**Opening Scenario for the Simulation**

**September 15th, 2017**

On the 15th of May, 2017 - the "Nakba" day - **serious riots** broke out in Judea and Samaria, following the passing in the Knesset on first reading of the law on the annexation of Maale Adumim, and after President **Trump** declared that in the future he does not intend to use his waiver regarding the law to move the American embassy to Jerusalem. The riots, which started with mass marches in the villages and near the checkpoints, and intensive activity in the social media, quickly lapsed into violent protests in every West Bank city, and mainly in Hebron, Nablus, Jenin and Ramallah.

**During the first phase of the riots,** 60 Palestinians died in clashes. At a later stage, after two Israeli Knesset members visited The Temple Mount, 3 **suicide attacks** took place in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, and 14 Israeli citizens were killed in these attacks. In the territories there were also mass marches against the PA by supporters of Hamas and other organizations.

**In his resignation speech**, given on the "Naksa" day on the 6th of June (marking 50 years after the Six-Day War), **the chairman of the PA Abu Mazen** declared that Israel finally proved that it wants to destroy the Palestinian dream and to bury the two states idea, with the support of the USA. While shedding tears, Abu Mazen evoked with regret the failure of his way of leading, based on violence-free negotiation, and announced that he will "hand over the keys" and that he will resign in 60 days. He also announced a historical conference of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) and called the representatives of all the Palestinian organizations, "including our brothers from Hamas" to unite, "as we will have to make historical decisions about the continuation of our national struggle in new ways."

Following Abu Mazen's resignation, the PNC partially gathered, as a consequence of the Israeli attempts to prevent PNC members from entering and arrests of some of its members. Hamas seniors joined the discussions through video calls, and the PNC decided to temporarily appoint the Prime Minister **Rami Hamdallah** as the temporary substitute to the chairman of the PNC, and on elections which will take place in 120 days.

The succession battle between Jibril Rajoub and Mohammad Dahlan is at its height, while Marwan Barghouti, Majid Farag and the heads of the security organizations operate behind the scenes as well. All those are trying to "ride the wave" and to recruit to their side the strongest forces operating on the ground. The Palestinian organizations decided on temporarily suspending the security coordination with Israel, and in the field there are signs that the cooperation has already stopped.

The Palestinian press reports that relations between Hamas and Fatah are significantly moving forward **towards a reconciliation agreement**. According to Hamas's leader Ismail Haniyeh, all the Palestinians understand today that the way of Abu Mazen has failed, that Israel isn't going to give the Palestinians a country and that it actively operates to erase the connection between the Palestinians and Jerusalem. Commentators estimate that Hamas is leaning towards taking part in the elections that would take place in Judea and Samaria, and sees them as an opportunity to unite and renew the two parts of the Palestinian people under its rule.

**The Minister of Defense, Lieberman**, announced that " good riddance to Abu Mazen", as he was "part of the problem and not a part of the solution". The Minister of Defense expressed his hope that the new Palestinian government that will arise would truly be committed to a peaceful solution and not only to two-faced talks.

**President El-Sisi and king Abdullah** made a joint announcement and declared that the annexation of Maale Adumim will make them call back their ambassadors from Israel for consultations, and may bring them to reconsider their relations with Israel. They called Abu Mazen to go back on his resignation, and promised to keep supporting him in his legitimate struggle for the Palestinian people. The king of Saudi Arabia also told the press that he is very concerned about the deterioration of the situation and called all the sides to exercise restraint.

President **Putin** claims that the agreement he reached with President Trump during their summit meeting in July, known to commentators as "The Grand Bargain", includes a reference to the Palestinian question, as a part of his efforts to bring back stability to the Middle East. According to him, the Palestinian problem should be solved by establishing a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, and Moscow is prepared to host an international conference with the participation of all sides involved in the situation. Despite the agreements reached between the Russians and the Americans, it was reported that there is provocative activity by Russian airplanes near the Baltic States as well as unidentified units operating in the area.

**The Opposition** submitted motions of no confidence in the government. The "Kulanu" movement is gathering and considering its way. On opposite side, there are demonstrations of left-wing activists calling for a negotiation with the Palestinians without prior conditions, as well as mass riots among **Israeli Arabs**, some of which became violent.

**In the Gaza strip** the humanitarian crisis is worsening and in addition to the frequent blackouts, in some extensive areas the waters aren't potable. In the Security Council's report during the Monthly Middle East discussion, the UN's envoy Nickolay Mladenov, reported that the humanitarian institutions located in the Gaza strip and especially UNRWA, are in danger of promptly collapsing. In addition, the unemployment, attaining these days about 40%, creates great frustration.

**Hamas in Gaza, under the leadership of Yahya Sinwar,** announced that it is ready for a confrontation in which "the Zionist enemy will pay the price it hasn't paid up until today". On the ground, significant preparations within the military wing for confrontation in the Gaza strip can be noticed. As recalled, the terrorist tunnel attack on the 20th of June did not meet the goals of Hamas and the terrorists were shot as soon as they left the tunnel near Nahal Oz. The Minister of Defense Lieberman declared again **that the next confrontation in Gaza would be the last one, as Hamas will fall and be replaced.** The military reporters reported vast preparations of the IDF for the confrontation in Gaza.

In **Iran's** elections which took place in May, President Rouhani won by a small margin. Following his meeting with the Prime Minister Netanyahu, President Trump's announced that he is considering operative ways for **modifying the nuclear agreement with Iran** as well as deciding on new sanctions to be promoted by the USA on the grounds of Iran missiles tests. This brought aggressive statements by Iran's leaders, including on the acceleration of the nuclear program in the case the agreement would be canceled. The head of the research division in the Intelligence branch of the IDF reported, in the Foreign relations and Security committee, that **the relations between the military branch of Hamas and Iran have grown closer.**

**Hezbollah** is encouraged by the situation in Syria and by the agreement between Trump and Putin. It announced that the time to go back and focus all efforts of countering Israel, which is the number one enemy of the organization, is coming closer. In a speech that got the name "Spider Webs 2", the secretary-general of Hezbollah, Nasrallah, announced that Israel will not stand a war in two fronts at the same time, and that his organization is preparing different kind of surprises that were never heard of - at sea, in the air, and on land. Citizens of the northern settlements repeatedly claim that they hear echoes of explosions and diggings underground.

Following the annexation legislation the **ICC's prosecutor announced on the 5th of August on the opening of the official investigation** on the case of the settlements and the case of "Israeli War Crimes". Lawyers claim that the day when Israeli leaders, politicians and even senior military officers will be invited for interrogation is not far away. In response to that, the Trump administration announced that, as he promised before (in the case that an investigation would be opened following a complaint from the PA), he will cancel the US assistance to the PA and close the PA's offices in Washington.

Following the Maale Adumim annexation law passing on first reading, the **European Union's ministers of foreign affairs** assembled and decided on the 10th of August on **establishing a committee that will devise sanctions on Israel** which will be activated in case the law would be implemented. Britain opposed the decisions in a weak manner (as it is immersed in the negotiations on "Brexit") while the rest of Israel's allies within the union announced they will not be able to defend it. As a response to the developments, 10 parliaments of European Union countries that include France, Italy and Spain recognized the state of Palestine. In a few European countries the Ministers of Foreign Affairs had called for Israelis who live beyond the green line to be required to get a travel visa to travel to the Union countries.

**The BDS movement** keeps gaining success, and the large French supermarkets network 'Carrefour' announced they would stop selling products that were made in Israel.

**Abdullah king of Jordan** says that the American decision to move the embassy is an historical mistake. In the Jordanian capital there are monthly large demonstrations and observers estimate that the riots are becoming a threat to the government. At the same time, it is reported of dramatic rise in the numbers of citizens in Judea and Samaria with either Jordanian papers, or family in Jordan that desire to immigrate to the kingdom. The Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs announced that "Jordan fully supports the rightful struggle of the Palestinians and that once and for all there should be the establishment of an independent Palestinian state". Despite the harsh statements, a secret visit of the Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs to Israel was reported on the website "Walla", allegedly to discuss the developments. In the streets of Jordan there is still a great presence of Defense forces, following ISIS's triple suicide attack in Amman which took 31 lives.

The rapprochement process between Israel and **Turkey** that ohas already made quite a progress, came to an end at least for now with an announcement by the Turkish government in August that said they are suspending the relations with Israel and from now on will only focus on defending the Palestinians whom, President Erdogan says, "are suffering under the most cruel occupation in human history". It has been reported that Turkey and **Qatar** are cooperating in order to transfer money and equipment to the Gaza Strip.

On the 1st of September **the Swedish delegation to the UN** put forward a draft resolution to the UN security council that calls for ending the occupation within two years, establishing a Palestinian state based on the 67 borders with agreed land exchanges, with East Jerusalem as its capital, an utter halt of building constructions in the settlements and a rightful solution for the refugees issue, which will be based on the Arab initiative. Likewise, the decision calls the UN to accept Palestine as a full member of the organization. The decisions call for the protection of the legitimate security needs of Israel and Palestine in every future agreement. The draft resolution expressed willingness to send peace keeping forces of the UN in order to assist in the implementation of the agreement while giving "international protection" to the Palestinians who are "a state under occupation."

In an uncharacteristic manner, **China is diplomatically very active** insupport of the resolution in the security council, in light of the diplomatic struggle it is waging with President Trump, in which it was reported on a military agreement between China and the Philippines and the action taking by the President of the Philippines to promote the legislation in parliament to remove the American military bases from the Philippines within a year. The USA's ambassador of the UN, **Nikki Haley**, announced that **USA will veto the resolution**

Following the developments, **major riots broke also all around the Muslim world**, mostly against US embassies. Beside these mass demonstrations, shooting attacks against Americans in Malaysia, Indonesia and Brussels took 5 American lives. In response, the President announced that he will send another aircaraft carrier to the Middle East.

**In the 10th of September President Trump twitted** that the riots in the Muslim world, that already caused a big decline in stock prices in the USA and around the world, endanger the global stability and the American economy. **In a conversation with King Salman of Saudi Arabia** he said that he is "still committed to solving the conflict but the transferring of the embassy to the west of Jerusalem does not determine anything about the final status".

The President added that **in the near future he would call Israeli and Palestinian representatives, as well as representatives of countries of the region to a summit meeting in Washington DC** to ,in his words, **"close a deal"**. He also said the person in charge - his son in law Jared Kushner - is preparing a blueprint for a settlement with the National Security Council, and "this time, both sides will have to be serious".