

Introduction

We will make our reckoning with ourselves today; we are a generation that settles the land and without the steel helmet and the cannon's maw, we will not be able to plant a tree and build a home. Let us not be deterred from seeing the loathing that is inflaming and filling the lives of the hundreds of thousands of Arabs who live around us. Let us not avert our eyes lest our arms weaken. This is the fate of our generation. This is our life's choice—to be prepared and armed, strong and determined, lest the sword be stricken from our fist and our lives cut down.

—Moshe Dayan, eulogy for Roi Rotberg, May 1, 1956

On May 1, 1956, IDF chief of staff Moshe Dayan came to Kibbutz Nahal Oz, on the border with the Gaza Strip, to eulogize Roi Rotberg, a member of the kibbutz murdered several days before by infiltrators from Gaza. Dayan declared that the fate of Roi Rotberg and his comrades—and perhaps the fate of the young State of Israel—was to fight again and again for their existence. Shortly after, the Sinai War broke out, with many wars to follow. Indeed, since its establishment, Israel has enjoyed only short periods of quiet in a continuous series of military conflicts. The peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan removed these countries from the sphere of military threats but did not weaken the hostility between Israel and most of its neighbors. Slowly, the primary weapon against Israel changed from all-out, high-intensity conflict to low-intensity terrorism backed by political, public diplomacy and media campaigns.

Israel's unique situation requires it to continually develop and improve its weapons, public diplomacy among them, and adjust itself to constantly changing circumstances. *Habara*—the Hebrew term for public diplomacy—has been employed by Israel, and before it the Zionist movement, from the beginning of the struggle to establish a Jewish

homeland. But it was also clear from the beginning that a political struggle was not enough, and the Jewish people would have to fight for their independence. Israeli public diplomacy grew in parallel with political and military institutions as an essential aspect of this struggle.

From its establishment, Israel was conflicted as to the type of *hasbara* organizations it should establish. The state's leaders tended to look down on *hasbara* and sometimes ignored it completely. In the struggles of war and peace, public diplomacy did not receive appropriate consideration and was mainly used for internal political purposes. In the realm of foreign policy, *hasbara* was the "black sheep" of the family, often a scapegoat for the failures of the political echelon.

As the need arose, several organized attempts were made to coordinate between institutions of public diplomacy. Over time, every action taken by these organizations had to consider revolutions in technology and changes in the world of diplomacy, most recently those caused by globalization. Israel's needs and changes in its diplomatic standing accelerated a shift toward a centralized system of public diplomacy. Since the year 2000, events like the second and third intifadas, the Second Lebanon War, and a series of small-scale wars between Israel and Hamas in Gaza reinforced the need for such a system, leading to a "new public diplomacy."

This book is based on a doctoral dissertation on the new public diplomacy. It includes documentation and extensive interviews with 250 decision makers, elected officials, experts, observers, and participants in the arena of public diplomacy. The book examines the different ways and means that Israel—and, before it, the pre-state Jewish community in Palestine—used public diplomacy in response to challenges on the political and military fronts, until the state established an up-to-date and unique model suited to its needs and abilities. This model is built on a foundation of both the "old" and "new" public diplomacy. The Hebrew title of the book borrows a term coined by *Haaretz* journalist Amir Oren. *Milchama* (media war)—a portmanteau of the Hebrew term for war, *milchama*, and the English word "media."

In this book, I will sketch the changes that took place in two arenas—diplomacy and war—both of which have been strongly influenced by globalization and the media revolution. There are strong similarities between the changes that have taken place in these two different arenas, and the point at which they meet is in the battle for "hearts and minds," which brings together the new public diplomacy and the challenges of low-intensity conflict.

In the world today, dozens of such conflicts are underway, often involving battles between liberal democratic states and nonsovereign entities such as guerrilla organizations and terrorist groups. These entities, whose power is inferior to the states they are fighting, wage continuous war based on the use of the media to shape the realm of consciousness.

The second intifada (2000–2006) is a paradigmatic example of such a conflict, in which both military and diplomatic weapons were tested. Once again, the Middle East became a type of laboratory, this time in regard to an asymmetrical war between a Western liberal state and terrorist organizations. The Israeli experience is thus of immense importance and will likely contribute a great deal to the conduct of similar conflicts by other countries.

In conclusion, this book will make several recommendations for an optimal and up-to-date model of the New Public Diplomacy and present a variety of tools that can be utilized in this new media war.