THE ASSAULT ON ISRAEL’S LEGITIMACY

The Frustrating 20X Question: Why Is It Still Growing?

Condition, Direction and Response

January 2017
Version A
This document is an important step forward in confronting one of the main challenges to Israel and the Jewish people in our time. Its analysis is careful and considered, sets out well the current situation, and advances valuable proposals for a coherent global Jewish response.”

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

“

The correlation between the Ministry’s mode of operation and what comes out of this document is very high, and has already proven effective. I am glad to see that we share a very similar point of view regarding the challenge and desired strategy.”

Sima Vaknin-Gil
Director General, Ministry of Strategic Affairs
The Assault on Israel's Legitimacy

Executive Summary

ARC: The ADL-Reut Partnership

In January 2016, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the Reut Group launched a partnership to fight the assault on the legitimacy of the state of Israel. This partnership was the ‘ADL-Reut Collaboration’ (ARC).

ARC was launched on the foundations of both organizations’ shared outlook, viewing delegitimization of Israel as a form of anti-Semitism in its singular denial of the universal right of self-determination to the Jewish people alone, as well as a shared commitment to the well-being and security of the State of Israel and the Jewish people.

Since its inception in 1913, ADL has been a leader in fighting anti-Semitism and all forms of prejudice and bigotry, and in its commitment to a thriving, secure, democratic and Jewish state. It is motivated by a long-standing commitment to supporting Israel including its quest for peace through resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of a Two-State Solution. Its commitment to fighting against the delegitimization of Israel stems from its view that this phenomenon today serves as a potent platform for manifestations of anti-Semitism across the world and runs counter to the goal of obtaining a peace agreement in the future.

The Reut Group has been committed to responding to the challenge of the assault on Israel’s legitimacy since the fall of 2008. The intended effects of Reut’s work on this issue, as initially defined in its seminal work of January 2010, Building a Political Firewall against the Delegitimization of Israel, were to be a catalyst for the emergence of a pro-Israel network that turns the tables on the delegitimizers, while re-uniting the Jewish world around Israel.

The keystone of ARC is this joint Strategic Framework for countering the assault on Israel’s legitimacy, highlighting the condition and direction of this challenge and introducing response principles. This report is designed to serve the entire field of those advocating on behalf of Israel’s fundamental legitimacy. Our aim is that it will complement and reinforce existing initiatives, which are successful, and inspire new ones.

ARC was launched on the basis of extensive field research. In total, some 150 meetings, interviews and site visits were held with governmental and non-governmental entities in Israel and in the U.S., particularly in NYC, Boston, the San Francisco Bay Area and Washington DC, as well as with organizations and activists from Europe. ADL and Reut are grateful to all of them for their contribution and generosity of time and spirit.

Scope and ‘The 20X Question’

This Strategic Framework is designed to serve people and organizations in positions of authority, leadership and influence, engaged in combatting the delegitimization of Israel. These organizations and individuals, from across the political spectrum and around the world, represent a multiplicity of outlooks and approaches and bring a broad range of assets and capabilities to dealing with this challenge. That diversity is essential. The focus of this report is the ‘20X question’.

How can it be that the collective investment of the Jewish community in dealing with this challenge is estimated to be twenty-fold bigger over the past six years, yet results remain elusive? According to some rough estimates, in 2016 the Jewish community in the U.S. alone will have invested 20 times more resources in fighting the delegitimization of Israel compared to its investment in 2010. Nonetheless, the challenge to the fundamental legitimacy of Israel, presented among other aspects, by BDS campaigns, and the collateral rise in anti-Semitism, are growing around the world.

In order to address this question, this report identifies and highlights key gaps in the collective outlook and approach in the understanding of and response to this challenge. It also offers principles and guidelines for a more efficient and effective response.

ADL and Reut hold this report to be a ‘Version A’, which brings together our conclusions and recommendations within a coherent framework. Its purpose is to serve as a platform for accurate and focused professional discussion of its observations, conclusions and recommendations. Feedback will be collected over the coming few weeks and months will be integrated into a full and comprehensive ‘Version B’.

This report aims to provide the ‘big picture’ of the condition and direction of its subject matter. Hence, while it aims to mention all key dynamics related to the delegitimization of Israel, it does not provide significant analysis in key related areas, which merit further investigation but fall beyond its scope, including:

- A global mapping of the delegitimization campaign or of local dynamics and trends in specific countries;
- Complete historical context for the contemporary manifestations of delegitimization;
- Deep analysis of the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, political process or final status issues;
- The status of Israel’s non-Semitic communities, and primarily its Arab minority;
- Specific ‘answers’ to critics of Israel or Zionism;
- A thorough examination of Iran’s role as a leading state instigator of delegitimization and anti-Semitism;
- Broader challenges of countering violent extremism and the strategic threats facing Israel and the United States from terrorism.

This resulted in a robust global effort to combat delegitimization, undertaken with new resources. Nonetheless, delegitimization persists, the movement that supports it has expanded and has increased its effectiveness and sophistication, and an unfavorable ‘spirit of the time’ (Zeitgeist) remains prevalent. These dynamics underlie the conundrum of the ‘20X question’.

Hence, the key focus of this report is the pro-Israel network’s need to improve its own adaptive capacity and to out-adapt the delegitimization network and the delegitimization movement. Transforming the pro-Israel network into a significant and sustained adaptive entity will provide the network with a sustained advantage over the delegitimization movement, allowing it to accomplish successive and repeated achievements and to ultimately diminish dramatically the question regarding Israel’s right to exist from public discourse. This will require a series of structural investments, the upgrading of some operating principles, and developing new knowledge regarding several key aspects of the challenge.

Structural Response

Four structural recommendations are highlighted in this report:

- There is an acute need to upgrade the information-gathering and strategy-building capabilities of the pro-Israel network, and to better integrate them with field activities. This will require an effective feedback loop among information-gathering and analysis, strategizing, research, development and experimentation, and
operations.

- Against this backdrop, cyberspace, broadly defined, stands out as a crucially important arena (for monitoring and counter and pro-active strategies) which requires more resources and attention due to its current influence, rapid growth and growing complexity.

- Many of the entities comprising the pro-Israel network should ‘professionalize’ by focusing their efforts in areas where their attributes create a unique value proposition in the field.

- There needs to be investment in simple, flexible, affordable and scalable platforms and tools to support local communities and key niche efforts e.g. for information gathering and analysis, project management, collaboration and learning.

Operating Principles

Several operational principles need to be integrated into the work of the pro-Israel network:

- Articulating the right goal. The overall effect the pro-Israel network needs to strive for is to alter the unfavorable Zeitgeist in which Israel’s legitimacy is determined – Alongside the efforts to counter delegitimization, a pro-active and positive campaign aimed at generating a ‘legitimacy surplus’ for Israel is essential. The successes of the delegitimization success can be attributed to a favorable Zeitgeist. Without focusing on the underlying Zeitgeist, every “victory” against delegitimization may only have short-term tactical significance.

- Segment Long-Tail response – The “Long Tail Model” we use in this document to explain the challenge, distinguishes between several groups, including the ‘legitimizers’ who lead the campaign, harsh and soft critics, as well as ‘standards’. It explains how the delegitimization campaign increased its base of support by appealing to broader audiences, and demonstrates how the pro-Israel network can adopt different strategies of engagement vis-a-vis each group.

- A united, not unified, response – The Long Tail Model highlights the diversity of the groups that comprise the growing delegitimization movement. Therefore, it also highlights the essential need for a broad and diverse, Jewish and pro-Israel coalition against it, which is able to work together despite inevitable deep differences in outlook and values. For such a coalition to emerge, the pro-Israel network needs to narrow the definition of what constitutes delegitimization, acknowledging the particularly vital significance of those who are willing to fight delegitimization among progressive groups even as they criticize Israeli government policies.

- Thought Leadership – Since the delegitimization movement is founded on intellectual arguments that challenge the foundations of Zionism, there is a need to systematically counter those arguments with equally appealing and sophisticated approaches.

Emerging Challenges

The concepts below were identified as increasingly important issues facing the pro-Israel network with significant potential impact on Israel’s legitimacy. They require not only research and learning, but also new types of activities:

- The Rise of ‘Intersectionality’ – Because of a discourse of intersectionality, the delegitimization movement has successfully been able to frame the Palestinian struggle against Israel as part of the struggle of other disempowered minorities, such as African-Americans and the LGBTQ community, and therefore to include itself in the loose-coalitions of these groups that support each other’s causes;

- Framing of Israeli-Arabs as a disenfranchised indigenous population that increasingly has been marginalized by legislation, government policies and public discourse. This framing naturally enhances the challenge posed by the trend of intersectionality;

- Breakdown of the two-state solution – The expansion of the delegitimization movement, particularly on campus and especially since 2014, has been fueled by the breakdown of the political processes between Israel and the Palestinians and the perceived lack of commitment by the Government of Israel to end the control over the Palestinians in the West Bank. This has also been fueled by a concomitant rise in public discourse within Israel favoring outright annexation of territories. In other words, the inability of governmental action to provide a credible horizon for the resolution of the conflict legitimizes governmental action and activism.

- Anti-normalization – This idea, which rejects any interaction with Israelis or increasingly with supporters of Israel in any form, even in conferences explicitly devoted to peace and dialogue, but also in other arenas, has been expanding among Palestinians as well as among Arab political figures in Israel. In recent years and in a much milder form, it has been spreading within the Western countries, mainly manifested in academia and on campuses.

- Israel’s internal issues of religious pluralism – Among the majority of US Jews who affiliate non-Orthodox, growing criticism of Israel’s treatment of non-Orthodox denominations and the dominant role of the Chief Rabbinate fuels indifference and resentment toward Israel. The embodiment of this dynamic is the controversy over egalitarian prayer at the Western Wall. However, this dynamic is an opportunity that BDS can exploit and diminishes the coherence of the pro-Israel network.

- The Palestinian Authority (PA) has embraced a confrontational diplomatic approach, adopting some of the delegitimization campaign’s language and tactics in the pursuit of its aims. This contributes toward a decline of the negotiation paradigm, and also may enhance the coordination and feedback loop between activities around the world and within the West Bank. Up until now the delegitimization campaign has been executed almost exclusively by Western organizations, without real PA backing. Unless properly addressed, this new conduct of the PA could complicate many aspects of the BDS campaign and constitute a strategic surprise to Israel with meaningful national security implications.

- The targeted boycott effort against Israel’s continued presence in the West Bank, and particularly the settlements, is gaining momentum. This effort, exemplified by product labeling by the EU, now increasingly is embraced in some form by both progressive Israelis as well as among liberal Zionists outside Israel, who frame their positions as motivated by effort to secure Israel’s future as a Jewish and democratic state. This trend may eventually affect many Jewish institutions, as the demand for clarity about positions regarding initiatives “across the Green Line.”

- The Silent Boycott – While most explicit BDS initiatives are blocked, a more prevalent collateral damage emerges in the form of a silent boycott – undeclared decisions by organizations, companies, and individuals to refrain from engaging with Israeli entities motivated by ideology or simply by a desire to avoid unnecessary problems and criticism.

- Anti-BDS legislation? – Recent years have seen a surge in legislative efforts, especially in the U.S., legislatively curtailing BDS activities. However, these efforts raise concerns about a backlash due to what is framed as an infringement on free speech, and the effectiveness of this legislation and unintended consequences remain to be seen.

- U.S.-Israel Relations post elections – The
election results in the US may lead to a set of paradoxical outcomes related to delegitimization. In the short term, potentially warmer relationship between the new administration in Washington can be expected with the Government of Israel. This is likely to strengthen Israel’s standing in the international arena. Furthermore, at a time of unprecedented polarization within American society, these warm relationship may paradoxically exacerbate the challenges in other arenas, to the extent that strong negative views toward the administration – prevalent among many American Jews and non-Jewish liberals and progressives – will be associated with Israel and its policies.

Over the past six years, the pro-Israel community has shown remarkable mobilization and growth as it stood up to the challenge of Israel’s delegitimization. No doubt the professional branch within the Government of Israel, led by the Ministry for Strategic Affairs (MSA), has inserted a great degree of sophistication and creativity to the pro-Israel network. Moreover, the evolving approach of the MSA seems to be consistent with the conclusions of this strategic framework. It is now time to upgrade the capacities of the pro-Israel network, eventually turning the table on the delegitizers.

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This Strategic Framework is the product of the partnership and collaboration between the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), led by its CEO, Jonathan Greenblatt, and the Reut Group, led by Founder and Honorary President, Gidi Grinstein. This partnership was launched in January 2016. More than 150 experts, academics, activists, and practitioners from across the political spectrum of the Jewish community, in Israel, the U.S. and elsewhere have been engaged in the course of this joint effort since January 2016. Their wisdom and experience have contributed to this Strategic Framework. In addition, we have conducted extensive research of texts and videos. The full list of contributors to this effort is available as Annex to this document.

The Reut Group effort within this partnership was led by Ms. Talia Gorodes, Managing Director of the Reut Institute, which is the research and strategy arm of the Reut Group. Other Reut team members who contributed to this effort include Mr. Gidi Grinstein, Reut Group Founder; Ms. Clareta Tregel, head of the Reut team which looks into the assault on Israel’s legitimacy; and Mr. Igal Ram, Founding Director of Firewall Israel, Reut’s web-platform for fighting the delegitimization of Israel. In addition, the Reut Group is grateful to our consultants: Mr. Eran Shayshon, Associate Director at APCO Worldwide Tel Aviv office, and former Director of Policy and Strategy at Reut and Rabbi Douglas Kahn, Executive Director Emeritus of the San Francisco Jewish Community Relations Council (JCOR). We are also grateful to our research associates: Wendy Wagner and Reuben Berman, and to our web-intelligence analysts: Ran Boldor and Jennifer Poliakov-Zhorov. Finally, the Reut Group is deeply grateful to the Rodan Family Philanthropic Fund, the Margolis Family Foundation, and the Rose Project of Orange County, and to Joe and Tina Wolf for their support of this effort.

Background: The Assault on Israel’s Legitimacy

The 20X Question: 20-Fold More Resources to What Effect?

1. Since 2010, the assault on Israel’s fundamental legitimacy has become a major concern for both the Government of Israel and Jewish communities around the world. While, anti-Zionism has existed since the inception of Zionism and the establishment of the State of Israel, in 2001, at the World Conference Against Racism (known as the Durban I Conference) it shifted in a significant way to affect Western societies particularly within liberal elites and progressive circles. For about a decade, until the Gaza Flotilla incident of May 2010, this assault was mostly disregarded and underestimated except in specific ‘hot spots.’ However, in recent years it has become a rallying cry in Israel and among Jewish communities around the world. (For an overarching historical context of the assault on Israel’s legitimacy, see Reut’s Conceptual Framework: Building a Political Firewall against the Delegitimization of Israel, January, 2010 and the forthcoming ADL White Paper on Delegitimization).

2. As the State of Israel and its allies awakened to the scope of this challenge, this has led to a robust coordinated global effort to combat delegitimization on every front, from international fora to university campuses. Dozens of new organizations and initiatives, small and large, have been launched with generous funding; the Government of Israel focused its Ministry of Strategic Affairs on this issue; and many existing organizations increased their activities in this area. These efforts have transformed the pro-Israel movement in terms of talent, technology, and organization.

3. However, many remain concerned that despite these investments, the challenge of delegitimization persists and evolves, and the unfavorable spirit of time to Israel (Zeitgeist) remains prevalent. In fact, it is broadly agreed that this massive effort by the Jewish community and the State of Israel has not yet led to a decisive ‘victory’ against the delegitimization of Israel nor has it anchored Israel’s fundamental legitimacy.

Understanding the Delegitimization of Israel and the BDS Challenge

4. For the purpose of this Strategic Framework, the delegitimization of Israel is defined as the singular negation of the right of the State of Israel to exist as the expression of the Jewish people’s right to national self-determination. It constitutes an assault on the political, security, and economic model of the State of Israel with the vision and objective of bringing about its implosion. This campaign is inspired by the political implosion of Apartheid South Africa, the Soviet Union, and East Germany.

5. In singling out the State of Israel, in delegitimizing and demonizing it, and in denying Jewish nationalism, this campaign represents a form of anti-Semitism, and indeed often promotes explicitly anti-Semitic ideas and imagery in pursuit of its aims. However, anti-Semitism is merely one driver of the campaign, which is also driven by other motives.

6. A narrow definition is crucially important for an effective response and ultimately for achieving success because it focuses on those who are true adversaries of Zionism, the Jewish people, and the State of Israel, rather than on a much wider array of those who might be critical of aspects of Israeli policy. In contrast, any expansion of this definition significantly compromises prospects for success, because it causes internal disagreements among the pro-Israel movement and expands the group of perceived adversaries.
7. The delegitimization campaign of Israel currently manifests in five distinct arenas: in the media; in international organizations, particularly the United Nations; within different national governments through political positions taken by their governments or politicians; through legal means, known as ‘lawfare’; and by the Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions Movement (BDS). A sixth method of ‘mega-events’ (e.g. Flotillas and Flytillas) was generally abandoned by the end of 2012 despite sporadic attempts to revive it.

8. The BDS Movement is the chief effort and strategy of the delegitimization movement. Its goal is explicitly to inspire and mobilize a global movement of organizations and individuals to take action against Israel. Notwithstanding the fact that its actual economic impact has been limited if not marginal, its main effect has mainly been in defining the discourse around Israel and mobilizing new supporters. BDS is merely one tactic in the campaign to delegitimize Israel, and recent trends indicate that it may be declining at least in the U.S., which should not be taken to mean that delegitimization itself is in decline.

9. It is important to note that, at this point, even if the BDS campaign is marginalized, the delegitimization of Israel by would likely continue in other forms. Indeed, recent successes in the fight against BDS activities in the U.S. have led to some new directions in that campaign, which are evident in 2015 and 2016.

A Network and a Social Movement with a ‘Long Tail’

10. The campaign to delegitimize Israel and the BDS movement are organized as a network and operate as a social movement. This means that they are “flat” with no single entity or group of individuals that are ‘in command.' Instead, most of their activities are initiated locally and in a bottom-up fashion. Achieving success against a network must therefore be defined in terms of the aggregate of local wins.

11. This anti-Israel campaign takes place in multiple arenas. These include, but are not limited to campuses and academia, cyber-space, in labor unions, churches, media and within the NGO community and international or multinational organizations. While one of the conclusions of this Strategic Framework is that each of these arenas requires a specialized treatment, designing strategies specific to each is beyond the scope of this paper.

12. The ‘Long Tail model’ is essential in explaining and understanding the delegitimization campaign and the community that drive and support it. The model highlights four groups:

- ‘The head’ is made up of a relatively small number of hard-core delegitizers who explicitly or tacitly negate Israel’s right to exist and the right of the Jewish people to self-determination. They comprise the instigators of the delegitimization movement;
- ‘The body’ is made up of a larger number of ‘harsh critics.’ These are mostly individuals or organizations, often found in academia, media outlets, international organizations or NGOs, who espouse profound and consistent criticism of Israel’s policies and conduct. Their work can serve to substantiate the claims of the delegitizers (at times inadvertently) and more centrally as the justification for the mobilization of the Long Tail;
- ‘The ‘Long Tail’ is made up mostly of individuals who are critical of Israeli policies. They can embrace some of the terminology and methods used by the instigators due in large part to their opposition to Israel’s policies or simply because of the predominant ‘spirit of the-time,’ or Zeitgeist. Most of them do not share the vision or fundamental motivations of the delegitizers, nor do they seek Israel’s elimination;
- A yet larger group of ‘bystanders’ is made up of those who have not yet shaped their opinion of Israel, and are part of the target audience of the delegitimization campaign.

13. Distinction among these groups is essential for success. Successful engagement with each group fundamentally requires different approaches and tools. Furthermore, approaching one group with assumptions or tools designed to target another can prove ineffective and even counterproductive. Mislabeling the Long Tail as “delegitimizers,” for example, can serve to diminish credibility and drive away elements of the Long Tail that can otherwise be engaged and drawn away from the delegitimization movement.

14. There is a feedback loop between the Long Tail and the Zeitgeist; the delegitimization campaign catalyzes an unfavorable Zeitgeist. This environment in turn, amplifies the harsh critics and legitimizes their statements and actions, which draw intellectuals and elites that shape public attitudes toward Israel and influence progressives and liberals. That, in turn, fuels the Zeitgeist. In this manner, the instigators are able to create an impact far greater than their actual size and true ideological appeal.

Competition of Learning and Adaptive Capacities

15. The 2010-2016 period has shown that both sides of this struggle possess very significant adaptive capacities. The ability to learn and adapt is the crucial characteristic of success in a dynamic system and a rapidly changing environment. In terms of adaptive capacity, both sides are performing significantly better in 2016 compared to 2010.

16. A key message and focus of this report is that the pro-Israel network’s major challenge is to improve its own ‘adaptive capacity’ and to out-adapt the delegitimization network.

The Rise of the Delegitimization Network

17. The World Conference Against Racism, otherwise known as the Durban Conference, held in Durban South Africa in 2001 is often seen as a turning point in the effort to delegitimize Israel and signaled the rise of a global delegitimization movement. It was then that a current form of the global anti-Israel movement began to emerge and begin to shape the prevailing zeitgeist. Initially this movement was driven by radical left-wing groups, primarily based in Europe, in coalition with Islamic associations. In recent years, however, it has been mainstreamed, primarily within left-wing audiences, but it is no longer limited to a radical fringe.

18. The growth of this movement was based on two strategic principles:

- Challenging the fundamental intellectual
underpinnings of Zionism and offering an alternative narrative which emphasizes the discrimination and disenfranchisement of Palestinians, as well as the continuity between Zionism, colonialism and global imperialism. This narrative frames the Palestinian struggle and anti-Israel sentiments and action as part of anti-colonial movements and necessitates therefore solidarity among all those resisting colonialism. Thereby it clashes with Zionism’s basic moral claim as a movement for the national liberation of the Jewish people, which is indigenous to the Land of Israel based on the universal right of national self-determination; for this reason, the narrative takes aim at the identity of the Jewish people as a nation.

- Framing Israel as an Apartheid state, associates Israel with the racist and immoral system of governance that existed in South Africa, thereby demonizing and delegitimizing it. The objective at its core is to associate Israel with a morally reprehensible political system rather than as a function of any particular policy. This outlook takes aim at the legitimacy of Israel’s basic political model – of being both Jewish and democratic – as morally bankrupt and fundamentally leading to discrimination against Palestinians within Israel;
- Deliberately blurring the line between criticism of Israel and the fundamental delegitimization of Israel, allows the delegitimization campaign in Western countries and the logic and network of Moqawama (resistance), which includes Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah and the Islamic Brotherhood associations around the Middle East and primarily in Europe. As demonstrated in Reut’s previous conceptual framework, the logic of the Moqawama rejects Israel’s fundamental legitimacy and any normalization with it, and therefore the campaign to delegitimize Israel fits within a broader strategy to bring about Israel’s implosion. Furthermore, these actors, who were outlawed by Israel’s military superiority in the battlefield, now view international public opinion pressure as a tool to circumvent Israel’s comparative military advantage on the battlefield. While clearly this network has been fundamentally challenged in recent years due to regional events, we believe that they still adhere to their goal through the following avenues:

3 The collapse of Syria and the involvement of Pakistan in the fighting there, the escalating tension between the Sunni and the Shiites, the rise of ISIS and other non-state actors, the massive immigration to Europe, the strategic and visible coordination between Israel and Egypt, the mutual interests of Israel and Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States - are only free of the regional changes that have reshuffled the priorities of members of the Moqawama Network. In fact, the tension between Hamas and its former patron Iran (and its proxy Hezbollah), raises the question regarding the viability and relevance of this network.

- Bracing a discourse of human rights and international law and by placing exclusive responsibility on Israel. In other words, it builds its coalitions by framing Israel as solely responsible for the situation in the West Bank and Gaza and removed from the history or reality of Israel-Palestinian negotiations and mutual responsibilities.
- Legitimizing attacks on Israel’s civilian population while delegitimizing the defensive use of military force against Arab and Palestinian terror organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas.

19. A feedback loop exists between the delegitimization campaign in Western countries and the logic and network of Moqawama (resistance), which includes Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah and the Islamic Brotherhood associations around the Middle East and primarily in Europe. As demonstrated in Reut’s previous conceptual framework, the logic of the Moqawama rejects Israel’s fundamental legitimacy and any normalization with it, and therefore the campaign to delegitimize Israel fits within a broader strategy to bring about Israel’s implosion. Furthermore, these actors, who were outlawed by Israel’s military superiority in the battlefield, now view international public opinion pressure as a tool to circumvent Israel’s comparative military advantage on the battlefield. While clearly this network has been fundamentally challenged in recent years due to regional events, we believe that they still adhere to their goal through the following avenues:

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- Iranian state-sponsored anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial (Iran’s role in the assault on Israel’s legitimacy is beyond the scope of this Report);
- Undermining the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and rejecting the principle of two-states-for-two-people and therefore a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This principle emanates from the fundamental rejection of Israel’s basic political model, whichmandates that any Israeli-Palestinian agreement that accords legitimacy to Israel is flawed and illegitimate. Paradoxically, for practical reasons, Israel’s control over the Palestinian population in the West Bank is seen as a strategic asset, as it constitutes a growing strategic, political, and diplomatic liability for the State of Israel;
- Terrorism and asymmetric warfare targeting and using civilian population: the rationale of the delegitimization network allows for systematic targeting of the Israeli civilian population and using Palestinians as human shields. Meanwhile, it is deployed to prevent or limit Israel’s use of military force to protect its citizens in response.

The Second Lebanon War of 2006 can be seen as a milestone in this regard. Massive waves of anti-Israel protests sprung up in multiple European capitals against Israel, although the war was ignited by a military operation of Hezbollah and continued with unrelenting attacks on Israeli civilian population centers. In 2010, the groups sympathetic to Hamas led major strategic operations against Israel, e.g. the Gaza Flotilla, that brought together its operatives with anti-Israel activists primarily from Europe.

20. For nearly a decade, the delegitimization network expanded primarily in Western Europe and gradually also in the United States, encountering little resistance or awareness, including from the Government of Israel. This reality changed in 2010.

- Decline of ‘Mega Events’: As of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla, all such subsequent ‘mega events’ have been circumscribed, and that strategy has been effectively abandoned by many Jewish communities around the world.

21. Events in 2010 served as a wake-up call for Israel and Jewish communities around the world in relation to the expanding global movement to delegitimize Israel. With the Gaza Flotilla incident, this movement began to be seen as a strategic threat by Israel and

22. Since then, a massive investment of resources and talent has been directed to contain and marginalize this assault, and a variety of organizations, tools, and methodologies were consequently developed (see Reut’s paper: 2011: The Year We Punched Back on the Assault on Israel’s legitimacy).

23. This coordinated global effort to combat delegitimization on every front resulted in several meaningful successes included the following (not by order of importance):

- The creation of a world-wide pro-Israel network, which is mobilized to confront the assault on Israel’s legitimacy.
- Decline of ‘Mega Events’;
While many public BDS efforts have failed, with primarily in
The Assault on Israel's Legitimacy
• BDS motions have been rejected in a dozen Spanish municipalities.
Over the past year, pro-Israel activists have obtained 24 rulings,
neutralization efforts and BDS with, e.g., some 50 Spanish
boycott a key objective in trade talks with EU;
• To date, 14 states have passed anti-BDS legislation (Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and South Carolina) and the State of New York is under an executive order from the governor to not do business with companies that boycott Israel) and the approval of President Obama of provisions making rejection of Israeli boycott a key objective in trade talks with EU.
• Spain: Turning the legal table on BDS - Spain has been a hub of delegitimization efforts and BDS with, e.g., some 30 Spanish municipalities that have passed resolutions in recent years endorsing BDS, more than in any other European country. Yet recent success of legal advocacy led by ACONE, a pro-Israel newspaper BDS has been recently identified systematically in a series of legal defeats. Over the past year, pro-Israel activists have obtained 24 rulings, legal opinions and injunctions against BDS in Spain, and as a result BDS motions have been rejected in a dozen Spanish municipalities.

The Delegitimization Network: Steep Learning Curve and Resilience
24. As mentioned above, the delegitimization network has faced growing opposition by the pro-Israel network since 2010. In spite of this opposition, and perhaps also due to it, the delegitimization movement has become much more professional and better organized both strategically and operationally. Thus, the delegitimization network has shown itself to be adaptive and resilient in its ability to increase its agility and pace of innovation. Some of the major changes are:
• Growing institutionalization and professionalization of the movement, with an emphasis on increased and more sophisticated use of legal (e.g. Palestine Legal) and commercial tools within the corporate world (e.g. Who Profits?). This aspect also includes more robust organizations, e.g., SJP and JVP and better training for activists.
• Co-opting of international organizations – While delegitimization of Israel in United Nations institutions has been a long-standing challenge, in recent years, additional international institutions are being targeted for blatant anti-Israel activities. Examples include ICC, ICJ, UNHRC and FIFA.
• Expansion to new arenas – The delegitimization network constantly seeks to re-invent itself through new methods and arenas e.g. the drop of the “Mega Events” method in favor of the legal and economic channels and the use of the rules of Socially Responsible Investments (SRI) are two examples;
• Targeting Jewish communities due to their association with Israel - Diaspora Jewry and individual Jews are increasingly held responsible for the actions and policies of the State of Israel. This results in Diaspora Jews as targets for criticism and, at times, even violence due to their perceived connection to Israel and/or dual loyalty.
25. Consequentially, by 2016, the delegitimization movement can also boast significant successes, particularly, and not by order of importance:
• An unfavorable Zeitgeist around Israel persists in many places around the world, especially in large urban centers and on college campuses.
• BDS gains ground among Palestinians in the West Bank – In contrast to the common perception, BDS ideas originally emanated from Europe, and were initially received within the Palestinian Authority with mix reactions ranging from rejection to anticipation. Moreover, the Palestinian Authority has been treating BDS activists as trouble-makers and law-breakers and even arrested some of them. However, recent polls suggest that BDS ideas are becoming more popular among Palestinians; and it seems that BDS has also influenced the PA’s “diplomatic initialed.”
• While many public BDS efforts have failed, there is a growing silent boycott of Israeli products, academics, artists, and athletes, although its actual economic effect is hard to measure;
• The anti-Israel network is global, with global ‘brands’ such as Israel Apartheid Week spanning the globe. It has expanded from Europe to the U.S. and many other locations worldwide, effectively present in many American cities and campuses, and has increasingly deepened its alliances with major minority groups and social justice coalitions under the framework of 'intersectionality'.
• The BDS movement has gained support from a small number of Jews who are critical of Israeli policies and benefits from their participation. This participation includes the support and cooperation of some Israeli organizations who seek to encourage external international pressure to affect the policies of the State of Israel;
• The delegitimization movement has had a degree of success in singling out Israel among companies, sensitive to and invested in Corporate Social Responsibility
Emerging Challenges

26. The challenges below were identified as issues of rising importance in opposing the assault on Israel’s legitimacy. Each of these issues requires a comprehensive learning process and extensive experimentation with new activities. In this document, we present these challenges, the basic dilemmas they raise, and a few insights about potential action. Many of these topics will be explored in greater depth in future analysis.

Intersectionality

27. The rise of identity politics and intersectionality is a concept originating in the Arab world, which calls for a rejection of any political, economic, social, cultural, or educational ties with Israel that would transform the relationship with Israel from abnormal to normal, or which would allow for the integration of Israel into the Middle East.\footnote{\textsuperscript{12}}

28. The Palestinian cause has been widely adopted as a core and prominent threshold for solidarity by many marginalized groups. At the same time, Jewish identity in America has undergone a significant shift, from self-perception as a marginalized and disenfranchised community, to one increasingly seen by outsiders as a privileged social group. This has significant implications: Jews are often excluded from coalitions of solidarity formed among members of oppressed groups, often along racial lines, and Jewishness, understood within the privileged/oppressed dichotomy, can be projected onto the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, confirming the basic categories by which Israel is portrayed as the oppressor and the Palestinians as the oppressed. In the aftermath of the 2016 Presidential election in the United States, there will be opportunities to test whether groups that feel threatened by an increasingly hostile environment (e.g. Latino immigrants and Muslim Americans) will be more receptive to welcoming American Jews into coalitions based on an understanding of vulnerability of Jewish communities to shared threats.

29. The anti-Israel network has been able to frame the Palestinian struggle against Israel as part of the struggle of other disempowered minorities, such as African-Americans, Latinos, and the LGBTQ community. Having become a permanent feature of this loose “solidarity coalition”, the anti-Israel network has largely succeeded in introducing as illusory tests for inclusion possessing a single view toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as the basis for membership.

30. Some principles designed to address this emerging trend include the following:

\textbullet\ Partnering with other minority communities based on shared values and common interests, such as on criminal justice reform, immigration rights or in fighting against racism, bigotry and hate crimes. Only authentic solidarity can feasibly serve long-term fundamental legitimacy of Israel within these communities (as opposed to an expectation of gains based on transactional relations). As noted above, in the aftermath of the 2016 Presidential election there is an opportunity and necessity to re-engage in such partnerships and reassess the state of communal relations;

\textbullet\ Relationship-based approach and regaining credibility: Most successes by the pro-Israel network were achieved by local leaders activating long-standing relationships with relevant and significant stakeholders in their local communities. Thus, it is in the best interest of Israel and the Jewish community to strive to re-acquire credibility and regaining a level of respect among minorities based on ground work, commitment, and experience or knowledge of issues of common interest.

European Experience and Engagement with the Muslim Community

31. The European experience teaches a few key lessons about Jewish-Muslim relations:

\textbullet\ A disproportionally large number of European Muslims, even those born in Europe whose families originate from nations who are not in conflict with Israel, demonstrate a higher degree of anti-Jewish and/or anti-Israel views compared to non-Muslims in Europe.

\textbullet\ Much of the most aggressive anti-Israel activities are led by the infrastructure of radical Islam in Europe, namely by radicalized mosques, individual imams, schools (‘madrasas’), and a variety of non-governmental organizations, often associated with the Islamic Brotherhood ideology.

32. Therefore, it is important for the North-American Jewish community to follow closely the development of radical Islam in the USA, and at the same time to engage with the American Muslim community based on a joint commitment to address violent extremism\footnote{\textsuperscript{13}} as well as Islamophobia. While a priority should be given to national initiatives, organizations should consider prioritizing communal relations in cities and institutions characterized by legacy of strong anti-Israel activity with large Muslim population, such as Chicago, as well as within locations that have experienced a rise in anti-Muslim activity or violence.

Anti-Normalization

33. Anti-Normalization (tabi’a al-mu‘tattat) is a concept originating in the Arab world, which calls for a rejection of any political, economic, social, cultural, or educational ties with Israel that would transform the relationship with Israel from abnormal to normal, or which would allow for the integration of Israel into the Middle East.\footnote{\textsuperscript{14}}

\textbullet\ CSR - Corporate social responsibility (CSR)\footnote{\textsuperscript{15}} is a concept originating in the Arab world, which calls for a rejection of any political, economic, social, cultural, or educational ties with Israel that would transform the relationship with Israel from abnormal to normal, or which would allow for the integration of Israel into the Middle East.\footnote{\textsuperscript{16}}

\textbullet\ BDS - Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS)\footnote{\textsuperscript{17}} is a concept originating in the Arab world, which calls for a rejection of any political, economic, social, cultural, or educational ties with Israel that would transform the relationship with Israel from abnormal to normal, or which would allow for the integration of Israel into the Middle East.\footnote{\textsuperscript{18}}

\textbullet\ Activism: Public campaigns against MNCs, shareholder activism, advocacy directed at investors and asset managers, and lobbying ethical committees in governments;

\textbullet\ Delegitimization has migrated into mainstream left-wing parties in Europe, such as in England and in Sweden, and may be gaining traction among certain political factions in the U.S.
views in the Arab world, as represented by the Arab Peace Initiative, view normalization as a “carrot,” which will be used only once the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is resolved. Others, such as the members of the Moqawama Network (see above) reject any semblance of normalization with Israel (although they are willing to acknowledge Israel’s existence as a gloomy fact, and even to negotiate with it indirectly to ensure their basic interests). A highly visible example of anti-normalization is the unwillingness of Muslim and Arab athletes to compete against Israelis in international competitions such as the Olympic Games. Increasingly, anti-normalization has been extended to include groups that either advocate for Israel or even Israelis seeking to engage in peacebuilding or dialogue work.

34. The BDS movement has adopted the anti-normalization approach and strives to expand it to Europe and the U.S. – This logic, which the BDS movement officially endorsed in 2007 and constitutes a key component of Students for Justice in Palestine’s (SJP) strategy: It drives the adoption of the more extreme tactics of the delegitimization campaign and undermines a-priori any attempt at dialogue and bridge-building, including of programs and organizations sponsored by the international community, such as OneVoice or PICRI. At its worst, anti-normalization can legitimize the harassment of Jews and provides the rationale for the exclusion of Jews from various coalitions, even when they are not directly related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

35. Anti-normalization has become a dominant within Israeli-Arab politics – Propagated predominantly by the Arab nationalist party in Israel, Balad, the anti-normalization approach was adopted by The Joint List14, when it rejected even a limited surplus vote-sharing agreement with the Israeli left-wing party, Meretz. A new dynamic is observable and increasing of cooperation between the global delegitimization movement and BDS with members of Balad.

36. The pro-Israel network needs to highlight The inherent paradox in the BDS approach - On the one hand, BDS delegitimizes any Israeli-Palestinian cooperation as long as Israel’s occupation of Palestinian lands continues; on the other hand, without Israeli-Palestinian cooperation and negotiation there is no possible way to bring about the end of occupation. Thus, BDS is agnostic to the fate of the Palestinians and often contradicts their actual interests.

37. Visible and positive examples of cooperation among Israeli Jewish and Israeli Arab NGOs, often including international engagement by Jewish communities, need to be amplified and expanded to serve as a counterweight to the growing anti-normalization efforts of elected Israeli Arab political leaders. Investment in these activities should deepen and extend thereby raising the cost of BDS.

38. The Breakdown of the Two-State Solution

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict provides the main leverage for Israel’s fundamental delegitimization. While the ideological framework for Israel’s delegitimization was solidified at the first Durban Conference in 2001, its momentum has been boosted by reactions to Israeli military campaigns that have occurred in 2009, 2012 and 2014, coupled with the lack of progress in the political process that would lead to a two-state solution, the outcome preferred by the mainstream international community.

39. Although BDS does not express explicit support for the so-called one-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the official call of the Movement includes the right of return for Palestinian refugees which inevitably would entitle the Jewish and democratic state of Israel and, in practice, many of its leaders are “one-staters” and have been working to undermine the two-state solution (see Reut’s paper, “The BDS Movement Promotes Delegitimization against Israel”).

40. Based on this understanding, the strategy of the pro-Israel network has been based on the demonstrable commitment of Israel’s government to a two-state solution. Israel’s ability to demonstrate a consistent and credible commitment to ending the control over the Palestinian population has been indispensable for combating delegitimization. The working assumption that this shared is the end-goal has served as the basis for attempts to build a broad coalition against BDS (the “broad tent”).

41. On the ground, the breakdown of the peace process and increasing doubts regarding Israel’s commitment to it have fueled the expansion of the delegitimization movement, particularly since 2014. Clearly, the erosion of the support for Israel among liberal and progressive cohorts is impacted by the growing criticism of Israel’s policies regarding the Palestinians in the West Bank, the absence of a peace-process, and the continuation of the settlements policy. In other words, the inability of governmental action to provide a political horizon for this conflict legitimizes, energizes and emboldens non-governmental grassroots action.

Eroding Perceptions of Israel’s Commitment to Pluralism, Democracy and Peace

42. In recent years, the perception of Israel as a peace-seeking, pluralistic and democratic state (PPD) has eroded. The weakening perception of Israel’s PPD nature cannot be divorced from the assault on Israel’s legitimacy.

43. This dynamic is exacerbated by the global trend of polarization of the political discourse, which has not bypassed Israel, and seems to have reached new heights in recent years, on both sides of the political spectrum. While Israel’s right-wing government is often portrayed as ‘fascist’ and ‘racist’ by its prominent political rivals, the left can be associated with ‘reason’ and ‘subversion’. In this climate, the delegitimization movement is effectively able to leverage genuine injustices that require change to substantiate its argument that the entire political model of Israel is corrupt. Its key claims:

- The mistreatment of the indigenous population – the Arab citizens of Israel – The delegitimization movement frames the Arab citizens of Israel as a disenfranchised indigenous population, which is being increasingly marginalized by legislation, government policies, and public discourse. This framing naturally enhances the challenge posed by the trend of intersectionality;
- A ‘lock-down on dissenting voices’ – Several Knesset legislative initiatives, such as the NGO law15, are framed as an organized attack on the democratic nature of the state.
- While the trend of polarization of the political discourse is not unique to Israel, the unique context of the delegitimization campaign makes its consequence for Israel more dramatic.

45. Notwithstanding, it is a conclusion and key message of this report that a credible and consistent commitment to PPD, among others to the full integration and equality of Israel’s Arab citizens and to the rule of law and free speech are not only a moral imperative, but would also weaken the claims of Israel’s...
Identifying places prone to silent boycott

Confrontational diplomacy and lawfare

Palestinian Confrontational Diplomacy

50. Not be considered as delegitimization

51. In light of the Israeli-Palestinian political deadlock, the popularity of Hamas in the West Bank and the growing regional and international interest in the Palestinian issue – the adoption of a defiant approach by the PA has become its political raison d'être.

52. Moreover, 2017 marks 100 years since the Balfour Declaration. 70 years since the UN partition plan (see UN Resolution 181) and 50 years since the "Naksa" (Arabic name for the defeat of the Arabs during the 1967 Six-Day War) – all seen by the Palestinians as important historical and symbolic benchmarks that explain their gloomy geo-political reality.

53. There are several arenas hosting the current Palestinian "flirtation" with the delegitimization campaign:

- Confrontational diplomacy and lawfare – The PA has been conducting a diplomatic and judicial confrontation of Israel in the international community. This manifests in leveraging their membership in international treaties and organizations (e.g. the International Criminal Court and UNESCO) in order to attack Israel.

- Calling for an expanded boycott of Israel – Following a decision taken by the PA in 2008 to boycott goods and services from the West Bank, it has recently expanded its call for boycott to include Israeli companies working in Israel proper as well.

54. We warn that confrontational diplomacy could very well constitute a turning point in the campaign to assault Israel’s legitimacy – as demonstrated above, up until now the delegitimization campaign has been executed almost exclusively by Western organizations, without real Palestinian backing. However, the emerging rivalry between the PA and the delegitimization network – which has consequently gained access to the powers and authorities of a state in the diplomatic arena – could prove to be a game changer for Israel. Unless properly addressed, the new form of confrontational diplomacy of the PA could complicate many aspects of the BDS campaign and constitute a strategic surprise to Israel with meaningful national security implications.

The Silent Boycott

55. BDS efforts only seldom end up in a public boycott or avoidance of doing business with Israel as a punishment or protest. Additionally, BDS also has largely failed to hijack the delegitimization network – which has almost exclusively by Western organizations, without real Palestinian backing. However, the emerging rivalry between the PA and the delegitimization network – which has consequently gained access to the powers and authorities of a state in the diplomatic arena – could prove to be a game changer for Israel. Unless properly addressed, the new form of confrontational diplomacy of the PA could complicate many aspects of the BDS campaign and constitute a strategic surprise to Israel with meaningful national security implications.

The challenge of Targeted Boycotts

60. The targeted boycott effort against Israeli presence in the West Bank, and particularly the settlements, is gaining momentum. This effort, exemplified by product labeling by the EU, is now increasingly embraced in other forms by a coalition of Israelis and Israeli-supporting self-proclaimed Zionist Jews, who frame their activities as an effort to secure Israel’s future as a Jewish and democratic state. This trend may eventually affect many Jewish institutions.

61. The uniqueness of this challenge emanates from the difficulty to categorize it:
On the one hand, while the delegitimization movement calls for a total boycott, it occasionally supports targeted boycott as it tarnishes Israel’s reputation and is easier to garner support around from the long tail. BDS leaders have said openly that tactical needs often require carrying out a selective boycott of settlement products as “the easiest way to rally support”—a mile-stone on the path towards a comprehensive boycott. Indeed, it is easy to make the case that partial boycotts fuel the assault on Israel’s legitimacy.

On the other hand, the call for a targeted boycott by Israelis and Jews is often driven by a genuine Zionist motivation representing a loss of trust by liberal Zionists regarding the commitment of the current Israeli government to peace. Their claim is that boycotting settlements will help to secure Israel’s future as a Jewish and democratic state and end Israeli control over the Palestinians. Indeed, this targeted act as well as labelling West Bank products, are perceived in the world as a well-intentioned, legitimate, non-violent protest against Israeli policies aimed at “saving” Israel from itself.

Coupled with the expansion of settlements, the tendency of the Israeli government and pro-Israel groups to delegitimize “partial boycotters” is often perceived as a sign that Israel is not genuinely committed to the two-state solution.

The polarization around the issue of targeted boycott is an indication of the lack of ethical clarity necessary in order to stand united against delegitimization by fostering diverse coalitions. Compelling and constructive alternatives to targeted boycott may be critically needed.

The Decline of Jewish Communal Cohesion

The Erosion of Israel as a Unifying Force

Since Operation Protective Edge in Gaza in 2014, a growing numbers of Jews have become more critical of Israel as their perception of Israel as pluralistic, peace-seeking, and democratic (PPD) is eroding.

This perception has been compounded by frustration over the confrontations between the Government of Israel and the Obama Administration, peaking in disputes surrounding the Iran Deal and some Israeli policies. These issues have led to reactions, which range from indifference to tacit and even explicit support for delegitimization activities. Paradoxically, a potentially warmer relationship between the new administration in Washington and the Government of Israel may exacerbate the challenges because of strongly held negative views about the administration by many American Jews and American liberals and progressives in general.

The Government of Israel seems to under-appreciate the collateral damage to Israel’s standing among Diaspora Jewish communities created by changing perceptions of Israel. The damage done by the erosion in Israel’s standing has serious implications, including in contributing to a growing internal split among Jewish communities and a growing rift between Jewish communities and the Government of Israel.

67. These trends have resulted in the decline of Jewish communal cohesion and the increasing polarization of the American Jewish community in regard to Israel, which under-mines the political strength and efficiency of the American Jewish community. The relationship between internal Jewish communal cohesion and the ability to respond effectively to the delegitimization challenge should be appropriately appraised, as this is key to the way in which the Jewish community functions as a network to combat delegitimization.

The Religious Gap Dividing U.S. and Israeli Jews

68. U.S. Jewry is undergoing its deepest-ever identity crisis, in which the future role of Israel in Jewish identity looms large. The clash is occurring as a result of several distinct but related factors. One of them is Israel’s religious establishment.

69. Whereas U.S. Jewry is increasingly multicultural and diverse in its religious practice, Israeli Jews are identified with a more rigid, statist Judaism. The dominant role of the Chief Rabbinate is widening the gap with the diverse faces of American Judaism. These dynamics are embodied, for example, in the tension around Women of the Wall and their fight for attaining social and legal recognition for praying collectively at the Western Wall. Beyond the emotional alienation this gap raises, a real obstacle is created by the Israel’s Rabbinate’s rejection of non-Orthodox streams of Judaism, which comprise more than 70 percent of American Jews. The rigidity represented in Israel’s approach is an anathema in an American reality in which more than half of Jews intermarry.

70. The result is that many U.S. Jews, especially among non-Orthodox denominations, identify less with Israel and are alienated more by the Jewish State. Thus, in essence the dominant role of the Chief Rabbinate in Israel fuels indifference and tolerance toward, and a greater acceptance of, BDS activities.

As a result of the above, a decreased mobilization of American Jews for Israel can be expected, and certainly a decrease in mainstream Jewish activism for Israel. In some cases, increased Jewish anti-Israel activism is evident.

The Response: Building Adaptive Capacities

Structural and Operational Response

72. The conundrum of the 20X question implies that a key challenge for the pro-Israel network is to accelerate its learning curve in order to out-adapt the delegitimization network. Furthermore, the most important investment must be made in improving its adaptive capacities, and that such investment will provide for on-going capability to successfully meet this challenge. Naturally, such capabilities will also bolster the ability of the Jewish community and the State of Israel to confront the emerging challenges articulated above.

73. Not more, better: The key message of this Strategic Framework is that the challenge of the pro-Israel network is how to become smarter and more strategic in the use of existing resources rather than mobilizing more money and more people. In other words, the conclusion of this report is that the challenge of the pro-Israel network is more ‘qualitative’ than ‘quantitative’.

74. At the same time, our work points to a number of key operational principles that are essential for successfully defeating the movement to delegitimize Israel.

Structural Investments: Pro-Israel Network 2.0

Upgraded Capabilities in Intelligence and Strategy
75. Every successful operation in a dynamic setting requires an effective feedback loop among information-gathering and analysis, strategizing, research, development and experimentation, and operations. This feedback loop happens when information gathering and analysis work informs both activities on the ground and planning and strategy, planning and strategy should guide activities, as well as establish priorities for information gathering, and operations should provide feedback to the strategic arm and to the intelligence-gathering group.

76. This system is currently lacking and often does not exist for the pro-Israel network, and its creation is urgent and essential.

77. The structure of the response should therefore include three interrelated components:

- Information gathering and analysis, which is then disseminated to all potential users;
- Planning and strategy work, focused on crafting relevant principles for achieving success based on targeted research. The purpose of this strategic work is to inform and guide the activity of many diverse actors;
- Operations – activities on the ground should implement the strategies and use the information that is gathered. The outcomes of the activity, should in turn generate evaluation, more planning and improvements and also direct intelligence efforts.

Bolstering Cyber Presence

78. The Internet is a crucial arena for the effort to delegitimize Israel, and is equally important as a field to counter delegitimization. This is complicated terrain because of the need to balance freedom of speech while protecting the rights of users. While the pro-Israel network increasingly is active in this domain, much more can be done in the following directions:

- Using legal measures and enforcing Terms of Service on social platforms to limit the proliferation of harassment and incitement against Jews and Israel. This includes a mix of policy advocacy and industry engagement with corporations such as Google, Facebook, and Twitter in a manner consistent with the recommendations of the ADL Center for Technology and Society and its Anti-Cyberhate Working Group;
- Targeted efforts to determine when and whether top instigating organizations and individuals employing techniques to harass and incite violence over the web and in social media or otherwise violate the law;
- ‘Bottom-up efforts’ of crowd-sourcing to enhance the adaptive capacity of the pro-Israel network.

Specialization

79. Specialization and division of labor: many organizations which are part of the pro-Israel network have unique assets that can become the foundation for a distinct contribution to the struggle against the delegitimization of Israel and the BDS Movement. For example, while there are a few organizations which specialize in campus activity, each brings to the table different assets. Some organizations specialize in legal campaigns while others in the battle of ideas. Similarly, while some have connections with dozens of Jewish communities around the world, others own a network of dozens of offices across the U.S.

80. Thus, this report concludes that many actors within the pro-Israel network should identify their unique added value in this struggle and leverage it through their different efforts and increased collaboration. Such deliberate specialization among the pro-Israel network is essential for greater effectiveness.

Supporting Small Communities and Niche Efforts

81. The delegitimization of Israel is a highly decentralized challenged, taking place in small and large communities and across many arenas. For example, there could be acts of delegitimization in labor unions in South Africa or among corporations in Greece. In fact, due to its architecture as a network and to its character as a social movement, acts of delegitimization against Israel can and do happen anywhere and in any field. Hence, the decentralized architecture of the delegitimization movement requires a decentralized response.

82. Consequently, it is essential to strengthen the pro-Israel network in small communities and in niche areas. In places where a sizable Jewish community resides, mostly in major cities, of the U.S., London, Melbourne, Paris or Buenos Aires, there is often a robust response to acts of anti-Semitism and delegitimization by a well-organized and well-funded Jewish community. In fact, on many U.S. campuses, the pro-Israel community is much better funded and even bigger than the anti-Israel one. However, in smaller communities or in areas that are not within the focus on Jewish attention, response is often based on a handful of activists who operate on a shoestring. Supporting their work, should be based on the following principles:

- Strengthening pro-Israel organizations that mobilize and coordinate a network of ‘nodes’ e.g. Jewish Community Public Affairs (JCPS) and its network of Jewish Community Relations Councils (JRCs) in the USA; Hillel, which is present in nearly five hundred locations in the U.S. and globally; the Israel Action Network (IAN) that reaches nearly 160 federations in the U.S.; or the Jewish Congress (WJC) that represents dozens of Jewish communities around the world.
- Developing simple, flexible, and scalable platforms, tools and resources of information-gathering, analysis and research, project management, collaboration and learning that can be used by activists in these small communities and niche arenas.

Operational Principles

Success Would be to Change the Unfavorable Zeitgeist

83. The fundamental remedy to the assault on Israel’s legitimacy can only be achieved if the Zeitgeist with regard to Israel is changed. This outcome can only be the result of a long-term, concentrated effort, whose effects accumulate over time.

84. The effect of achieving this goal would be that the fundamental legitimacy of Israel will not be challenged in the mainstream arena, and the delegitimization will be marginalized to a point where it is considered socially inappropriate.

85. Changing the Zeitgeist is an elusive objective where the whole is larger than the sum of its parts. The reason is that, while
circumventing acts of delegitimization is important, even multiple successes may not result in changing the Zeitgeist. Paradoxically, high profile fights or high-visibility actions against BDS motions or the BDS Movement may even bolster BDS.

86. In fact, this report concludes that changing the Zeitgeist requires a segmented response along the different constituencies of the Long Tail.

Segmented Response along the Long Tail

87. Confronting the delegitimization campaign requires the pro-Israel network to mindfully tailor appropriate responses and/or engagement strategies for each section of the Long Tail i.e. toward the instigators, harsh critics, the soft critics and the bystanders:

- The instigators must be singled out from the other groups, and handled uncompromisingly, publicly or covertly as appropriate;
- Harsh critics should be intellectually engaged and challenged;
- Soft critics – which represent the largest group within the Long Tail – should also be addressed through sophisticated engagement strategies;
- Bystanders should first be approached and engaged through softer tools to be ‘won over’ or, at least, be inoculated from the anti-Israel propaganda.

88. The crucial ‘battle ground’ is the hearts and minds of the soft critics and bystanders. Their gravitation away from the vision of delegitimization would mean that this delegitimization movement remains marginal and ineffective. In other words, success in changing the Zeitgeist depends upon shifting them toward Israel’s favor, and driving a wedge between them and true delegitizers.

89. Failure to understand this model and the need for tailored and segmented responses for the different constituencies can lead not only to a waste of resources but also to the counterproductive outcome of further growth of the delegitimization movement. For example, a heavy-handed approach toward soft critics may actually drive them away and closer to the anti-Israel camp, rather then bring them closer to Israel.

90. A segmented response along the long tail requires narrowing the definition of delegitimization. Such a narrow and focused definition — establishing delegitimization as the singular negation of the right of the State of Israel to exist and of the right of the Jewish People to self-determination — is crucial for success. Such a definition allows for both unity among the pro-Israel network, as well as focus on the true instigators and the deployment of distinct efforts for each of the groups along the Long Tail, thus allowing for driving the wedge between instigators and other groups.

91. The confluence of the delegitimizers’ ‘open tent’ approach with Israel’s ‘narrow tent’ approach is leading to Israel’s camp being outnumbered.

92. However, even a broad tent has limits, and therefore establishing red lines with regards to the discourse on Israel is also essential:

- On the left, the red lines need to distinguish between legitimate criticism and acts of delegitimization. Such a slippage can occur when criticism is consistently and repeatedly one-sided, not nuanced and without context, for example, when placing all the blame for the current state of the political process with the Palestinians on Israel. This is particularly sensitive since such criticism can quickly feed into the delegitimization campaign;

93. In contrast, the narrow tent approach, which broadens the definition of delegitimization and excludes progressive groups, is counter-productive. Some pro-Israel groups expand the definition of delegitimization to include criticism of Israel and even of the Israeli government. Consequently, they are not only spreading their resources thin on a much larger group of organizations and individuals, but also alienating key players on the progressive and liberal side of the pro-Israel community.

94. Furthermore, it should be noted that the breakthrough of the campaign to delegitimize Israel occurred when it embraced its own ‘broad tent’ approach. The instigators of that movement have been willing to overlook ideological differences and to collaborate tactically against Israel across a broad spectrum of opinions, and even with self-proclaimed Zionists and Israelis who are ‘just’ critical of Israeli policies.

95. The confluence of the delegitimizers’ ‘open tent’ approach with Israel’s ‘narrow tent’ approach is leading to Israel’s camp being outnumbered.

96. Finally, the unique role of Jewish peoplehood organizations must be acknowledged: Some organizations within the Jewish community, primarily Federations, Hillel centers, JRCs and JCCs, were established on the logic of peoplehood with the aim of serving the entire Jewish community across its diversity. Specifically for such organizations, a narrow definition of delegitimization that focuses on the delegitimizers is essential for their ability to serve their mission, and a broad definition compromises it.

Legitimacy Surplus

97. Creating a legitimacy surplus — alongside the efforts to circumvent delegitimization, a clear pro-active and positive campaign aimed at strengthening the legitimacy of Israel is vital for changing the Zeitgeist. This includes:

- Positive messaging and branding — It is necessary to reframe the context through which people hear about Israel so as to associate it with ‘positive’ values, such as innovation, creativity, and its contribution to...
humanity.

- Israel engagement programs – While the challenges of Israel engagement have increased due to the ongoing assault on Israel, this also created an opportunity to reconnect across the dividing lines within the Jewish community.
- Tikkan Olam projects: Beyond their intrinsic value for humanity, projects of social justice that contribute to humanity and build the good standing of Israel and the Jewish people are essential for mobilizing the pro-Israel movement and for engaging with the Long Tail and with the Bystanders.

Doubling Down on Europe and Other Crucial Places

98. While this report has a significant emphasis on the U.S., it is important to note that the challenge of the delegitimization of Israel is much more acute across Europe and in South Africa. Meanwhile, in recent years the majority of resources and attention has been focused just within the U.S., and particularly on campuses.

Marginalizing Delegitimizers and Instigators

100. Expose the true colors of the delegitimizers to drive a wedge between them and the rest of the long tail. While intending to express opposition to Israeli policies, many of the Harsh Critics, often unwittingly, engage alongside anti-Zionists in acts of delegitimization such as supporting BDS. However, when delegitimization was narrowly defined (as negating Israel’s right to exist and the right of the Jewish people to self-determination), and when the true colors of BDS were exposed, even notable Harsh Critics were quick to denounce BDS for being too radical.

101. At the same time, high-visibility response by the pro-Israel side can be counterproductive, by serving the anti-Israel network and amplifying its successes. Many educators stated that the principle of separating education from its imperfections. Many educators stated that the principle of separating education from its imperfections.

Exposing the true colors of the BDS movement generated a series of setbacks to BDS. This exposure brought Norman Finkelstein and Noam Chomsky, individuals BDSers often quote, to publicly denounce the tactics and goals of the movement.

was the heavy-handed response of pro-Israeli groups that generated mainstream media coverage for marginal BDS events.

102. Early warning and pro-emption of experiments - when Israel’s delegitimizers try new methods or new arenas and locations for various activities and campaigns it is important to counter-balance the over-concentration on American campuses with a greater allocation of resources and attention to SRI, churches, and labor unions.

Marginalizing Delegitimizers and Instigators

103. The Mission: Achieve “Conceptual Superiority” – transforming the pro-Israel network into a significant and sustained adaptive entity will over time grant the network with a conceptionally superior tool-kit and specialized organizations for engaging Jewish liberal groups and notable individuals to condemn BDS.

104. Since the delegitimization movement is founded on intellectual arguments that challenge the foundations of Zionism, there is a need to intellectually match those arguments in an equally appealing and sophisticated manner. There is therefore a need for institutions that are dedicated to and specialize in the waging of this battle of ideas, specifically within progressive discourse. Such institutions should develop specialized capabilities to engage with anti-Israel arguments made by opinion leaders, in prominent media outlets, as well as within specific niches such as labor unions, professional associations or churches.

The Long Tail and the Bystanders Are the True Battleground

105. The battleground between Israel and its allies, and the delegitimizers is over substantially engaging with those Soft Critics.

106. Mobilizing this constituency to stand against delegitimization requires substantively responding to their concerns.

In 2012, Brooklyn’s Park Slope Food Co-Op has voted down a referendum to join the international BDS movement. The strategy of local pro-Israel groups to fight it was engaging Jewish liberal groups and notable individuals to condemn BDS.

107. Building personal relationships. The pro-Israel movement has developed a diverse tool-kit and specialized organizations for engaging various constituencies that comprise

21 These conclusions were drawn based on a segmentation study and analysis that was co-funded by the Brand Israel Group (BIG) and the Conference of Presidents. This research suggests that the humanity of the Israeli people is what resonates with most Americans. The study demonstrated that the key is to emphasize the creative, diverse, indomitable, moral and personable nature of the Israelis.

the ‘Long Tail,’ such as academics, student leaders, journalists or religious leaders. This has been done through a variety of programs such as Israel visits, educational initiatives, messaging and marketing highlighting Israel’s humanitarian facets, and alternative political engagement opportunities (invest vs. divide). This portfolio is crucially significant and should be a site for further innovation and expansion.

108. Developing new platforms and programs for substantive engagement of the Long Tail. The availability and ease with which an individual can get involved in BDS or anti-normalization, combined with the open-ended approach of the delegitimization campaign (see above) has led to the impressive growth of the BDS movement in the U.S. particularly among liberal and progressive circles. The pro-Israel network’s challenge is to create competitively appealing programs and alternatives for political action that also focus on the contested issues regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and initiatives which provide meaningful avenues to promote coexistence and societal enhancement.

109. Invest in Bystanders and broaden the conversation – For those who don’t have their mind set on Israel yet, it is important to share positive stories and allow an intermediate connection with Israelis. It is inadvisable to allow the conflict to define Israel, and a “pre-emptive” strategy aiming at showcasing Israel’s side in the conflict among the Bystanders, is unlikely to be effective. Only once the positive emotional connection has been set, then ‘Hasbannah’ tactics may be effective.

In Conclusion: Greater Focus on Adaptive Capacities

110. Our goal was to create a Strategic Framework against the delegitimization of Israel that would serve the entire field. Our success will be determined by the extent to which this report will actually serve others and be viewed as valuable to them. We look forward to discussing it over the coming few months.

111. As mentioned, this report is based on months of extensive fieldwork, research, and many hours of strategy-crafting. Nonetheless, key aspects of the delegitimization and BDS challenges remain only shallowly explored, and require further research and investigation, and multiple issues and areas, worth benefit from additional in-depth focused work, which we and others should conduct in the months to come.

112. The ‘20X Question’ is indeed frustrating. But one aspect of it is encouraging: over the past six years the pro-Israel community has shown remarkable mobilization and growth as it stood up to the challenge of the delegitimization of Israel. It has gravitated from a being a neglect to a condition of growth. But one aspect of it is encouraging: over the past six years the pro-Israel community has shown remarkable mobilization and growth as it stood up to the challenge of the delegitimization of Israel. It has gravitated from a being a neglect to a condition of growth. However, key aspects of the delegitimization and BDS challenges remain only shallowly explored, and require further research and investigation, and multiple issues and areas, would benefit from additional in-depth focused work, which we and others should conduct in the months to come.

Annex: List of Experts

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Luxembourg, Assaf CEO, crowdmix
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22 These conclusions are based on the work of the U.S. Segmentation Study of Applied Marketing Innovation (Dori Oppenheimer, prepared for the Conference of Presidents, 2011) and the Mellman Group Focus Group Analysis (prepared for the IAN, 2014).
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