwanted civilization" in the Middle East region. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, although it seems to have been extinguished because there are no spectacular acts of violence, is still one of the serious factors destabilizing security in recent years.

The article aims to justify the influence of the cultural factor on Israel's security policy in the internal and external dimensions. The aim of the research is to present the areas of this affinity as well as the tasks undertaken by the state and the instruments it uses in this policy. The exemplification is based on the analysis of sources, partly also on historical analysis, and where necessary, also on descriptive narrative.

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[1] The Knesset, *Full text of Basic Law: Israel as the Nation State of the Jewish People*, "Knesset News", 19 July 2018, https://main.knesset.gov.il/EN/News/PressReleases/Pages/Pr13978_pg.aspx (accessed: 10.06.2020).

ON THE ROAD TO HEGEMONY

In ancient Israel, royal power, law, and order determined the strength of the state and the way of resolving internal and external conflicts. Until the Roman conquest, the ancient state, despite numerous attempts to weaken it, remained a major player in the region. After the defeat of the Bar Kokhba revolt, the Jewish state in *Eretz Israel* was definitely over, which initiated the period of exile (*galut*). At the end of the 18th century, thanks to the Zionists, the conviction that only having own state could ensure security for Jews returned. After the tragic experiences of the Holocaust, modern statehood in its historic homeland was reborn on the ruins of the former Jewish world.

From the beginning of its existence, Israel had to deal with the catalogue of threats resulting from its "otherness" in the neighbourhood, gradually, especially since the Six-Day War, strengthening its position in the region, promoting a democratic type of political culture, fighting terrorism, and exposing military power and intelligence. As part of its security policy, the State of Israel strengthens its military, economic, and cultural potential; stabilizes social life; and selects allied arrangements.[2]

Contrary to the first decades of Israel's existence, today its survival is not so vulnerable, although the scale of security threats is still much greater than in democratic Western countries and is generated both by non-state actors – mainly terrorists from Hezbollah and Hamas, or the Palestinian national liberation movement – and by state entities: Iran, Syria and Turkey.[3] Since its uprising in 1948, Israel has been forced to operate in extremely

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[2] The most important for Israel is the alliance with the United States. In the context of Huntington's theory of war between cultures and civilizations, among others Jonathan Cook emphasizes that Israel's geocultural situation determines its security policy. Cook speaks of the role Israel would play in revitalizing the Middle East as potentially the largest regional power. See: J. Cook, *Israel and the Clash of Civilizations. Iraq, Iran and the Plan to Remake the Middle East*, London 2008. Entering into alliances with the strongest power has now become the preference of many countries in the world, and *chain-ganging* or *buckpassing* are especially effective in countries where alternative mechanisms in security policy are weak. It is not without significance that for Israel, the area of its near abroad is made up of countries considered hostile. Most Middle East governments do not formally recognize Israel, moreover, even in the case of Egypt and Jordan, which officially recognize Israel, there are strong anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic sentiments in societies.

[3] A. Skorek, *Bliskowschodnia strategia Izraela po Arabskiej Wiośnie* [Israel's Middle Eastern strategy after the Arab Spring], "Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe", 2018, no. 3, p. 115.

difficult strategic conditions, developing a defensive capability absolutely disproportionate to its size, and eventually becoming a regional power.[4]

Hegemony, from the socio-cultural perspective, is the ideological dominance of influences, which are determined not only strictly by political power, but also by social, cultural and religious institutions that influence the establishment of unquestioned norms and beliefs.[5] The implementation of this theory may prove useful for the interpretation of the vectors of Israel's security policy, which is to ensure strategic security in the region.

There is a significant relationship between the cultural environment and the decision-making process in Israel's security policy. As Rabinovich writes, it is very important for Israel to feel the identity of the state (in the sense of its distinctiveness), the implication of which are security challenges resulting from the specific geopolitical and geocultural location.[6] Conflicts between different cultures in Israel are coordinated by the state through legal regulations implying control mechanisms.[7]

In the relationship between culture and politics, culture is an inviolable component of national consciousness, which consists of identity, a sense of bond shaped by historical experiences, and obligations resulting from citizenship. The culture of modern Israel is a contamination of the heritage of Judaism, the achievements of the Haskalah, and the dominance of the ideology of the Zionist movement. In the first period of settlement, the kibbutz culture, based on the Hebrew language, played an important role.[8]

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[4] C. Freilich, *Israel's National Security Policy*, Oxford 2019.

[5] Cf. E. Weiss, *Beyond Mystification: Hegemony, Resistance, and Ethical Responsibility in Israel*, "Anthropological Quarterly", 2015, vol. 88, no. 2, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43653000?seq=1 DOI 10.1353/anq.2015.0019, p. 422 (accessed 10.06.2020); see also: Y. Peled, *Toward Religious Zionist Hegemony in Israel*, "Middle East Research and Information Project", Fall/Winter 2019, no. 292/3.

[6] I. Rabinovich, *Israel and the Changing Middle East*, "Middle East Memo", January 2015, no. 34, p. 2, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Israel-Rabinovich-01292015-1.pdf. (accessed: 10.06.2020).

[7] See also: B. Kimmerling, *Between Hegemony and Dormant "Kulturkampf" in Israel*, [in:] *In Search of Identity. Jewish Aspect in Israeli Culture*, E. Urian, D. Karsh (ed.), London 1999, pp. 49–72.

[8] R. Tarasiuk, *Utopia w ideologii ruchu kibucowego przed proklamacją Państwa Izrael* [Utopia in the ideology of the kibbutz movement before the proclamation of the State of Israel], [in:] *Utopia obecna/nieobecna* [Present/absent utopia], E. Zgolińska (ed.), Siedlce 2016, pp. 79–103.

Since Israel's security environment, which consists of external, internal, military and non-military conditions, is conditioned by its geocultural situation, the choice of security concept must be adequate to the assumed strategic goals, and Israel's security will always have to take into account the cultural context.

Language and security policy

Under the Basic Law of July 2018, Hebrew became the only official language of Israel, emphasizing the Jewish character of the state. For centuries, language played a dominant role in shaping the civilizational distinctiveness of Jews. The successive stages of the changes that took place within the Hebrew language are adequate to the political changes in the history of the state and nation. Already the ancient Hebrews used a language that distinguished them from other communities, emphasizing their distinction and independence. During the period of exile (*galut*), when the nation of ancient Israel transformed into the scattered "nation of the book", the change also became apparent in the structure of the language, which, up to Haskalah, functioned only in liturgy, and rabbinical texts and commentaries. The revival of the modern Hebrew language after 1881 accompanied the political aspirations of the Zionists, convinced that only having their own state could guarantee security for Jews. Language was to help build a modern society and deal with differences in lifestyles and worldviews.[9] Hebrew has acquired the status of an official language in the British Mandatory Territory, where it was used in addition to English and Arabic in official documents, orders, and official notices of the government, local authorities and municipalities. Although most of the provisions of the British mandate were adopted by the State of Israel, on 19 May 1948 all laws concerning the use of the English language were repealed.

The revitalization of the Hebrew language is considered one of the greatest achievements of the Zionist movement. Distant echoes of the

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[9] Rabbi Eliezer Perelmann (Ben-Yehuda) recognized the revival of the Hebrew language as a condition for national revival. The year 1881 was a symbolic beginning – the arrival of Ben-Yehuda to Palestine. In 1890, the Hebrew Language Committee was established, which in 1953 was transformed into the Academy of the Hebrew Language, and in 1908, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda began work on *A Complete Dictionary of the Ancient and Modern Hebrew Language*, which contributed to the popularization of the language. In 1913, Hebrew became the language of Jewish education in Palestine, and in 1918, the Hebrew University was established in Jerusalem.

Zionist language postulates are visible in the social and demographic policy of the modern state, among others, in facilitating the access of new citizens to free Hebrew education.

The Hebrew language of modern Israel is the language of politics, economics, culture, education, law, and security. Apart from Israel, there is no country where it is the language of a national minority,[10] it remains only the language of the liturgy and sacred books of Judaism wherever there are Jewish communities.

Although Arabic is no longer the official language of Israel, it enjoys a special status in the country and remains in common use by Israelis of Arabic origin.[11]

JUDAISM AND THE SECURITY POLICY

In the Ancient Middle East, Judaism became an organized religion, creating a coherent system of traditions and values. Many aspects of it influenced directly or indirectly secular ideals and morals. The relationship between Judaism and politics, including security policy, was closely dependent on the changes that took place within the Jewish communities themselves, as well as on external conditions. Several political models existed in Israel's ancient history: tribal federation, monarchy, rabbinical theocracy, and the rule of prophets. Three separate centres of power: the rabbi, the royal throne, and the prophets – were necessary to maintain political independence, security, diplomacy, and the position of a hegemon. In Roman Judea, a substitute for Jewish rule was exercised by rabbinical courts headed by the highest authority in the Jewish community of the Second Temple period – the Great Sanhedrin, which was a contamination of religious and secular authority. During the rabbinical period (up to the 6th century), and throughout the Middle Ages, up to Haskalah, the political organization embraced the semi-autonomous rule of Jewish religious councils and courts, which combined religious functions with the representation of secular authority. In Talmudic times, thanks to the Babylonian Talmud (Sanhedrin 20b), the belief in royal power as the best form of Jewish government was popularized, but later *galut* referred to the Talmudic principle of *dina de-malkhuta dina* "the law of the land is the law" ordering obedience to those in power in the

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[10] The language of everyday communication of Haredi orthodox communities in the United States is Yiddish.

[11] The Knesset, *Full text of Basic Law…*, *op. cit.*

countries where the Jews lived. It was also assumed that these countries would be able to ensure the security of the Jews in exchange for loyalty.[12]

During the Middle Ages, the *qahal*, a kind of local religious government, became a representative form of Jewish security. Since the Haskalah, along with the expansion of political rights granted to Jews in European countries, the authoritativeness of the *qahal* institutions was abolished, and Jews became present in the political and social spheres. In the first phase of development, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Zionism developed in a two-vector way, as an internal Jewish movement and, at the same time, as a political organization seeking external support.[13]

The new culture of the Zionist state was shaped by the translocation of traditional religious symbols. An example is the history of the contemporary Knesset, referring to the tradition of the Great Assembly (*Kneset ha-Gedola*) – Jewish religious leaders who, after returning from Babylonian captivity, opened a new era in the history of Judaism. The Grand Assembly was of a legislative and administrative nature, it was the centre of Jewish law.[14] The meaning of Judaism is shown in state symbols. The state flag is white, with two blue stripes near the edge and a blue Star of David in the centre.[15] The two blue stripes on the edges of the white rectangle clearly refer to the tallit, the prayer shawl, one of the most recognized symbols of the Jewish religion.

As Shevah Weiss writes, the flag is not only a confirmation of national but also political identity. It is a symbol of values that are respected in the security policy.[16] The burning of flags by the Arab community, religious anti-Zionists and radical leftist circles is a reminder that Israel's security is still under threat.

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[12] *Dina-de-malkhuta-dina*, [in:] "Jewish Virtual Library – A project of AICE", n.d., https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/dina-de-malkhuta-dina (accesed: 10.06.2020).

[13] M. Kramer, *Towards a Middle East Region Security Regime*, [in:] *Routledge Handbook on Israeli Security*, S.A. Cohen, A. Klieman (eds), London – New York 2018, p. 250.

[14] *Kneset ha-Gedola*, [in:] "Encyclopedia Britannica", 20 July 1998, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Kneset-ha-Gedola (accesed: 10.06.2020).

[15] The Knesset, *Full text of Basic Law…*, *op. cit.*

[16] S. Weiss, *Flaga – społeczny barometr* [The flag – the social barometer], [in:] N. Aravot, S. Weiss, J. Łaszczyk, L. Malinowski, M. Paluch, M.E. Pietrzak, *Flaga. Naród. Tożsamość* [Flag. Nation. Identity], Warszawa 2017, p. 41.

The symbol of the state is a seven-branched menorah, surrounded by olive leaves on each side, with the word *Israel* written on it.[17] The symbolism of this seven-branched candlestick has been central to Judaism since ancient times. Traditionally, the menorah was made of pure gold and used in a portable sanctuary established by Moses in the desert and later in the temple in Jerusalem, and the purest quality fresh olive oil was burned daily to keep the light in the temple.

Although the political culture of the State of Israel follows the European model, the role of the Jewish tradition in Israeli religious parties remains significant. These parties treat Judaism as the foundation of a political ideology encompassing the religion, culture, tradition, law and civilization of Jews, emphasizing the specificity of Israel as a Jewish state.

Religious Zionists play an important role in the ideological leadership of the bloc of religious parties. Religious Zionism has become a powerful ideological formation in modern Israel with the predisposition to establish cultural hegemony over Israeli society.[18] An important symbolic act was the nomination in November 2019 of Naftali Bennet as Minister of Defence. He was the first religious Zionist to receive such a high mandate of trust in Israeli security policy.[19]

Religious Zionism in Israel, also referred to as National Religion, includes a range of religious and national views along with activist-messianic tendencies. Abraham Isaac Ha-Cohen Kook, who persuaded young religious Jews to settle in *Eretz Israel*, which would hasten the coming of the Messiah, was considered to be the spiritual and ideological founder of religious Zionism. Rabbi Kook's views constitute a specific synthesis of secular Zionism and messianic Judaism, where Zionism is "the coming of redemption on earth".[20] In this reinterpretation of traditional Jewish thought, messianism is transferred to the secular realm, simultaneously transforming the traditional formula of *tikkun olam*, where the repair of the world was to begin with the Jews regaining their place in *Eretz Israel*. *Eretz Israel*, where the Jewish spiritual and political identity was born, the place on the mental map and the imagined homeland, gained real shape, materializing the vision of physical security as a new quality, absent in "time without history" (*galut*).

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[17] The Knesset, *Full text of Basic Law…*, *op. cit.*

[18] Y. Peled, *Toward…*, *op. cit.*

[19] Naftali Bennett remained as Defence Minister until May 2020.

[20] Y. Peled, *Toward…*, *op. cit.*

The aim of religious Zionism is not to introduce theocracy, but to use Judaism to emphasize the Jewish character of the state, including the maintenance of the highest status of Judaism in Israeli society and the domination of religious law in the area of *Mishpat ivri* 'Jewish/Hebrew law/jurisprudence', which is part of Jewish heritage and although it has its source in religious legislation (*Halakha*), it is part of modern state legislation as well. Israeli public law functions on its foundation, and the jurisdiction of rabbinical courts in civil law also prevails.[21] Since 1948, the Chief Rabbinate has functioned as a public institution, regulating many aspects of the life of the Israeli community, and part of the Israeli judiciary are rabbinical courts, supervised by the Ministry of Justice.[22] An example of the influence of Judaism on Israeli society is also the halakhic interpretation of *The Law of Return* of 1950.

The legally sanctioned presence of these principles confirms Israel's cultural strategy, emphasizing the Jewish character of the state, independent of changes in the external environment. Israeli cultural strategy negatively affects hits minority communities, especially Arab and Ethiopian communities, which is not always perceived by society as a real concern for the security of the state and its citizens. Some Israelis see this as a threat to internal security, especially public security, when the minority communities demonstrate and protest against "excessive control" and the unequal treatment of non-Jewish ethnic and national groups.[23] The sensitive relationship between the State of Israel and the Arab minority has fluctuated many times in recent times. On the one hand, the aspirations of the Arab community, especially the younger generation, for civic integration are deepening, on the other hand, the hostility and distance between both communities is visible, additionally reinforced by the excluding rhetoric of radical politicians.[24]

In 2019, there were significant changes in the perception of security by the Israeli society, revealing differences in the recognition of the religious nature of the state and the balance between national and religious values,

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[21] A. Skorek, *Żydowskie ugrupowania religijne w Państwie Izrael. Polityczna rola ortodoksyjnego judaizmu* [Jewish religious groups in the State of Israel. The political role of orthodox Judaism], Kraków 2015, pp. 46–47.

[22] *Ibidem*.

[23] M. Elran, C. Padan, P. Sharvit Baruch., S. Hadad, Z. Israeli, S. Even, Y. Ben Meir, *Israeli Society. Challenges to Societal Resilience*, "INSS – The Institute for National Security Studies", January 2020 (*Strategic Survey for Israel 2019–2020*).

[24] *Ibidem*.

and democratic and liberal ones. According to *The INSS National Security Index* from November 2019, more than half of Israelis believed that Israeli democracy was threatened by cultural hegemony and the policy of isolation as well as the religious nature of the state.[25] In 2020, this effect may worsen due to the plans of the annexation of parts of the West Bank, which result in a threat to security in the region, but also to internal security, especially public security, due to the escalation of negative sentiment in the Palestinian community.

The gap is also widening between Haredi Jews, who recognize the primacy of the Jewish religious character of Israel and radical religious groups, and the moderately orthodox and liberal secular Jews.[26] This internal dispute is usually held back by strategic actions for cultural diplomacy conducted by authorities and state institutions, which continue to remind that defending values such as language and religion is important to emphasize the character of the Jewish state, also internationally.

The price of civilizational hegemony

The beginning of a new era in Israel's security policy can be seen in the times of Ariel Sharon's "imperial" doctrine. However, the Palestinian cause became Sharon's "legacy" – one thing among the most important challenges for Israel's security, the Syrian conflict, worsened and the threat posed by the Iranian regime increased, with President Ahmadinejad creating a vision of a new world map "without Israel".[27] In the Palestinian community, Sharon's name remains a symbol of the tragic events of Sabra and Shatila.[28] His plan was that only a separation policy could keep Israel safe. The first step was to erect barriers in the West Bank between Jewish settlers and Palestinians, with support from Israelis who believed that the construction of fences and walls would greatly reduce Palestinian suicide terrorism. The separation policy gave the illusion of the possibility of solving the Palestinian problem

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[25] *Ibidem.*

[26] R. Tarasiuk, *Bezpieczeństwo społeczne charedim w Izraelu wobec wyzwań współczesności* [Haredim social security in Israel in the face of contemporary challenges], [in:] *O terroryzmie jako zagrożeniu dla bezpieczeństwa społecznego* [On terrorism as a threat to social security], M. Lipińska-Rzeszutek, A. Indraszczyk (eds), Warszawa–Siedlce 2017, pp. 205–225.

[27] Iran's Islamist regime has repeatedly revealed its intention to destroy Israel with nuclear weapons. Iran is currently the greatest threat to Israel among state actors.

[28] G. Levin, *Ariel Sharon's Legacy of Separation*, "The Atlantic", 11 January 2014.

on its own terms with the tools of cultural and ethnic isolation. Building a separation wall reduced the risk of suicide bombings but facilitated the Hamas uprising in Gaza. Sharon was also the "provocateur" of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. His symbolic entry into the Temple Mount complex was associated with the declaration that holy places, including the Al-Aqsa Mosque, belong exclusively to Jews, and therefore will remain part of Israel's territory.[29]

The Al-Aqsa Intifada began on 28 September 2000 on the Temple Mount, spanning all of Jerusalem and rapidly spreading to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Given that the fighting began in Jerusalem, it is important to note the geopolitical role that this city played in the entire Israeli-Arab conflict.[30] The special status of Jerusalem as a site of a potential political explosion was noticed by the Palestinian lawyer Henry Cattan and the Israeli writer Abraham B. Yehoshua in 1981, and in 1999 by Shimon Peres, then a speaker in the Knesset.[31] Initiated in the space of the "holy city", the Al-Aqsa Intifada, in its very name, identified with one of the most readable symbols of the Muslim world – the Al-Aqsa Mosque, has gained a figurative character, crossing the narrow frames of the Palestinian national liberation struggle.[32] The Arabic word *intifada*, translated as "insurrection", refers to boycotts, mass revolts, strikes, demonstrations, and, in its most extreme meaning, direct confrontation of violence. Seen from a military perspective, the Al-Aqsa Intifada met all the criteria of an asymmetric conflict, and from a cultural perspective it can be defined in the context of a "cultural clash". The suppression of the intifada, also in its symbolic and cultural dimensions, meant the end of a certain stage of the conflict, emphasizing Israel's civilizational superiority in terms of military, political and cultural advantage. The weakness of Palestinian organizations, resulting from ideological dispersion, has become apparent. In this conflict,

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[29] *Ibidem*.

[30] S.B. Cohen, *Jerusalem. Bridging the Four Walls. A Geopolitical Perspective*, New York 1977, pp. 11–28. See also: K. Armstrong, *Jerozolima. Miasto trzech religii* [Jerusalem. The city of three religions], Warszawa 2010.

[31] Quote after: D. Hulme, *Identity, ideology and the future of Jerusalem*, London 2006, pp. 7–8.

[32] Although the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades refer to religious terminology, which is also evident in the name of this armed organization itself, they are based on secular Palestinian nationalism. They are not an Islamist group, although, using Islamic symbolism, they emphasize the cultural face of the conflict as well as unity and solidarity with the Arab and Muslim world. See E. Pearson, *Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades*, "Encyclopaedia Britannica", https://www.britannica.com/topic/Al-Aqsa-Martyrs-Brigades (accessed: 10.06.2020).

there was a clash between fundamentalist Islamic fighters, seeking hegemony in their conviction of the superiority of their culture and the political culture of Israel, convinced of its universality resulting from the promotion of human rights, democratic ideals, and freedom of conscience and religion.

For Islamic militants, the Jewish presence in the Middle East is a humiliating intrusion into the holy areas of Islam.[33] Mainly for this reason, from the moment of its proclamation, Israel has had to face numerous pressures that potentially pose a threat to enduring national security. External risk factors imply the government's implementation of extensive security measures, creating a specific security culture, exemplified by a 25-meter concrete barrier wall and hundreds of military checkpoints in the West Bank and along the western border.[34] After Hamas's victory in 2005, Israel also introduced blockades of border crossings for the movement of people and goods. The seven-year policy of blockade of Gaza was explained by the Jewish state's right to defend itself against Islamic fundamentalism, which was tantamount to fighting against organizations that wanted to destroy it. This was the justification for operations Cast Lead and Protective Edge.

Currently, one of the fundamental reasons for the destabilization of the region is Israel's desire to annex part of the Palestinian territory. As early as 1 July 2020, Israel was ready to occupy a third of the controlled West Bank area, including the strategically important Jordan Valley. For the incumbent Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu this could be a "historic opportunity" to occupy a large part of the West Bank and stabilize the eastern border with Jordan. However, many security experts see this as a serious threat to Israel's security. They argue that the imposition of Israeli sovereignty there may destabilize security not only in the West Bank but also in neighbouring Jordan, and may even contribute to the international isolation of Israel. Moreover, the Israelis themselves fear a serious armed confrontation, a resurgence of violence, and an increase in terrorist attacks as well as the great cost of full military occupation. The prevailing view among the supporters of the annexation is that similar forecasts did not come true

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[33] J. Cook, *Israel…*, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–30.

[34] J. Roache, *Safety at a Price: The Effect of Israel's Security Culture on Palestinians in the West Bank*, "Northeastern University Political Review", 31 August 2014, https://www.nupoliticalreview.com/2014/08/31/safety-at-a-price-the-effect-of-israels-security-culture-on-palestinians-in-the-west-bank/ (accessed: 10.06.2020).

after US President Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and decided to move the American embassy there from Tel Aviv.[35]

In response to Israel's plan of annexation, Palestinian protests spread across the Jordan Valley. In July 2020, tensions also increased along Israel's southern border following the launch of three rockets from the Gaza Strip, to which the Israelis responded by attacking an underground Hamas facility. Although there was no significant terrorist attack, the Palestinians were throwing stones and Molotov cocktails on Israeli vehicles.[36] There was also a wave of anti-Israel protests in the Gaza Strip, including a great protest march in which about 2,000 Gaza residents took part.[37] This shows that there is no consent on the part of the Palestinian people to Israel's policy towards Palestine, and unity in this matter was expressed by Al-Fatah and Hamas at a joint virtual (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) press conference about the formulation of a joint strategy that would open a new chapter in confrontation with Israel.[38]

In Israel, the so-called "new terrorism" remains a separate issue. While the "old" terrorism concerns mainly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and is associated with "classic actions", a new type of terrorism in Israel is attacks by "lone wolves". Almost every day there is an attack or attempted attack on an Israeli civilians or soldiers, which implies a sense of the seemingly growing threat of Israeli society. Attacks, usually with a knife, are usually carried out by one or two people acting alone.[39]

Conclusion

As Bauer claims, the civilizational distinctiveness implying Israel's cultural isolation from its near abroad is the main reason for the reluctance of its Middle Eastern neighbours towards Jews at the turn of the 20th

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[35] D.M. Halbfinger, A. Rasgon, *As Annexation Looms, Israeli Experts Warn of Security Risks*, "The New York Times", 19 June 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/19/world/middleeast/isael-annexation-west-bank-risks.html (accessed: 15.07.2020).

[36] *Stones and Molotov cocktails thrown at Israeli vehicles*, "News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", 1–7 July 2020, p. 6.

[37] *Activity to prevent Israel's annexation of parts of Judea and Samaria*, "News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", 1–7 July 2020, p. 9.

[38] *Display of Fatah–Hamas unity at a press conference*, "News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", 1–7 July 2020, p. 13.

[39] S. Dennen, *Is lone wolf terrorism on the rise in Israel?*, "The Jerusalem Post", 4 October 2019.

and 21st centuries.[40] The "civilizational" strategy of isolation is, however, of fundamental importance for both national and international security, as both vectors of threats remain unchanged for Israel – internal, related to the activities of the Arab resistance movement, including Palestinian nationalism; and external, from states and non-state entities denying Israel's right to exist.[41] The more so as the intensely experienced hatred towards Israel is no longer limited to the Middle East region; it is also present in other regions of the Muslim world, but it is most visible in the immediate vicinity of Israel, because it is related to the vital interests of Arab communities.[42] Halkin described anti-Israel rhetoric as a new stage in the history of anti-Semitism, which became possible only after the creation of the Jewish state, following the same motivations and methods that governed old anti-Semitism.[43]

In its policy of cultural hegemony, Israel also seeks recognition by the international community of its right to defend itself, including the defence of fundamental cultural values that implement the vision of Israel as a Jewish state.

In the Middle East, emphasizing one's own individuality is a strategic goal, but the price of internal and external conflicts can be high. The entry into force of the law emphasizing the Jewish character of the state shows

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[40] Y. Bauer, *Beyond the Fourth Wave: Contemporary Anti-Semitism and Radical Islam*, "Judaism. A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought", Summer–Fall 2006, vol. 55, no. 1–2, https://www.questia.com/magazine/1G1-149590107/beyond-the-fourth-wave-contemporary-anti-semitism (accessed: 10.06.2020).

[41] M. Khaleel, *Zionism, the Qur'an, and the Hadith*, "Judaism. A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought", Spring 2005, vol. 54, no. 1–2, pp. 79–94 (accessed: 10.06.2020).

[42] N.J. Kressel, *Antisemitism, Social Science, and the Muslim and Arab World*, "Judaism: A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought", Summer–Fall 2003, vol. 52, no. 3–4, pp. 225–245.
For example, Egyptian Sheikh Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, one of the most important Sunni clerics in 2002, described Jews as "enemies of Allah, descendants of monkeys and pigs"; Sheikh Abd Al-Rahman Al-Sudayyis, imam of the most important mosque in Mecca, also referred to this rhetoric, additionally describing Jews as "the scum of the human race, the rats of the world"; Physician Abdel Aziz Rantisi, chief leader of the "non-military" wing of Hamas, told reporters in June 2003, "I swear we will not leave one Jew in Palestine". Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, described Israel as a cancerous tumor. Similar sentiments can be found among Muslims outside the Middle East.

[43] Quote after: E. Raab, *Antisemitism, Anti-Israelism, Anti-Americanism*, "Judaism: A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought", Fall 2002, vol. 51, no. 4, pp. 387–396.

how important it is in Israel to ensure a cultural monolith, which may, however, be in contradiction with the interests of minorities. Plans for the annexation of the West Bank, justified by the need for border stability, may be perceived as a special kind of cultural and ethnic occupation, constituting an introduction to further actions aimed at limiting the interests of minorities and their security, and may even entail the risk of an armed conflict.

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