

## The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Opportunity Amidst Crisis

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Class of 2017

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved--OMB No. 0704-0188		
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 01-04-2017		2. REPORT TYPE STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Opportunity Amidst Crisis			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) Colonel James Lock United States Army			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Colonel Scott Bertinetti			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA 17013			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT    Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited. To the best of my knowledge this SRP accurately depicts USG and/or DoD policy & contains no classified information or aggregation of information that poses an operations security risk. <b>Author:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Mentor:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Word Count: 5,257					
14. ABSTRACT The protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains one of the primary sources of tension in the Middle East today. The same intractable issues that have defined the conflict for decades remain unresolved: the acknowledgement of Israel's right to exist, the status of Jerusalem, freedom of movement in the West Bank, and the disposition of Israeli settlements. As varied and challenging as these issues are, the most critical obstacles to a negotiated peace revolve around the basic issue of security. The United States Security Coordinator (USSC) plays an important role in U.S. policy by partnering with the Palestinian Authority Security Forces (PASF). Assuming U.S. policy remains focused on achieving a two-state solution in resolving the conflict, USSC will continue to play a vital role in coordinating security issues between the IDF and the PASF. This coordination will help to reduce security concerns between the two parties, an important stepping stone for future bilateral negotiations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS PASF, USSC, Partnership					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 26	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UU	b. ABSTRACT UU	c. THIS PAGE UU			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (w/ area code)

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(5,257 words)

### Abstract

The protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains one of the primary sources of tension in the Middle East today. The same intractable issues that have defined the conflict for decades remain unresolved: the acknowledgement of Israel's right to exist, the status of Jerusalem, freedom of movement in the West Bank, and the disposition of Israeli settlements. As varied and challenging as these issues are, the most critical obstacles to a negotiated peace revolve around the basic issue of security. The United States Security Coordinator (USSC) plays an important role in U.S. policy by partnering with the Palestinian Authority Security Forces (PASF). Assuming U.S. policy remains focused on achieving a two-state solution in resolving the conflict, USSC will continue to play a vital role in coordinating security issues between the IDF and the PASF. This coordination will help to reduce security concerns between the two parties, an important stepping stone for future bilateral negotiations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

## **The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Opportunity Amidst Crisis**

The train and equip mission for the [Palestinian Security Forces], unlike other American-led efforts in Syria and Iraq, has been an unquestioned operational success.

—Geoffrey Aronson<sup>1</sup>

The protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains one of the primary sources of tension in the Middle East today. In May of 2011, President Obama outlined six core interests of the United States in the Middle East; two of these six interests focused on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>2</sup> Current U.S. policy calls for a two-state solution with "an independent, viable and contiguous Palestinian state as the homeland of the Palestinian people, alongside the Jewish State of Israel."<sup>3</sup> The same intractable issues that have defined the conflict for decades remain unresolved: the acknowledgement of Israel's right to exist, the status of Jerusalem, the right of return for Palestinian refugees, Palestinian rights of self-determination and political representation, freedom of movement in the West Bank, and the disposition of Israeli settlements. The inability to solve these core issues has bedeviled the peace process for decades and led to the collapse of a promising peace plan, the Oslo Accords, in 2001. As varied and challenging as these issues are, the most critical obstacles to a negotiated peace revolve around the basic issue of security.

Security issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be considered from the perspective of both parties. From the Israeli perspective, security can be defined as protecting Israeli citizens from terrorist attacks and preventing the establishment of a hostile nation in the occupied territories. From the Palestinian perspective, security can be defined as bringing an end to the Israeli occupation and achieving sovereignty over its territory. In order to be effective, U.S. strategy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

must also address the security concerns of both parties. For the United States government, the United States Security Coordinator (USSC) is the lead government official tasked to coordinate security issues between the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and the Palestinian Authority (PA). USSC is also tasked to advise the Palestinian Authority on the restructuring and training of its security services to ensure accountability to the elected civilian leadership, counter terrorism, and enforce the rule of law.

This paper outlines several recommendations USSC must consider in order to develop the Palestinian Authority Security Forces (PASF) into a capable and effective security force as a part of a two-state solution.<sup>4</sup> The paper begins with a brief description of the PASF, a review of the historical context, and a description of USSC's structure. The paper then examines USSC's operational environment and partnership with the PASF. Finally, the paper offers several recommendations on how USSC can best assist the PASF in their transformation into a legitimate and effective security force capable of maintaining security as a part of a two-state solution.

#### PASF Organization and Structure

The PASF include approximately 31,000 personnel organized into eight separate services. USSC partners primarily with four of these services: the Presidential Guard (PG), the National Security Force (NSF), the Palestinian Civil Police (PCP) and the District Coordinating Offices (DCO). The PG with 2,750 personnel provides security for the Palestinian President and visiting dignitaries in the West Bank. Many Western security experts, to include the current U.S. Security Coordinator, LTG Frederick Rudesheim, regard the PG as the most reliable, capable, and trustworthy service within the PASF.<sup>5</sup> The NSF, the largest service with 8,850 personnel, serves as a national

gendarmerie, supporting the local police during times of civil unrest. The NSF also serves as the primary counter-terrorism force in the West Bank. The PCP with 7,950 personnel serves as the local police in the West Bank and maintains the most day to day contact with the Palestinian people. The DCO, the smallest of the services with 250 personnel, serves a critical role by coordinating movement requests between the IDF and the PASF. It is important to note that the PASF include a robust and influential intelligence infrastructure, spread over three services with over 8,000 personnel. However, based on its mandate, USSC does not partner with these services.

### Background and Strategic Context

Although a comprehensive history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to understand how specific events over the last 30 years shaped the current state of the conflict. Three events in particular influence the security environment facing the PASF today: the First Intifada from 1987 to 1993, the Oslo Accords in 1993, and the Second Intifada from 2000 to 2005. In December 1987, Palestinian frustrations with the Israeli occupation reached a boiling point. Weary of the heavy-handed tactics employed by the IDF occupation forces, Palestinians took to the streets in widespread protests across the West Bank and Gaza. Marking the beginning of the First Intifada or “shaking off,” the depth and breadth of this uprising rapidly surpassed any previous protests since the beginning of the occupation in 1967.<sup>6</sup> The protests quickly spread in an organic fashion, giving rise to the development of local leadership and a unity of effort not previously seen among the Palestinians in the occupied territories. This homegrown leadership filled the vacuum left by Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) who were in exile in Tunisia at the time. As the protests grew in size and strength, the response by the IDF became even

more severe including mass arrests, extended curfews, demolition of homes, and the use of live ammunition against unarmed protestors.<sup>7</sup> The First Intifada demonstrated to the Israelis and the international community that, after twenty years of occupation, the Palestinian people were willing to fight and die for their freedom and right to self-determination. The sustained level of unrest during the First Intifada led many Israelis to question the value of maintaining control of the occupied territories, opening the door to a “land for peace” deal. Recognizing the fluid situation in the occupied territories, the PLO changed its official position in 1988 and endorsed the concept of a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza, along pre-1967 borders. The First Intifada proved to be a seminal event in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as it enabled a territorial compromise and spawned a new generation of Palestinian leadership from the youth in the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>8</sup>

The First Intifada and the ensuing endorsement by the PLO of a two-state solution led to a flurry of multinational diplomatic efforts in the late 1980s and early 1990s.<sup>9</sup> Although these multinational efforts led by the U.S., Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia failed to provide a solution, they enabled direct negotiations between the Israelis and the PLO.<sup>10</sup> These direct bilateral negotiations culminated in 1993 with the signing of the Oslo Accords, a groundbreaking agreement whereby both parties recognized the other’s right to exist and outlined a path towards a two-state solution.<sup>11</sup> The Oslo Accords outlined a five year plan for a phased withdrawal from the occupied territories and a transition of territorial control from the IDF to a future Palestinian government. During this period, an elected interim body, the PA, served as a transitional government responsible for the administration, local governance, and security of the newly

established Palestinian-controlled territories. The Oslo Accords authorized the PA to build a police force to “to guarantee public order and internal security for the Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.”<sup>12</sup> To establish momentum towards peace, the Oslo Accords delayed resolution of the most contentious issues, to include the final status of Jerusalem and the disposition of Israeli settlements in the West Bank.<sup>13</sup> The delay in resolving these two issues ultimately contributed to the collapse of the Oslo Accords.

The Oslo Accords divided the occupied territories into three separate categories: Area A, major Palestinian cities / refugee camps where the PA is responsible for both administrative and security control; Area B, clusters of Palestinian towns and villages where the PA is responsible for administrative control, but the IDF maintains security control; and Area C, where the IDF maintains full administrative and security control (see Map 1). Under this arrangement, the PA controls approximately 18% of the West Bank, while the IDF controls the remaining 82%.

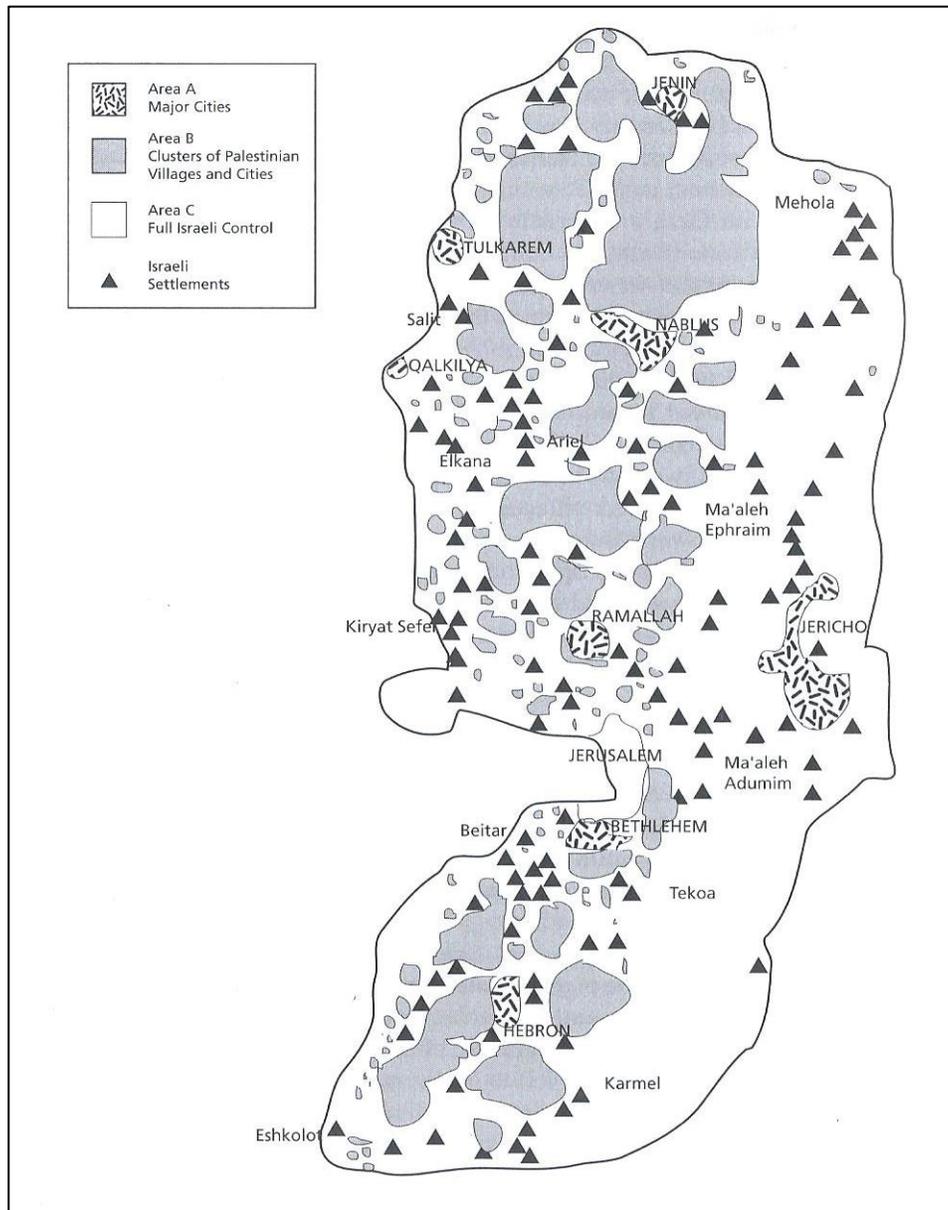


Figure 1. The Oslo Accords: Areas A, B, and C within the West Bank<sup>14</sup>

The Oslo Accords envisioned a deliberate transition of Areas B and C to Palestinian control over a five year period, ultimately resulting in a contiguous Palestinian state. During the transition period, the IDF maintained control of the road networks between the different areas and maintained security buffer zones around Israeli settlements. Crossing from one Area to another required approval from the local

IDF commander. As highlighted in Map 1, Area C incorporates all Israeli settlements and the associated security buffer zones around these settlements. This arrangement effectively created a series of small, non-contiguous Palestinian-controlled areas across the West Bank. To the detriment of the Palestinians, this temporary security arrangement remains in effect over three decades later.

Following the signing of the Oslo Accords, Yasser Arafat returned from exile to be overwhelmingly elected as President of the newly established Palestinian Authority. A contingent of trusted advisors from the PLO “old-guard” accompanied Arafat on his return from exile. Arafat installed these trusted advisors into key positions within the PA, sidelining the younger leadership that rose domestically during the First Intifada. Although loyal to Arafat, much of the new generation looked with disdain upon the “old-guard” PLO, derisively referring to them as the “Tunisians” who did not participate in the hard work that led to the tipping point in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>15</sup> This point of friction between the old guard and new generation of leadership contributed to the Second Intifada and remains a point of friction today for both the PA and the PASF.

Although the international community greeted the Oslo Accords as a watershed event, many Israelis and Palestinians remained skeptical about its chances for success. In 1995, a right-wing Israeli Jew assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin for conceding parts of greater Israel to the Palestinians as a part of the Oslo Accords. In the following election, the Israelis elected Benjamin Netanyahu of the right-wing Likud Party. Although he did not openly withdraw from the Oslo Accords, Netanyahu undermined the spirit of the agreement by rapidly increasing Israeli settlements in the West Bank.<sup>16</sup> Netanyahu’s policies contributed to a delay in the negotiation timelines

outlined in the Oslo Accords, effectively halting the transition of Areas B and C to Palestinian control.

For the Palestinians, the initial hope provided by the Oslo Accords began to wane in the late 1990s. Palestinians became frustrated with the ineffectiveness and corruption plaguing the nascent Palestinian Authority led by Arafat. The continued expansion of Israeli settlements and the stalled peace negotiations led many Palestinians to doubt the viability of a two-state solution. In this context, the militant Islamic Hamas Party began to gain popularity among the Palestinians. After the collapse of the Camp David Accords in 2000, Palestinian frustrations again reached a boiling point, leading to the Second Intifada. While the First Intifada was defined by largely non-violent protests, the Second Intifada proved to be more militant, resembling an armed resistance employing guerrilla tactics.<sup>17</sup> Palestinian attacks from 2001-2004 killed 905 Israelis in both the West Bank and Israel, to include 443 civilians killed by suicide bomb attacks.<sup>18</sup> The Israeli Government held the Palestinian Authority directly responsible for its inability to prevent these attacks, and it responded with overwhelming military force. In March of 2002, the IDF launched Operation Defensive Shield, a large scale military reoccupation of the West Bank designed to undermine the PA and suppress Palestinian violence.<sup>19</sup> The aggressive tactics employed by the IDF resulted in 2,910 Palestinians killed.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, in 2002 the Israeli government began construction of a security wall or separation barrier, dividing the West Bank from Israel proper. The reoccupation of the West Bank and the construction of the security wall effectively marked an end to the Oslo Accords.

The consequences of the First Intifada, the Oslo Accords, and the Second Intifada combine to shape the security environment facing the Palestinian Security Forces today. The First Intifada demonstrated the resolve of the Palestinian people to organize and fight for the right of self-determination and generated a cadre of new domestic leadership. The Oslo Accords enabled the development of both the PA and PASF, but also divided the occupied territories into separate non-contiguous security areas under Palestinian control. The Second Intifada led to the reoccupation of the West Bank and the construction of the separation barrier between Israel and the West Bank. All of these factors continue to define the security environment and directly impact the long term effectiveness of the Palestinian Security Forces.

The continued separation of the West Bank into tiered security areas significantly restricts Palestinian freedom of movement, quality of life, local economic activity, and the effectiveness of the security services. The PASF are unable to move between Palestinian areas without receiving approval from the IDF, an unpredictable process that can take anywhere from hours to days. For example, the local police station in Yatta, a town south of Hebron, is responsible for non-contiguous portions of Area A. For the local police to respond to an incident in the village of Beit Amra, less than 2.5 miles to the west, the patrol is required to request and await approval from the local IDF Commander to cross into Area B. Such delays reduce the effectiveness of the PASF and challenge its legitimacy in the eyes of the Palestinian people. The tiered security structure also creates safe havens for criminal activity in Area B. In the West Bank, the IDF remains focused on securing Israeli settlements in Area C, ignoring the Palestinian villages of Area B. As a result, criminals are able to operate with relative impunity in

portions of Area B. These consequences of the tiered security structure present significant challenges to the PASF in its ability to enforce local Palestinian law and provide security to the Palestinian people.

### USSC Role and Structure

Following the death of the Yasser Arafat in 2004 and the conclusion of the Second Intifada in 2005, the United States seized an opportunity to re-invigorate the peace process with the ultimate goal of a two-state solution as envisioned in the Oslo Accords. Arafat's death and replacement by Mahmood Abbas presented an opportunity to restructure and reform the PASF infected with nepotism and corruption accompanying the cult of personality surrounding Arafat. In 2005, the U.S. State Department and the Department of Defense (DoD) signed a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing the Office of the United States Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority with the mission to reform, train, and equip the Palestinian Authority Security Forces.<sup>21</sup> The MoU identified USSC as "the lead official in the USG to advise the PA on restructuring and training its security services to ensure accountability to the elected PA civilian leadership, act effectively to counter terrorism...and enforce the rule of law."<sup>22</sup>

USSC encountered a significant roadblock at its inception. In an unexpected turn of events, the Islamic Hamas Party defeated the secular Fatah Party in the 2006 Palestinian elections. Hamas refused to recognize Israel's right to exist, refused to acknowledge the international agreements signed by the PLO, and called for armed resistance against Israel. Both Israel and the United States classified Hamas as a terrorist organization. Seeking to remain in power and recognizing the challenges Hamas would cause with international donors, Abbas refused to form a unity

government. This decision effectively split the PA into two separate ruling parties. This split remains today, with Hamas controlling the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and the Fatah party under Abbas controlling the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank.

USSC operates within this complex security environment. USSC is a joint, multinational organization within the U.S. State Department based out of the U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem. Led by a U.S. three-star flag officer, the mission of USSC is to “assist the PA in transforming and professionalizing security institutions in the West Bank, engage with the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority on security initiatives, and support coordinated international efforts in order to develop a stable security environment as a necessary component of a negotiated two-state solution.”<sup>23</sup>

USSC focuses on two primary tasks: increasing the capacity and capability of the PASF and coordinating security activities between the Israeli government and the PA. A relatively small organization, USSC is comprised of approximately 60 military and law enforcement officers from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Italy, and Turkey.

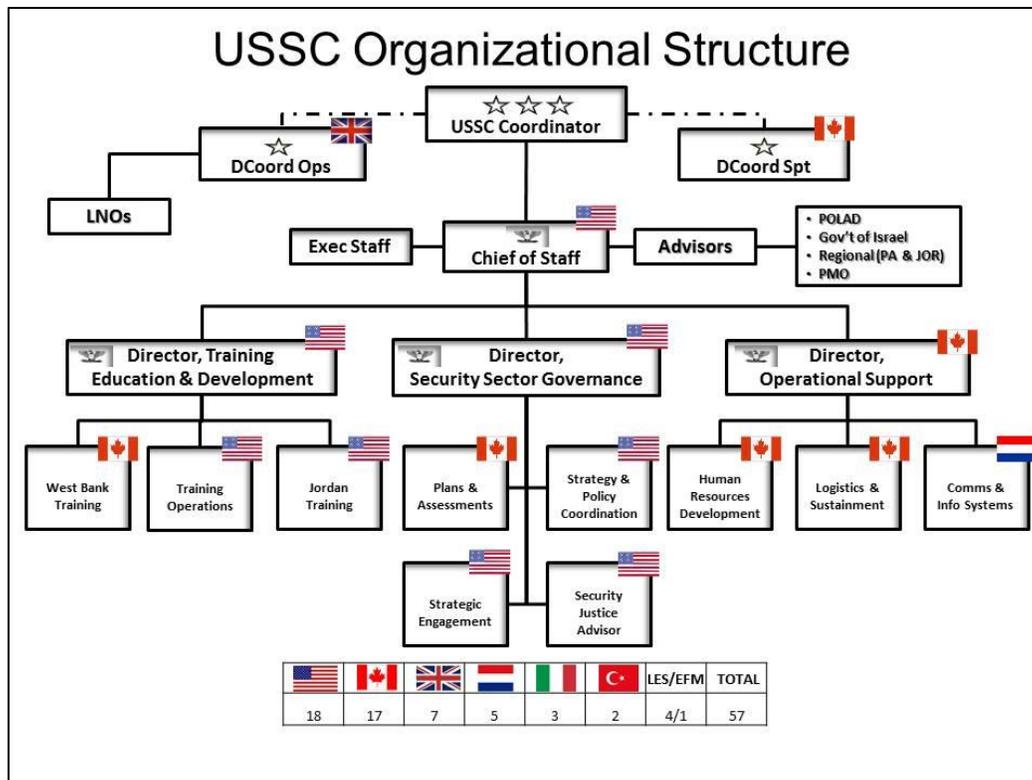


Figure 2. USSC Organizational Chart<sup>24</sup>

USSC is organized into a headquarters section with two Deputy Coordinators (one-star general officers from the United Kingdom and Canada) and three main staff directorates, roughly equivalent to the traditional Operations, Logistics, and Plans structure of a military staff. The Training, Education and Development Directorate plans, coordinates, and manages all U.S.-sponsored training for the PASF. The Operational Support Directorate assists the PASF in the development and execution of logistics communications information systems. The Security Sector Governance Directorate assists the PASF in the development of strategic planning, security sector reform, infrastructure planning, financial management, and the development of a transparent military justice system.

Since its founding in 2005, USSC has operated with four guiding principles: 1) USSC will never sponsor activities that could threaten the security of the State of Israel; 2) USSC will do nothing that interferes with the Middle East Peace Process; 3) USSC does not conduct intelligence collection; and 4) all PASF training candidates are subject to full background security screening/vetting per U.S. law.<sup>25</sup> All training, equipment, and support provided to the PASF must be approved by the Israeli government through the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT).

From 2005 to 2014, USSC focused primarily on the train, build, and equip mission to professionalize the Presidential Guard, the National Security Forces, and the Palestinian Civil Police. During this period, USSC conducted the majority of this training at the Jordanian International Police Training Center (JIPTC) southeast of Amman. USSC leveraged an existing relationship with JIPTC, as much of the U.S.-trained Iraqi Police force participated in basic training at the Jordanian facility from 2003 to 2007. Training in Jordan accomplishes multiple objectives for USSC. First, it enables quality training delivered by a culturally aligned regional partner, the Jordanian Public Security Directorate. Second, it reinforces the U.S. relationship with Jordan, a critical U.S. ally in the region.

However, training in Jordan does not represent a sustainable training solution for the PASF as it is cost-prohibitive for a developing security force reliant on international donor funding. As a result, with the majority of PASF forces built to a base-line level in 2014, USSC shifted its focus to building a long-term institutional training capacity in the West Bank. The majority of these efforts focused on building the PASF Central Training

Institute in Jericho, with the long-term objective of delivering the majority of the courses in the West Bank using Palestinian instructor cadre.

USSC performs its mission within a complex strategic environment, particularly in the diplomatic, informational, and military arenas. Within the diplomatic arena, USSC operates in support of the Department of State, reporting through both the U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem and the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv. The U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem serves as the U.S. representative to the Palestinian Authority, and the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv serves as the U.S. representative to the Government of Israel. Based on their mission partners, the Consulate in Jerusalem and the Embassy in Tel Aviv often see events from different perspectives. The United States Security Coordinator must balance these two perspectives as he interacts directly with senior leadership in both the Israeli Defense Forces and the Palestinian Security Forces. Additionally, the Coordinator maintains a relationship with the Jordanian security forces, as much of the training provided to the PASF is conducted by the Jordanian Public Security Directorate (PSD). Maintaining a strong relationship with the Jordanian PSD is an important aspect of the Coordinator's function.

Several other diplomatic factors complicate USSC's support to the PASF. As the Palestinian Authority is not a nation state, the support provided to the PASF is unlike support provided in other DoD security assistance missions. Training funds for the PASF are provided by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), rather than Title 22 funding used in other security cooperation activities executed by DoD. The majority of U.S. sponsored training is conducted by civilian contractors hired through INL to execute and oversee training in

both the West Bank and Jordan. USSC also must coordinate assistance with international organizations, such as the European Union's Police Coordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support (EUPOL COPPS), the primary partner for the Palestinian Civil Police.

In the information arena, USSC faces multiple challenges. First and foremost, USSC must remain transparent in all of its activities to maintain its position as a trusted broker between the IDF and the PASF. This often involves ignoring rhetoric from both parties and highlighting uncomfortable truths. When appropriate, USSC also works to highlight the progress and legitimacy of the PASF with multiple audiences, to include U.S. civilian leadership. Congressional delegations that visit Jerusalem and the West Bank are surprised at the depth and breadth of the security assistance mission being conducted by USSC, given its relatively small footprint and partnership budget. These same delegations are also often surprised by the professionalism and dedication of the PASF in comparison to other developing security services in the region.

In the military arena, USSC operates on a daily basis within two separate combatant commands' areas of responsibility: U.S. European Command (EUCOM) for operations in Israel and the West Bank; and U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) for operations in Jordan. EUCOM also provides funding via the Combatting Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP) for professional development courses for mid to senior level PASF officers. As a result, USSC must remain nested within the Theater Campaign Strategies of both EUCOM and CENTCOM. As with any multinational military organization, USSC must consider the capabilities and national caveats that each of the member countries brings to the organization. From a USSC perspective, some of these

national caveats are restrictive, others are mission-enhancing. For example, the Turkish officers within USSC are limited to providing classroom-based leadership courses to the PASF and require explicit approval from their embassy to perform any tasks beyond this function. On the other hand, the British and Canadian officers operate with less restrictive movement requirements, enabling them to travel throughout the West Bank without the security overhead required for U.S. personnel. Adding another layer of complexity to the USSC mission is a requirement to maintain visibility on training provided by non-NATO countries. Although USSC is the largest provider of security assistance to the PASF, countries such as Russia, China, India, and Pakistan provide training to the PASF as well. Gaining visibility on the depth and breadth of this training remains a challenge for USSC.

#### Assessment of the PASF

The PASF services have demonstrated significant growth in capability, professionalism, and legitimacy in their eleven-year partnership with USSC. Over the last several years, the PASF demonstrated this growth by effectively quelling demonstrations in the West Bank with crowd control techniques and measured police tactics without causing widespread injury or death.<sup>26</sup> Multiple stakeholders, to include the U.S. Department of State, the Israeli government, and the IDF view the partnership between USSC and the PASF services as an operational success. In a 2013 address to the European Parliament, Israeli President Shimon Peres said “A Palestinian security force was formed. You and the Americans trained it. And now we work together to prevent terror and crime.”<sup>27</sup> In response to the wave of stabbing attacks in 2015-2016, Israeli Defense Minister Ya’alon stated “[w]e work closely with the Palestinian Authority, and we have determined that the PA has worked tirelessly recently to stop terror.”<sup>28</sup> In

April of 2016, Geoffrey Aronson of the Middle East Institute remarked “[t]he train and equip mission for the PSF, unlike other American-led efforts in Syria and Iraq, has been an unquestioned operational success. IDF officials recognize the sustained ability of the PSF to provide law and order on the streets of Palestine and to insulate the PA from challenges by Hamas.”<sup>29</sup> The development of the PASF is widely viewed as one of the few positive developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

However, as successful as the partnership has been to date, significant work remains to develop the PASF into a force capable of securing a future Palestinian state. When asked to assess the ability of the PASF to secure the West Bank, the current United States Security Coordinator, LTG Fredrick Rudesheim, stated “[i]f given the authority, resources and time, the PASF would be able to control the entire West Bank, not just the 18% that constitutes Area A.”<sup>30</sup> LTG Rudesheim went on to identify three long-term challenges the PASF face:<sup>31</sup> First, the PASF must increase their credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the Israeli Government and the Israeli Defense Forces. This is a critical requirement before the PASF are granted increased control in Areas B and C in the West Bank. Second, the PASF must develop an effective human resource management system that is fiscally sustainable over the long term. The current system is akin to a jobs program with a guaranteed retirement. Promotions are based on time in service rather than performance, resulting in an inverted personnel pyramid in which the services have more officers than enlisted personnel. Third, the PASF must remain apolitical and maintain allegiance to the Palestinian Authority rather than to the president. The current president, Mahmud Abbas, is 82 years old and has been in office

for twelve years. It is unclear how the PASF service chiefs will react when Abbas transitions from office.

### Findings and Conclusions

Many significant, long-standing issues must be addressed if the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is to be resolved in a sustainable manner. For decades, these challenges have prevented U.S. and international efforts to achieve a sustainable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As history has demonstrated, complex political issues should be solved primarily by the parties involved, rather than by external actors. Solutions dictated from external actors or international organizations, particularly in the Middle East, have little chance for success. Although it is an outside actor, USSC serves an important coordinating role in addressing the security concerns of both parties. By reducing security concerns as an obstacle to peace, USSC, in a supporting role, assists the Department of State in setting conditions for meaningful peace negotiations.

Over the last eleven years, USSC's relatively quiet partnership with the PASF has resulted in operational success. One of USSC's greatest assets is its relatively small size. USSC's 60-man structure is much smaller than the 500-man Security Force Assistance Brigades currently being established by the U.S. Army. USSC's size allows an enduring presence without substantial overhead, enabling strategic stamina not seen in other partnership missions. This sustained presence provides stability, demonstrates resolve, and builds trust among the stakeholders. Despite its small footprint, USSC continues to successfully transform the PASF into a legitimate and effective security force capable of preventing terrorism and maintaining the rule of law.

USSC's size and relatively low cost also enable strategic patience. This is essential when approaching a problem as complex as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Continued patience is critical as transforming the PASF into a legitimate security force has taken on a generational aspect. The best hope for the future viability of the PASF is the young field-grade level leadership within each of the services. These leaders grew up in the West Bank during the First and Second Intifadas. They are not members of the "old-guard" cadre of the Arafat era. USSC has remained focused on developing this new generation of leadership, building the bench for the future by providing focused professional development training. Strategic patience will continue to be required as these field grade leaders transition into senior leadership roles within the PASF services.

Assuming that U.S. policy remains focused on achieving a two-state solution, USSC should consider several concrete steps to improve the long-term viability of the PASF. First, and most importantly, USSC must continue and reinforce its efforts to develop a long-term institutional training capability in the West Bank. Training in Jordan is cost-prohibitive in terms of a long-term solution without predictable international funding. In 2015, USSC developed a detailed 10-year plan to enable the development of sufficient training capacity in the West Bank. This training transformation plan approached the problem from a doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) perspective. It identified lines of effort and established milestones to enable the development of a sustainable training management program to be delivered primarily in the West Bank by 2020. Much of this effort remains focused on the development of training cadre, doctrine, courseware, and

infrastructure at the PASF Central Training Institute (CTI) in Jericho. One key milestone of this plan was achieved in 2016 with, COGAT's authorization for the delivery of training ammunition to the West Bank.<sup>32</sup> Enabling the shipment and use of training ammunition removes one of the primary obstacles to fully transferring training from Jordan to the West Bank. The development of a sustainable training capability delivered by Palestinian cadre in the West Bank is critical to the long-term viability of the PASF.

Second, USSC must continue to demonstrate strategic patience by quietly building on its operational successes. Based on the significant improvements in the PASF's capability over the last several years, it may seem logical to significantly expand the size of USSC to increase partnership and complete the professionalization of the services. However, USSC must be wary of expanding too rapidly. Any increase in manning or force structure for USSC should only be considered under certain conditions. The Israelis and Palestinians must agree to a new, conditions-based plan to transition Areas B and C to Palestinian control. The new transition plan must also include an enforceable timeline for the transfer of control and withdrawal of the occupation forces from the West Bank. In May of 2016, Ilan Goldenberg of the Center for American Security provided a detailed proposal for an enforceable, conditions-based transition plan incorporating the security concerns of both parties. Barring these two conditions, USSC should maintain its current force structure, leveraging its relatively small size to build trust and confidence between the IDF and the PASF.

Finally, the U.S. Army should study USSC's partnership with the PASF as a potential model for future building partner capacity missions. While USSC executes its mission in a relatively permissive environment in the West Bank, it is likely that Army

units will be employed in similar environments in the future. Perhaps the most important lessons to be learned revolve around leveraging a smaller footprint over an extended period of time. The reduced personnel and resourcing costs enable both strategic patience and operational stamina. This methodology is nested within the concept of operational reach outlined *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2030*.<sup>33</sup> Employing small partnership forces over an extended period of time may prove to be more sustainable and effective in the long term.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to be the source of unrest in the Middle East. The same intractable issues that have prevented meaningful negotiations to a lasting peace remain today. However, assuming U.S. policy remains focused on achieving a two-state solution, USSC is expected to play an important role in coordinating security issues between the IDF and the PASF. This coordination will help to reduce security concerns between the two parties, enabling future bilateral negotiations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and ultimately advancing U.S. interests in the region.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Aronson, "Palestinian Security Forces: Living on Borrowed Time," October 16, 2015, <http://www.mei.edu/content/article/palestinian-security-forces-living-borrowed-time> (accessed March 14, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on the Middle East and North Africa," public speech, The White House, Washington, DC, May 19, 2011, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/19/remarks-president-middle-east-and-north-africa> (accessed January 25, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama and President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority in Joint Press Conference," press conference, Ramallah, West Bank, March 21, 2013,

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/03/21/remarks-president-obama-and-president-abbas-palestinian-authority-joint-> (accessed March 14, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> The author served as the Deputy Director for Training, Education, and Leader Development in USSC from 2015-2016. Several previous members of USSC have written strategy research papers analyzing USSC's partnership mission with the Palestinian Security Forces. The most recent of these was written by COL Jeff McCoy in 2016 entitled "Is the Palestinian Security Force Still Relevant?" In his paper, McCoy examined the structure of the Palestinian Security Forces and recommended increasing joint capability and the development of institutional training capacity. This paper takes a different approach, outlining both the historical context and strategic environment within which USSC operates. This paper also examines USSC's successes in partnering with the Palestinian Security Forces, offering it as a potential model for future building partner capacity missions.

<sup>5</sup> Frederick S. Rudesheim, U.S. Army, United States Security Coordinator to Israel and the Palestinian Authority, telephone interview by author, February 21, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Tessler, "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," in *The Middle East*, 13<sup>th</sup> ed., ed. Ellen Lust (London: Sage Publications, 2014), 334-336.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 341.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 341-344.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 342.

<sup>11</sup> *Oslo Accords* (Washington, DC: 1993), [http://cis.uchicago.edu/oldsite/sites/cis.uchicago.edu/files/resources/CIS-090213-israelpalestine\\_38-1993DeclarationofPrinciples\\_OsloAccords.pdf](http://cis.uchicago.edu/oldsite/sites/cis.uchicago.edu/files/resources/CIS-090213-israelpalestine_38-1993DeclarationofPrinciples_OsloAccords.pdf) (accessed March 14, 2017).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>14</sup> Simona Sharoni and Mohammed Abu-Nimer, "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," in *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., ed. Jillian Schwedler (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013), 200.

<sup>15</sup> Benoit Challand, "Palestinian Authority" in *The Middle East*, 703.

<sup>16</sup> Tessler, "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," 346.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 353.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Jim Zanotti, U.S. *Security Assistance to the Palestinian Authority* (Washington, DC: U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, January 8, 2010), 1.

<sup>22</sup> Alexis Neal, USSC Operations Officer, "USSC 101 Overview Brief," briefing slides, USSC, Jerusalem, January 12, 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> US.. Department of State, "Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement," <https://www.state.gov/j/inl/regions/africamiddleeast/219007.htm> (accessed March 12, 2017).

<sup>27</sup> Shimon Peres, "Full Text of Peres' Speech to European Parliament," *Haaretz*, March 12, 2013, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/full-text-of-peres-speech-to-european-parliament-1.508915> (accessed March 12, 2017)

<sup>28</sup> Moshe Ya'alon, "Ya'alon Vows not to Leave Likud, Step Down," *Israel National News*, April 12, 2016, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/210762> (accessed March 14, 2017).

<sup>29</sup> Geoffrey Aronson, "Palestinian Security Forces: Living on Borrowed Time," October 16, 2015, <http://www.mei.edu/content/article/palestinian-security-forces-living-borrowed-time> (accessed March 14, 2017).

<sup>30</sup> Rudesheim, telephone interview.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2030, Draft* (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, June 28, 2016), 11-13.