

Cyberspace and Propaganda

Israel and the War in Gaza

Jan Thomas Otte

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International mass media, embedded journalism, and propaganda by none-state actors on the internet, social networks and blogs threatens crisis diplomacy. Case studies with current references to the main US, Israeli and Palestinian media sources on the war between Israel and the Hamas in Gaza 2008/09. The article includes some suggestions on bargaining between Gaza and Jerusalem.

The situation in this case, the current Gaza conflict and Israeli security fence in general might show the weakness of International Relations (IR), United Nations (UN) and European Union (EU). Probably, Gaza reminds international crises diplomacy of the fact that 60 years of civil war have totally estranged people from another. This ethnic, political, and religious division has given a strong foundation to militants inside Gaza (compared to moderate civilians in early 80's) and their radical supporters worldwide to attack their enemies most efficiently both in reality and the Cyberspace by propaganda. The *Hamas*, a Palestinian Sunni Islamist paramilitary organization and major political party in Gaza holds the majority of seats in the 2006 elected legislative council of the Palestinian National Authority. Besides Hamas propaganda, dishonorable known for the effect of its suicide attacks on Israeli civilians mainly against Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. But *Hamas* also runs extensive social networks. One might assume that Hamas hospitals, education stipends, libraries and other services throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip might be intended to recruit new members that commit themselves getting terrorists. Principally, their charter on the internet calls for the recapturing of the State of Israel and its replacement with a Palestinian Islamic state.

Since Israel's seven-days-war 1967, a great amount of mass media and propaganda has entered IR: The Iran's Shiite revolution in 1979, the Catholic Church's role in the "third wave" of democratization, and finally the 9/11 attacks. They all are examples on how media journalists have empowered themselves as a fourth power in the Western democratic system, while none-state actors, terrorist formations, and religious fundamentalists like *Al Qaida* and *Hamas* have become very popular by spreading their videos on the internet. These include political and religious fundamentalist hate messages and kidnapping innocent civilians, in order to threaten the state of Israel. Recognized TV stations, mainly the breaking news on BBC and *Al Jazeera*, and newspaper like The New York Times and many Arab and Israeli magazines multiply those messages. Clearly, there is a much bigger threat for crises diplomacy from mass media than its opportunities to restore freedom of speech and peace. Those phenomena illustrated, "how important a global force religion has become", says Thomas Farr. The really new toolset and framework of international warfare and crises diplomacy is found on the internet, which spreads images, audio files and videos worldwide. Especially in a society in Gaza, where many people continue to be illiterate, the less educated are more likely to be easily convinced by propaganda. Combined with a strong sanction policy of Israeli government and an aggressive regime of the Hamas, very few people are left, consuming international recognized media.

Whether in New York, Washington D.C., Berlin or Jerusalem: politicians are depended on what they read in their intelligence reports. Journalism correspondents find themselves in a system of embedded journalism both by the Israeli government and Palestinian *Hamas*, which restrict them to show no more than censored news. And finally, behind the individual's eyeglasses in Europe and the US, every citizen is touched from what he intermediate sees online in his living room. Even the big problem of IR turns out in Gaza's living rooms: The viewers of propaganda are more likely to vote with their remote controls than by further reasoning. At least since the period after 9/11, "terrorism and war have dominated international politics, and questions about the nature of globalization have been sidelined", says Duncan Green. Facing political Islam, David Hoffman says, that the Western world influences inevitably break through traditional Muslim culture by film, satellite television, international radio broadcasts, and the Cyberspace. Gaza citizens might start to notice the shortfalls of their state media's stodgy, strictly censored by stealth PR and propaganda.

Moreover, many none-state actors have joined International Relations (IR). Besides popular non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like Amnesty International, even independent bloggers have found the mass media as a powerful tool to support their troops. Re-building the small Gaza strip in the Cyberspace, high-tech businesses, weapon industry lobbyists, investigative independent journalists, and Internet activists communicate through online communities linked around the whole world. The era of mass communications, embedded journalism, propaganda and electronic intifada, has given a strong foundation to the fact that (only) the public matter. David Hoffmann says: "The 'street' is a potent force and can undermine even the best-crafted peace agreement".

Analysis: The issues of mass media in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

As the war on terrorism moves beyond Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran, the up-coming Obama administration could extend the US media assistance program from Eastern Europe to the Middle East. The consumption of international broadcasting in the Gaza strip is critical important to the success of IR. Therefore the United States might be able to support the market growth, legitimacy and education for independent regional newspapers, domestic radio and television channels and local Internet service providers. Since its foundations in the late 60's, the cyberspace enables extended personal and organizational interactions through many political, religious and economical borders in the World. At least in-between member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Wide Web has become a *locus* for many traditional infrastructures. In *Beyond Public Diplomacy*, David Hoffmann not only identifies the banking and finance sector, but also emergency services, energy delivery, and many transportation and military systems: "these computer communications networks are the underlying technological bases that will enable any and all visions of the information society", says Stephen Lukasik. As quick sides note on the vulnerability of modern IT, more than ninety percent of military traffic is transacted via public computers. It has already happened many times, that the servers from US pentagon or the Israeli defense department are the target to viruses and Trojans. Stephen Lukasik categorizes the vulnerable cyberspace into three different kinds of failure: "complexity, accident, and hostile intent".

Consequently, assurance or securities had not been the primary consideration for a long time. The USA and Israel should take more efforts in protecting themselves against virus attacks in the online security systems of their national defense departments in Washington D.C. and Jerusalem. But taking the actions taken place in the Gaza strip since the invasion of Israeli defense forces (IDF) into Gaza city on 28 December 2008. Lukasik characterizes the

negative outcome of the internet by “destroy, damage, deny, delay, deceive, disrupt, distort, degrade, disable, divulge, disconnect, and disguise”. Clearly, not only Israeli and US governments are the target of digital attacks. Millions of customers found themselves being forced by viruses, worms and aggressive spam mail with ungovernable snowball-effects. Its biggest problem is quite linked to propaganda and misleading, censored or embedded journalism. Complexity needs to be reduced by IR to an extent that independent actors and individuals being involved in the media industry are able to act rationally.

Assuming that the hypothesis, made by the US National Intelligence Council (NIC), is quite right none-state actors like militant splinter groups of *Hamas* might take over the negotiation power. Unquestionably there will be a conversion of commercial globalization, e.g. particularly the distribution of information technologies (IT) into Gaza with its low political stability and less educational possibilities. Analyzing IT, the opportunities due to cheaper and more cost-efficient connectivity through virtual communities in the Cyberspace outweigh its disadvantages. Indeed, the main threat of conducting IR is to deal with the new data complexity of thousands of web sites by individuals, but furthermore to negotiate with none-state-actors, e.g. elected terrorist regimes like *Hamas* in Gaza. The NIC anticipates two main developments in IR: First, that political Islam would have a significant global impact, Thomas Farr says, “rallying disparate ethnic and national groups and perhaps even creating an authority that transcends national boundaries”.

Secondly it assumes that the internet may become known as a strong force in IR. Because of poor economic prospects, less education, low employee perspectives, the influence of fundamentalist religious teaching, and the Islamization of trade unions funding the *Hamas*, their fellows will ensure that political Islam remains a major force in the Middle East. Particularly Gaza City as one of the densest settled cities, but most isolated areas in the world, has had to face these serious problems since many years throughout both intifadas, uprising in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The technological design of IR is changing dramatically with an exceptional speed. The propaganda taken place in the great current wars in Iraq, beginning at 20 March 2003, and Afghanistan, having started at 7 October 2001, for the first time in world history showed the destructive power of internet propaganda towards IR. *Hamas* came to power in Gaza after the elections in 2006 subsequently seized control of the territory of 1.5 million people on only 45 Square Kilometers, one of the most populated places in the World. Group leader Ismail Haniyeh declared in an unofficial propaganda broadcast, 12 January 2009 that Hamas will continue to fight despite Israel's military offensive in the Strip: "Gaza will not break - our victory over the Zionists is near," Haniyeh said in a fiery speech. Their fate would lay in the hands of *Allah*, so what power could the “sons of Zion” have against him? Haniyeh continued: “Allah will take his revenge on them”, says Avi Issacharoff at Reuters.

Taking a short look on George Orwell’s novel, since 1984 many things have appeared through the internet today as the “voice, made metallic by the amplifiers, boomed forth an endless catalogue of atrocities, massacres, deportations, lootings, raping, torture of prisoners, bombing of civilians, lying propaganda, (...)”The deterioration of language no longer seems to shock people, particularly in a political season: “Spin and propaganda have gained strength in ways that Orwell didn’t foresee, and are transported through the public bloodstream via media that Orwell couldn’t imagine”. The corrosion of language due to the massive war broadcasting on the internet no longer shocks their consumers. Propaganda has gained strength in ways that Orwell probably didn’t foresee, and “are transported through the public bloodstream via media that Orwell couldn’t imagine”. The catalyst and vehicle in warfare and guerilla combat (not the cause) has always been technological revolution. Today, at least since the Al Qaida attacks at 9/11, “technology is profoundly affecting the sovereignty of

governments, the world economy, and military strategy”, says Walter Wriston. Without doubt, information, according to Wriston, has often made the difference between victory and defeat. As a consequence, any efforts of governments in crisis diplomacy to stop others from interfering in its affairs are rapidly eroding. Already 90 years ago in history, when Woodrow Wilson went to the Paris Peace Conference (18 January 1919) to negotiate the Treaty of Versailles after WWI, he ordered his postmaster-general to assume control over all transatlantic cable lines in order to censor the news from Europe.

Clearly, individual war crime is more likely to be absorbed by online resources than the bigger framework of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. The horrible pictures shown by individual US soldiers at the Iraqi prison, conducted at *Abu Ghraib* by Lynndie England, and Charles Graner, e.g. posing with prisoners ordered to form a human pyramid, went around the world within less than one day. They have been published on many title pages both by recognized magazines like *The Economist* 2004 and massive provocative mass propaganda on the internet. Especially in the Cyberspace this torture scandal, forced by individual soldiers has started a very controversial discussion in IR within the pressure of public thought. As a direct response to this prisoner’s abuse taken place in Iraq, Palestinians, agitated by the photographs on the internet and their own radical groups, destroyed a historical war grave yard belonging to the British Commonwealth in Gaza City: “wielding axes and shovels, (...) in anger over the reports of abuse of Iraqi prisoners by British and American soldiers”, (*Haaretz*, 10 May 2004).

Additionally it has also to be taken into consideration that quite a few international journalists, TV correspondents and their local stringers, mainly from Europe and the USA, have been captured by Hamas activists over the last years. This certainly influences media reports out of Gaza (after the media blockade by Israel) indirectly. Presently, nobody can block the entire information flow effectively. Whether the borders of states, regimes and economic differences nor special interest groups from terrorists to human rights activists, the Cyberspace seems to have been invented its own rules. Not only the TV breaking news like CNN, BBC and *Al Jazeera*, which have brought the warfare of the Middle East with its shocking pictures into everyone living room, highly affect the media society in the Western World. Through the uprise of the internet, self-determined online communities and social networks like Youtube, Facebook, and Second Life, but also thousands of independent blogs and open-source-servers have emancipated millions of web developers and bloggers to follow new feedback channels.

Without consideration of economic, religious, racial or political attitudes in the virtual global village, time zones are becoming more important than borders. Small townships are best known as efficient marketplaces of ideas with a short adaption time and high probability of mass communication through snow-ball effects. These small units increasingly pressure sovereign governments in Washington D.C. and Jerusalem, Beirut, Cairo and Amman. Certainly, IR and crises diplomacy have been influenced by internet warfare and have even conducted mass media by stealth PR, embedded journalism and propaganda since 9/11. In 2005, approximately \$ 300 million have been exclusively spent by the US Pentagon for stealth Public Relations, countering the ideology of terrorists and influencing foreign audiences to support American policies. The US military wants to fight the “information war against al-Qaeda through newspapers, websites, radio, television and “novelty items” such as T-shirts and bumper stickers”, says Matt Kelley. In any event, Richard Boucher, a US state department spokesman, said to *The New York Times* (13 March 2005): “our goal is to put out facts and the truth. We’re not a propaganda agency”.

Analyzing the current conflict on Gaza meta-critically in the eyes of a German media reporter, is it appropriate to speak of the termination of critical journalism? “Perhaps, here we have to do with the demise not of the press, but of its formerly beloved, leftist intellectual

critic. After 1989, he has obviously lost the thread of world history. Thus, in a media society, regarding events only as important as the breaking news they make, the difference between headlines can determine the fate of individuals, issues and nations. Obviously, this explains the rise of public-relations agencies and political consultants on the domestic level, making fortunes by mastering the alchemy of converting information into news. David Bar-Illian, one of Israel's most renowned journalists on both sides, writes that "the only reasonable explanation seems to lie in the all-too-human proclivity for following the fashion. In the current vernacular, such socio-intellectual fashion is known as "politically correct." The Israeli foreign ministry suggested on the first day of Israel's ground offensive against Gaza on 27 December 2008, that casualty figures put forward by the Palestinians were misleading: " Hamas is using figures to attract public attention, media attention and for propaganda purposes," Ofir Gendelman told *Al Jazeera* on this latest electronic Intifada (29 December 2008).

More general, all diverse diplomatic efforts to stop the Middle East conflict between Gaza, the West Bank and Israel, including the UN Security Council, where the USA is vetoing many anti-Israel resolutions, have failed so far: "because the battlefield is not ripe for a ceasefire. The two sides, Hamas and Israel, are not yet ready to end the confrontation", says Khasan Ghabtib. On the Arab side, their television is "inherently a medium that likes drama, blood and tears", says Israeli Government Press Office Director Danny Seaman on the filter, manipulation and alteration of Arab news channels. In the system of good news are bad news, Israel and the Hamas are far behind before they have even started to negotiate. What about the powerful press and its means of democratic protest? Gideon Levy, a journalist of the left-wing Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* says that apparently this verdict would not be evil in the eyes of most leading media figures: "A rare coalition, almost wall to wall, seems to be very pleased with Gaza being closed off to coverage: When the readers don't want to read, the government and the defense establishment don't want things to be read or broadcast, and the reporters, editors, and publishers don't want to anger anyone either (...) a great darkness has fallen on the abyss", says Gideon Levy. Accordingly, right-wing Israelis maintain to cover their eyes, looking away from what is happening on the other side of the security fence, built around the Gaza strip.

Inside the hospital of Gaza City, the Hamas seems to play on one's immediate emotions as they invite media stations, filming even the most brutal pictures of seriously injured people. It only depends on the editors, which picture might be too bloody to broadcast it. In contrast, the street fighters of the militant arms of the Hamas must not be filmed. Clearly, the pictures of dying civil Palestinians are horrifying enough to affect the heart of media consuming people much more than any proposed peace solution in words. In this case it must be said, that in the current conflict more than 1300 Palestinians, mainly armed forces but also woman and children, have been killed by the superior power of IDF. Around 5000 Palestinians have been wounded. In the Jewish population less than 100 have been killed by thousands of *Khassam* rockets, citing depended sources in Gaza and Jerusalem. This distressing preliminary result might be due to human defense shields and underground rocket launching bases that *Hamas* purposely chooses inside residential areas to maintain its psychological warfare against Israeli snipers and tank attacks. The Israeli civilians hide in bunkers, equipped with alarm systems against the countless rocket attacks from Gaza.

Besides Hamas there are dozens of other fundamentalist Islamic splinter groups that fight with media propaganda on the internet against the Jewish state. Many of them appear unknown in the public mind until they kidnap or kill people, including Western journalists that as victims in-between the fronts. One of these groups, calling itself the *Tawhid* and *Jihad* Brigades, is claimed to have killed Alan Johnston, the BBC correspondent who was kidnapped in Gaza City on 12 March 2007. They sent an e-mail, Isabell Kershner cites, to dec-

lare that the group held the British government, but also their own Palestinian government and the Palestinian presidency responsible for the death of Johnston. Six months earlier, an unknown militant group had demanded the release of Muslim prisoners in US jails within 72 hours in exchange for two kidnapped Fox News journalists, who were shown sitting cross-legged and barefoot on the floor in a video (24 August 2006). This online propaganda video marked the first time militants in Gaza have issued demands going beyond the conflict with Israel. In general, the freedom of press is forced by fundamentalists in the Palestinian territories. On the wars, Israel and the US are participating in, the autonomy of correspondents is not granted due to embedded journalism.

Even in Germany, a country that has declared press freedom in its constitution and tries very hard to maintain a balance between its responsibility for the Holocaust it's views on Israeli politics today (and the Palestinians on the other side), and news reports are not totally free from false translation. In an interview on Deutschlandradio Kultur (2 January 2009) with Professor Moshe Zuckermann from Tel Aviv University, saying that Israel should even negotiate with militant Hamas, the total number of victims in Israel, Zuckermann mentions had been reduced from 400.000 to 400 in the German translation. One year later, even Israel had been indirectly involved in killing journalists. A footage released by Reuters shows the death of a Palestinian journalist, filming a tank over the Israeli border, firing its shell and exploding next to him. The IDF denies the killing of civilians and has started a video channel with around 40 videos on the internet platform Youtube (13 January 2009) to show, that they take every effort to be as precise as they can in their targeting of Hamas activists. It seems like, that the CNN-factor, bringing the Gulf War into living rooms, has been updated by an open-source lecture for everyone who subscribes to it. Limited access of international recognized media agencies and independent journalists to Gaza raises immediate propaganda conducted by thousands individuals on the Internet since the beginning of Israel's offensive against Hamas militants. It should not be forgotten, that in the whole conflict, including both Israeli and Palestinian citizen, and the wider context of the United Nations, most civilians desperately seek peace in their homes.

Being a victim of victims, it cannot be easy to negotiate any peace solution for Gaza on a neutral level with both Israelis and Palestinians. Whether directly involved with injuries and dead family members due to suicide bombing, rockets from Hamas or IDF, or indirectly concerned through embedded journalism, domestic censor and none-state propaganda, people cannot discuss the Middle-East conflict unbiased. The unveiling and convincing power of pictures and videos shown online cannot be underestimated. In the entire Israel-Gaza conflict, many photographs easily have been modified by Palestinian radical movements and afterwards uploaded at dozens of online communities, challenging the truth of warfare. At the Dart Center, located at London as a global network of journalists to improve media coverage of trauma, conflict and tragedy, "photos have the power to make people think, feel and take action. They may horrify, reassure, anger or take the breath away. While words can describe the aftermath of a disaster (...) a photo visually communicates the pain etched in victims' faces, the mangled metal and strewn debris, the wounded bodies being rolled away on stretchers by paramedics", say Dart Center officials.

Today, the *Hamas* (like the *Taliban*) is fighting a two-front war, one on the internet and another by ambushes in Gaza houses. Conscious on the fact that it cannot beat the firepower of the Israeli defense forces, the militant regime relies on the power of perception by using a fast and increasingly effective propaganda machine that spans from Gaza City to US living rooms. Regarding the terrorist aim to threaten Israel and other Western societies around the globe, it has to be noticed, that they have probably won the battle on bridging virtual predominance effectively with reality. The Economist writes (9 January 2009) that merely "a total-

ly crushing blow-something Israel remains unlikely to deliver-can” would be a clear Hamas conquer. If not, the radical Palestinian party will persist on its survival against Israel’s offensive. In the minds of Hamas leaders, this ongoing conflict delivers a victory for its resistance, rather than that won by Hezbollah in the 2006 war in Lebanon. Without a shred of doubt, Israel’s military supremacy has learned on intelligence and propaganda from its last hasty warfare.

Compared to the last Lebanon war against Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, his regime, supporters and radio propaganda, Israel intelligent forces struggles very hard to get official hands on anti-Israel media propaganda. The Israeli defense ministry operated a radio station, called *al-Mashreq* (The East), which targeted the Shiite population in southern Lebanon. Additionally, an ad hoc Internet site was launched, but its resonance were only a very few hits. However, the Israeli specialists, answering *Hezbollah’s* psychological warfare strategy, could place anti-*Hezbollah* clips into *Hezbollah’s* own broadcasts in Lebanon. Compared to internet technologies, not many Lebanese people consumed this anti-propaganda. As a result, Israel was “forced to rely on that most primitive of propaganda tools – dropping leaflets from the air”, says Ehud Yaari.

Suggestions: Rectifying and negotiating between Gaza and Jerusalem

Any suggestions at this time, to solve the current Gaza conflict, its *Khassam* attacks and IDF offenses, can only be argued on a theoretical level. By using much more effective social online media to shape ones position in the Gaza conflict, Will Ward of the Arab Media and Society says, “the most effective voices in the internet propaganda war hail from outside official channels”, says Will Ward, and therefore can hardly being neutralized. Again, IR and crisis diplomacy should lay more emphasis both on established international social networks and those of web-publishing individuals. With a larger scope on home-made diplomacy through online picture books, diaries, and blogs, platforms like Facebook and Youtube, but even Cyberspace applications like Second Life have entered the controversial Israel history of IR. Again, many NGOs like Human Rights Watch claim that journalists and rights monitors “should be allowed into Gaza to investigate and report on the conduct of both sides”, says Fred Israel Abrahams. Authorities like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International are seen very critical by Israelis as they are supposed to support the Palestinian side. If non-violent Israeli diplomatic efforts would have succeeded in pressuring *Hamas* to end the rocket attacks, “the current escalation with its far greater "humanitarian impact" would have been prevented. By using their considerable resources in the propaganda war against Israel, these organizations are undermining the moral foundations they claim to promote.

The growing use and manipulation of modern communications by terrorist organizations have led communication and terrorism scholars to “re-conceptualize modern terrorism within the framework of symbolic communication theory”, says Gabriel Weimann, professor at Haifa University in northern Israel. For more than eight years, Weimann’s team has analyzed terrorist online presences, more than 5.000 militant websites, online forums, and chat rooms serving terrorists and their supporters, in total. The militant organizations and groups come from all corners of the globe. Even tough, the Weimann monitors that the most popular parties are in the Middle East. As a consequence, IR should much more consider the mental significance of the mass media for modern terrorism, the media tactics of terrorists, and their challenges to truth-finding media organizations and governments. Certainly, this paper cannot be the place to discuss a definitive respond to militant exploitation on the internet, but two preliminary conclusions in this ongoing conflict might be appropriate.

First, governments must become better informed about the uses to which terrorists put the Internet. Secondly, although we clearly must defend our societies better against terrorism, one must not deny the internet's great opportunities towards democracy, the emancipation of the individual and freedom of speech as an almost perfect embodiment of the democratic ideals. "The new communication technologies and especially the Internet carry a paradigm shift: They empower the individuals over states or societies", says Weihmann. Increasingly, modern activists can express their opinions and even threats with multimedia techniques more effectively by supporting individual's traditional oral propaganda. Through the Internet, the content of propaganda against Israel can be more effectively transmitted to the world's public than other traditional media "by those who have hacking techniques or possess skills to access a target's computer servers", says Hyung-Jin Woo. Responding to Islamic terrorists, the US and every organization and government involved in IR should continue to learn a multi-tasking work on both fronts, online and offline. They should improve the monitoring of their online activities as they fight against terrorism in the real world. Doing so will require "a realignment of U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies, which lag behind terrorist organizations in adopting information technologies", says Evan Kohlman.

The media's influence on IR has grown during the wars in Kosovo, Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Yet the 2006 clash in Lebanon between Israel and the Hezbollah represents a quantitative leap, according Peri Yoram. Two parties, Israel and the *Hamas* bargaining with each other on one case of peace and many more issues rise by none-state actors, embedded media and propaganda. At this point, Howard Raffia distinguishes between distributive bargaining and integrative arguing on an agreement. Distributive negotiations are very competitive and include a "most-and-less"-plot for each party. This attitude takes place in an environment of unequal balanced goods between Gaza and Jerusalem. Also, distributive bargaining is about constraint on positions similar to the Prisoners dilemma in Game theory. Raffia considers human greed as a main problem in negotiation. The inefficient diplomacy between Israelis and Palestinians is due to arguing on positions only, whose side should be blamed more for propaganda than the other.

Instead, both parties should come back to crisis diplomacy, talking about real interests that will benefit to all; excluding *Hamas* militants and their dozens splinter groups. An alternative would be to work on integrative strategies that will benefit both parties, like the two-state-solution or a Gaza corridor to the West Bank. Raffia's strategic negotiating model simplifies and abstracts many typical bargaining situations. He notes that negotiation means more than just simple business transactions about time and money. Every party knows their own reservation price, like Israel's former president Yitzhak Rabin wanted to give back the occupied Golan Heights, land for peace. But each party has probabilistic information about the others reservation price and the *Hamas* does not accept any existence of Israel.

This 'canonical case of distributive bargaining' sharpens the whole process. Which personal skills and behavior improve a negotiators performance? The 'satisfy-the-other-attitude' is found more among bankers and salesmen than Israeli and Palestinian diplomats. Raffia suggests improving the ability to persuade others and being well prepared for that with in-depth planning in advance. Every politician involved in IR and independent blogger negotiates some issues every day. It is a back and forth communication designed to reach an agreement. For Roger Fisher, conflict management is a growing industry. A soft negotiator wants to avoid individual conflicts. And the hard negotiator, both Israel and *Hamas* can be found here on the other side, sees any situation as a competition and challenge of wills. How to negotiate on the winning side? Fisher advises to look for mutual gains whenever possible. His method of principled negotiation is "hard on the merits, soft on the people". Propaganda disturbs any soft skills in communicating interest, charity and support to the other party.

Mainly, Fisher's system points on efficient negotiating, looking on those interests that are laying beyond the Israel-Gaza battle about positions, personal views and subjective influences. How is one to reconcile interests for a wise solution? Clearly, understanding the great discrepancy among positions and interests is the most critical point. For Fisher interests are the "silent movers behind the hubbub of positions". In the Gaza conflict, it is very difficult for the Israeli government to negotiate with the *Hamas* forces when they weakened and isolated, Mahmud Abbas on an enduring peace plan with Israel.

Again, it is very useful to look beyond positions on economy, religion and any geopolitics. In politics, Fisher refers to the Israeli-Egyptian war 1978. Israel wanted security because of preventing further tank attacks. Egypt wanted sovereignty because of its pride antic history with their Pharaohs. These are serious and more than visible interests, so that every third party would follow it: "reconciling interests rather than compromising between positions", says Fisher. Many more interests than conflicts lay at the back of opposed positions. One of the central actions is to overcoming common thinking, a system of extremes and opposites that stick in the mud of propaganda: If one wants to minimize the amount of the rent, the landlord does not inevitably have to be bound on maximizing the fees of his leaser. In this case Fisher provides more than three interests both parties, the Israelis and Palestinians, have in common.

First, both want stability of the occupant, having a permanent address and trustworthy income. Secondly, both want to maintain a nice apartment with a great reputation, increasing its value and transforming it to a high-quality place to live in, e.g. Israel legally bought desert land from individual Palestinians to make it blooming through water pipe systems. Third, both want a good relationship by paying themselves rents regularly as well as the costs for necessary repairs. There are only a few exceptional cases, Fisher mentions. Having allergies or wanting security bonds in advance. These metaphors of the dilemma of IR in the Middle East perhaps will never be solved in a sufficient way for everyone. Additional problem solving, conducted by the UN and joined EU, should consider more intensively the internal and external factors of electronic Intifada, the supply and demand of international propaganda, and the costs and benefits of both antagonized parties.

What are the economic, religious, and geo-political consequences of crisis diplomacy that affect the general public opinions, being ungovernable widespread through the Cyberspace? Obviously, the deeper interests on both sides, the Jews and the Muslims, strongly stand firm against being put into model-driven thinking of IR: every negotiator has a constituency to whose interests he is sensitive. Much easier to understand are the basic human needs of the Gaza population and those Israelis living around *S'derot*. Their strong resistance to live and suffer of rockets attacks, being shown on the online media, continues to have a most powerful impact. In the public opinion, the wishes on both affected sides appear plausible and highly credible: safety, economic happiness, sense of affiliation, acknowledgment and the right of self-determination.

Regarding these issues in IR bargaining, I would recommend international mediators and parties to be as most specific and precise as they can, providing concrete details and hard facts without any doubt on terrorist propaganda and government modified information. *Vis-à-vis*, the soft factors of individual civilians, IDF and *Hamas* fighters should result into a credible and open minded foundation, once again coming back to negotiation. In this ongoing conflict, every participant should look forward, not back into more than 60 years of warfare, disloyalty, and distrust. Basically, paying more attention to the interests of others not only serves Christian, Jewish and Muslim values, but simplifies the whole bargaining peace process in future. This direction might mutually establish virtues like intelligence, maturity and capability to get into control of propaganda and launch freedom of press and speech in the Palestinian

territories, encouraged by an armed (and capable of acting) international UN/EU peace force. Assumably, the inner violence and propaganda circle of action immediate leading towards reaction might be broken sooner than expected: demonstrating appreciation on the Israeli interest so they will even more likely appreciate the Palestinians needs. In reality, it is important to divide battling parties from the problem in order to be “hard on the problem, but soft on the people” in Fisher’s words. To put this simple wisdom into biblical words of Paul, the Apostle: We reap what we sow, says the Bible. Instead of unconstructively blaming Israel the whole time for its superpower, a UN/EU negotiator should conduct his mission on a face-to-face level, establishing both an ethical media behavior and strong foundation for diplomatic success. In economics, bargaining covers wage negotiations, tax negotiations, competition where competitors are few, settlements out of court, and the real estate agent and his customer, says Thomas Schelling. What means efficient ‘bargaining’? Like Fisher, Schelling considers the distributional aspects of bargaining opposing an integrative culture of negotiation. Furthermore, he talks about the plausibility and logic of self-commitment. First, physical and mentally advantages, e.g. Israeli military potency, influence the power, strength and skills on bargaining. In an oligopoly economy of scale, the leadership on prices and costs of bigger corporations will lead small firms into niches.

Both sides, even disadvantaged competitors depending on non-changeable factors can make use of the powerful tool to fool and bluff, setting the best price for oneself and fool the opponent into thinking that has been the maximum offer. How is it possible to make another believe something? Letting the other think “wow, a small price”, overcoming the prospect of self-damage. This is how propaganda in the Israeli conflict might have been raised. Obviously, this practice has to be benchmarked critical towards ethical values and sustainable results on IR. Is there a penalty on lying? Can all interested Jewish and Muslim parties be recognized? Is there a *status quo* that unavailability of peace *corpses* can also win? Can compliance with an agreement be observed by human rights watchers? In the short-run the toolset of bluffing, mainly maintained by *Hamas*, might have turned out to be more triumphant. Whether speaking honestly or half truth: Both parties and individuals do believe in different value conceptions and religious based associations. How to estimate the value of a glass of water, for a swimming pool tenant and a parching marathon runner on the other hand? However, the power of peace-oriented civilians might be greater than IDF assumes. Getting back to earth, whether and how can commitments be taken? Schelling says that bargaining is all over commitment, the communication of the first offer that probably wins. What is the true reservation price of the counterpart, crossing his heart? Assuming a wide range of potential agreement once again, the outcome depends on bargaining. The strategy of negotiation for UN/EU is to communicate persuasive enough to establish a possible commitment. In that assumptive proposal, it is crucial to be aware of the probably risk of going to high in enthusiastically negotiating, which might cause stalemate or breakdown.

Achieving agreement between Palestinians and Israelis depends on redistributing costs and gains joint profits. To convince others, commitments have to be both qualitative and quantitative. The economic principles of profit sharing support the IR negotiation strategy of the Gaza conflict. Schelling also features some basic threats: the communication of one’s incentives should not impress the others by force, which would insinuate the opponent with credulity. "It is essential [...] for maximum credibility, to leave as little loom as possible for judgment or discretion in carrying out the threat", says Schelling. In sum, effective negotiation is about performance, recognition and trust-worthy confidence. Bargains may include defining subjective limits, distinguishing performance from nonperformance. Thinking on future opportunities and further interests may enforce many agreements, but each party has to make sure not being ‘jeopardized’ by destroying trust at the outset, negotiating some minor

issues before bargaining the big interest might stabilize the initial bargaining position. Finally, these five suggestions might accelerate an UN/EU anti-propaganda mission: First, listen with respect to the other individual. Show accommodation to the opponent's arguments. First communicate appreciation for time, honesty and effort of the other's. Primary, emphasize the concerns of the basic needs of the others. Attack the problem, neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians in person.

Background

In 2004 and 2006 the author altogether travelled for more than seven months in Israel and the Palestinian territories including the hot-spots of the militant *Hamas* like Hebron, Nablus and Ramallah. As a freelancing journalist and correspondent to German media I have witnessed mental accidents, physical massacres by distance, and suicide bombs, and media misinformation on both the Israeli and Palestinian side. In my research, conducted both journalistically on-side and academically with databases, I have focused this paper on resources in the English language. Obviously, there is a great amount of articles, books and internet pages, being published in Hebrew, Arabic, and German as well. In this essay I have mainly monitored the latest online news brought on recognized top-media with a bold approach like *Al Jazeera* and BBC News on television, *TIMES*, *The Economist* and *The New York Times*, as well as *Ha'aretz* and *The Jerusalem Post* representing Israel's biggest left- and right-centered newspapers. In a sum, nobody really can judge the complex war history in the Middle East since Israel's independence 1948. As I have met lots of students and professors both at the Jewish-Israeli side in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa, and Islamic-Palestinian universities in Ramallah and Bethlehem on the other side, I do have sympathy with the individual situations many Israeli and Palestinian families have gone through so far. Clearly, the majority on both sides wishes for peace. But since the outbreak of the second intifada 2000 and the up-coming internet propaganda, the diplomatic relationships between Gaza and Ramallah, Washington D.C. and Jerusalem have been deeply spoiled.

During my time in Israel 2004, the German Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation organized a meeting of Palestinian and Israeli news correspondents located at a neutral place in Antalya, Turkey. It turned out, that both sides have to deal with propaganda by the radical party *Hamas* and the stealth PR conducted by the Israeli government *Knesset*. The Palestinian journalists confessed that they are sometimes physically forced to re-write the truth. However, after the death of the PLO leading Jassir Arrafat, their discontent in Gaza seemed to jeopardize their loyalty with the Palestinian territories. This little inter-media peace progress took place in-between the Second Intifada, the Lebanon war 2006 and the military conflict in Gaza 2008/09. Experiencing the current weakness of International Relations, United Nations and European Union, the ethnic, political, and religious diversity in the Gaza has given a strong foundation to the militant wings of *Hamas* inside the Gaza strip. Surely we have to be aware of the fact that this article refers to Gaza as a Case Study. In dealing with current, journalistic sources, the threats of polemics cannot be overemphasized. *Hamas* not only conducts militant wings, but also runs extensive social networks. Whether in New York, Washington D.C., Berlin or Jerusalem: politicians are depended on what they read in their intelligence reports. Journalism correspondents find themselves in a system of embedded journalism both by the Israeli government and Palestinian *Hamas*, which restrict them to show no more than censored news.

No external journalist, whether Europe and the United States, was allowed to go into Gaza during the battles. Finally, behind the individual's eyeglasses in Europe and the US, every citizen is touched from what he intermediate sees online in his living room. Even the big

problem of IR turns out in Gaza's living rooms: The viewers of propaganda are more likely to vote with their remote controls than by further reasoning. Since its foundation the cyberspace enables extended personal and organizational interactions through many political, religious and economical borders in the World. None-state actors like militant splinter groups of *Hamas* might take over the negotiation power. The internet may become known as the strongest force in IR. Through the upraise of the internet, self-determined online communities and prominent social networks like Youtube, Facebook, and Second Life, but also thousands of independent blogs and open-source-servers have emancipated millions of web developers and bloggers. Being a victim of victims, it cannot be easy to negotiate any peace solution for Gaza on a neutral level with both Israelis and Palestinians. The growing use and manipulation of modern communications by terrorist organizations on more than 5.000 militant websites, on-line forums, and chat rooms serving terrorists and their supporters, urges IR. The militant organizations and groups come from all corners of the globe.

The media's influence on IR has grown during the wars in Kosovo, Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Yet the 2006 clash in Lebanon between Israel and the *Hezbollah* represents a quantitative leap. Two parties, Israel and the *Hamas* should bargain with each other on one case of peace and many more issues raised by none-state actors, embedded media and propaganda. The inefficient diplomacy between Israelis and Palestinians is due to arguing on positions only instead of civilians beyond interests. Regarding those issues in IR bargaining, I would recommend international mediators and parties to be as specific and precise as they can, and to provide concrete details and hard facts beyond any doubt on terrorist propaganda and government modified information. Vis-à-vis the needs of civilians, interests of IDF, and those of *Hamas* fighters should result into a more credible and open minded foundation - hopefully once again coming back to negotiation very soon.

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