

## The 17<sup>th</sup> Herzliya Conference Simulation

**The Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS) at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya (IDC) will hold a simulation as part of the 17<sup>th</sup> Herzliya Conference**

**On the Topic :**

### **Israel in a Multi-Front Confrontation**

**Three foreign research institutions participate in the simulation:**

**Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs  
at Princeton University**

**China University of Foreign Affairs**

**France – Sciences Po CERI Paris**

**Main insights from the simulations of the foreign research institutions**

**Dr. Shaul Shay  
Simulation Convener**

## SIMULATION SCENARIO: Israel Faces a Multi-Front Confrontation

### **The Palestinian Arena**

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The president of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), Mahmoud Abbas (Abu-Mazen) was admitted to the hospital in *Ramallah* and the spokesman of the PNA announced on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June that due to the president's condition he is unable to fulfill his duties for an unknown period of time.

Following this announcement, the leadership of the PNA and the Palestinian National Liberation movement have decided to appoint an interim leadership Council headed by the deputy head of the Palestinian National Liberation movement - Mahmoud Al-*Aloul*, Secretary-General of the Palestinian National Liberation movement - *Jibril Rajoub*, the director of the Palestinian general intelligence service - Majid Faraj and Nabil Shaath.

*Mohammad Dahlan* declared that he "doesn't acknowledge the interim leadership Council and will return to the West Bank to lead the Palestinian people in one of the hardest times in their history. Hamas's leadership announced that the organization does not acknowledge the authority of the interim leadership Council as well. In different hotspots within the West Bank violent riots and clashes erupted between Dahlan's supporters and the Palestinian security forces.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of June A young Israeli man, resident of one of the settlements, was kidnapped and no organization took responsibility for the kidnapping. Israel demanded that the PNA take the necessary steps to return the kidnapped civilian. The interim leadership Council announced that it decided to stop the security cooperation with Israel and thereafter demanded the immediate release of *Marwan Barghouti* from prison and a halt to IDF's activities within the West Bank.

As a result of the IDF's operational activities, violent riots erupted in different hotspots within the West Bank. Both the IDF and the Palestinians suffered casualties. Moreover, large-scale riots erupted in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The Palestinian media outlets define these events as "the Liberation Intifada", which occur on the eve of the 70<sup>th</sup> year to the Nakba.

The wave of terrorism by lone attackers (stabblings, running over and into crowds with a vehicle and shootings) intensifies and Hamas has committed a suicide attack in a bus within Jerusalem which caused an immense number of civilian deaths and injuries.

Hamas announces that it will not restrain itself in light of the acts of aggression made by Israel against the Palestinian people. Rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip towards the Gaza envelope but caused no damage or injuries. The IDF responded to the rockets fired by attacking Hamas's strongholds in the Gaza Strip.

### **The Northern Front**

#### Syria

Forces loyal to Assad, forces of Hezbollah and elements of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard have taken control over the Syrian Golan Heights - from Mount Hermon's lower parts to the area of Quneitra. These forces started building fortifications and transferring weapons to the area (rocket launchers and anti-tank missiles).

In a speech carried by *Hassan Nasrallah* he announced that the liberation of Quneitra is an important step towards the liberation of the Golan Heights and threatened that Hezbollah will not stand by when Israel "slaughters the Palestinians".

### Lebanon

Hezbollah reinforced its forces in southern Lebanon using units of the organization that returned from Syria to Lebanon.

## **The war against Islamic State**

### **The battle for a-Raqqa**

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In Syria, forces of the coalition led by the US conquered its North Eastern areas (near its border with Turkey). An all-out battle is being fought in order to conquer the city of a-Raqqa, the capital of the Islamic state. In the ground offensive took part Kurdish, Turkish, Saudi Arabian and special American & French forces. The ground forces are supported by massive aerial support of the US, Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

In the course of battle at a-Raqqa and Northeastern Syria over 2,000 ISIS fighters have been killed and hundreds of its members have been captured, but its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi hasn't been captured and it is estimated that he managed to escape. There is unverified information about his whereabouts in Libya.

The forces of the coalition refrained from attacking forces loyal to Assad which are now besieged in enclaves within the coalition controlled zone.

### **The battle for Mosul**

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The Iraqi army, pro-Iranian Shiite militias, Kurdish Peshmerga forces and American ground forces with massive aerial support of the US have managed to take the city of Mosul out of the Islamic State's hands. Islamic State's casualties in Mosul and its surroundings are estimated at 3,000 fighters.

The Iraqi government demands that the Kurds leave the areas they captured in the city and the Turkish take their forces out of Iraq's territory.

Thousands of the Islamic State's members went underground and some are trying to flee Iraq and Syria. Turkey, Jordan and Saudi Arabia intensified inspections along their borders to prevent penetration of Islamic State's members into their Territory.

In response to the defeats it suffered in Iraq and Syria, the Islamic State carried out a series of attacks around the world.

### **The war in Yemen**

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The war in Yemen between the Houthi rebels aided by Iran and the loyal forces of the Yemeni government headed by President Hadi together with the coalition headed by Saudi Arabia continues. The Houthi rebels struck two oil tankers and one merchant ship using shore-based anti-ship missiles and naval mines. As a result of the damage made to the sea trade route at the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb the cost of oil has risen

globally and so do the costs of maritime insurance. The United States announced that it will organize an international naval force which will enable the freedom of sailing in the Red Sea.

## **Humanitarian crisis in the Middle East**

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As a result of the fighting against the Islamic State in a-Raqqa and Mosul, the refugee problem in Syria and Iraq has worsened. Aid organizations and the UN report that there was a sharp rise in the number of refugees and a severe shortage of food, drinking water and medicine.

**The Secretary-General of the UN** calls for an immediate convening of an international convention for the resolution of the refugee crisis and to bring order and security to the region.

## **The great world powers**

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President Trump announced in a special address to the nation that the US achieved an important victory in the war against terror in Iraq and that soon the Islamic State will be eliminated in Syria as well. He expressed hope that after the elimination of the Islamic state, peace and stability will return to the region.

Talks are being conducted between the White House and the Kremlin in order to arrange a formal summit meeting between President Trump and President Putin.

United States, the European Union and Russia are in close contact regarding an international convention sponsored by the UN to reach political agreements in Syria and Iraq.

## ***Stage II - Israel in a double-front confrontation at the Palestinian arena***

### **The Palestinian arena**

Israel faces a violent confrontation against the Palestinians in the West Bank - the third Intifada ("The Liberation Intifada", according to the Palestinians).

An escalation occurs in the confrontation with the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip as well. Hundreds of rockets and mortar bombs were fired from the Gaza Strip to Israel's territory: the Gaza envelope, Beersheba, Ashkelon, Gedera, Ashdod and Rishon LeZion.

### **The Northern front**

A rocket barrage was fired from the Hezbollah controlled Quneitra area towards the Nafah area in the Israeli side of the Golan Heights and a few IDF soldiers were injured. The Israeli Air Force attacked targets from which the rockets were fired. Forces of Hezbollah in Lebanon were put in a state of alertness.

*Nasrallah* threatened again that Hezbollah will retaliate against Israel if the latter will not *cease its acts of aggression* against the Palestinian people.

### ***Stage III - Israel in a multi-front confrontation: Two Palestinian fronts and two northern fronts***

- Israel faces a violent confrontation against the Palestinians in the West Bank - the third Intifada ("The Liberation Intifada", according to the Palestinians).
- Israel is at war with the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Massive barrages of rockets are being fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip. The IDF attacks the rockets infrastructure and other Hamas targets using its Air Force, artillery and tank firepower. An Israeli reserve draft is being issued in order to reinforce the IDF in the West Bank and to prepare for a ground offensive in the Gaza Strip.
- Hezbollah fires hundreds of rockets from Lebanon and Syria into Israel's territory. Hassan Nasrallah declares that Hezbollah joined the battle against Israel alongside the Palestinians. He then called upon the entire Arab and Muslim world to fulfill the duty of jihad and join the battle against Israel.



## Princeton University

Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs

### IDC Herzliya Simulation Scenario - 2017

#### Stage I

1. Does the United States recognize the new Palestinian interim leadership Council?
  - It is in the interest of the United States to support the Council, which has been authorized by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). If the Israeli government has a different view, the United States would seek consultations to iron out differences. If Hamas launched attacks in response to the formation of this Council, the United States would support Israel's right to respond under the rubric of its right of self- defense.
2. What is the position of the United States regarding the escalation between Israel and the Palestinians in the West Bank.
  - The United States would urge restraint on all sides and try to bring down the level of violence and ultimately stop all violence. As part of its approaches to both sides, the United States would advise Israel to forego operational raids into Area A unless there is 'ticking bomb' intelligence.
3. What is the U.S. reaction to Iran's strategy?
  - a. Iran's involvement in Syria and the deployment of Hezbollah and IRGC forces along the border with Israel.
    - The United States would work diplomatically to build support against Hezbollah, including reaching out to the Russians to encourage them to press Iran to withdraw the IRGC and to prevail upon Hezbollah to withdraw from the positions taken.
    - The United States would ask Israel for some time to see whether diplomacy works. If diplomacy does not succeed, the United States would not condemn actions undertaken by Israel but would ask for restraint and for Israel to limit its goals to the Golan front.
  - b. The Houthi/Iranian threat to the maritime route in the Bab al Mandab strait.
    - The United States would increase its naval presence in the area and continue to disrupt and challenge any effort to block the straits or to impede freedom of navigation, including the use of force if necessary. The United States would continue to interdict Iranian arms shipments to the Houthis.

- The United States would continue to support and enhance Saudi military capabilities.
- The United States would not threaten to withdraw from the JCPOA in response to these aggressive Iranian behaviors.

4. What is the U.S. vision regarding a new geostrategic order in the Middle East (viz., relations with Russia)?

- The United States does not believe there is a new “geostrategic order” in the region and is watching Russian actions carefully. With regard to some of the crises in the region, defined areas of cooperation with Russia make sense, especially where Russia’s relations with Iran can help resolve problems.
- At the same time, the United States sees no strategic value in deepening relations with Russia per se, given U.S. concerns about Russian behaviors elsewhere in the region and in Europe. This includes denying Russia a “seat at the table” in situations where Russian interests or actions are inimical to U.S. interests. The United States will not consider lifting sanction tied to the Russian occupation in Ukraine as a negotiating point in Syria.

## Stage II

1. What is the position of the United States regarding the war between Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank?

- The United States opposes escalation between Israel and the Palestinians and will try to tamp down the violence and bring it to an end.
- The United States will continue to support Israel’s right to defend itself, and will urge Israel not to expand the scope of the fighting.
- The United States will remain watchful for Russian or other third party overtures to the Palestinians that could have the effect of worsening the situation on the ground.

2. What will be the preferred ‘exit strategy’ for Israel and how can the United States support Israel to achieve it?

- The United States will argue for restraint on all sides so as to avoid escalation that would make it harder to achieve a solution.
- The United States will argue not only for a ceasefire but, more importantly, for a political solution. In this respect, the United States will encourage talks with relevant stakeholders and resumption of a serious effort toward stabilization and peace.

3. What is the position of the United States regarding the threat of escalation between Israel and Hezbollah?

- The United States will reaffirm its traditional support for Israel and Israel’s right to defend itself.

- The United States will also argue against expanding the war to affect Lebanon's civilian population and infrastructure. In this particular phase of the conflict, which the United States will try to limit to the Golan area, the United States will be more understanding of a very strong Israeli response to Hezbollah aggression.
- The United States will caution Israel against sending ground forces to Syria, given the turmoil there and the delicate state of the coalition the United States leads against ISIS.

4. How will the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians affect a conference to discuss the Syria and Iraq crises?

- The United States does not believe these crises are linked and will oppose efforts to create linkage, specifically by Russia who may seek to gain position by stalling any talks and inserting their ties to Assad as necessary.

### Stage III

1. What is the position of the United States regarding the war between Israel and Hezbollah?

- The United States supports Israel, diplomatically and, if requested, with military supply, including responding to specific Israeli intelligence and strategic requirements.

2. How serious is the threat that the war between Israel and Hezbollah will lead to a regional conflict and what can be done to prevent the escalation?

- The threat that the war will expand is most likely tied to an increase in civilian casualties and destruction of civilian infrastructure, which Arab governments cannot be viewed as condoning. The United States will stress to Israel that civilian casualties would undermine their interests by potentially strengthening Hezbollah's support in the region..

3. Regarding the war between Israel and the Palestinians and Hezbollah, are potential solutions combined or separate?

- The underlying problems are essentially different, and thus the potential solutions need to be developed separately.
- Hezbollah does not represent the interests of Lebanon, and it must cease its violent activities against Israel.
- The conflict between Israel and Palestine should be resolved through serious negotiations aimed at achieving a two-state solution.

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- Note to simulation: We do not think Turkey is likely to support any coordinated action in northern Syria that involves Kurdish forces.



# **China University of Foreign Affairs**

## **China's Views in the simulation**

### **Phase 1**

#### **1. What is the position of China regarding the escalation between Israel and the Palestinians in the West bank?**

China condemns any military actions that will lead to casualties of civilians. Chinese government hopes that comprehensive ceasefire could be achieved by two sides, including ceasefire in air attack, ground battle and rocket shooting so that it could provide sound condition for humanitarian assistance. The two sides should exercise calm and restraint to prevent the escalation of the situation in West Bank. China advocates UN-led mediation to form concerted efforts and calls on relevant parties to abide by UN initiatives and resolutions. China welcomes the mutual respect by two sides, encourages them to pay attention to each other's legitimate concerns and interests and urges two sides to solve the conflict through peaceful means. Promotion and resumption of peace talks are fundamental to the final solution, and China is prepared to contribute to the achievement of dialogue and conversation between the two sides.

#### **2. What is the position of China regarding the Iranian involvement in Syria?**

China has always maintained that all countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community and must respect one another and treat one another with equality. Referring to the thing of Iranian's involvement in Syria, China's position, I think, is as follows.

Firstly, China maintains that the problem in Syria should be handled in a peaceful way, on the basis of respecting willingness of Syrians, and resists any armed intervention from outside in Syrian's issues.

Secondly, China contends that Iran could afford assistance and supporting for Syria. For example, it could send armed forces to help Syrian's government troops, but it couldn't use weapons that international community has prohibited, such as, chemical weapons and mass destruction weapons etc. And also it's aims shouldn't be point to ordinary people and non-combat people.

Thirdly, the aims of the Iranian's action should not against a third country.

#### **3. What is the position of China regarding the threat to the maritime route in Bab al Mandab?**

Firstly, Bab al Mandab is a key ring of the great path from the Suez Canal, Red Sea to Gulf of Aden.

Secondly, Bab al Mandab is a major part of south Maritime Silk Road of One Belt One Road.

Thirdly, Bab hal Mandab is the only way for China to evacuate it's people in the period of Arab Spring.

Fourthly, Bab al Mandab is a core channel for China, because the amount of petroleum carried through this channel is up to a 1/4 in the amount of China's input petroleum.

So China believes:

Firstly, China calls on the related countries dealing with the Yemeni civil war through negotiations to keep stability and peacefulness.

Secondly, countries around Bab al Mandab , such as Saudi Arabia, Eritrea, Yemen and Somalia, should take responsible to safeguard the freedom and security of navigation.

Thirdly, China will continue to dispatch convoys to safeguard the ships that pass Bab al Mandab.

Finally, concerning the stern facts, such as piracy problem, China builds a military base in Djibouti which is not point at any third countries, to offer supporting to United Nations Peacekeeping Force and efficiently keep marine safety.

#### **4. How does China see the solution of the humanitarian crises (refugees) in the Middle East?**

We would like to stress that the Chinese side always opposes the use of force in international relations and maintains that disputes should be peacefully resolved through political and diplomatic means such as dialogue and consultation. We put high significance on the humanitarian crises in the Middle East. Our thoughts are with the victims, and we express our sincere sympathy to the injured and the bereaved families.

With international community, we would fulfill our due responsibilities within the framework of UN, and we long for the revival of peace and stability in the respective regions and maintain the well-being of the people in this region.

### **Phase 2**

#### **1. What is the position of China regarding the war between Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza and the West bank ?**

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II), on the partition plan for Palestine and Israel. Seventy years on, the Palestinian people are still seeing their legitimate rights and interests denied and continue to be subjected to unfair treatment, a situation that must be rectified without delay. The Palestinian question remains at the heart of the Middle East issue and is of fundamental importance to the region. The latest developments on the ground are testimony to the fact that the Palestinian question, if left unresolved, will undermine security and stability in the region and beyond. In this connection, the international community

should shoulder collectively the responsibility of defending the legitimate rights and interests of Palestine with a renewed sense of urgency. There is a pressing need for both Palestine and Israel to observe restraint and to take concrete action to revive the peace talks.

First and foremost, both parties should implement in earnest resolution 2334 (2016) by stemming the violence against civilians. Israel should cease settlement expansion, lift restrictions on humanitarian access to Gaza and demonstrate goodwill so as to enable renewed peace talks. The legitimate security concerns of regional countries must be respected and addressed.

Secondly, both Palestine and Israel should resume talks at the earliest opportunity and make strategic choices that serve the interests of their peoples. Resolving the Palestinian question through peace talks is the best way to serve the interests of all parties. The use of force offers no solution. The earlier the talks resume, the sooner the peoples of both sides and of the wider region will benefit. Both parties should respect each other's right to statehood and survival. Talks must begin, and breakthroughs can be made along the way. Efforts should be made to achieve an early harvest of positive results and gradually to rebuild and strengthen confidence. It is crucial to sustain dialogue in preparation for a final and comprehensive solution. China supports efforts to resolve the Palestinian question on the basis of, inter alia, the two-State solution, the Arab Peace Initiative, the principle of land for peace and relevant Security Council resolutions with a view to establishing a fully sovereign Palestinian State within the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Thirdly, we must build international consensus and engage all forces actively working to de-escalate the situation. China welcomes the fact that the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and countries with influence are playing a greater role and stepping up their efforts with respect to Palestine and Israel in order to consolidate the will for peace talks and to foster synergy. The lead role of the United Nations must be fully leveraged. Any outcome of such efforts should be endorsed by the Security Council.

## **2. What is the position of China regarding the threat of escalation between Israel and Hezbollah ?**

The Chinese Government has always been concerned with the border situation between Lebanon and Israel, which has once again become tense. It deeply regrets the human casualties arising therefrom and hopes that relevant parties will soon take measures to calm the situation.

Also, China is greatly concerned about the worsening of the situation in South Lebanon. China has called on parties concerned to exercise restraint and to take measures to end the situation as soon as possible.

The Chinese Government has always maintained that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon should be respected. Israel should unconditionally implement the No. 425 Resolution of the U.N. Security Council. The Middle East peace process has entered a crucial stage, all parties

concerned in the Middle East should stop any action which is not conducive to the Middle East peace negotiations, so that headway may be made in the Middle East peace process.

The vicious cycle of violence for violence between Israel and Lebanon must stop. China urges Israel, Palestine and other parties to respond in good faith to the appeals of the international community and cooperate with international good offices, achieve an immediate unconditional ceasefire and refrain from taking any actions that might escalate tensions, so that calm can be achieved as soon as possible.

### **3. How the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians will affect a convention that will discuss the Syria and Iraq crises ?**

After Syria's hardline President Bashar came to power, he reversed Syria's position in the region to reverse the situation in Syria, which is not conducive to the Middle East Policy. First, he improves relations with neighboring countries, and strengthens cooperation with major powers in the region. Leveraging the Iraq issue highlights the Arab Israeli conflict. After the outbreak of the crisis in Iraq, Syria gradually involved, first take a position on the United States "Saddam" cooperation, continue to promote the reconciliation with Iraq, and then again in the Security Council expressed strong opposition to the war. The Israeli Palestinian conflict is actually the president of Syria to enhance the degree of international attention, one way to improve its position, he hopes to draw on international attention of the Israeli Palestinian conflict to establish their authority in the middle east.

### **Phase 3**

#### **1. What is the position of China regarding the war between Israel and Hezbollah ?**

A final settlement would not be easy. Hezbollah was established amid conflicts and hatred. The conflicts between the two sides over fresh water resources and the existence of Palestinian armed forces in Lebanon escalated the tension in the Southern Lebanon, and Israel believes residents in this region has offered their services to PLO. Thus almost all military action was conducted in this region. Hezbollah has been seeking sent Israel back to home since its establishment.

However, China hope a final settlement could be reached at an early date. China believes that the war between Israel and Hezbollah poses the danger of continuous escalation. A peaceful Middle East, which is of highly geopolitical significance, is important for the building up of the Belt and Road Initiative.

#### **2. How China does suggest to put end to the war between Israel and the Palestinians and Hezbollah?**

Firstly, the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah comes after Palestinian issue, so establishing an independent State of Palestine and peaceful coexistence between Palestine and Israel is the way out.

Secondly, peace talks, as the only way forward, must continue. The use of force is never a solution. The earlier the peace talks start, the sooner the people of this region will benefit.

Thirdly, both Palestine and Israel should take specific steps to move the peace process forward. Israel must first demonstrate its sincerity like lifting the blockade on Gaza so as to create conditions conducive to the resumption of talks.

Finally, the political and military status of Hezbollah need to be clarified. Now we see existence of Hezbollah in the Lebanese administration indeed, but what matters now is whether the calls of it could echo with the people. Also, the call for a disarmed Hezbollah is on the rise, while Hezbollah is strengthening its military capabilities and influence.



*Liberté • Égalité • Fraternité*  
**RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE**

**SIMULATION SCENARIO : ISRAEL FACES A MULTI-FONT CONFRONTATION  
JUNE 2017  
FRANCE DIPLOMACY**

**Phase 1**

- **What is the position of France regarding the escalation between Israel and the Palestinians in the West bank?**
  - France conveys its sincere regards to the President of the Palestinian National Authority, wishing president Mahmoud Abbas a quick and complete recovery. It urges the Interim Palestinian leadership and all Palestinian leaders to pursue the unity and cohesion of Palestinian leadership.
  - France condemns most firmly all acts of violence and terrorism, and calls upon all parties to combat all forms of incitement and hatred. On several occasions, alongside its European partners, it called upon all parties to abstain from any action that could aggravate the situation through either incitation or provocation, and asked them to condemn any attack carried out and to rigorously respect the principles of necessity and proportionality in the use of force. Once again, France is calling to parties on both sides to refrain from worsening the security situation on the ground and to respect the above stated principles. France is calling for both Israeli and Palestinian leaderships to engage swiftly in a peaceful political strategy and pursue engagements for nonviolence and the protection of Palestinian and Israeli peoples.
  - France calls for the immediate release of the kidnapped civilian and will continue to raise this issue at international level until his safe return. France wishes to reiterate its friendship to the Israeli people. France also stresses the importance of restraint, moderation, and the protection of civilians. France calls for all concerned Palestinian parties to do everything in their hands to guarantee the safe return of the kidnapped civilian, discourage further attacks against civilians, refrain from all forms of incitements, and restore quiet in the west bank.
  - France calls upon Israel to fully respect International humanitarian law.
  - Finally, France wishes to express its long commitment to a peaceful and negotiation solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. France believes that the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians cannot be considered separately from its regional environment. It is a key element to the restoration of stability in the region and, beyond, to our shared goal to guarantee global collective security.

- **What is the position of France regarding the Iranian involvement in Syria?**
  - France supports all coordinated diplomatic efforts to maintain a durable truce in Syria, engaging all parties to respect the cessation of hostilities in accordance to UN Security Resolutions. Regional and international groups and actors should combine their diplomatic activity in the region to ensure the protection of all civilian populations on the Syrian territory.
  - The government of France reiterates the need to envisage and prepare the political future of Syria. In this regard, it calls for outside actors to refrain from any interference in Syria and its internal political organization.
  - Since the beginning of the war in Syria, France has always called for a peaceful settlement of the conflict through an inclusive, open and Syrian led political process. In accordance to this reiterated position, France calls upon all concerned parties, inside and outside of Syria, to refrain from any attempt to modify the political and territorial organization of Syria. It calls for the respect of Syria's territorial integrity and encourages the Government of Syria to engage in international negotiations in good faith. Finally, France praises the efforts of the International Syria Support Group to put an end to the civil war in Syria.
  - France denounces all military activity in the demilitarized zone around Quneitra and urges all military forces to refrain from any action that could destabilize an already fragile environment and violate UN Security Council Resolution 350 and 338.
  
- **What is the position of France regarding the threat to the maritime route in Bab al Mandab?**
  - In accordance with International Maritime Law and especially the principles of Freedom of Navigation as enshrined by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, France calls for the absolute respect of international norms.
  - Following very serious recent incidents in the straits of Bab-El-Mandeb threatening the security of merchant fleets in the area, France will take all necessary steps to ensure the safety of international navigation in and around the straits, protecting its interests and the interests of its allies.
  - In light of the current threats on the sea trade route at the straits of Bab-El-Mandeb, France will lead the European Union naval effort to guarantee the safe passage of the maritime route, joining the international naval force initiated by the United States. France will act within the framework of the European Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), mobilizing, if necessary, its military resources currently based in the region.

- **How does France see the solution of the humanitarian crises (refugees) in the Middle East?**
  - Since 2012, France has been supporting projects implemented by international organizations and NGOs to provide emergency assistance to populations fleeing from combat zones and to support host communities in Syria's neighboring countries. At the London Conference in February 2016, France announced that it would raise €200 million in donations for the 2016-2018 period, including for youth and education, focusing on Lebanon, and to support cross-border assistance projects. France also announced that the French Development Agency would provide €900 million in loans and concessional loans for Jordan.
  - France is engaged in providing emergency aid to people fleeing the fightings, welcoming refugees and supporting victims of ethnic and religious violence.
  - In addition, France is mobilized to ensure that the crimes committed by Daesh, which the United Nations deems to be war crimes, crimes against humanity, and in some cases, crimes of genocide, do not go unpunished.
  - France is taking action to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law, including humanitarian access and stopping attacks against civilians in Syria. Along with its European counterparts and in accordance with EU declarations and sanctions' policy, France especially and explicitly condemns the use of conventional and non-conventional weapons against civilians and highly populated areas. In particular, France has forcefully denounced the use of chemical weapons against civilian populations in violation of international laws and principles. Such extremely serious violations of international humanitarian law directly impact the worsening of the current humanitarian crisis and aggravate issues related to increased flows of refugees from the region.
  - As it has already done in the past, France will stand besides all United Nations efforts to improve the humanitarian situation in the region and supports the convening of an international convention for the resolution of the refugee crisis. France wishes to make the humanitarian situation an absolute priority of its diplomacy in the region and offers to host the UN international convention in Paris, under UN and European Union auspices. This Convention shall include all concerned actors - both public and private - currently involved in civilian protection in the region.
  - Finally, France wishes that international discussion on the refugee situations also include exchanges on the hosting and humanitarian admissions in the countries of arrival, and issues related to resettlement.



## Phase 2

- **What is the position of France regarding the war between Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza and the West bank?**
  - France is very concerned by the resumption of hostilities between Israel and the Palestinians. We call upon all parties immediately to return to a ceasefire. France asks Israel to limit its military operations in the Gaza strip and the West Bank, and take all possible measures to protect Palestinian civilians in all relevant areas.
  - France forcefully denounces the firing of rockets from the Gaza strip to populated areas within the Israeli territory. All firing of rockets from the Gaza strip into Israeli territory must stop. Civilians on both sides should not be the target of any military operations.
  - France is extremely preoccupied by the worsening security situation and the once again revival of the vicious cycle of radicalization and violence. France deeply regrets that warning signs have not been heard making it more difficult than ever to settle the conflict. France denounces the escalation of violence from all sides and calls for urgent and immediate restraint.
  - France remains committed to the Two-State solution to put an end to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian. In accordance with France long standing position, the French government strongly believes that this is the only solution capable of addressing the legitimate aspirations of both the Israelis and the Palestinians to security, independence, recognition and dignity.
  
- **What is the position of France regarding the threat of escalation between Israel and Hezbollah?**
  - France pays the utmost attention the evolution of the security situation on the border area between Israel and Lebanon and in the Golan Heights. The Government of France wants to officially show its support to the Israeli government and the civilian population living in the concerned areas.
  - France officially condemns firings from Hezbollah controlled areas and reaffirms the legitimate right of Israel to protect its territory. France regrets that Hezbollah strategy has still not changed in nature, and will have no indulgence towards the use of indiscriminate violence by its military wing.
  - As it has already done in the past France condemns the interference of any outside actors in the regional conflicts and encourages all parties and partners to support peaceful outcomes to current tensions and escalations of violence.
  - France calls for all political forces in Lebanon to engage in the path of dialogue, peaceful negotiation and diplomacy. France will support any initiative aimed at restoring quiet in the area and will provide every means, military & civilian to support it.

- **How the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians will affect a convention that will discuss the Syria and Iraq crises?**
  - All parties should take immediate practical steps to address the urgent humanitarian needs in the region including urgent steps to facilitate full humanitarian access.
  - Pursuing its long tradition to act for the protection of civilians on all sides, especially women and children, France stands besides its friends in the region and will support all their efforts in putting an end to the sufferings of civilians.
  - France wants to stress out that humanitarian principles and the value of human life applies in the same way in every conflict, and this is also true for the entire Middle East.
  - France wishes that the International Convention will lay down the principles for a fair treatment of refugees and the possibility of their return to their home country.
  - France believes that the current crisis could lead to a new momentum for peace if all concerned actors, including members of the Arab League and members of the Quartet for the Middle East put their effort together. In this regards, France believes that a sustainable peace in the region will, eventually, include the concretization of a two-state solution.

### **Phase 3**

- **What is the position of France regarding the war between Israel and Hezbollah?**
  - France strongly condemns the attacks by Hezbollah forces on the Israeli Territory.
  - France reaffirms its support to the Israeli government and its population, reiterates the right of Israel to protect its territory and its civilian from the firing of rockets from Lebanon and Syria.
  - The French government strongly asks Hezbollah leadership to refrain from interfering in Syria and calls for all concerned parties to denounce and abstain from supporting Hezbollah violent and unjustified actions.
  - France officially calls for an immediate ceasefire and will support a UN Security Council Resolution to this effect.
  
- **How France does suggests to put end to the war between Israel and the Palestinians and Hezbollah?**
  - France has always supported a comprehensive settlement of the conflicts in the Middle East and has repeatedly brought its supports to the numerous efforts to settle the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

- France believes that the first and most urgent step is to protect the civilians on all sides and solve the current humanitarian crisis, notably through an immediate cessation of hostilities respected by all belligerents.
- A sustainable solution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian will only be possible once Palestinian unity is achieved. France believes the support of friends and allies in the region would usefully serve for the return of the Palestinian National Authority in the Gaza strip under a new political leadership, depending on the evolution of the current political crisis within the Palestinian government in the West Bank. France therefore calls for the Arab League and to friends of both parties to engage in the bid for Palestinian reconciliation and unification.
- The Palestinian leadership as well as neighboring countries should officially abide by the principle that interferences by outside actors – especially by violent means - will not help advance the cause for peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Relevant actors should put pressure on violent groups to put an end to attacks on the northern part of the Israeli territory.
- Following the successful declaration of a complete ceasefire, Israel should declare the termination of all military operations in the Gaza strip and engage in direct or indirect security cooperation with the Palestinian leadership to improve the security situation. With the approval of all parties, France will support the sending of an international and UN sanctioned observing force.
- France believes that the current regional crisis might constitute a new opportunity to make peace in the region and to solve the long standing Middle East conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. It is committed to promote and support every possible means to come to such an end and, first of all, to ensure the protection of civilians from the greatest atrocities of our time.