**Purpose of the grant:** support for a one-year project of the Mitvim Institute to develop a new political concept for dealing with Iran and for turning the Iranian issue into a political and public asset.

**Background**

The failure of Netanyahu’s Iran policy over the last decade—which has been burned into the public consciousness over the past months—has created a unique opportunity to design and advance a new concept regarding the Iranian issue. This is an opportunity to present the public with an alternative to the resounding failure of right-wing policy on an issue that has existential implications for the State of Israel.

This opportunity is particularly significant when it comes to the important audience of centrist voters, for whom national security—and in particular the Iranian threat—are key issues. The development of a new concept will focus on creating and cultivating two key public narratives. First, that a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a necessary precondition for addressing the Iranian threat. Second, that what is required is a shift in approach that moves away from the old paradigm of reliance on an independent military force toward political and diplomatic efforts within an international and regional partnership.

Although the failure of the right and of Netanyahu to address the Iranian threat has been all too apparent over the past few months, the political opposition has not yet been able to develop or present an alternative way of thinking. Rather than seeing it as a top-tier electoral and public asset, the opposition has left the handling of this issue to the right and to the security establishment.

Emphasizing the damage that Netanyahu’s policy of absolute victory is causing to the efforts to contend with the existential threat posed by Iran can be an important component of “the peace of no choice” that the Mitvim Institute promotes among centrist voters. This can be achieved while also internalizing the importance of political progress on the Israeli-Palestinian axis and increasing support for a two-state solution.

**Action Plan**

The proposed project will run for one year, and will be based on two strands: a research-conceptual strand and a political-public strand. The research strand will focus on developing policy measures and new narratives, while the political-public strand will integrate a group of leaders into the knowledge development process, and transform them into partners in the influence process.

One of the main goals of the research strand is to create a new forum—a community of experts and former diplomats. These academics and practitioners will address, among other things, the role of Israeli-Palestinian conflict resolution in the strategic struggle against Iran, how to leverage the Iranian threat to create regional alliances, and how to strengthen cooperation between Israel and the United States.

Within left and center circles, there is a huge knowledge gap about the Iranian issue. At the same time, new leaders from within politics and the protest movement—such as Yair Golan, Nimrod Sheffer, Eran Etzion and others—have experience in strategic thinking.

Within the new forum, simulations will be conducted in which those same leaders will practice scenarios. There will be briefings with international players, and experts will take part in Knesset Committee hearings and other relevant venues. At a later stage, further measures will be examined, such as establishing coalitions and influencing legislation, as well as promoting narratives among public opinion leaders.

**Annual budget in NIS**

Team leader and logistics coordinator: 75,000

Digital campaign—social media management, creative, design, and fundraising: 65,000

5-7 researchers who will participate in thinktanks, international dialogues, and leadership briefings: 10,000

Production of thinktank sessions: 5,000

Production of 3 short policy papers: 8,000

Survey: 7,000

Translation and linguistic editing: 15,000

Total: 185,000

Success metrics

* The formulation of a political concept with concrete policy measures on the Iranian issue.
* The creation of a basis for Israeli-regional-international dialogue to shape a joint strategy for confronting the Iranian threat.
* The establishment of a new forum of strategic experts and leaders on the Iranian issue.
* Holding at least one discussion in the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee/ Directors-General Forum at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for presentation and discussion of the plan.
* Implementation of the concept among a selected group of opinion leaders—journalists and key media figures.