



The Prospects of the “Sword of Jerusalem” Battle



Prof. Dr. Walid 'Abd al-Hay

May 2021



Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations

The Prospects of the “Sword of Jerusalem” Battle

May 10–21, 2021

Prof. Dr. Walid ‘Abd al-Hay*

Introduction

Many researchers and authors who study the rounds of the Arab-Israeli conflict capture a specific “event” and try to explain at that moment without taking into consideration its historical sequence. In the Sword of Jerusalem battle (dubbed by Israel Operation Guardian of the Walls), the focus is on the Israeli efforts to evict Palestinians from the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Jerusalem, or on settlers’ aggression on the holy sites. However, the essence of the conflict should not be neglected, namely the “Israeli settler colonialism in Palestine,” which has made the Arab region have the highest indicators the world in terms of political instability, either directly (in wars, which are repeated every 4.5 years), or indirectly through flash operations or assassinations, etc. When analyzing the causes of each of these wars since 1948, we will find an “event” triggering the latent conflict in one way or another, and accordingly, the ongoing rounds of conflict since 1948 will continue until the cause of this historical conflict, which is the occupation, is eradicated.



It suffices to point out that Israel is part of the colonialism phenomenon and it is governed by its laws. Contemporary history indicates that 62 currently independent states were colonies (settler and non-settler) and have gained their independence in

* An expert in futures studies, a former professor in the Department of Political Science at Yarmouk University in Jordan and a holder of Ph.D. in Political Science from Cairo University. He is also a former member of the Board of Trustees of Al-Zaytoonah University of Jordan, Irbid National University, the National Center for Human Rights, the Board of Grievances and the Supreme Council of Media. He has authored 37 books, most of which are focused on future studies in both theoretical and practical terms, and published 118 research papers in peer-reviewed academic journals.

the 20th century.¹ It is necessary here to point out that settler colonies that gained independence are the ones in which the percentage of the original population remained higher than that of foreign settlers. Similarly we notice that the Palestinian population in Palestine outnumbers the Jewish population by around a quarter million, which is the biggest dilemma for Israel and this represents the deeper interpretation of what has happened in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood as well as what might happen in other Palestinian neighborhoods, cities and rural areas.



First: The Sword of Jerusalem Battle and the Historical Trend of the Conflict

The repercussions of the of the Sword of Jerusalem battle can be linked, in their various aspects, to the historical trend of the conflict as follows:

1. The Jerusalem Issue

Despite the US decision by former President Donald Trump to move the US embassy to Jerusalem in December 2017 and its actual implementation in May 2018, the number of foreign embassies in Israel is 90, of which 88 are in Tel Aviv and only two in Jerusalem (the US and Kosovo embassies). If we add to this the fact the current US Democratic administration has indicated in a number of statements, on the level of the presidency and the state department, that it does not want to define a clear position on the issue of east Jerusalem, we conclude that Jerusalem has turned into an “ambiguous” issue.² Such an ambiguity was reinforced by the latest



uprising in Jerusalem, Sheikh Jarrah and *al-Aqsa* Mosque, and is seen in the hesitation of some countries that have previously expressed their desire to move their embassies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem but retreated, such as Brazil, Honduras, Guatemala, Hungary, Moldova and Romania, while Paraguay returned its embassy to Tel Aviv a few months after its relocation to Jerusalem.³

This means that considering Jerusalem as the united capital of Israel has been struck by skepticism. The clashes inside Jerusalem and the Palestinian rockets reaching the city itself, in concurrence with Israel's preparations to celebrate its complete occupation of Jerusalem in 1967, make considering Jerusalem as the united capital of Israel controversial and an issue which the international community has not approached as a political axiom in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This skepticism can be seen in subsequent Security Council deliberations, where effective international positions regarding Jerusalem are dispersed.⁴ While most countries of the world are committed to considering east Jerusalem as part of the territories occupied in 1967, the US consider it neither part of these territories nor the capital of the proposed state of Palestine. Furthermore, it will not return the US embassy to Tel Aviv, as per the statements of US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, on several occasions.⁵ However, it is necessary to pay attention, without exaggeration, to some change in the orientations of the ruling Democratic Party in the US, which is noticed by Israeli intellectual elites, who expressed concern should this sub-trend continue. For it seems to be ultimately focused on the two-state solution, which Israel has tried to overcome, taking advantage of the political environment created by Trump in the "Deal of the Century."⁶



Anthony Blinken

2. The Israeli Trauma with the Role of the 1948 Palestinians

The demonstrations, sit-ins and popular action defending *al-Aqsa* Mosque by the Palestinians of the 1948 occupied territories have shocked most Israeli experts and political leaders to the extent that Israeli President Reuven Rivlin warned of a civil war.⁷ Israeli authorities even imposed a curfew on some cities and there was wide

spread of police in the streets, which prompted some Western media outlets to describe what was happening in these cities as a “new front line” besides the confrontations with Gaza.⁸ Some Israeli social researchers noted the interconnectedness between two dimensions in the structure of Arab society in Israel, namely: the discrimination of the Israeli political economy against them, and that they are still connected to their Palestinian society, through their parties, civil organizations, or elites, etc.⁹ Seemingly, this development will have deeper strategic repercussions than what might appear at first glance. For it is not separate from a historical track, illustrated by previous confrontations with the Israeli authorities, the most prominent of which was the Land Day in 1976, which turned into an annual Palestinian event that deepens the Palestinians’ geographical unity. Israel view it a worrisome phenomenon and an expression of Palestinian interconnectedness.¹⁰

3. The Transformation of Official Arab Position: From Being a Party to the Conflict to a Mediator

The Sword of Jerusalem battle perpetuated the gradual Arab transformation from being a party to the conflict to a mediator between the Palestinian and Israeli side. However, this mediator’s ability to pressure the resistance is more than its ability to pressure Israel to reach a settlement. The Arab sides which are active in mediation, especially Egypt and Qatar, for fear of expanding the circle of conflict or due to a US request from behind the scenes, use their diplomacy to pressure the Palestinian side (on the material, geopolitical and logistical levels) more than the Israeli one.



This means that such mediation, whatever their results are, reflect such position change.¹¹

The Sword of Jerusalem battle reveals that the Arab countries were divided into three groups: first, the countries that fully recognize Israel and are not ready to take any practical steps against it, no matter how intense the fighting. The second includes countries that work within proxy diplomacy, which means that the US assigns them to communicate with Washington's opponents in the region to transfer to them the US perspective, and in order for these countries to fulfill this function, they provide some assistance to the regional US opponents as a measure of confidence-building.¹² The third group has maintained its support for the Palestinian resistance without effective measures.

4. Growing International Sympathy For the Palestinians

Without going back to a large number of international public opinion polls which we have discussed repeatedly in the *Palestine Strategic Reports* series, issued by al-Zaytouna Centre, the current round of confrontation is consistent with a growing trend that has been supporting Palestinian rights since 1987 (the first *Intifadah*). These polls have revealed an increase in “relative” support for the Palestinians among the ruling Democratic Party in Washington, and the US public, in general.¹³ Also, a relative change is manifested when 14 member states of the UN Security Council supported a statement that only the US opposed.¹⁴ If we add to this the criticisms of some international human rights organizations or media agencies, it becomes clear that the Palestinian issue has returned to the forefront of the international scene.¹⁵ This means that the confrontation revived the idea that the core regional conflict is the Palestine issue, and that resolving this conflict is a



fundamental matter. Therefore, trying to marginalize the Palestine issue is not as simple as some sides have tried to promote.

5. The Normalization Impasse

The civil and military clashes have embarrassed the countries that have normalized their ties with Israel, whether in front of their peoples or the Arab population, in general. This was evident in their very shy statements and their attempts to equate the Palestinians with the Israelis as was clear in the statement of the United Arab Emirates, while Bahrain waited for the Saudi position to follow suit.¹⁶ The Arab and Muslim population reactions indicated the deep gap between the orientations of the official Arab administrations and the aspirations of the Arab peoples, something the Israeli leadership expects to have a strategic risk in the long term.¹⁷ However, considering the official statements of Arab countries having ties with Israel (old and new), shows that they perceive the relation with Israel and its recognition a priority over the issue of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, the holy sites or Palestinian rights. They are committed to their relation with Israel, even if it affects the religious and Arab national values. This is because the value system of the Arab regimes prioritize the political system over the state and society. They believe that the relation with the Western capitalist system is the best guarantee for the security of the political system, and that such a relation would be maintained through the relation with Israel.

6. The Religious Dimension of the Conflict

Arab political regimes are working to not revive the religious dimension of the conflict for fear of the repercussions of this revival on their internal conditions, especially after rounds of conflict with national religious movements in more than one Arab country. Thus, it is not a coincidence that both normalization and the suffocation of religious movements proceeded side by side during the past decade. The paradox, interestingly, is that at a time when the Arab countries besiege the religious sentiments of their societies, Israel loosens the anomaly of the Jewish religious thought and strengthens it.



Since Hamas and the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine (PIJ) represent a model which attracts Arab sentiments on the one hand, and an expression of a broad religious trend in the Arab society on the other hand, their success in achieving any gains is viewed from the standpoint of the regimes as reinforcement of a model they do not want and are afraid of.¹⁸



7. Growing Technical and Tactical Expertise for the Capabilities of the Military Resistance

The confrontation in the Sword of Jerusalem battle indicates that the military capabilities of the resistance have clearly improved, admitted by the Israelis side, without denying the high cost of the confrontation. Yet, tracking Israeli media clearly indicates kind of “psychological exhaustion” of the Israeli society, which has been witnessing daily clashes for more than 54 years, and with the increasing decline of pro-Israel international public opinion, even by some countries that traditionally support it. Reports of the Israeli Ministry of Health indicate that the highest suicide rate in Israel is in the settlements of the Gaza envelope, which I do not believe is a coincidence, but rather, as Israeli psychologists assert, is the result of psychological exhaustion and severe and continuous psychological anxiety.¹⁹ Notably, the Gaza battles and the Palestinian rockets hitting Jerusalem and Tel Aviv spread this exhaustion from the “envelope” settlements to the “core” of Israel itself.



Comparing the resistance’s combat performance during this confrontation to that of previous ones, especially in 2008, 2012, and 2014, the Israeli Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) of Tel Aviv University indicates the following:²⁰

- a. Technical improvement of Palestinian missiles in this round.
- b. Improvement of targeting accuracy.
- c. Inflicting higher losses.
- d. Improvement of the level of command and control of the Palestinian organizations.
- e. Better coordination between Hamas and the PIJ.
- f. The number of rockets in “one barrage” during the Sword of Jerusalem battle was higher than previous times, in order to disrupt the Iron Dome operation.



8. Impotence of Palestinian Authority in Ramallah

The current Jerusalem battle indicated the absolute impotence of the Palestinian “security coordination authority” in Ramallah, and that the strategic decision regarding the Palestinian orientations is in the hands of Hamas and the resistance in Gaza. This shift has had an impact on the Israeli thinking, as Israeli experts have warned against undermining the position of the Palestinian Authority (PA) as a result of its impotence in the Gaza confrontations, and particularly its impact when ‘Abbas leaves the scene. They believe that it is important to restore the PA to the



“status of the exclusive representative of the Palestinians.” Indeed, some Israeli studies have called for conducting “large-scale arrests of Hamas operatives in the West Bank in coordination with the PA security apparatuses, and to prevent Hamas from influencing the Palestinian agenda.” These strategic studies have also recommended that if there are favorable conditions for an arrangement with Egyptian mediation, the “architecture for an arrangement should be designed with the PA and over the head of Hamas leadership,” and that “Hamas should be left only with tactical elements of an arrangement, resulting from its responsibility for managing life in the Gaza Strip.”²¹

Second: Future Outlook

There are two battles that are interlinked: the military battle that covers all of Palestine and leaves repercussions on the societies of the two parties to the conflict, and the political battle that is taking place on three levels:

1. Unilateral international efforts for a ceasefire.
2. International efforts through the United Nations to reach a ceasefire.
3. Discussion within the political decision-making bodies on each side of the conflict.

It is clear that the US administration was on one hand in contact with Egypt and Qatar to convey its views to the Hamas leadership through what is called proxy diplomacy. However, on the other hand, it sought to:²²



1. Disrupt any statement from the UN Security Council to stop the fighting, although such a position exposes it to a kind of diplomatic isolation in front of the world, where 14 members have supported the statement proposed by the council members.
2. Continuously affirm its commitment to the security of Israel, justifying its attacks, while shyly mentioning the issue of protecting Palestinian civilians.
3. Announce its agreement to provide Israel with weapons worth about \$735 million, just days before the start of the “Sword of Jerusalem” Battle. Some US sources have

tried to interpret the disclosure of the deal as an appeasement to Israel to agree to a ceasefire.

This means that the declaration of a ceasefire, without specifying the political environment associated with it, is a victory to proxy diplomacy rather than the international diplomacy represented by the Security Council. Although the approaches of the countries of the Security Council seem to be ahead of the proxy diplomacy parties, due to their historical experience with this diplomacy.



When considering ceasefire agreements, it is necessary to review the previous battles between the Palestinian resistance and the Israeli army during the period 2008–2021, where we find a number of meaningful indicators:

Year	Fighting period	Days	US administration	Mediation	Political provisions of a ceasefire
2008–2009	27/12/2008–18/1/2009	21	Republican	Egyptian	Unclear
2012	14–21/11/2012	7	Democrat	Egyptian	Unclear
2014	8/7–26/8/2014	48	Democrat	Egyptian	Unclear
2021	10–21/5/2021	11	Democrat	Egyptian	Unclear



1. Three out of the four wars in GS occurred during democratic administrations, which means that betting on democratic administrations contradicts the historical trend of US behavior.
2. All ceasefire agreements were concluded through proxy diplomacy represented in the Egyptian diplomacy, and by making a party in the conflict a mediator.
3. The absence of the UN role. In these four wars over 13 years, no cease-fire has been arranged by UN. For Israel is hostile towards the UN.
4. The political framework of the ceasefire agreements is unclear in the four wars. This means that every ceasefire provides an opportunity for the parties to prepare for the next war. In the latest war, the resistance movements in GS have linked the ceasefire to the halt of Israeli policies towards Sheikh Jarrah evictions and the Israeli security practices towards the *al-Aqsa* Mosque. However, these conditions were not clear in the ceasefire agreement, which means that the next war is only a matter of time.
5. The “Sword of Jerusalem” battle has revealed that most of the Arab countries have not taken, directly or indirectly, any “practical” position to support the resistance.
6. It seems that the steadfastness of the resistance and its combat performance prompted the Syrian government to send positive signals to Hamas, after having negative stances towards it.



Third: Recommendations

1. In the latest confrontations, there were factors that increased pressure on Israel, including the unrest of Palestinian-Israeli relations inside the Green Line and the concerns that it would expand and become more violent; the paralysis of vital Israeli facilities, including civil aviation or trains, or disrupting schools and factories; and the fact that hundreds of thousands of Israelis had to remain in shelters. This indicates that the resistance leaderships must give a high priority to the continuation of communication with this sector of Palestinian people.

2. Working with regional and international allies to give the UN, in the worst-case scenario, a role that is on par with proxy diplomacy. That is in case international diplomacy could not prevail, especially since Israel and the US are quite hostile towards the UN.
3. Coordinating and cooperating with other resistance forces to expand the confrontation with Israel in other areas.
4. After the cessation of fighting, the political battle will focus on the following:
 - a. Israel will seek to make the truce a permanent one.
 - b. Israel will take measures to reinforce the impression that it has not backed away from confiscating Sheikh Jarrah's homes and violating *al-Aqsa* Mosque.
 - c. The entry of aid into Gaza will be linked to Israeli conditions concerning the types of financial and non-financial aid, lists of permitted items, their timing, and the bodies that provide them. Israel will obstruct aid from Iran and Turkey. As for the captured Israeli soldiers in Gaza, or the bodies of their dead, these issues will be made part of the bargaining in the post-fighting phase.
 - d. International actors will deal with two Palestinian parties with different strategic orientations, where the resistance seeks to harden its foundations, and the PA seeks to return to the useless Oslo Accords, while Israel support the latter.
 - e. Israel will try to link the issue of demonstrations and the incendiary balloons, coming from the Gaza Strip towards the Gaza envelope settlements, with the opening of the crossings so that the aid would enter the strip.
 - f. Israel will link its negotiation with Jordan regarding the "Hashemite guardianship" to the demand that Jordan would exclude the people, who Israel deems close to the resistance, from any religious activities or other events in *al-Aqsa* Mosque.
5. The necessity of investing in the Sword of Jerusalem battle, in the media and culturally, in order to confirm the effectiveness of resistance action, compared to the Oslo diplomacy, which has failed miserably. Thus, paving the way to expand the popular support of the resistance.



6. Strengthening and developing the role of the Joint Chamber of Palestinian Resistance Factions in the Gaza Strip, especially concerning the issuing of military statements in case clashes renewed. For this is highly likely, given the unclear terms of the ceasefire.



Endnotes

- ¹ John Springhall, *Decolonization since 1945: The Collapse of European Overseas Empires* (Red Globe Press, 2001); and Rudolf Von Albertini, *Decolonization the Administration and Future of the Colonies, 1919-1960* (Holmes & Meier Pub, 1982).
- ² Deirdre Shesgreen and Courtney Subramanian, Biden has yet to reverse many of Trump's pro-Israel policies he labeled 'destructive', site of USA TODAY, 16/5/2021, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2021/05/16/israel-gaza-and-us-biden-has-kept-many-trump-policies-he-panned/5083875001>
- ³ Paraguay to move embassy in Israel back to Tel Aviv: foreign minister, site of Reuters, 5/9/2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-paraguay-israel/paraguay-to-move-embassy-in-israel-back-to-tel-aviv-foreign-minister-idUSKCN1LL2HE?il=0>; Brazil moving its embassy to Jerusalem a matter of 'when, Not if'- Netanyahu, site of *The Guardian*, 31/12/2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/dec/31/brazil-moving-its-embassy-to-jerusalem-a-matter-of-when-not-if-netanyahu>; Romania announces plans to move embassy to Jerusalem, site of Arutz 7 (Israel National News), 24/3/2019, <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/260815>; and Kosovo Opens Embassy In Jerusalem, Weeks After Establishing Relations With Israel, site of Radio Free Europe, 14/3/2021, <https://www.rferl.org/a/kosovo-opens-embassy-in-jerusalem/31150166.html>
- ⁴ International calls for calm as Jerusalem violence surges, site of France24, 11/5/2021, <https://www.france24.com/en/americas/20210511-un-security-council-holds-emergency-meeting-on-jerusalem-considers-statement>
- ⁵ Blinken 'non-committal' on East Jerusalem as Palestinian capital, site of Al Jazeera, 11/2/2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/11/new-us-administration-considers-jerusalem-capital-of-israel>
- ⁶ Eldad Shavit, What can be learned from the United States' conduct during Operation Guardian of the Walls?, Official Page of The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), Facebook, 19/5/2021.
- ⁷ Rami Ayyub, Israeli president warns of civil war as Jews, Arabs clash over Gaza, Reuters, 13/5/2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/violence-grips-mixed-arab-jewish-towns-israel-tensions-flare-2021-05-12>
- ⁸ This feels like civil war': Israel's mixed cities become the new front line, site of The Independent, 14/5/2021, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-civil-war-frontline-lod-b1847798.html>; and site of *The New York Times*, 13/5/2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/05/13/world/israel-gaza-news->
- ⁹ Zeev Rosenhek, "New developments in the sociology of Palestinian citizens of Israel: an analytical review," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* journal, vol. 21, issue 3, 1998, pp. 564-573.
- ¹⁰ What Is Palestinian 'Land Day' and Why Is Israel Worried?, site of *Haaretz* newspaper, 29/3/2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/what-is-palestinian-land-day-and-why-is-israel-worried-1.5955513>
- ¹¹ Site of *The New York Times*, 14/5/2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/14/world/middleeast/israel-arab.html>
- ¹² Howard LaFranchi, In Mideast, US diplomacy by proxy, site of The Christian Science Monitor, 25/7/2006, <https://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0725/p01s01-usfp.html>
- ¹³ Lydia Saad, "Americans Still Favor Israel While Warming to Palestinians," site of Gallup, 19/3/2021, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/340331/americans-favor-israel-warming-palestinians.aspx>; and Is Israel losing its influence over Western audiences?, site of TRT World, 18/5/2021, <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/is-israel-losing-its-influence-over-western-audiences-46770>



-
- ¹⁴ Joe Biden feels political ground shift as Israel-Gaza conflict rages on, *The Guardian*, 16/5/2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/may/16/joe-biden-feels-political-ground-shift-as-israel-gaza-conflict-rages-on>; Shibley Telhami, “Changing American Public Attitudes On Israel/Palestine: Does It Matter For Politics?,” site of The Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS), <https://pomeps.org/changing-american-public-attitudes-on-israel-palestine-does-it-matter-for-politics>; and Ishaan Tharoor, The U.S. conversation on Israel is changing, no matter Biden’s stance, site of *The Washington Post*, 17/5/2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/05/17/biden-israel-palestinians-change>
- ¹⁵ Pattern of Israeli attacks on residential homes in Gaza must be investigated as war crimes, site of Amnesty International, 17/5/2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/05/israel-opt-pattern-of-israeli-attacks-on-residential-homes-in-gaza-must-be-investigated-as-war-crimes>; and RSF asks ICC prosecutor to say whether Israeli airstrikes on media in Gaza constitute war crimes, site of RSF (Reporters Without Borders), 16/5/2021, <https://rsf.org/en/news/rsf-asks-icc-prosecutor-say-whether-israeli-airstrikes-media-gaza-constitute-war-crimes>
- ¹⁶ Israel-Gaza: Conflict stalls Arab-Israeli rapprochement, site of BBC News, 14/5/2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-57105583>
- ¹⁷ Jared Malsin and Nazih Osseiran, Israel’s Conflict in Gaza Tests Limits of New Detente With Arab World, site of *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*, 13/5/2021, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/israels-conflict-in-gaza-tests-limits-of-new-detente-with-arab-world-11620918769>; ‘An Embarrassing Time’: The Challenges For Arab Nations That Made Peace With Israel, site of NPR, 14/5/2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/05/14/996503383/an-embarrassing-time-the-challenges-for-arab-nations-that-made-peace-with-israel>; and Amid escalation, Israel’s Arab allies walk a diplomatic tightrope, site of Deutsche Welle (DW), 11/5/2021, <https://www.dw.com/en/amid-escalation-israels-arab-allies-walk-a-diplomatic-tightrope/a-57497849>
- ¹⁸ Tawfiq Aclimandos et. al., *Islamist Mass Movements, External Actors and Political Change in the Arab World* (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), 2010), pp. 189–197.
- ¹⁹ Walid Abd al-Hay, The Correlation Between Social Deviance and Political Violence in Settler Colonial Societies: Israel as a Model, al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 10/12/2020, <https://eng.alzaytouna.net/2020/12/10/academic-paper-the-correlation-between-social-deviance-and-political-violence-in-settler-colonial-societies-israel-as-a-model/#.YLCaCFEzZhE>
- ²⁰ Kobi Michael, Between Operation Guardian of the Walls and Operation Protective Edge: Existing Differences, and Necessarily Different Implications, INSS, Facebook, 18/5/2021.
- ²¹ Udi Dekel, “Operation Guardian of the Wall: Envisioning The End,” INSS Insight No.1468, 19/5/2021.
- ²² Jessica Donati, U.S. Blocks U.N. Statement on Violence in Gaza, *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*, 17/5/2021, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-blocks-u-n-statement-on-mideast-violence-11621295675>; ‘Israel has a right to defend itself’: Biden says he expects Middle East violence to abate soon, site of abc7, 13/5/2021, <https://abc7.com/biden-israel-palestine-conflict-2021-why-are-and-hamas-fighting-gaza/10625463>; and US legislators question \$735m arms sale to Israel: Report, Al Jazeera, 17/5/2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/17/us-legislators-question-735-million-arms-sale-to-israel-report> Udi Dekel, “Operation Guardian of the Wall: Envisioning The End,” INSS Insight No.1468, 19/5/2021.