

Rethinking Long-Term Strategy for Israel

A Herzl Institute–RAND Corporation Initiative

A New Regional Landscape Requires New Strategic Thinking

Over the last few years, unprecedented political upheavals have been transforming the Middle East at a furious pace, producing momentous realignments and the redrawing of the regional map.

The demands of the “thundering present” and the lack of an agreed-upon vision of the future have hampered long-term Israeli strategic thinking. But given the historic changes under way, the current Israeli national security concept must be revisited. Even the most entrenched strategic assumptions need a fundamental reassessment—strategic partnerships, national security resources, national ethos, economic and social strength and resilience.

Given the current state of progressive regional volatility and instability, short-term tactics such as “mowing the lawn” every 2–3 years are proving to be less and less effective. To date there has been no significant attempt to either grapple with these issues systematically or articulate a long-term strategy.

This proposed cooperation between the Herzl Institute and the RAND Corporation aims to initiate such a process.



THE HERZL INSTITUTE
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A Dynamic Partnership

To broaden both the perspectives and the resources to be employed in the process, The Herzl Institute identified RAND as the premier U.S. research institution that could bring significant expertise to the project and add a critical non-Israeli perspective.

The Herzl Institute: Ofir Haivry, vice president of the Herzl Institute and director of its National Strategy Initiative (NSI), heads NSI’s permanent strategy working group, and has served on various advisory committees to the Israeli government. Haivry has brought together an impressive group of leading Israeli professionals from the academic, military, and government arenas. For more than a year, this elite group has been engaging in joint studies on strategic issues, convening meetings with outside experts and developing a framework for the Israeli strategic reassessment process.

RAND Corporation: A global nonprofit research institution conducting objective policy analysis has nearly 70 years of deep experience in national security strategy development, a legacy in forward-thinking analysis, and an array of robust methodologies that can uniquely contribute to this Israeli strategic reassessment effort. RAND has advised Israel’s national and local governments on domestic and international policy issues and has worked with Israeli research organizations.

Objectives

- Engage in an unprecedented, innovative exchange of ideas.
- Transform the current paradigm from short-term tactics to sound long-term strategy.
- Influence the thinking and policies of Israel's leadership by producing a final document outlining alternative national strategies that will aim to encourage debate among Israeli decisionmakers and opinion leaders.

"Solarium" Conferences: A Proven Approach to Developing National Strategy

This initiative will draw on the "Solarium" approach, named for President Eisenhower's successful strategy process whereby leading American analysts and government officials held a series of conferences informed by task forces and working papers to develop strategies to counter the Soviet threat.

We believe the Solarium model can be similarly applied to the development of Israeli long-term strategy, allowing cutting-edge researchers from Israel and the United States to

- engage in a comprehensive assessment of strategic options and goals, gaining insight into their respective benefits and shortcomings
- develop a framework for a national strategy doctrine
- produce concrete long-term options for Israeli decisionmakers.

The Herzl Institute and RAND intend to hold two Solarium conferences that engage key American and Israeli strategic thinkers—one in Washington, the other in Israel. Researchers from both institutions will jointly structure the conferences, engage in regular intellectual exchanges between conferences, and help prepare the policy papers presented at the meetings.

Your Support

- guarantees the independence and objectivity of this strategic reassessment through nongovernmental objective analysis and nongovernment funding sources
- ensures the project's impact since independent funding sources will have greater influence with top Israeli decisionmakers across the political spectrum.

For further information on the Herzl-RAND initiative,
please contact Fern Baker at fernb@herzlinstitute.org or Irma Quintana at quintana@rand.org.