The Israeli Military and Israel's Palestinian Policy

From Oslo to the Al Aqsa Intifada

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Key Points

- Far from being a passive implementer of policy, the Israeli military has been a major catalyst in embarking on the road to peace as well as the path to war. Such a high level of policy influence is uncharacteristic of the military in advanced democracies. However, it has been typical of political-military relations in Israel and has become even more pronounced in the past decade.

  Indeed, the changing nature of warfare in Israel and elsewhere has led to the emergence of a "political-military partnership" in which the military is no longer outside the policymaking process. At the constitutional level, formal decisions are still ostensibly made by elected political leaders. But in practice there is another, concealed, level at which the professional officer class is deeply involved in policymaking. In fact, the military is an equal partner in the policy process.

- The forces participating in the policymaking game are not officers versus their political bosses, but rather a coalition of officers and politicians versus another coalition of officers and politicians. Throughout the years of Israel's existence, there have been several fluctuations in the relative power of each side (the civil and the military). At the beginning of the twenty-first century the balance changed drastically toward the military due to several factors, among them the exacerbation of the subconventional war between Israel and the Palestinians.

- A series of events in the international arena at the end of the 1980s—including the outbreak of the first Intifada and the end of Soviet support to Syria—was interpreted by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) as marking a radical change in Israel's geostrategic position and led it to argue for a peace initiative and territorial compromise. The ability of the IDF to press its case at the highest levels of Israeli politics was greatly enhanced by the fact that government ministers were reluctant to make clear and politically risky decisions on territorial matters and had come to depend heavily on the Intelligence and Planning Divisions of the Israeli General Staff for expertise, information, and intelligence. While the Israeli chief of general staff (CGS) continued to participate actively in cabinet meetings, some of his fellow officers began to play prominent roles in the negotiations to implement the Oslo Accords. When Netanyahu became prime minister in 1996 he tried to limit the political roles played by IDF commanders, but he soon discovered that he could not conduct political-security negotiations without them.

- The IDF's support for the peace process began to erode in the latter half of the 1990s in the face of ongoing violence in the occupied territories and terrorist attacks in Israel. IDF strategists were particularly worried that the IDF, restrained by political pressures, could not win in these low-intensity conflicts. The beginning of the Al Aqsa Intifada and the failure of the Camp David talks in late 2000 convinced the IDF leadership that the peace process had failed. While Prime Minister Barak sought to maintain ties with Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian Authority, CGS Mofaz

pressed publicly for a hard-line policy toward the Palestinians. Unable or unwilling to rein in Mofaz and his like-minded colleagues, Barak adopted the military's policy.

- Sharon's assumption of the prime minister's office in 2001 did not restore harmony between the military and the government. Senior commanders complained of political restraints, accused politicians of blaming the IDF for not halting the ongoing attacks on Israeli civilians, and urged that the Palestinian Authority be treated as an enemy and fought directly. Not content with voicing internal criticism, the CGS and his senior officers made a point of expressing their position in the media—a position that enjoyed the support of the vast majority of both soldiers and civilians. The defense minister, the foreign minister, and others accused Mofaz of overstepping his authority, but he would not be silenced. Meanwhile, some lower-ranking IDF officers took the liberty of misinterpreting orders from the political leadership in their zeal to deal aggressively with the Palestinians. When Mofaz's term of office came to an end in the summer of 2002, it was widely anticipated that he would seek to build a coalition with Sharon's most serious rival, Netanyahu. As it turned out, Mofaz became defense minister less than four months later, joining the hard-line government formed by Sharon after the exit of the Labor Party from the National Unity Government.

- At the beginning of the twenty-first century, a combination of factors and conditions has led to the weakening of civilian control over the military, along with a rather high level of influence of the military over policy. In the policy sphere, these factors include dependence on the military monopoly on information, a relatively weak institutional system of civilian control that depends more on internalization of the principle of civil supremacy and less on strong constitutional mechanisms, and the absence of coordinating organs between the military and the civilian side. On the military side, these factors include weakness of the mechanisms that are supposed to separate the military from politics—for example, by creating obstacles to a swift transition from military service to a political career—and traditional resistance to the creation of checks and balances to military power such as a powerful council for national security.

- In retrospect, the change that occurred in the IDF's conception of security at the end of the 1980s was consistent with its military culture. The IDF may have switched to supporting a peace process, but peace was seen primarily as a means of achieving security, and security was understood in a narrow sense. For this reason, the military showed little interest in the economic arrangements that were supposed to create an infrastructure and incentives to preserve the peace. For the same reason, the military also paid little attention to efforts to prevent incitement and to foster education for coexistence.

  In the 1990s, as in previous decades, diverse opinions concerning the issue of peace did exist among the top military commanders, but it was easier for the IDF as a whole to line up with the demand for maximum security. But can one expect otherwise of the military—especially a military that has not stopped fighting for one

week throughout the entire existence of the state? Perhaps we should look at it from the opposite direction and praise the military for the fact that despite the state of ongoing war it has no ambitions for territorial expansion, and most of the officer class still belongs to the more liberal side of Israeli society. Even if it is sometimes uneven, an impressive civil-military balance still exists in the country. How would militaries of other democratic countries behave if they were in the same situation?

- The Israeli case may shed important light on the future of civil-military relations in the United States, European countries, and other postmodern societies. The blurring of politics and military affairs, the influence of generals at the highest levels of policymaking, the ability of one overzealously destructive soldier to radically alter public policy: these dramatic trends may be the wave of the future. Advanced democracies are increasingly undertaking the same type of military interventions that Israel has carried out for decades—counterterrorism operations, subconventional warfare, and peacekeeping missions—the kinds of operations that were the direct cause of the current transformation in Israeli civil-military relations. The current U.S. war on terrorism, so strikingly similar to Israel's armed struggle, may even be the catalyst for such change.

- In the long term, the best means of guaranteeing civilian control over the military is to strengthen civil society. In the short term, however, several practical solutions can help remedy the present situation. These include restricting senior officers' free access to the media and limiting their participation in cabinet meetings. Other important changes would be to reduce the dependence of the civil authority on information and assessments from military sources, and to expect senior IDF officers to recommend to the political echelon not just one plan of action but a number of alternative schemes.

Foreword

Yoram Peri's monograph could not be more timely or more relevant.

If one needed any evidence to demonstrate the significance of this analysis of the evolving role of the Israeli Defense Forces in Israel's policy process, the latest twist in Israel's political crisis provides it. After retiring as chief of general staff only four months ago, Lt.-Gen. Shaul Mofaz has suddenly reappeared as minister of defense for the remaining three months of the Sharon government. Moreover, reportedly he has been assured by both Prime Minister Sharon and newly appointed Foreign Minister Netanyahu that he will be asked to remain, regardless of which of them wins the prime minister's post in the early election, to be held no later than the end of January 2003. So the one thing that seems almost certain about Israel's chaotic political scene is that Mofaz, the most politically influential chief of general staff in decades, if not ever, will loom large in politico-military decision making for years to come.

And, in all likelihood, what Peri calls Israel's new "symbiotic model" of civil-military relations—which he dubs "political-military partnership"—will become only more pronounced.

Yoram Peri has long been regarded as the foremost scholarly expert on the evolving role of the Israeli military in society. His close acquaintance with key players within Israel's military establishment and political elites enables him to dissect a problem that would defy most if not all non-Israeli scholars. In this, his latest work on the topic, he breaks important new ground by explaining clearly and persuasively how the current "political-military partnership" has come about—how an initially strong tradition of civil authority over the military has evolved under the growing pressures of prolonged low-intensity warfare, interspersed with brief but violent episodes of major conventional war, into this new model. What so enriches Peri's historical generalizations and analytical insights are many arresting accounts of struggles among various military actors to handle the demanding, multiple roles played by the IDF in Israel's national security system, a system and tradition that grew de facto out of more than half a century of national experience of living under a permanent state of siege. While maintaining a vibrant parliamentary democracy and avoiding the pattern of periodic military coups that have plagued other countries, Israeli society has not escaped relying increasingly on current and retired military leaders to assume political leadership roles. In the process, as Peri points out, Israel's foreign policy has increasingly become the servant of security policy, rather than the other way around.

Military officers now play influential roles in cabinet discussions not only of intelligence assessments and politico-military issues but also of fundamental diplomatic choices about peacemaking and even major domestic matters that inevitably affect the Palestinian-Israeli struggle. These trends were notable by the early 1980s—just before, during, and after the Lebanon War. But Peri explains cogently how the two Palestinian uprisings (1987–92 and 2000–?) have altered how the Israeli military establishment assesses its politico-military role in governmental policymaking, in actively taking part in diplomatic-security negotiations *and* in communicating directly with the public about its

analysis and recommendations, often to the dismay of prime ministers. By illuminating the overwhelming dominance of the director of Military Intelligence over intelligence analysts from other security institutions, including those in the Foreign Ministry, Peri explains well the concerns of those who advocate various ways to right the tilted balance between political and military influence over national policymaking. Unfortunately, his sensible recommendations to this end have no chance of adoption as long as Israel is locked in a permanent state of war.

Although memoirs from retired Israeli generals are plentiful, at least in Hebrew, this is a rare if not unique analysis, in English, of the prominent roles played by military officers, staffs, and leaders in the long-running effort to negotiate peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Military intelligence assessments first encouraged and reinforced Prime Minister Rabin's pursuit of the Oslo peace process after 1993, then gradually shifted to a highly skeptical view of the possibility of making peace with Yasser Arafat as Palestinian violence increasingly darkened the negotiating skies. Military analyses became almost totally pessimistic after the current phase of violence erupted in September 2000, shortly after the failure of the Camp David peace negotiations in July 2000. These assessments have reinforced the policies pursued by Prime Minister Sharon toward Arafat and other Palestinian leaders since he took office early in 2001.

For American readers, a subtext of Peri's account of Israel's travails is the broader lesson about what can happen to a democratic political system over decades of constant warfare of greater or lesser intensity. Perhaps inevitably, military leaders, active or retired, acquire great public prominence, while civilian politicians, nominally their superiors, shrink in perceived stature. In Israel it has become more and more difficult for either major political party to achieve political success without having a bevy of retired generals in its top posts. The United States has not fallen victim to this tendency, and the American military remains firmly subordinate to civilian leadership. Nonetheless, it is worth pondering the long-term implications of a worldwide "war against terror" without any definite horizon or foreseeable duration. Such an endless state of war against its various enemies has now weakened the fabric of Israeli parliamentary democracy and provides a strong argument for making every possible effort to reach a comprehensive peace soon.

But Peri's work provides a cautionary tale for Americans as well.

AMBASSADOR SAMUEL W. LEWIS
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One

The Israeli Pattern of Political-Military Partnership

When Maj.-Gen. Shaul Mofaz was appointed chief of staff of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), he believed that he would be the head of the Israeli army in a time of peace. Indeed, during his first year in office he actively supported Prime Minister Ehud Barak's efforts to make peace with Syria and the Palestinians. The collapse of the negotiations at Camp David in the summer of 2000 and the outbreak of the Intifada in September of that year led to a U-turn in Mofaz's strategic viewpoint. He began advocating the destruction of the Palestinian Authority and the expulsion of Yasser Arafat. One month before he left office, in July 2002, the Israeli army reoccupied the entire West Bank.

Far from being a passive implementer of policy, the Israeli military has been a major catalyst in embarking on the road to peace as well as the path to war. Such policy influence is uncharacteristic of the military in advanced democracies. However, it has been typical of political-military relations in Israel and has become even more pronounced in the past decade. The reasons for this Israeli model and the implications of these relations are analyzed in this paper.

Israel is the only post–World War II democracy in the world that has been in a state of constant war with its neighbors throughout the entirety of its existence. Its military machine is among the largest in the world relative to its population: 600,000 men and women serve in the three branches—including the reserves, almost 10 percent of the population. The IDF receives a considerable share of national resources (in the mid-1980s the defense budget accounted for more than a quarter of the GNP, and over the past decade its share stood at 10 percent). Most other countries that achieved independence after World War II have been plagued by multiple military coups, and many states in the Middle East were until recently governed by officers in military uniform. In Israel, in contrast, the military has never seized power, and none of those who have headed the army, navy, or air force has ever considered such an option.

For close to thirty years, scholars of civil-military relations have argued that Israel disproves Harold Laswell's classic "garrison state" thesis (Lasswell 1941; Horowitz 1977), which posits that a state that is constantly at war cannot remain democratic and that its society will cease to be an open society. National security needs will severely restrict civil liberties, and the military will become the dominant institution of government. This has not happened in Israel, thought scholars, because of the nature of Israel's institutional arrangements. One group of scholars, military sociologists following Morris Janowitz's theories, has argued that Israel's military is professional and therefore accepts civil authority. The IDF officer class is not recruited from a separate social group but rather reflects

society as a whole; it is neither corporatist nor alienated from civil society, which are necessary conditions for intervention in politics (see, e.g., Horowitz and Lissak 1989).

A second group of scholars, political scientists who built on Samuel Huntington's theories, noted the high degree of institutionalization of politics in Israel and classified it as a "mature democracy" (to use Samuel Finer's term [1975]), which creates both "objective" and "subjective" civil control of the military (e.g., Perlmutter 1969). In other words, there are simultaneously mechanisms of civil control that act on the military from the outside and internal mechanisms, particularly the internalization of the value of loyalty to the political leadership.

What explains the Israeli phenomenon, according to all of these scholars, is the fact that the IDF is a citizens' army. It reflects the mosaic of which civil society is composed; the early retirement of officers prevents the formation of a closed military caste; the reserve service prevents alienation and isolation of the military from civilian society; the integration of the military in the civil system prevents the growth of corporatism; and the military lifestyle in Israel hardly differs from the civilian lifestyle, as reflected in the careless dress of the reserve soldiers who fill the city streets. To sum up, the existence of permeable boundaries between the civil and military spheres creates harmony in civil-military relations. According to this line of thought, such permeability is true of the various social spheres as well as the political sphere. Israeli society is not militarized despite the prediction of the garrison state thesis. On the contrary, the military has become civilianized.[1]

Harmony in civil-military relations, the IDF's character as a citizens' army, and the existence of boundaries between the civil and the military spheres have led researchers to argue that a clear hierarchy exists between the civilian echelon and the military echelon, which is subordinate to it. "The opening of channels of communication between the two elites ensures the continued civil control of the military elite and serves as a functional defense against the danger of injury to the democratic character of Israeli society" (Ze'ev Maoz, *Ha'aretz*, October 16, 1996). According to this view, the "instrumental military" model operates in Israel. That is, the military is a nationwide and supraparty profession that acts out of purely professional considerations and stays away from ideology. Above all, it is a tool for the implementation of the policies determined by the political leadership. The IDF's support of the peace process in the early 1990s was perceived as one expression of the "nonmilitaristic" character of the military and of the instrumentalist principle that guides it: When the politicians decided on a historic compromise with the Palestinian national movement, the military cooperated and fulfilled its role in the process.

The instrumental model is characteristic of advanced democratic states. However, I wish to argue that the changing nature of warfare in Israel and elsewhere has led to the emergence of a new model, which can be described as "political-military partnership." In Israel, which has been immersed for years in a state of mostly low-intensity war, this symbiotic model, rather than the instrumental model, has been the norm for a long time. At the constitutional level, the symbiotic model ostensibly preserves the instrumental pattern, and the formal decisions are made by elected political leaders. But in practice there is another, concealed, level at which the professional officer class is deeply involved in policy-

making. In fact, the military is an equal partner in the policy process and is sometimes even more powerful than that.[2]

The forces participating in the policymaking game are not officers versus their political bosses, but rather a coalition of officers and politicians versus another coalition of officers and politicians. Throughout the years of Israel's existence, there have been several fluctuations in the relative power of each side (the civil and the military) in this symbiotic model. At the beginning of the twenty-first century the balance changed drastically toward the military due to several factors, among them the exacerbation of the subconventional war between Israel and the Palestinians.

As opposed to optimistic predictions in the last decade of the twentieth century that the world was entering a postwar era, it appears at the beginning of the twenty-first century that although conventional wars between countries will continue to decrease, the number of low-intensity conflicts within states will grow. If one of the characteristics of the postmodern military is "increasing interpenetrability of the military and civilian spheres, both structurally and culturally" (Moskos 2000, 2), the new wars will blur yet further the boundaries that separate these two spheres. One scholar has even described it as "the collapse of the distinction between military and civil decision-making" (Kaplan 2001, 38). A study of political-military relations in Israel should therefore have interest beyond the specifics of the Israeli case itself, because the Israeli experience may indicate developments that will become prevalent in other democratic countries in the coming years.

What was the strategic concept underlying the IDF's defense strategy toward the end of the twentieth century, and how did the military form its policy toward the Palestinians?[3] What was the nature of the relationship between the military and political echelons in the 1990s? And how did the Israeli military-political system function after the outbreak of the Al Aqsa Intifada in September 2000? These questions will be discussed in the following sections.

Two

The Geostrategic Transformation of the 1990s

A series of events in the international arena at the end of the 1980s was interpreted by the IDF as marking a radical change in Israel's geostrategic position (Cohen et al. 1998) and led it to argue for a peace initiative. In the first security circle around Israel, the one closest to Israel, the twenty-year-long status quo on the West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza Strip collapsed in September 1987 with the outbreak of the first Intifada, the popular uprising of the Palestinians against Israeli occupation. A year later, in 1988, the PLO dramatically changed its policy by declaring publicly that it had renounced its opposition to the existence of the Jewish state and adopted a new approach whereby two independent states would live side by side: Israel and Palestine in the territories occupied in 1967.

The fall of the Berlin Wall had a great impact as well: Syria lost its support from the USSR, without which it could not make war against Israel. As a result, Syria began to change its international orientation and put out feelers toward the United States, and in 1991 it actually joined the coalition headed by the United States in its war against Iraq.

That war, which saw an Iraqi missile attack on Israel and a U.S. victory in battle, was the third in this series of dramatic events that had occurred in such a short time span. Iraq's defeat put an end to the possibility of establishing a strong northern front against Israel. Twelve years after Israel's border with Egypt had become a peaceful border, the IDF began to recognize that the military threat on Israel's northern border was now weaker than ever. The military was among the first to interpret the effect of the emerging reality on Israel's geostrategic situation. The following were its conclusions.

The Meaning of the Intifada

The Intifada engendered a radical change in the Israeli perception of the Israeli-Arab conflict, leading the IDF to finally adopt the "war between nations" school of thought. Since the establishment of the state in 1948, and even earlier, there had been an ongoing dispute between two schools of thought in the Israeli policy sphere.[4] The first, the "war between states" school, argued that the source of the Israeli-Arab dispute was the refusal of the Arab states to recognize Israel's existence and that peace would come only if this policy changed. According to this school, the Palestinian problem should be solved in the framework of a peace treaty with Jordan. The second school, which can be defined as the "war between nations" school, argued that the Israeli-Palestinian dispute was at the heart of the Israeli-Arab dispute and that Israel could achieve normalized relations with the Arab states only if the Palestinian problem were resolved (Cohen et al. 1998).

The former school had been dominant before the Intifada. When Yitzhak Rabin became prime minister, he, as a disciple of Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir, continued to be an ardent supporter of this school. However, the Intifada led him to recognize that the Pales-

tinians were a nation fighting independently to shape their fate. Therefore, he concluded, Israel should relate to the Palestinians as an independent actor, a partner (Peri 1996; Sneh 1996, 71).

While the political leaders heading the Likud Party continued to oppose the "Palestinist view" even after the outbreak of the Intifada, a change was taking place in the geopolitical and geostrategic beliefs of the military. In March 1989, the head of the Intelligence Division, Maj.-Gen. Shahak, submitted his Annual Review of the [Security] Situation to the cabinet, in which he stated explicitly that the Intifada was directed and led by the PLO. This document angered the Likud ministers and Knesset members, who were not prepared on any account to grant legitimacy to the PLO—a group they viewed solely as a terrorist organization. Shahak was accused of meddling in politics and of being influenced by dangerous leftist attitudes. Some Knesset members even demanded his dismissal.

The second conclusion reached by the IDF as a result of the Intifada was no less radical. While the political Right demanded that the IDF put an end to the Palestinian uprising, the IDF itself realized that it could not do so without using methods far beyond those acceptable in Western democracies and in the normative system of Israel society. Chief of General Staff (CGS) Dan Shomron drew heavy flak from the nationalists when he stated this explicitly; it was a public acknowledgment of the limits of the IDF's power to solve the Palestinian problem. The Intifada thus redefined the framework of political discourse on the major issue that divided Israeli society between Right and Left, Labor and the Likud, and the peace camp and the nationalist camp: the attitude toward the PLO and the occupied territories. The issue was not only whether or not to cede the territories, but also whether or not to recognize the PLO and eventually agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state. And in this new discourse the military stood firmly in the pro-recognition, pro-peace camp.

The New Threat: The Outer Circle

Another significant change in military perceptions occurred in the IDF's views of Israel's foremost security threats. The main threat to Israel's existence as a state (its "fundamental security" in Israeli terminology) had previously come from the Arab countries of the "first circle," primarily Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. The 1979 peace treaty with Egypt, the covert collaboration on security with King Hussein of Jordan, and the weakening of Syria following the collapse of the USSR reduced this threat significantly and led to a change in a central component of Israel's defense doctrine. Traditionally,

> Israel aimed to achieve its principal goal—acceptance by its Arab neighbors—through the cumulative effect of limited but clear-cut battlefield victories, that might eventually convince its adversaries of the futility of efforts to eliminate it. During wartime, Israel sought to destroy enemy forces and seize territories for use as a bargaining chip in postwar negotiations, and as a means of achieving more secure borders that would enable it to absorb an enemy surprise attack without risking its survival. This would also, Israeli planners hoped, enable it to create a more stable postwar status quo. (Cohen et al. 1998, 20)

By the beginning of the 1990s a new security situation had developed. The failure of the war in Lebanon and the lesson of the Intifada—the high price Israel was forced to pay for holding the occupied territories—showed, in Rabin's words, that "Israel cannot set itself a defense policy that includes imposing the peace settlement it chooses after the rout or defeat of the Arab countries. This is not a pleasant situation but that's the way it is."[5]

At the same time, the change that took place in Jordan and Syria, as well as Palestinian willingness to recognize Israel's existence, strengthened the possibility of Israel's being accepted by the countries of the first circle through a peace agreement. Such an agreement was now even more vital, in view of the new threats posed by the states of the outer circle. These states—Iran, Iraq, and Libya—now threatened Israel with Scud missiles, which were fired on Israel during the Gulf War, as well as with weapons of mass destruction.

The conclusion reached by IDF planners was unequivocal: It was necessary to reach an agreement with the states of the first circle, even at the cost of territorial assets, in order to improve Israel's preparedness for a possible war with the countries of the outer circle. This was vital not only to avoid a situation in which the first-circle countries would ally themselves with those of the second circle but also to gain strategic advantage by allowing for the possibility of flying over Jordan or Syria, and even permission to station IDF land forces on Jordan's eastern border, in the event Iraqi forces advanced toward Israel.

The Lessons of the Peace Treaty with Egypt

An agreement with the Palestinians and the states of the first circle was perceived by the IDF not only as giving Israel an advantage in a possible attack from the second-circle countries but also as likely to eradicate the desire of these countries to act against Israel. "The more we reduce Palestinian terror without hurting Israel's vital interests, the harder it will be to arouse hostile action against Israel. A new strategic situation will be created and hostility toward Israel from Benghazi in Libya to Teheran in Iran will probably decrease," asserted one of the IDF's strategic planners.[6]

This view was reinforced by the IDF's review at the end of the 1980s, by which time the IDF felt that it had acquired a good perspective from which to evaluate the benefits derived from the peace treaty with Egypt. This evaluation reinforced the view that peace—no less than the occupied territories—could provide security. In the words of the officer quoted above, "Peace is a strategic asset." This treaty gave Israel many strategic benefits. In the first stage, it removed Israel's most significant military opponent and weakened the Arab coalition, which then became very divided. As a result of peace with Egypt, it was possible to cut the defense budget, disband military units, and reduce the overall size of forces. Moreover, Israel received increased defense assistance from the United States, upgraded its military equipment, built three new airfields, and strengthened its defense guarantees. But perhaps the main result was a revolutionary change in the IDF's perception of war.

Changes in the Defense Doctrine

Following the Yom Kippur War (1973), when three thousand Israelis were killed and more than twice that number wounded, Israel's defense policy planners realized that the saturated battlefield and the use of a mass army in future conflicts in wars of assault and fric-

tion would create an unbearable level of attrition. The solution to this appeared to be a radical change in military doctrine that would enhance the IDF's ability to hit enemy targets without direct contact on the battlefield.

As a result, Israel took steps to give the IDF land force technological superiority over the armies of the Arab states, which it had not hitherto possessed. The state of peace with Egypt made it possible to divert huge resources to this project, including development of a "small smart army" that uses precise guided ordnance, vertical envelopment, long-distance firing, and special units to hit many targets simultaneously (the same kind of tactics as were employed in Afghanistan in 2002).[7] This radical change was possible because of the huge sums that were freed up in the wake of the peace treaty with Egypt.

The change in defense doctrine also included another element, which was related to the definition of Israel's war aims. In the past, the war aims as seen by the Israeli commanders were to destroy the rival military power and to seize control of territories. The end of the Cold War meant that the first goal suddenly became more important than the second, since the USSR's withdrawal of support from Egypt and Syria made the destruction of military equipment increasingly significant because now the Arab states could not replace it so quickly. At the same time, occupation of territory became less attractive. This was another reason for the decline in the importance of the territorial dimension, as the Iraqi missile attack on Israel's home front, over and beyond Israel's "strategic depth," has shown.

However, the new military doctrine also had to take other factors into account, some of them of a paradoxical nature. Just when the military balance between Israel and its neighbors had improved immeasurably, it became increasingly clear that there were limits to Israel's power. The U.S. refusal to let Israel join the coalition against Iraq, as well as Israel's inability to react to the Iraqi missile attack—contrary to its long tradition of retaliating to attacks—and the weakness displayed by the Israeli home front in the face of the attacks revealed chinks in Israel's power. Added to these were the decline in Israeli society's traditional readiness to tolerate a long-term war as a mobilized society.

Thus, a broad range of factors led the IDF to review its defense policy at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. The review concluded that changes in the surrounding countries had made peace more possible and that the strategic value of the occupied territories had diminished. Therefore, ceding these territories would be a fair price to pay for achieving a peaceful accommodation with Syria, Jordan, and the Palestinians.

Sagi's About-Face

A revealing case is that of Maj.-Gen. Uri Sagi, who served as the head of Israeli Intelligence at the beginning of the 1990s. His story is particularly important, since he was the first officer who dared to present the new security framework to the prime minister and to Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir. In his diary, Sagi described his thoughts during the Gulf War, particularly about the conflicting views at the top of the defense establishment on the question of whether Israel should react to the Iraqi Scud missile attacks.

The air force and special IDF units began exercises in preparation for attacking the missile launchers in western Iraq, but the United States, which feared that Israeli action would endanger its Gulf War coalition, demanded that Israel forgo attacks on Iraq.

Generals and civilians were on both sides of the debate. Air force commander in chief Avihu Ben-Nun and Deputy CGS Maj.-Gen. Ehud Barak were in favor of action and received the support of Defense Minister Arens. CGS Lt.-Gen. Dan Shomron fiercely opposed retaliation and won the support of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who decided in the end not to act. Sagi was convinced that the CGS was right, because he had analyzed the significance of military intervention, weighing the various factors from an overall strategic and political perspective. He was worried by the fact that the commander in chief of the air force and the deputy CGS were urging military action "despite their understanding that that alone would make it harder to reach an overall solution to the firing of Scud missiles.… Here we see again a phenomenon that we saw in the war in Lebanon—failure to understand the meaning of military action that cannot achieve its stated objective" (Sagi 1998, 105).

Sagi presented the new perception in his first annual review to the government in 1991. Among other things, he wrote:

> Nineteen ninety-one was an exceptional year in terms of the changes that took place in the world in general and the Middle East in particular. . . . There were far-reaching changes and profoundly significant processes, whose strategic importance for Israel is equal to that of the wars that we have known hitherto. . . . Following the Gulf War, the short-term Arab military threat to Israel has declined because of Iraq's defeat and the reduced military potential. The war engendered radical changes in the power relations among the Arab countries. . . . Egypt regained its leading status and its natural size. . . . Altogether, relations among the Arab states were marked by deep division. . . . The USSR and the Communist bloc underwent a change and ceased to be a political and military support for the radical elements in the Arab world. . . . The USA after the Gulf War remained as the only Great Power, with everyone waiting at its door, and as the one trying to shape a new world order, of which one of the components is peaceful solution of conflicts. . . . As a result of Iraq's defeat, the awareness that Egypt had previously reached now spread among broad circles—also in Syria—that there is now no practical alternative to political action in solving disputes with Israel.

The most significant change in the 1991 Intelligence assessment related to Syria:

> The changes in the international arena and in the region have ripened into awareness on the part of Asad that there is a need for changes in his policies. In a prolonged stocktaking process, the Syrian leader came to understand that the way he had gone so far would not help him to achieve his aims (return of the Golan Heights, enhancement of Syria's international and regional status, and promotion of its welfare). . . . Asad recognized that he must replace the concept "strategic balance," which had become an empty slogan with less and less chance of being realized, with a new approach focusing on an attempt to achieve the same goals through a political process led by the United States. Asad actually referred to peace with Israel as a goal, even if in practice it is a means of advancing toward his goals. . . . It seems that the change also occurred because in Asad's view the timing seems to be an opportunity—perhaps never to be repeated—to take advantage of the potential for improving relations with the West and above all the United States.

Sagi identified what he called a process of increasing openness in Asad's policies, "revealed in increased tactical flexibility: more openness toward the West, a series of changes in Syria's conception of the characteristics of peace talks, resumption of diplomatic relations with Egypt … [and] omission of the term 'strategic balance' from his public statements. All these prepared the ground for the last significant change, whose crux was willingness to negotiate directly with Israel in the framework of a peace conference." This annual Intelligence Division report was an assessment of the situation among the enemy states, but it pointed to a fairly clear conclusion as to what Israel's policy should be: "In 1991 the danger of overall confrontation initiated by the Arabs is low. . . . [However,] stagnation in the political process is liable to sow the seeds of the next military confrontation, even if this does not happen in the near future."

This was a very brave act on the part of the new head of Intelligence. He understood well that Defense Minister Arens and Prime Minister Shamir were the leaders of the hard, uncompromising ideological faction in the Likud. Shamir summarized his attitude to changes in the Arab world in one sentence, which quickly found a place in the lexicon of classic statements by Israeli prime ministers (alongside such assertions as Golda Meir's comment in the 1970s, "There is no Palestinian nation"): "The sea is the same sea, the Arabs are the same Arabs." Even after being compelled by the United States to participate in the Madrid conference, Shamir neither expected nor intended that the Madrid conference would lead to any kind of agreement, as he later admitted openly.

In a retrospective analysis in 1998, Sagi wrote with restrained criticism: "Perhaps the seven years that have passed [since the Madrid conference] may give us the sense that the time factor is not indifferent and creates circumstances that stem not only from decisions to employ a certain strategy, but also from the inability to decide. Saying 'no' to everything and not taking initiative to continue the dynamics of the process creates stagnation, which gives rise to a different, basically negative dynamic, even if the decision makers did not want this to happen" (Sagi 1998, 147–155).

Three

The Political Arm of the Israeli Defense Forces

The Influence of the Intelligence Division

In Israel, there is no separation between foreign and defense policy. This is expressed, among other things, in the fact that one parliamentary committee, the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, deals with both arenas. The natural pattern is that prime ministers are also defense ministers—the two roles were divided only when the prime minister did not have enough political power to keep the second role for himself. The ascendancy of security over diplomacy was determined by Ben-Gurion at the beginning of the 1950s: "Foreign policy has to serve defense policy" (see Peri 1983).

The defense system gained added importance in 1967 following the establishment of a military government in the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and Sinai. In addition to being constantly occupied trying to quell an insurgent war that took various forms—infiltration across the border (mainly from Jordan), terrorism (in Israel itself), guerilla warfare (in southern Lebanon), and popular uprising (in all the occupied territories)—the defense apparatus was also the body governing the Palestinian civilian population. All this forced the defense establishment, with the military at its head, to deal with the political issues that had been at the top of the national agenda for over a generation: relations with the Arab states and the Palestinians.

The defense establishment, particularly the military—followed by the Defense Ministry, the General Security Services (GSS), and the Mossad—gained added prominence due to the structural political crisis that had existed since 1967. The divide between the political Left and Right—defined variously as doves and hawks, moderates and extremists, or the peace camp and the national camp—in addition to other social cleavages, made Israel a deeply divided society in which it was extremely difficult to achieve a majority for any policy. In this state of affairs, the most convenient pattern of action for governments from both political camps was to remain passive, to hold on to the status quo, and to respond to external initiatives only when there was no choice. Taking active initiative entailed such a heavy political price that very few leaders were prepared to risk it, and then only rarely.

Despite these differences of opinion, most Israelis shared the view that the Arab world was the source of the conflict. This view—that the source of the conflict was external, and that the conflict was a reality that would change only if a transformation occurred in the policies of the Arab world—lent legitimacy to the absence of political initiative on the part of Israeli governments. The policy that remained was to follow events in the Arab world, to guard against Arab belligerence, and to hope for the day when a desire for reconciliation would appear.

This is the reason why intelligence has been a vital tool for the very survival of the Israeli state. According to Israeli defense doctrine, it is supposed to not only warn of impending attacks against Israel but also trace and evaluate less bellicose and more positive

political changes in the Arab world. Indeed, the Intelligence Division of the General Staff has become both the main military intelligence–collecting agency in Israel and the main Israeli analyst of strategic developments in the Middle East and elsewhere. As such, the head of Intelligence is subordinate to the CGS, but in practice he is also a political adviser to the defense minister, the prime minister, and the government as a whole.

The lack of a civilian intelligence system placed the military at the center of Israel's strategic and political decision-making process. The Agranat Commission, a national commission of inquiry, established by the government following the Yom Kippur War and instructed to examine the "blunder"—the causes and implications of the surprise attack on Israel—sought to break this military monopoly. But its recommendations to establish a parallel civilian intelligence system in the Foreign Ministry, upgrade the assessment section of the Mossad, and appoint a special adviser on intelligence to the prime minister were not implemented. The institutional structure and Israeli political culture gave senior status in the political decision-making community to those in uniform: the head of Intelligence, the head of its research unit, and the CGS.

Once a year, the head of the Intelligence Division presents his annual review to the cabinet, starting with his answer to the question of whether war is anticipated in the coming year. But this document is also much broader in scope; it is essentially a political document that reviews both regional and global political processes. Although it focuses on events outside Israel's borders and is not designed to deal with, evaluate, or make recommendations on Israeli politics, the "objective" analysis of the situation implies what Israel should do. Gen. Sagi explains this process in his memoirs:

> In my opinion, the chiefs of staff, and no less than the heads of Intelligence, are not only entitled to express their opinions on the significance of strategic military and political action, such as that during the war in Lebanon, it is their duty to do so. If they do not do so, then they make it easier for the politicians in the short term, but make it much harder, in the absence of intellectual integrity, to explain clearly to Israelis the meaning of what happened. . . . It is the duty of the professional level to analyze the meaning of the [leaders' political] decision and its outcome. (Sagi 2000, 106)

It was not by chance that Sagi wrote so explicitly. The previous head of Intelligence (like Shahak and Barak, who had also preceded Sagi in the role) belonged to the generation of officers whose formative military experience had been the surprise attack of the Yom Kippur War in 1973. That "blunder" had caused severe shock and added to Israelis' feeling of vulnerability, so much so that people feared for Israel's existence. The body responsible for not preventing this tragic surprise attack was in fact the Intelligence Division.

The Agranat Commission had placed the blame squarely on the head of Intelligence, Maj.-Gen. Eli Ze'ira, and Chief of Staff David Elazar and did not investigate the political leadership. The commission's conclusions angered the public, which was not prepared to forgive the government, and the resulting controversy resulted in the resignation of Prime Minister Golda Meir. But the conclusions of the commission also had serious implications for the IDF. Military officers took this as a lesson that during a crisis the politicians would disclaim responsibility and would instead lay the blame on the generals. This awareness led to a profound change in the military's attitude toward politicians. On the one hand,

military leaders developed a lack of respect and deep suspicion of the latter; and on the other hand, the officers wished to be more equal partners in making decisions so they would not fall victim to a failed policy that they had no role in formulating. The negative force of this lesson was even stronger than the similar moral drawn by the officer class in the United States following the war in Vietnam (Halberstam 2001), since the Yom Kippur War intelligence failures had threatened the very existence of the state of Israel.

The fact that the Intelligence Division's major task was to warn of belligerent intentions led it to emphasize worst-case scenarios, and the cabinet, unwilling to take responsibility, was reluctant to act against Intelligence recommendations. Only rarely did the government make a decision contrary to the position taken by the military. For example, the head of Intelligence, Maj.-Gen. Shlomo Gazit, and in his wake CGS Motta Gur, interpreted President Sadat's peace initiative in 1977 and his projected visit to Israel as a trick prior to an Egyptian military move against Israel. If this interpretation had not been categorically rejected by Prime Minister Begin, the peace treaty with Egypt might never have been achieved.

On the other hand, the failure of the Intelligence Division in 1973 reinforced the political leadership's reservations toward it, and some went even further, like the present leader of the opposition, Knesset member Yossi Sarid. He argued that "those involved in strategic evaluation strengthen Abba Eben's remark that Intelligence communities are inevitably fated to err. And they really have erred very often, apart from exceptional cases. For example, they estimated that the Iraq-Iran War would end within weeks, and it went on for eight years. They were also mistaken in predicting a quick Israeli victory in Lebanon in 1982 and did not anticipate the Intifada in 1987" (interview, July 2001).

Critics of Israeli Intelligence use its many errors as evidence that the assessments of its research unit should not be taken as revealed truth. But they also cite other reasons, including the very fact that there are often differences of opinion within the Intelligence community. For example, in the 1990s there were serious differences between the assessments of Intelligence and those of the Mossad with regard to Syria's policy toward Israel (the Mossad warned of imminent war, which did not happen). As we will see later, during 2000 and 2001 the GSS and Intelligence differed over the strategic intentions of the Palestinian Authority.

The reason for these differences of opinion—and this is the other argument voiced against Israeli Intelligence—is that in the end intelligence is a question of political evaluation and not of scientific truth. Both Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin used to say that assessing intentions or political situations is more than merely collecting data and requires political insight. And in most cases it is precisely the experienced statesmen who possess this ability more than the young Intelligence officers (Uzi Benziman, *Ha'aretz*, August 10, 2001). Regardless of the comparison between these two groups, one cannot ignore the elusive nature of intelligence information and the fact that evaluations are largely influenced by one's worldview, mental makeup, judgment, and political outlook. This, among other things, led Rabin, as prime minister, to request the raw material from which the Intelligence Division experts drew its conclusions.

The Role of the Planning Division

While Intelligence is supposed to study and evaluate purely external factors and is forbidden to deal with Israeli considerations and policies, another division in the General Staff is requested to do so. This is the Strategic Planning Division, which began as a smaller unit within the Operations Division and dealt with purely military planning issues. In 1969, under the command of Avraham Tamir, its role expanded to deal with strategic planning, encompassing not only its military aspects, but overall national interests as well, including the political and economic aspects of security (Tamir 1988, 232).

This unit gradually expanded until its acquisition of the status of an independent branch of the General Staff in 1974, headed by an officer (Tamir) with the rank of major-general. Following Shimon Peres's entrance into the Defense Ministry, the Planning Division became a joint unit of the military and the Defense Ministry, and its head became subordinate both to the CGS and to the defense minister. This strengthened the Planning Division and legitimized its penetration into distinctly civilian and political spheres.

After the Yom Kippur War, the officers and experts of the Planning Division took part in the talks that led in 1974 to two disengagement agreements: one between Israel and Egypt, and another between Israel and Syria. The main work involved was the preparation of security arrangements and maps of new deployments in the Sinai and the Golan Heights. Later, the Planning Division also played a part in drawing up the 1975 interim agreement with Egypt, and in 1976 it formulated a plan for an overall peace settlement (Tamir 1988, 14).

When the Begin government began peace talks with Egypt in 1977, Tamir and the Planning Division were again involved in the process. The division was the government's principal staff arm in the preparations for the talks. Prior to the first Camp David conference in September 1978, Tamir headed the interministerial committee that prepared the working papers for the conference, as well as participating in the delegation itself. This pattern was repeated in the peace talks between Israel and Lebanon in 1983—talks that led to the signing of an agreement, albeit one that was never implemented (Tamir 1988, 147).

The same pattern recurred at the beginning of the era of peace in the 1990s. The Planning Division coordinated the staff work for the negotiations. In its offices in the General Staff headquarters in Tel Aviv, data were collected on the various subjects of negotiations and position papers were prepared on topics from border security to water-sharing agreements to economic arrangements. Again, professionals in the Planning Division coordinated the work of civil servants in other ministries. The division did, however, enlist the help of civilian experts, with some of them doing this work in the context of their military reserve service. The heads of the Planning Division played a major part in these meetings with the prime minister, meetings at which the Israeli position on the various issues was determined. In addition, they also participated in the delegations to the talks as heads of the subcommittee on security.

The entrance of the Planning Division into the political process as the long arm of the military illustrates the Hebrew proverb, "The cow wants to give more milk than the calf wants to suckle." This was in fact a result of one of the structural weaknesses of the administration and of the organizational culture of Israel's political system. Israel's

coalition government is in many senses a federation of ministers who run their ministries with a high degree of autonomy. The prime minister's office has little influence over the various ministries, and central bodies with an overall view and broad responsibility for several cabinet ministries are relatively weak. This structure is particularly detrimental to long-term national planning, strategic thinking, and evaluation. Israeli political culture simply does not encourage long-term planning, and there are no civilian bodies capable of doing systematic integrative planning work.

The structural weakness of the government was compounded by the politicians' unwillingness to make clear decisions on territorial issues, even in the course of peace talks. The unwillingness of prime ministers or defense ministers to reveal their true attitudes or even to leave traces of their real views on paper—ostensibly so as not to give the adversary an advantage in negotiations, but in fact to avoid exposure to public criticism at home—placed the Planning Division in a "strange and difficult" situation, as remarked by one of its heads. "We were asked to draw up strategic plans in the course of the peace talks without the political echelon being prepared to tell us explicitly what its territorial policy was. In fact, there was no open dialog with us. We were forced to estimate, to guess, to make predictions of the leaders' intentions. We also knew that if a political problem arose they would disclaim responsibility for the papers we had prepared" (interview, December 2001). As we will see, this in fact happened more than once.

But the government badly needed the professional planning ability of the Planning Division, as well as another advantage that it possessed over the civilian system. In the IDF, as in professional military organizations generally, staff working practices are highly developed. Officers learn the principles of staff work during their military careers, and senior officers have long experience of methodical staff work. The combination of ability and experience is a major component of the intellectual capital that causes senior officers to be in such demand after their release from the military, both in the private and in the public sector.

The personality and style of working of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin also influenced the depth of involvement of the military in political questions in the 1990s. Rabin, a chief-of-staff-turned-politician, liked the working style of the IDF officer corps, which was accustomed to undertaking special missions, showing flexibility, dedication, and a can-do spirit. Rabin preferred this style to the slow, by-the-book style of the government bureaucracy. He was particularly concerned about what he called "leaking sickness," which he described as a disease of politicians, and feared that their personal political considerations might harm the peace process.

The use of the military as a staff unit during the negotiations was of personal benefit to Rabin. The young officers admired "Mr. Security," submitted willingly to his personal authority, and were loyal to him in a way that is rare in civilian life. A similar situation existed in the case of Ehud Barak, and this tendency was strengthened by the fact that he had moved almost directly from the military to the prime minister's office.[8] Because of his suspicious nature and his hands-on working style, Barak relied heavily on the special team he set up for himself, which was composed mainly of people from the military whom he knew and trusted.

A short time after Binyamin Netanyahu replaced Peres as prime minister in 1996, it became clear just how dependent the political leadership had become on the military for information and intelligence assessments, for political planning and the work of the Planning Division, for the practical know-how that the IDF commanders had acquired in the territories, and for the expertise of the other arms of the defense system, primarily the GSS and to a lesser extent the Mossad. Netanyahu rose to power as an opponent of the Oslo Accords who sought to "stop the process of Israel's giving up its strategic assets," and from the start he had a critical attitude toward the military. He was not enthusiastic about the fact that the senior officers dealt with political matters, and he believed that it was not healthy for IDF commanders to rub shoulders at diplomatic meetings and cocktail parties with Israel's adversaries, whom they might have to meet later on the battlefield.

Thus, tension existed between the prime minister and the senior command as soon as Netanyahu took office, and it grew when he announced that the political negotiations would be conducted solely by civilians. However, not many months had passed before he came to understand that without the military he lacked the knowledge, tools, and ability to conduct political-security negotiations with the various actors, including the United States, and he had no choice but to bring the officers back.

Four

The Modus Operandi of the Military

Staff Work and Preparation of Material

The beginning of the Oslo process was exceptional in the history of international relations. It was a private initiative of Deputy Finance Minister Yossi Beilin, using a group of friends from academia who met secretly with representatives of the PLO for five months without the knowledge of the foreign minister or prime minister and in violation of government policy. After the negotiations had made progress, they were made known to the senior political leaders, who gave their approval, with Uri Savir, director-general of the Foreign Ministry, entering the picture in May 1993. But after Prime Minister Rabin authorized the talks to continue and raised the contacts to a more official level, he left the IDF out of the process without reporting the existence of the secret negotiations to CGS Barak.

Rabin did this for several reasons. He argued that the agreement at this stage dealt with more general topics (which Rabin called "ideological and political"), most of them concerned with mutual recognition. He therefore believed that there was no need for experts of any kind and that it was better for as few people as possible to be privy to the negotiations. Internal political considerations, however, may have played a more important role in his decision. Throughout the entire process until the clandestine signing of the agreement, Rabin feared that the talks would fail. He preferred a process that would allow him to disclaim responsibility for the initiative, which would then be identified with his partner and political rival, Shimon Peres.[9]

The IDF's exclusion from the talks enabled CGS Barak to assume a critical stance toward their results. He argued that the absence of military experts resulted in many "security loopholes" in the agreement, which could be used to harm Israel in the future. But there was also another reason for the military's criticism of the Oslo process. The IDF believed that Israel should start negotiations with the Syrians rather than the Palestinians. According to Barak, Syria constituted a real threat to Israel's security: It was at the head of the Arab "refusal front," it was the core of the eastern front, and a peace settlement with it would radically improve Israel's position. Now that Egypt was not a threat, a peace treaty with Syria would weaken the Palestinians and enable Israel to reach an agreement that required far fewer concessions on its part.

After the signing of the Oslo Accords, Rabin set up the staff that coordinated the negotiations on implementation. At the head of the delegation he appointed Deputy CGS Amnon Shahak, and two subcommittees were to be headed by major-generals: Uzi Dayan, in charge of the Planning Division, headed the military team, and Danny Rothchild, coordinator of activities in the territories (and later his successors, Gady Zohar and Oren Shachor), headed the team on civilian affairs. The extensive preparatory work, which occupied dozens of experts and clerks, was done at the Planning Division, which also recruited civilians for this purpose, including senior officers in the reserves. The position

papers that were formulated in the Planning Division were brought to the CGS for his approval, and the staff recommendations were then presented to the political echelon.

In the stage between the signing of the Declaration of Principles in Oslo and the signing of Oslo B, Foreign Ministry personnel played a part but, according to Carmi Gilon, later head of the GSS, "With all due respect to the political work done by Uri Savir and Joel Singer [of the Foreign Ministry] on our side, and Abu Alla on the Palestinian side, who created the framework for the agreement, the content was filled by the military [and the GSS]." There appears to be more than a grain of truth in this statement, which is also relevant to later stages of the process (Gilon 2000, 209). This pattern continued until the last stage of the peace talks, at the end of the decade.

Decision Making in the Government, the Cabinet, and the Kitchen Cabinet

In the IDF headquarters in Tel Aviv, dozens of officers and civilians in the Planning Division pored over the material that served the decision makers, while the top brass participated in political forums where the decisions were actually made: the small, largely informal team around the prime minister and the government, and between these two the "security cabinet" or "kitchen cabinet."

Three salient points characterized the meetings at all three of these levels. First, both elected politicians and public servants, whether from the military or security organization (the GSS and Mossad) or civil servants, took part in all the discussions. Second, although in many cases the uniformed officers were more reluctant to relinquish military advantages in the territories—for example, in the army's redeployment or in the easing of restrictions on the population—on the whole the differences that emerged did not follow the lines of military versus civilian. Third, it was clear to everyone that the prime minister still had unquestioned authority to make the final policy decisions. This style of work reflects the special character of the "political-military partnership." On the one hand, no one questioned that the formal decisions were made at the political level. On the other hand, the military was deeply involved in the processes leading up to the decisions. This high degree of influence indicates a military that did not act as a subordinate body obeying orders but instead played the role of an associate or partner equal to the civilian leadership.

The nature of this military-civil partnership was also apparent in the weekly Sunday morning sessions of the cabinet, as well as in other special meetings. The CGS, sometimes accompanied by other senior officers, began to participate regularly in meetings of the government after the War of Attrition at the end of the 1960s, when almost every session began with a review of the security situation. Although the CGS does not have the right to vote at these meetings, his position of authority makes him one of the most important people sitting around the government table.

We must take into account the fact that the formal title of the IDF's senior commander, the chief of the General Staff, does not reflect his true power. Unlike the head of the military pyramid in the United States, who is the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), the military command in Israel is unified, with the CGS commanding the IDF's three arms. He is responsible for the two major functions of the IDF: preparation for war and building military strength, and the actual management of military operations.

Moreover, the Israeli pattern of command, in which high ranks are closely involved in events in the field, makes the CGS very much a hands-on leader. His position as the only formal link between the political and military echelons, the only military adviser to the government, and the all-powerful commander of the entire military gives him enormous power—much more than his counterpart in the United States.[10] This constant contact of the CGS, his deputy, and the head of Intelligence with government ministers is one of the reasons that led chiefs of staff to be "infected" with politics and to choose this profession after retiring from service.

Participation in the Talks

In contrast to the officers' involvement in the making of policy decisions, their participation in the negotiations themselves aroused considerable public controversy. The bitterest dispute arose when Prime Minister Rabin decided to name Deputy CGS Amnon Shahak to head the Israeli delegation to the talks with the Palestinians. The critics argued that IDF officers should not be involved in a political process that was at the heart of the most serious political issue in Israel. Such involvement, they argued, had an adverse effect on the IDF's status as an apolitical national body. In addition, they argued that the officers' involvement in the peace talks would come at the expense of time that they should devote to training and to preparing the military for a projected war. On a more general level, the critics asserted that the social ties that officers would form with the Palestinian leaders would dull their alertness to the danger awaiting them from the enemy.

Rabin rejected these arguments outright and claimed that this pattern had existed in Israel since 1949, when he himself, together with Yigal Allon, the commander of the southern front, had participated in the cease-fire talks with Egypt that took place on Rhodes. Another general, Moshe Dayan, had in fact negotiated with representatives of King Abdullah of Jordan over the cease-fire on Israel's eastern border. The same thing had happened after other wars—for example, when Maj.-Gen. Aharon Yariv headed the Israeli delegation to the talks at Kilometer 101, which determined the disengagement agreement between Israel and Egypt after the Yom Kippur War of October 1973.

Rabin's controversial decision also resulted in a new photograph becoming an icon of peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians: Maj.-Gen. Amnon Shahak, dressed in mufti, together with his Palestinian counterpart, Abu Mazen, strolling like old friends along the shore of the Red Sea. In a media-saturated society with an enormously powerful visual culture, this picture replaced the image that had come to represent the commencement of the era of agreements—the picture of Yitzhak Rabin shaking hands with Arafat on the lawn of the White House. There Rabin's body language had conveyed his hesitation, skepticism, even revulsion. This time the picture radiated deep friendship. And of whom? Not the friendship of a citizen but of a man who stood at the head of Israel's war machine.

And, indeed, in the course of the talks relations of trust and even friendship developed between the negotiators who came from a military background: officers such as Shahak and Dayan and GSS heads Ya'akov Peri and Yossi Ginossar on Israel's side befriended

Muhamed Dahlan and Jibril Rajoub, who had led Palestinian security organizations. Their style, if not their military experience, created a common language: "Their common control of the language of force, tempered by human empathy, was what made the relations between them so special and gave them the added value that is so necessary at critical moments in the process" (Savir 1998, 125).

Five

The Second About-Face: The Al Aqsa Intifada

Despite the IDF top leadership's support of the peace process from the beginning of the 1990s, there were some members of the General Staff who were more critical of the process. Among a "hopeful" majority in the military—those who believed that peace with the Palestinians could be achieved and maintained—the "hopeless"—those who did not—were in the minority. However, this group included the head of the research unit in the Intelligence Division, at first Brig.-Gen. Ya'kov Amidror and later Brig.-Gen. Amos Gilead. These two doubted that the PLO's about-face was really strategic. In their view Arafat's peace policy was a political tactic designed to gain territory, and he had no real intention of ending the armed struggle against Israel.

With regard to the terms of the settlement, they asserted that the PLO did not intend to relinquish the principles that it had stated explicitly throughout the years: A peace settlement was possible only on condition that Israel withdraw from all the territories occupied in 1967, that a Palestinian state be established with east Jerusalem as its capital, and that the right of return of the Palestinian refugees be implemented. They estimated that the PLO would not stop using violence against Israel during the course of the talks, although it had undertaken to do so in the Oslo Accords.

The skeptics won in September 1996. Following the opening of an ancient tunnel in the Muslim quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, the Palestinians responded with a wave of violence that left eleven Israelis dead. What most shocked Israelis was that the Palestinian police helped the rioting citizens and even used weapons given to them by Israel against the IDF soldiers. The Intelligence Division's research unit likely retorted to its ideological counterparts, "We told you so."

Another event that occurred in 1996 had a far-reaching effect on military thinking. In the spring of that year the IDF launched the "Grapes of Wrath" operation in southern Lebanon, aiming to eliminate the threat of Katyusha rockets and mortar shells being fired into Israeli territory. This was an operation in the style of future wars, using assault helicopters, MRPVs for surveillance, ingenious methods for reaching objectives, and mobile artillery and smart ammunition. All this was designed to avoid exposing the IDF soldiers to stress and burnout. The operation went well until IDF shells were mistakenly fired at a United Nations base in Kana, Lebanon, killing more than one hundred civilians, including women and children. This turned everything upside down. Israel was widely accused of slaughtering innocent civilians and lost ground in international public opinion. The prime minister was forced to stop the operation, which was now seen to have clearly failed.

The ongoing war in Lebanon, the continuous terrorist attacks in the territories, and terrorist acts in Israel proper made it clear to IDF strategists that low-intensity warfare was still going on and that the peace process would not provide a sustainable solution to

Israel's worsening ongoing security problems. They were particularly worried by the fact that the IDF could not win in these low-intensity conflicts. It was restrained by political pressures and its scope of action was restricted by coverage by the international media. Any mistake at the tactical level, such as a misfired artillery shell or one soldier breaking the rules for opening fire, could have severe strategic and political implications. All of this was happening at a time when civil society was growing increasingly tired of the ongoing conflict and wanted to return to normal life, and when its traditional supportive and admiring attitude toward the IDF and military service was changing (Cohen et al. 1998, 93). In short, the self-confidence that had enabled Israel to open negotiations with the Palestinians was being eroded. Nevertheless, the skeptics on the General Staff were still in the minority, and the top leadership still supported and participated in the peace talks.

Toward the end of 2000 the moment of decision quickly approached. The term of office of U.S. president Clinton was coming to an end, and Prime Minister Barak was in a hurry to reach an overall peace agreement that would put an end to the conflict. To this end, he urged Clinton to convene a peace conference at Camp David. On the eve of the conference, the position of the Intelligence Division's research unit had not changed. As opposed to the position of the Planning Division, which estimated that it was possible to reach a compromise at the conference on several issues, including the refugees' right of return, the Intelligence Division was convinced that the Palestinian Authority could not and would not become more flexible. The assessment presented by Intelligence to the prime minister prior to the conference stated this view explicitly: Arafat will not sign an agreement at Camp David. When the talks fail, the Palestinian Authority will launch violent action in order to wring further concessions out of Israel.

The failure of the Camp David talks engendered a change in the attitudes of the IDF leadership. The beginning of the Intifada, the intensity of the violence revealed in it, and the actual participation of the Palestinian police and other security organizations—in one case a Palestinian policeman shot his Israeli partner in a joint patrol unit—all led more and more officers from the "hopeful" school to join the ranks of the skeptics. It is a good thing that we prepared for this possibility and responded at once according to the new plan, said the officers at the outbreak of the Intifada, without asking themselves whether the military response that they had prepared was not in fact the cause of the escalation. This point requires a brief explanation.

Following the first Intifada, IDF leaders reached the conclusion that an irresolute policy and the absence of a sharp response in the very first days of September 1987 were perceived by the insurgents as weakness on Israel's part, which encouraged them to continue the Intifada. For this reason, the IDF was prepared to respond much more resolutely and massively if and when a second wave of violence broke out. IDF planners were convinced that a real show of strength immediately following an outbreak of violence would make the rioters understand the heavy price they would have to pay for the continued violence, and that would cool their ardor at once. Therefore, when the Al Aqsa Intifada broke out, the IDF responded with excessive force, including firing from helicopters, resulting in dozens of casualties among the Palestinians compared with a few wounded on the Israeli side.

Contrary to the expectations of the IDF planners, the hard blows that had been dealt the Palestinians did not subdue them. Instead, the Israeli response led to an escalation of violence as the Palestinians became increasingly angry at the strikes directed at them. Here a vicious circle began. Prime Minister/Defense Minister Barak saw the uprising as pressure by Arafat to make Israel agree to the demands it had rejected at the negotiating table. He placed all the responsibility for the Intifada on Arafat, calling him the ringleader of the violence and demanding that he stop the uprising and order the Tanzin (the armed organization of Arafat's Fatah movement) to turn in its illegal arms. Yet at the same time the government had not yet lost hope that the talks would be resumed. Indeed, in the coming months they did continue sporadically and indirectly, with increased flexibility on the Israeli side.

Barak, who was growing increasingly skeptical that an agreement could be reached, concurrently instructed Ephraim Sneh, his deputy in the Defense Ministry, to draw up alternative plans, such as graduated negotiations (that is, an interim agreement) or unilateral withdrawal from parts of the territories on the West Bank in order to minimize the friction between Israel and the Palestinians (Sher 2001). These two strategies—continuance of the negotiations and unilateral withdrawal—were both anathema to the General Staff and brought the prime minister's relationship with his CGS to a new low.

In the course of the year preceding the fall of Barak's government in February 2001, an unhealthy relationship developed between the government and the military. On the structural level the source of the trouble lay in the relations that started to develop between Prime Minister/Defense Minister Barak and CGS Mofaz as soon as Barak became prime minister. His participation in the political negotiations resulted in his functioning only part-time as defense minister. The CGS, who operated with a high degree of independence, became virtually acting defense minister. As long as there was harmony between the two with regard to policy their differences of opinion were on marginal issues. However, when the chief of staff disagreed with the prime minister, he did not hesitate to express his views publicly. Furthermore, his self-confidence increased with the lack of reaction by the prime minister. On February 15, 2000, following a week of heavy exchange of fire in Lebanon, Mofaz informed the media that he would recommend that the cabinet implement a new policy in Lebanon that would include direct fire on village-based Hizbullah positions. The cabinet ministers were furious with Mofaz. Following Mofaz's announcement, Foreign Minister David Levy said that "it is improper for cabinet ministers to learn of the chief of staff's recommendations from the media" (Drucker 2002, 325).

The first serious policy debate arose as a result of Barak's decision to withdraw from southern Lebanon. For many months Barak had talked about Israel's planned withdrawal, but he had always emphasized that a withdrawal would be the result of an agreement. As the Hizbullah attacks continued and the number of IDF casualties grew and grew, the public movement calling for immediate unilateral withdrawal (that is, without an agreement) gathered strength. In the end Barak decided to heed their demand. The public liked this decision but the CGS was furious, both because the prime minister had deviated from his previous policy and made a decision contrary to the opinion of the CGS and because of the decision to withdraw immediately, whereas he thought that the military needed a long period of preparation before deploying along a new line. The withdrawal, which was

accomplished in one night, was presented to the public as a successful operation carried out without casualties despite the skeptics' predictions. However, it was perceived by the IDF as a panicked retreat that undercut its image as a strong and self-confident military. This was a severe blow to the IDF's self-respect, and the officers pointed an accusing finger at the politicians.

Differences of opinion between the prime minister and the CGS also emerged concerning the line to which Israel should withdraw. The military wanted a line that would be easy to defend and that would give it control of the terrain and therefore demanded that the new line pass through southern Lebanon at certain points. Barak understood that the withdrawal would achieve its aims—an increase in international support for Israel and a free hand to respond militarily to Hizbullah if the latter continued attacking it from southern Lebanon—only if the IDF were stationed on the recognized legitimate international border.

This, in fact, is what happened, and the United Nations confirmed the new border and gave its blessing to the move. The result exposed how narrow the military's view of the situation had been. But this affair did nothing to improve relations between Barak and Mofaz. Withdrawal from southern Lebanon was interpreted by the IDF as weakening Israel's ability to deter attack. The Hizbullah portrayed it as a heroic victory for its warriors, and it was clear that this claim would strengthen the Palestinians' belief that they could drive Israelis out of the West Bank if they adopted the methods of a war of attrition like the one in southern Lebanon. The need to restore Israel's deterrent power in the eyes of its enemies and equally to restore the honor of the military in the eyes of the Israeli public and in its own estimation would henceforth be factors that would have considerable impact on Israeli military policy against the Intifada.

At the end of 2000, the pathological nature of the relationship between Barak and Mofaz became even more pronounced when fundamental differences arose between the government and the military regarding defense policy. After the popular manifestation of the Intifada dwindled and it assumed the character of an armed struggle between the Palestinian military and terrorist organizations and the IDF, the latter began to see it as war in the full sense of the word. In contrast, government policy seemed to be suffering from a split personality. Alongside its agreement with the IDF perception *à la guerre comme à la guerre,* the government attempted to continue negotiations with Arafat in the hope of reaching an agreement by the end of the year. The result was a policy that seemed to the military to be confused and incoherent, with frequent changes of instructions and directions that were not clear. The *Ha'aretz* military correspondent offered this summation of the atmosphere at the General Staff : "It's a long time since there has been such a spirit of skepticism among the senior officers toward the politicians and the double message coming from the political level" (Amos Harel, *Ha'aretz,* December 12, 2000).

After Arafat violated his public commitment to order a cease-fire, a phenomenon that was to recur again and again in the coming months, CGS Mofaz took issue with the political echelon, not only over the conflict with the Palestinian Authority, but also over the actual peace plan. In December 2000, when President Clinton announced his proposal for a peace agreement, Mofaz voiced strong opposition to it and during a consultation in the prime minister's bureau defined it as "a danger to the state." His remarks were so extreme

that Barak responded by saying, "Shaul, you cannot really think that Israel can't exist without ruling over the Palestinian people, but that's the conclusion that arises from your comments" (Sher 2001, 367).

The CGS took a step that was a blatant deviation from appropriate procedures, whereby the CGS is expected to express his opinion in internal discussions and not publicly, especially if it differs from the policy of the prime minister and defense minister. News stories of the conflict duly appeared in the press: "Senior officers in the IDF this week expressed surprise and criticism of the American proposal, which the government views favorably. In addition to the details of the agreement, the IDF has reservations about what appear to be exaggerated concessions to the Palestinians while the fighting in the territories still continues on a large scale" (Amos Harel, *Ha'aretz*, December 29, 2000).

The IDF did not stop at general leaks, and before the government ministers convened to discuss the Clinton plan, an article appeared in *Ha'aretz* describing in detail the CGS's position on the subject. CGS Mofaz was opposed to eight substantial points in the proposal. "The IDF sees peace as important to Israel's security and supports continuation of the negotiations with the Palestinians," said the CGS, "but these security arrangements will destroy the peace agreement and present a significant threat to Israel" (Ze'ev Schiff, *Ha'aretz*, December 31, 2000). At the government session the CGS repeated this statement in a tone so sharp that some of the participants said later that they were shocked. Mofaz thus threw down the gauntlet, defying the government and its head, challenging the president of the United States, whom the government saw as an incomparably faithful ally to Israel, and inviting public pressure on the government to persuade it to reject the Clinton plan.

As the Intifada continued in late 2000, the confrontation between the prime minister and the chief of staff intensified (Drucker 2002, 326). The IDF came to the latest conflict with the Palestinians with a firm decision not to repeat its previous failures against the Hizbullah in Lebanon and the Palestinian rioters in the first Intifada. It wanted to suppress the Intifada, to nip it in the bud by inflicting heavy losses on the Palestinians while keeping its own casualties to a minimum. For this purpose it even gave a degree of freedom of action to commanders in the field. This explains the difference between types of action in different sectors, as described by one military correspondent: "The GOC southern commander, Yomtov Samia [who is responsible for the Gaza Strip] showed no hesitation in ordering the destruction of houses, breaking a path through obstacles, and other aggressive actions, much more than in Judea and Samaria. It is not clear how many of these actions, and certainly their scope, had the full approval of the political echelon. To a Knesset member who came to visit the area and asked him about it, Samia replied simply: 'Nobody will tell me how to win'" (Ofer Shelach, *Yediot Aharonot*, December 22, 2000).

The government policy of continuing the peace talks in spite of the war did not appeal to the General Staff. It is impossible to win a war with your hands tied behind your back, the officers said repeatedly. A metaphor they were fond of using was that of a wall. "The war is a wall, and it is impossible to win if holes are made in the wall" was a favorite saying of Deputy CGS Moshe Ya'alon (who in March 2002 was appointed by the defense minister as the next CGS). He even defined the new Intifada as "the continuation of the War of Independence from 1948," an approach that implies rejection of every concession as an

expression of weakness. In conversations with journalists, politicians, and anyone else who would listen, the General Staff made no secret of their state of mind: "The IDF intends to win in this encounter. It is not ready to allow the political echelon, with its contradictory orders and other considerations, to dim its victory" (Ofer Shelach, *Yediot Aharonot*, December 22, 2000).

Again and again, the cabinet ministers saw that the prime minister and the defense minister lacked control over the military. Cabinet Minister Shahak, who was asked by Barak to open a clandestine channel with the Palestinians to improve communication and reduce tensions, realized that his promises to Arafat were not being implemented by the military. For example, he promised Arafat that the Dahaniya airfield would be opened, only to realize that his pledge was not honored by the Israeli army. In another case, Shahak agreed that tanks would be pulled back, but they were not. "Shahak and the entire cabinet realized that the IDF was resisting any attempt to ease the economic sanctions on the Palestinians. Cabinet Minister Ben-Ami reacted, 'Barak's breadth of control over the chief of staff is very problematic. Mofaz did whatever he wanted, and Barak did not put him in his place.' However, Barak did not listen to his staff's and ministers' advice to assert his authority over the military. In fact, Barak enabled the military to dictate some of the most critical steps" (Drucker 2002, 331–33). It is not clear whether Barak's behavior was a result of his agreement with the military's hard-line policies or whether he was too weak to impose his will. Whatever the answer, it is clear that Barak adopted the military's policy during much of that period.

As the year 2000 drew to an end, the feeling grew in the military that government decisions were being dictated by considerations related to the forthcoming elections:

> Barak needs an agreement with the Palestinians in order to win the elections; the military, on the other hand, will insist on its right to defeat them in battle. In the absence of a full-time defense minister to separate and mediate between these two tendencies, the contradictory messages will continue, not only toward Arafat but also between the political and the military echelon, until one of them prevails over the other. It is not clear which of them will prevail, but it is clear that it will come at the expense of the highly sensitive relationship between a democratic government and its military arm. (Ofer Shelach, *Yediot Aharonot*, December 22, 2000)

Six

The Sharon Government: The Tail Wagging the Dog?

Ariel Sharon's assumption of the prime minister's office in February 2001 should on the face of it have brought harmony between the military and the government, since Sharon had opposed the Oslo Accords and his party wanted to treat the Palestinian Authority and those involved in violence with a heavy hand. However, the tarnished relations between the political and military echelons continued during the new government's first year in office. Problems began when Sharon expressed dissatisfaction with the IDF's inability to reduce significantly the number of injured in Israel and criticized the officers for their lack of professionalism and resourcefulness. Needless to say, this public criticism was unwelcome to the military commanders, who found it hard to defend their names and professional honor.

Complaints soon began to come from the military against the political leadership—the very same complaints that the military had voiced against Barak. Sharon, as prime minister, was subject to political constraints that did not permit him to give the military a free hand. Washington's call for restraint and the criticism of the international media, coupled with pressure for continuation of the talks from the Labor Party as the left wing of the National Unity Government, forced Sharon to take the middle road. The need to take these important factors into account also led Sharon, like his predecessor, to zigzag between restraint and violent retaliation. All this added to the frustration of the senior commanders, who reiterated their complaint that the politicians would not let them act according to their professional assessment of the situation on the one hand, and on the other hand avoided responsibility and placed the blame on the military for not providing the population with an adequate level of security.

Not content with internal criticism, the CGS and his senior officers made a point of expressing their position in the media. "It seemed," wrote a close adviser to the prime minister in his memoirs, "as if they claim the right to conduct direct discourse with the public as if it were their duty to report to society at large and not to the political echelon" (Sher 2001, 368). The locus of civil authority, to which the military owes allegiance, is a critical criterion distinguishing between legitimate political partnership on the one hand and illegitimate and destructive intervention in a democratic regime on the other (Kemp and Hudlin 1992).

The core of the dispute throughout 2000 was how to define the Palestinian Authority and its leader, Arafat: whether to fight it as one fights an enemy and to define it explicitly as such, or to see its violence as part of the negotiation process and therefore to continue negotiations along with the military confrontation. Mofaz took advantage of the state of transition between the two governments and on January 2, 2001, declared: "The Palestinian Authority is becoming a terrorist entity." This was a declaration with legal and opera-

tional significance: If the Palestinian Authority is an enemy that attacks Israel and its citizens, it should be fought directly. In fact, Mofaz's statement was a kind of declaration of war modified only by use of the phrase "is becoming" rather than "has become" (Ze'ev Schiff, *Ha'aretz,* March 4, 2001).

Voices warning that the CGS had overstepped his authority made little impression on either the military or civilians, the vast majority of whom supported Mofaz's hard-line policies and who had become accustomed to the intermingling of the military and political spheres during the Intifada. A growing majority preferred a clear-cut, military solution rather than a policy of "mixed signals," as former defense minister Moshe Arens called it (*Ha'aretz,* January 7, 2002).

Despite the repeated disappointments with Arafat and the growing consensus in the government and defense establishment regarding the measures that should be taken against the Palestinian Authority and Arafat personally, even at the end of 2001 other voices were making themselves known. On December 19, 2001, Israelis were surprised by a statement in all the media "from important sources in the defense establishment" casting doubt on the possibility of eradicating terror by military means and concluding that "[g]oing on with the assassination policy is like trying to dry up the sea with a teaspoon." Prime Minister Sharon was infuriated and reprimanded his officials for their constant appearances in the media with political statements. This time the source was not an officer in uniform but a civilian, and none other than the deputy head of the GSS. Sharon demanded that the secret service cut down its media briefings and altogether talk less, but journalists who covered the area smiled cynically, knowing that nothing would change (Ben Caspit, *Ma'ariv,* December 21, 2001).

The relations between the military and the political echelons in the Sharon government became even more complex because of the power structure at the top of the defense establishment—namely, the division of civil responsibility for security between the prime minister and the defense minister and the low personal prestige of the defense minister among the military leaders. Under Barak, Mofaz had a great deal of independence, but Barak's professional superiority—as the most highly decorated soldier in the IDF—was never questioned. This was not, however, the case in 2000. For the first time in Israel's history, the minister of defense, although a retired senior officer, did not enjoy the admiration and respect of the senior command, as figures like Moshe Dayan, Ezer Weizman, and Yitzhak Rabin had done. Binyamin Ben-Eliezer had not reached the rank of major-general; the military posts that he had held did not include command of a corps, territorial command, or leadership of an important division in the General Staff. His last military post was coordinator of activities in the territories. And if that was not enough, above him was a prime minister who possessed a military aura of many years' standing. Sharon has a hands-on working style, and as defense minister in the war in Lebanon in 1982 he had in fact filled the role of super–chief of staff. This time, too, it was clear that the prime minister intended to be directly involved in the work of the military. Thus, a relatively weak defense minister found himself between a very strong political CGS and an authoritative prime minister—a recipe for problematic working relations.

The situation was complicated further by the status and role of Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. Peres's status departed from the long tradition whereby foreign policy was

supposed to serve defense policy, and the foreign minister was therefore secondary in importance to the prime minister, the defense minister, and even the finance minister. The National Unity Government formed in 2001 was based not so much on collaboration between the Labor Party and the Likud as on the partnership and mutual understanding of the veteran leaders of these parties—Sharon and Peres. Both of them are in their seventies and both have much higher prestige than the other government ministers. Foreign Minister Peres was Sharon's real partner, and, unlike Ben-Eliezer, who—squeezed between the military and the prime minister—could only recommend an alternative policy, Peres was capable of leading a move to oppose Sharon's policies.

It is no accident that Peres was perceived by the CGS, his deputy, and the senior staff as the man who made holes in the wall and who prevented them from succeeding in the war against the Intifada, since he was their number-one rival in the decision-making community. They would put military pressure on Arafat and thought that he was closer than ever to capitulation, "and then Peres rushed up with a stretcher to rescue him" (Amir Oren, *Ha'aretz*, September 28, 2001). And just as the military's differences with the prime minister were not kept from the public eye, so the acrimonious debates with the foreign minister were conducted publicly. The picture that emerged was not one of public servants expressing their opinions to their superiors, but rather of a contest between two forces of equal status in the political arena.

In September 2001, "highly placed sources" in the Foreign Ministry accused the IDF of trying to torpedo attempts to reach a cease-fire with the Palestinian Authority. "The IDF has not internalized the fact that it is possible to reach a cease-fire by talking and not only by using force.… It is a pity that there are people in the IDF who are busy all day long leaking information and inciting opinion against the prime minister and the foreign minister. It's time they realized that there is a government in Jerusalem" (*Yediot Aharonot*, September 28, 2001). The IDF on its side pressured the prime minister to attach a representative of the military (Maj.-Gen. Giora Eiland, head of the Planning Division) to Peres for his meeting with Arafat in order to limit Peres's room for maneuver in these talks. Not content with an internal decision, the IDF publicly announced its conditions for holding this meeting (Amir Oren, *Ha'aretz*, September 5, 2001).

One of the themes of the arguments between the foreign minister and the top IDF leaders concerned the weight that should be given to Intelligence assessments. Peres, who had tended to be critical of Intelligence assessments in the past, was even more critical after the summer of 2000. He and his people accused Intelligence of presenting exaggerated and one-sided evaluations, of indulging in political forecasts, and of mental stagnation—all this on top of his criticism of the IDF's get-tough policy (Uzi Benziman, *Ha'aretz*, September 30, 2001). When Uri Savir, Peres's faithful disciple, conducted negotiations with the Palestinians on behalf of the Rabin government, he refused to look at the Intelligence reports presented to him by the officer who was assigned to him. "They understand the Palestinians like I understand the Republic of China," he said mockingly, reflecting the same state of mind as Peres. "They quote all the curses that Arafat brings down on the Jews in conversations and they think, 'That's it, we've caught him.' If they recorded what Ehud Barak says about his ministers in private conversations it would not be much better" (Nahum Barnea, *Yediot Aharonot*, November 24, 2000).

In addition to the accusations hurled at the military by the Foreign Ministry, complaints were also heard from other directions that the military was not behaving according to government orders, and that it even ignored its instructions and pursued a policy of its own. In effect, they were saying that the tail was wagging the dog. Arguments of this kind had been heard from Palestinian leaders since the beginning of the Intifada, but this time the source was the upper level of the Israeli government. Accusations that the military had gone far beyond the pattern of political-military partnership were repeated explicitly in meetings of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee (Sima Kadmon, *Yediot Aharonot*, May 18, 2001). Was there any truth in these claims?

The political-military partnership model implies that despite the military's high level of involvement in the policymaking process, in the end it follows the directives of the political echelon. In fact, there have been no cases when the military explicitly disobeyed decisions of the political leadership or refrained from implementing political orders. Nevertheless, there is a large gray area between these extremes, and particularly during wartime there have been many cases when military activity went beyond the original instructions or when the IDF secured the approval of the political echelon only after operations were completed. Stories of field commanders who turned off their radio equipment to avoid receiving orders they did not want to hear are part of the IDF military tradition and have even involved Arik Sharon and Ehud Barak.

This gray area is precisely where the IDF allowed itself broad scope for interpretation of government policy in 2001. One observer described the situation thus: "The military drags its feet when the orders are not to its liking" (Ofer Shelach, *Yediot Aharonot*, December 22, 2000). Many examples of the military undercutting government policy could be cited. When a government order came to open the airfield at Dahania, the IDF carried it out but at the same time blocked the roads to the airfield so that people could not reach it. When ordered to open a major road, the IDF delayed doing so for several hours. Another case concerned a brigade commander who decided not to carry out an explicit order from the defense minister himself to open the Adam bridge over the Jordan. "When he was asked why, he replied that he would not have enough manpower to carry out the order" (Ze'ev Schiff, *Ha'aretz*, January 26, 2001).

Similar stories were confirmed by the head of the Civil Administration in the West Bank, Brig.-Gen. Dov Tzadka, who also complained of other infringements, such as the IDF "stripping policy"—razing houses and uprooting trees in order to prevent Palestinians from using them as cover when firing on Israelis from the territories. "They are given explicit orders," said the senior officer, "but when I reach the place, I find the forces in a state of hyperactivity. The soldiers and the commanders get carried away." Tzadka admitted that the defense minister's reply to a Knesset member was not correct, and that the number of trees uprooted and acres destroyed exceeded the number reported by the minister. In a small society with a reserve military, an informal political culture, and an invasive media, it is impossible to hide facts for a long time. As a result, considerable evidence of the IDF's loose style of behavior has been easily exposed.[11]

Other cases have remained unexplained. In one incident, IDF soldiers opened fire on the entourage of Mohammed Dachlan, preventive security chief in the Gaza Strip, when he returned with representatives of Israel from security talks with the Palestinian

Authority. In another case, IDF soldiers shelled the house of Jibril Rajoub, West Bank preventive security chief. These and other incidents were explained away as misunderstandings—mistakes by soldiers and the like—but they have formed the basis for accusations that the IDF is carrying out its own policies rather than the government's (Uzi Benziman, *Ha'aretz*, January 1, 2001).

The speculations aroused by these events related to the unhealthy relations between the government and the military and were manifested particularly by the man at its head. As far back as June 1999, following Katyusha shelling from Lebanon, Mofaz said publicly: "Israel should respond to Katyusha shelling, and in previous cases the government did not permit us to respond." He was reprimanded for this statement by then foreign minister Ariel Sharon: "Your job is to implement government policy, not to set it." A short time after his election as prime minister, Sharon accused Mofaz of briefing journalists against government policy. Mofaz did not take this quietly and presented a file of press cuttings that he had saved containing evidence that the political echelon had leaked information against him. And in July 2001, the prime minister seethed with fury once again when he read in newspapers that the IDF was moving forces toward the West Bank, but that its hands were tied due to the limitations imposed on it by the political echelon (Eli Kamir, *Ma'ariv*, October 19, 2001).

Two incidents that occurred in 2001 are particularly noteworthy because they illustrate just how problematic relations between the political and military levels have become. The first took place in September 2001. For a long time, the military-political leadership had been examining ways to prevent or at least reduce the infiltration of Palestinian terrorists into Israeli territory. A plan was devised to create a "buffer zone," an area along the "green line"—the 1967 border between Israel and the West Bank—blocking passage with a fence and an alarm system and even declaring these areas closed military zones.

Whether or not these plans had military advantages, they clearly had far-reaching political significance. First, implementing them would show that Israel had given up hope of reaching a mutual agreement with the Palestinian Authority. Second, the plan would create a security zone inside the territories like the one in southern Lebanon, which had been a constant source of friction and which had provoked harsh international criticism. Furthermore, the plan also resurrected the old border, which successive Israeli governments had tried to obliterate. Not surprisingly, both Peres and Sharon opposed the plan. Suddenly, while visiting Russia, Prime Minister Sharon heard that the CGS was about to hold a press conference to announce the buffer zone plan. An enraged Sharon ordered the cancellation of the press conference. He explained to the journalists on the plane with him that the CGS had forgotten who made policy in Israel. "We are a state with a military and not a military with a state," he said. "They should remember that there is a government in Jerusalem."[12] Upon his return to Israel, Sharon did not hide his anger and in a cabinet meeting said cynically to a group of IDF officers, "Next time you want to tell me something, call me at my ranch," adding his home phone number (Nitzan Horovitz, *Ha'aretz*, September 9, 2001).

A short time after this, the second incident occurred. This was related to the government's "zipper policy," whereby IDF forces entered Palestinian Authority territories, sealed off towns and villages, and afterward ended the blockades in exchange for a Palestinian

commitment to stop shooting and violence. On October 12, 2001, at a meeting of the cabinet subcommittee on security, the defense minister proposed that the IDF start easing the restrictions on the Palestinian population in places where the Palestinian Authority had fulfilled its commitment and quiet was being maintained. CGS Mofaz objected to these steps, but at end of the meeting the decision was made to implement them.

Needless to say, this story reached the media, which reported that the CGS categorically opposed all suggestions for easing restrictions. The IDF spokesman hastened to issue a correction, saying that the CGS did not object to easing restrictions in civil matters except those—such as withdrawal from Hebron—"that might threaten security and would make it hard to protect Israeli citizens and IDF soldiers." The CGS was trying to show that he was not intervening in civil matters, but the military spokesman's announcement only served to aggravate the affair since it seemed to accuse the government of neglecting the security of Israeli citizens and the IDF.

Burning with anger, the defense minister wondered aloud whether the time had not come to dismiss the CGS. The prime minister's reaction was similar, and at a cabinet meeting on October 14, he banged his fist on the table and said, "This is an impossible situation. How can the chief of staff issue such a press release? It is unprecedented. Nothing like this has ever happened in Israel's history. What, is he planning a political career? Anywhere else he would have been fired." In the end, the defense minister summoned the CGS to his office and reprimanded him for his actions.

Sharon's remark about Mofaz's political ambitions touched on one of the main weaknesses of civil control of the IDF. When the military penetrated more deeply into the area of policymaking, it became increasingly infected by politics and thus became more and more politicized. The case of Mofaz recalls the story of another CGS, Raphael Eitan. He too was chosen largely because he had been a professional soldier, taciturn and apolitical. The very fact of being on the spot when national decisions were made transformed him into one of the most political chiefs of staff. On retiring from the military he entered political life, was elected to the Knesset, and became a minister. After more than two years as CGS, Mofaz too had become such a political figure, and the possibility that he might enter political life was taken for granted by the political class. The only question that remained was what political strategy he would adopt, and this unknown gave him political power vis-à-vis the prime minister and defense minister.

At the beginning of 2002, Mofaz's behavior was being interpreted as preparation for building a coalition with Sharon's most serious rival, Binyamin Netanyahu. Public opinion polls showed that Likud supporters preferred Netanyahu—who had positioned himself far to the right of the prime minister—rather than Sharon as a candidate in the next elections. If Mofaz joined Netanyahu, they would certainly make a winning team (Eli Kamir, *Ma'ariv,* October 19, 2001). In exchange for not joining Netanyahu, Mofaz could certainly secure himself a central place in other parties. Pushing him out of the military—as Israel's political history shows—would only strengthen Mofaz politically. The prime minister and defense minister had very little room to maneuver against their insolent CGS.

As Mofaz's term as CGS approached its end, there was growing criticism of the political character of his performance in office. For example, B. Michael wrote the following in the

newspaper with the widest circulation in the country: "In six weeks' time Shaul Mofaz will go home. At last. Four years too late. It would be hard to find a CGS from the past who inflicted such severe military and political damage as Lt.-Gen. Mofaz inflicted on everything around him." After enumerating half a dozen failures and faults in his military career, Michael added, "To his discredit it will go on record that there has never been a CGS during whose term the IDF so much resembled the military arm of a political ideology rather than a national military" (*Yediot Aharonot*, May 31, 2000).

Never before had such harsh criticism of a serving CGS been published. This was not just a reflection of the new cultural climate, in which security—and even its supreme representative, the chief of general staff—is no longer sacred territory. Anger had accumulated at the depth of Mofaz's political involvement. The background to this controversy was the escalation of the war against the Palestinian Authority, Operation Defensive Shield, launched by the IDF on March 29, 2002. During that month, there had been a steep rise in the number of terrorist attacks, reaching a peak on March 28, the first evening of the Passover holiday, when a Palestinian suicide bomber killed thirty people and wounded dozens of others in the Park Hotel in Netanya. That horrendous attack on people who had come to celebrate a religious holiday brought the number of casualties in that month to 127 killed, and the government ordered the IDF to enter all the territories in the West Bank, including refugee camps, which had hitherto remained outside the range of operations of the IDF.

The declared aim of the operation was to destroy the Palestinian infrastructure of terror: to seize Palestinians who were involved in violent acts against Israel, to collect weapons, to find munitions factories, to neutralize potential suicide-bombers, and to capture their dispatchers. But the operation also had other aims, some of them more covert. First, the IDF wanted to reassert its power of deterrence against Palestinian terror—deterrence that had been weakened by the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000. Second, it wanted to strip the immunity of the Palestinian Authority in the Oslo-mandated areas under its control (Area A). If the partial incursion into Palestinian Authority–controlled areas in the early stages of the Al Aqsa Intifada aroused international criticism, Operation Defensive Shield was designed to create a new reality on the ground, whereby these areas were no longer closed to Israeli military activity.

The operation also furthered the Sharon government's policy of reversing the basic principle of the Oslo Accords, whereby the Palestinian Authority was responsible for preventing attacks on Israel and its citizens. This responsibility was now assumed directly by Israel itself. This change in policy was destructive to the spirit and letter of the Oslo Accords, despite the Palestinian Authority's actual inability or lack of interest in preventing violence against Israel. But when the extent of the Israeli military operation was revealed it became clear that it had another aim—to undermine the status of the Palestinian Authority, and in fact to cause it to collapse.

The appalling wave of suicide attacks that had preceded the military operation resulted in the fact that despite international criticism, Operation Defensive Shield was broadly supported by Israeli public opinion, even by the pro-peace camp. There was also agreement on the need for the operation between the top political echelon—the prime minister and the defense minister—and the military leadership. However, when its overall

objectives became clear and the cost in human lives was revealed, sharp criticism began to be heard—criticism of a kind not heard in the past. Although some previous operations had been more strongly opposed in the past (such as the outcry against the war in Lebanon in the summer of 1982), the current criticism was different in character. This time, criticism was directed not only at the political echelon but against the military as well. At the military level, the criticism focused on the futility of the war and the fact that it could not bring an end to terror. Added to this was the political criticism. The IDF was accused of waging a political war designed to protect the settlements and not to safeguard the security of the state, and of maneuvering the political leadership into a battle with the Palestinians. Frequently repeated statements by Mofaz and his senior officers that Arafat had no intention of making peace with Israel and that he should be replaced served as evidence for this accusation.

Certain incidents that occurred during the military operation added to the acrimony of the debate. There were injuries to civilians in the course of house-to-house fighting in a built-up area in the heart of the Jenin refugee camp, followed by allegations of violations of international law by IDF soldiers in the course of battle. But there were also complications of a more political nature, such as the siege of wanted men who had escaped into the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and the siege of the Palestinian Authority offices in Ramallah, the Mukata, where Arafat and some of the Palestinian leaders had dug in.

Again, the CGS seemed to be overstepping the boundary between the political and military spheres, as manifested by his pressure on the prime minister to drive Arafat out of the Palestinian Authority territories. In one instance, the CGS was caught on camera urging the prime minister to do so. In another, he announced that he would resign if the government agreed to accept an international delegation to investigate the accusations of violations of international law by the IDF during the operation. He also opposed proposals to put an end to the siege of the Mukata. When a compromise suggestion was being considered, whereby those Palestinians accused by Israel of terrorism would be imprisoned in Jericho and guarded by American and British jailers, Mofaz argued that that would be tantamount to internationalization of the conflict and threatened again to resign. He reiterated his basic objection to the introduction of international elements into the conflict between the Palestinians and Israel, an attitude that had its supporters in the government, including the foreign minister. Finally, the CGS publicly expressed his opinion that it was necessary to continue the operation for another month or two—*after* the prime minister and defense minister had ordered the IDF to terminate it.

In the end, all of the tensions that had arisen throughout the two years of the war—the disputes within the government, its zigzagging policy, the defense minister's weakness vis-à-vis the senior officers, the IDF's tough attitude toward Arafat and the Palestinian Authority, and above all the military echelon's high level of involvement in the decision-making process and the leeway it had in implementing decisions, and the fact that this occurred in the public view—came to a head during Operation Defensive Shield.

With his retirement rapidly approaching, Mofaz became more and more a political figure. While right-wing organizations and settlers held parties and events in honor of the IDF and its head for their achievements during Operation Defensive Shield, criticism of Mofaz grew sharper from the Left, which opposed the policy followed by the military.

"One might think by the chief of staff's behavior that he had already doffed his uniform. . . . There is a feeling that the IDF is fanning the flames. The behavior of the soldiers has severely damaged Israel's image and the chance of a political solution. . . . The CGS is supposed to obey the instructions of the political echelon and not to intervene in them," wrote Michal Aharoni in a letter to *Ma'ariv* typifying this approach (*Ma'ariv*, April 9, 2002).

As Mofaz's performance became a topic of debate between the Right and Left, little room was left for a focused debate on the essential issue—the IDF's influence on policy toward the Palestinians and its involvement in the decision-making process. Unfortunately, this subject remained a matter of interest only to a handful of academics and was discussed in just a few symposia and debates conducted during the summer of 2002, discussions that did not reach the political or public agenda. A few weeks after Operation Defensive Shield ended, it became clear that suicide attacks were not coming to a halt. The IDF therefore decided to launch yet another operation, this time not limited in time or scope, but rather a total reoccupation of the West Bank. On the day that Mofaz ended his term, July 8, 2002, this plan was even endorsed by U.S. president Bush.

Commentators who reflected on Mofaz's term of office lauded his leadership of the IDF, his introduction of organizational reforms, his strengthening of the IDF's technological infrastructure, and even his promotion of the status of women. They were critical, however, of some of his faults, including his overinvolvement in politics. The public thought differently, and two-thirds endorsed the statement that "he was an excellent chief of staff" and wanted to see him enter politics (www.dailynews.walla.co.il, July 9, 2002). Indeed, in early November, when the Labor Party left the National Unity Government and Prime Minister Sharon lost his parliamentary majority, Sharon decided to call for elections within ninety days. In order to bolster his position against Netanyahu in the Likud primaries, and in the general election, he invited Mofaz to join the cabinet as defense minister. Three months after his retirement from the IDF, Mofaz returned to head the defense establishment, this time as a civilian.

It was a national record in the speed of parachuting from the military to the government, and it was the first time that a former CGS had landed straight in the defense minister's seat without starting as a junior minister. Public criticism was rejected by the government and its supporters. The legitimate, constitutional demand for a cooling-off period was dismissed as political hostility from the Left toward hard-liner Mofaz.

Seven

Discussion: Peace from a Realpolitik Perspective

The major purpose of this study is to examine the role of the IDF and its influence on Israeli-Palestinian relations throughout the 1990s, both in the peace talks and in the war against the Palestinian Authority. After summarizing the findings of the study, I will present the theoretical conclusions that can be drawn from this case study with regard to civil-military relations in general and civil control of the military in advanced democracies in particular.

With regard to the IDF's attitudes toward the peace process, there is a difference between the attitudes of the officers as individuals and the official position of the IDF as an organization. As individuals, the officers who led the IDF first to the peace talks and then to war in the course of the 1990s revealed the same patterns of attitudes and behaviors as those that have characterized IDF officers throughout the existence of the state of Israel. They spread across the entire political spectrum. The most extreme right-wing parties in the Knesset have been headed by former professional soldiers, but so have political parties on the Left. Some IDF officers have expressed racist views and supported the policy of "transferring" the Palestinians out of the country, while others were among those who began the contacts with the PLO in the early 1970s, when doing so was far beyond the national consensus and was perceived as treason.[13]

However, most senior officers who went into politics on retirement found their places in the two major parties at the center of the political spectrum, mainly in the dominant Labor Party until the 1970s and since then in the Likud as well. Within these two catch-all parties, the officers range along a spectrum from hawks to doves, with the majority being left of center. They are not disciples of the "Greater Israel" ideology, but neither are they post-Zionists or supporters of the moralistic approach that characterizes parts of the peace movement. Their approach to the conflict is practical and pragmatic. They see relations with the Arabs mainly from the angle of security and not from the angle of rights based on God's promise to Israel, on the one hand, or of moral injustice done to the Palestinians, on the other.

This range of views could also be found among senior military personnel of the 1990s. At the top of the military there were a few officers with a distinctly ideological view based on religious belief (such as Brig.-Gen. Binyamin Amidror and Brig.-Gen. Effy Eitam). Many more were hawks for strategic reasons (such as Maj.-Gen. Amos Gilboa and Maj.-Gen. Meir Dagan). On the other side, many officers continued the dove tradition (such as Maj.-Gen. Ami Ayalon), but in the end, the majority were "dove-hawks."[14]

Two military subgroups merit special attention. One group consists of officers whose close contact with the Palestinian population or leadership in performance of their military roles made them more sensitive to the Palestinians' needs and the roots of their

thinking and therefore also more willing to respond to their requests. This applies not only to those who filled roles such as coordinator of activities in the territories (Maj.-Gen. Ya'akov Orr and Maj.-Gen. Oren Shachor are but two examples), but also those who dealt with security and the prevention of terrorism, such as the heads of the GSS. In fact, precisely this latter group (Ya'akov Peri, Carmi Gilon, Yossi Ginossar, and others) revealed the deepest understanding of the Palestinians' needs and were most willing to compromise with them. The same thing happened to the group of officers who were involved in political contacts during the peace process. Sitting together around a table for many hours of negotiations gave them a broader perspective of the Palestinians' needs, interests, and attitudes, compared with officers whose acquaintance with the Palestinians was confined largely to dealing with security needs on the spot. Lt.-Gen. Amnon Shahak and Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan are salient examples of those who hold this broader view. One should not make a sweeping generalization from this distinction, but there are many examples of it in practice.

The second group consists of military personnel who doffed their uniforms and changed their perspectives when they began dealing with affairs of state as civilians. An example of this process in the previous generation was Lt.-Col. Ezer Weizman. Weizman, who was in favor of Israel's remaining in the territories when he was commander in chief of the air force in the 1960s, became one of the most militant spokesmen of the Israeli peace camp after 1973. He and Lt.-Gen. Moshe Dayan, both of whom were behind the peace process with Egypt, resigned from Menachem Begin's government in 1980 when they realized that Begin did not intend to continue the process. In some cases, uniformed officers or those who were barely out of uniform were bolder than civilians in their willingness to meet the Palestinians halfway.

The diversity of attitudes among the officers in the 1990s, as in the past, was reflected in the positions they adopted on specific issues. In contrast to CGS Motta Gur, who saw President Sadat's peace initiative as a ploy and opposed full withdrawal from the Sinai (1977), the head of Intelligence, Maj.-Gen. Sagi, recommended that the government reach a political settlement with the president of Syria despite the territorial cost (1991). As opposed to CGS Shomron's statement in 1988 that the first Intifada should be dealt with solely by political means, CGS Mofaz argued in 2000 that the Palestinian violence could be stopped by military force.

While the opinions of individual officers are important, the positions of the IDF as an organization must also be explored. A thorough examination of its official positions throughout the various stages of the negotiations shows that although it supported the strategic move toward a settlement, the military expressed reluctance concerning steps that it saw as conceding too much—steps that were liable in its view to compromise Israel's security interests. In other words, it preferred alternatives that ensured broader margins for security to taking military risks, even if they offered certain political advantages. It also preferred concrete physical arrangements to principles, declarations, or statements of values.

This phenomenon was evident at the end of the 1980s, when the IDF began to adopt the peace strategy. Despite the change in its defense doctrine, there was no paradigmatic revolution. The IDF's support for a peaceful accommodation did not stem from its adop-

tion of the basic concepts of the ideological Left, which sees the conflict as a struggle between two equally just national movements and doubts the legitimacy of the occupation. Certainly the change did not express acceptance of the thinking and analysis of revisionist historians, who claim that even in the past some Arab leaders wanted to arrive at peace agreements with Israel, and it was Israel who refused. Officers who underwent a conceptual transformation at the end of the 1980s did not begin to think, like most of the supporters of Peace Now, that the settlements in the territories obtained in the 1967 war were the major obstacle to peace.

Even in discussing the harmful effect of the counterinsurgency warfare that the IDF had been conducting since 1967, they measured the damage to the IDF primarily in professional and technical terms. The moral issue was measured by its potential damage to the IDF, and not as a moral attitude in itself. The conflict, and the ways to solve it, continued to be analyzed in terms of the realpolitik or *machtpolitik* paradigm, which sees peace not as a supreme goal in itself but primarily as a means of achieving security. This amounts almost to a reversal of Clausewitz's famous observation on war and politics; in the eyes of some officers, "Peace is the continuation of war by other means."

For this reason, the military showed little interest in the economic arrangements that were supposed to create an infrastructure and incentives to preserve the peace. For the same reason, the military also paid little attention to the issues of preventing incitement and promoting education for coexistence. In contrast, the minutest details of the security arrangements on a hilltop or in a small neighborhood were given close scrutiny by IDF officers. Their answer when asked about this was, "It's our job to deal first of all with security arrangements." But doesn't economic development, or education for coexistence, have a security value? The military's tendency as an organization was to attribute very little weight to these matters.[15]

In this respect, the change that occurred in the IDF's conception of security at the end of the 1980s matched its military culture. This culture of "conservative innovation … has fostered incremental change, but, until recently, has resisted fundamental transformation" (Cohen et al. 1998, 79). This was said solely in reference to Israeli military doctrine, but such a definition could be applied to the broader Israeli political-military system. The fact that no paradigmatic revolution occurred is apparent from deconstruction of the new security discourse. Although the political-military leadership presented peace as a goal, the terminology they used had not changed. The prevalent terms were "struggle for peace" and "the war for peace." Victims of terrorist attacks were called "victims of peace," and Yitzhak Rabin declared that he was "a soldier in the army of peace." The language in which discussions were conducted for or against a peace agreement was replete with military terms and came from a military viewpoint, in which military experience, especially prestige acquired on the battlefield, gave the speaker an advantage.

The willingness of Israel's political-military leadership to grant the Palestinian leadership territorial and political concessions was motivated by the expectation of receiving a reward in terms of Israeli security—defense against possible activity by militant Palestinian organizations, such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hizbullah, or extreme left-wing groups. Throughout the entire peace process, the main criterion by which the negotiators judged the Palestinian side was the extent to which the leadership succeeded in this task. The

Palestinian Authority's failure to do so, particularly during periods such as 1996 and 2001, which were replete with terrorist attacks by suicide-bombers, was seen by Israelis as proof that it did not intend to establish real peace. The Palestinian Authority's argument that it could not totally control all the militant groups was dismissed as avoiding responsibility. The fact that the Palestinian public received no visible return during the negotiations (such as economic development or the freezing of the settlements), which would make it easier for it to support the Palestinian Authority in a civil war against hard-line terrorist groups, was not perceived as relevant in most Israeli military thinking.

We see here a vicious circle. Despite its readiness to make territorial concessions, the political-military leadership demanded very broad security margins, both in interim arrangements and in negotiations over the permanent settlement (such as control of border crossings and of the Palestinian skies, or Israeli bases and military deployment areas inside the independent Palestinian state). Israelis saw these as vital to ensure security in case the peace agreement was not implemented, but these very demands were perceived by the Palestinians as proof of Israel's desire to continue the occupation by other means, a situation that could never bring about reconciliation between the Palestinian people and its powerful neighbor.

Palestinian negotiator Abdel Razek El-Yehye explained this in one of the meetings of the security committee in 1995:

> You have a narrow view of the meaning of security. You need to understand that the answer lies in the change of psychological atmosphere. If you force us to do something, Arafat will not be able to survive it. If you appoint yourselves arbiters of what is right and wrong, you will destroy the good will that prevails between us and between our peoples. The way to bring about a radical change in the atmosphere, which in the end will serve the interests of both sides, is to create partnership in security. (Savir 1998, 193)

An alternative approach for the Israelis would have been to make more of an effort to put themselves in the other side's shoes, to understand the origins of its perceptions, fears, motives, and personal and collective needs, but at the same time not to ignore security considerations. This would have meant an effort to defuse some of the security threats to Israel by comprehensively understanding and responding to them. Such an approach would not have ignored the vast importance of military power, but it would have presented a more balanced package that preserved military capability while at the same time defusing negative tendencies of the adversary. An alternative approach would have been to settle for a lower level of prevention of the adversary's ability to threaten Israel in exchange for a weakening of its motivation to do so—a more significant factor when looking at the peace process as a whole. In the end, the question is how much security, or security at what price? What characterized Israel's domineering approach was its demand for absolute security, ignoring the fact that this demand severely damaged other dimensions of the relations between the two peoples.

Another issue that influenced the IDF's policy behavior as an organization was the ongoing occupation. For the IDF, an occupier force for over a generation, it was hard suddenly to relate to the Palestinians as equal partners. The long occupation had created a sense of lordship, and the officers found it difficult to "change the diskette," as one of the

participants in the talks called it. This is how civilian Uri Savir saw the situation when, in the summer of 1995, the staff of the Civil Administration had difficulty removing restrictions they had imposed on the Palestinians and transferring administrative authority to the Palestinian Authority:

> Some of these restrictions stemmed from justified security needs, but most of them were products of the habits of a growing bureaucratic monster fed by an endless budget. In the course of the twenty-seven years of occupation almost every third Palestinian in the territories had at some time or another been imprisoned or detained, and the population as a whole had suffered great humiliation at our hands. Some of the wounds of that period may never heal. Now those who had ruled over the Palestinians were asked to transfer their authority to their "subjects," and this caused them extreme distress, both conceptual and emotional. When we terminated the occupation … there were those among our people who found it very difficult to change. (Savir 1998, 237)

However, the behavior of the military was influenced not only by the attitudes formed in the meetings of the General Staff or the dynamics created between the delegations but to a very large extent by the behavior of the IDF in the field. Such influence was prevalent both in the IDF's deliberate actions, such as when executing policy decisions, and in the spontaneous behavior of its soldiers and officers. This was one of the IDF's weakest points. The sense of superiority that develops in an occupying army, the insensitivity of a bureaucratic machine that is not subject to public supervision, the soldiers' physical fear for their lives, and even the opportunities for people with disturbed personalities to act cruelly—all of these factors left their mark on the behavior of the military. Such influence was exacerbated by the fact that the IDF was an army that wanted very much to preserve a high moral standard and believed that it was maintaining an "enlightened occupation." Power tends to corrupt, said Lord Acton, and absolute power—as military rule over a foreign people inevitably becomes—corrupts absolutely.

Daily delays and humiliations in passing through roadblocks were the lot not only of Palestinians in the territories but also of their leaders with VIP cards, who were theoretically supposed to move without hindrance. The humiliation of these leaders on their way to political meetings often ruined the atmosphere around the bargaining table, as members of the Palestinian team often complained.[16] "Perhaps because we were the first occupier in history who felt as if they were the occupied, our self-image as a humane society and as an eternal victim of history, coupled with the Arab antagonism, blinded us to what was happening in the territories," wrote Savir (1998, 236). "It is always possible to explain evil behavior toward the Palestinians as a function of the fear of terrorism—and not without reason. But part of this behavior comes from deeper erosion of norms in human relations. Very few understood that if we did not treat the Palestinians with respect, as equals, across the whole range of interactions, we would pay for it in areas where there was mutual dependence of the two sides, particularly in security" (Savir 1998, 246).

In addition, the behavior of the IDF during its operational activity in a war against terror often had the opposite effect of that required by the peace initiative. This was true at both the macro and the micro levels. The use of fighter jets against civilian structures in Gaza led to the Egyptian ambassador being recalled to Cairo, a result that was not taken

into consideration in the planning stage in the General Staff or in the cabinet. Similarly, local actions taken by soldiers and officers of low rank, such as shooting at the entourage of Dachlan, the head of security organization in the Gaza Strip, or at the house of Rajoub, Dachlan's counterpart in the West Bank, were likely to influence Palestinian perceptions of the Israelis' intentions much more than the high rhetoric of ministers and high-ranking officers across the bargaining table.

Among the Israelis who took part in the talks, as among IDF officers in general, there were many who could not be included in Acton's category of "corrupt." Their behavior was in fact the reverse of this. The coordinator of activities in the territories, Maj.-Gen. Ya'akov Orr, was described in the IDF as someone "who was ready to lie on the IDF roadblocks in order to allow the gas tankers to enter the Gaza Strip in the middle of the Intifada and ease the suffering of the civilian population" (Akiva Eldar, *Ha'aretz,* December 20, 2000). His fellow officers called him "the ambassador of Palestine on the General Staff." "I don't agree with the thesis of 'Let's squeeze a bit more and they'll give in,'" he said in an interview with Amos Harel (*Ha'aretz* supplement, September 14, 2001). In the course of the negotiations, there were many cases when it was in fact the IDF officers who showed sensitivity toward Palestinian attitudes, revealing openness in their thinking and the flexibility necessary to further the negotiations. For example, Gilad Sher testified that Prime Minister Barak's military secretary, Brig.-Gen. Gadi Eisencott, was one of those who tirelessly urged Barak to make more use of the mediating endeavors of Shahak and Ginnosar (Sher 2001, 322).

Thus, in the summer of 2001 someone who had played a central role in Israel's defense system could issue declarations that sounded as if they had come from a political activist in the peace movement. For example, when Maj.-Gen. (Res.) Ami Ayalon, former commander in chief of the navy and later head of the GSS, revealed his position to the public, many people were astonished. Ayalon called for immediate withdrawal from the territories, explaining this by the need to preserve Israel's democratic character and the moral level of Israeli society (*Ma'ariv,* July 13, 2001), although the type of arguments he used accentuated the fact that he did not reflect the dominant overbearing approach that prevails in the top ranks of the military.

This leads to the conclusion that in the 1990s, as in previous years, diverse opinions concerning the issue of peace did exist among the top military commanders, but it was easier for the IDF as a whole to line up with the demand for maximum security. But can one expect otherwise of the military—especially a military that has not stopped fighting for one week throughout the existence of the state? Perhaps we should look at it from the opposite direction and praise the military for the fact that despite the state of ongoing war it has no ambitions for territorial expansion, and most of the officer class still belongs to the more liberal side of Israeli society.[17] How would militaries of other democratic countries behave if they were in the same situation?

A broader historical view nevertheless reveals an interesting phenomenon. At four critical landmarks in Israel's history when there were historic breakthroughs in the Israeli-Arab dispute, final decisions regarding military affairs were made by determined statesmen despite the reservations of the military. Prime Minister Begin responded to President Sadat's peace initiative at the end of the 1970s and was ready to give up the

whole of the Sinai despite the opinion of his CGS, Motta Gur. The Oslo Accords, which opened the peace process between Israel and the PLO in the 1990s, were achieved by Prime Ministers Rabin and Peres without the involvement of the military and despite the reluctance of CGS Barak. The decision to withdraw from southern Lebanon in 2000 was made by Prime Minister Barak in direct opposition to the attitude of his CGS, Shaul Mofaz. One can also cite another event from the more distant past, when Prime Minister Ben Gurion decided in 1957 to withdraw from the Sinai after the Suez campaign despite the opposition of his CGS, Moshe Dayan.

On the other hand, those who made these decisions were people who had only recently exchanged their military uniforms for civilian dress, including Rabin, Barak, Dayan, and Weizman. And these people were also helped by the fact that there were some senior officers whose opinions differed from those of the CGS. For example, the head of the Planning Division, Maj.-Gen. Avraham Tamir, supported the peace treaty with Egypt despite the attitude of CGS Gur. These facts illustrate how difficult it is to characterize the complex Israeli civil-military picture using simplistic definitions. How can we nevertheless explain the formal attitude of the IDF in these cases when fateful decisions for the future of the state had to be made? One explanation is that the CGS and the entire senior command as an organization presented a reluctant attitude to the proposed agreements based on the assumption that it was their professional role to be the prosecution, not the judge or the defense. As those responsible for security, they believed that they were supposed to place military considerations above all others, examining the problem from a narrow military point of view.

However, such an explanation is suspect, because at the level of the supreme command, the officers were aware that security also included extramilitary factors—political, economic, social, and others. Thus, there appears to be another explanation, related to the conservative organizational culture of the IDF as a whole. In each of the three cases cited above, the military was asked to adapt itself to a radical change in the overall political situation. And when militaries in general come to a crossroads where they have to choose between following the old familiar route and taking a new, unfamiliar path with a higher level of uncertainty, they avoid the risky option. This is not because of the attitudes of individual officers—since some officers, and even more so those who are no longer in uniform, will support making a bold move—but because the collective body, the organization, and those who are formally responsible for it will resist such change.

In the final analysis, what prevents the IDF from becoming even more conservative is its civilian character. Israeli culture as a whole, with its informal style, diversity, and pluralism, its level of equality which borders on lack of respect for those in authority, and its difficulty in accepting authority which borders on contentiousness, serves to counterbalance the institutional attitudes of the IDF senior staff.

Eight

Conclusions: Civil Supremacy in a Low-Intensity Conflict

Research on civil-military relations, and particularly on the way in which governments control their armed forces, has enjoyed a renaissance in recent years. Two topics that occupy scholars are related to the entrance into the postwar era: the degree to which the military reflects society at large, and the friction in everyday life between society and the military (Avant 1998; Moskos 1999). However, the proliferation of intrastate wars and international terror has led to a growth in the importance of a problem that seemed to have previously disappeared: the question of the military's influence on policy. In the United States, this question resurfaced following structural reforms that considerably strengthened the supreme command, both the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the regional commanders in chief (CINCs). The personality of Colin Powell, a dominant figure in U.S. defense policy, also added to this influence (Kohn 1994)—in fact, so much so that one discussion of the subject bore the heading "the origin of the American military coup of 2012" (Dunlap 2002).

In Israel, too, scholars' interest in civil-military relations focused in the 1980s and 1990s on the growing gap between the military and civil society. This research has dealt mainly with issues such as the effect of military service on civil values, norms, and behavior patterns, attitudes to war and power, and other sociological and anthropological issues (Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 1999). In contrast, very little has been written on issues that occupy political researchers, especially on the military's influence on policymaking and civil control of the armed forces. The military's participation in the peace process has not been dealt with at all, although it began over a dozen years ago and although the number of memoirs written by people who participated in the process has grown significantly.

This study, which has described the relations between the military and the political institutions during the past decade, brings the neglected subject of the military's involvement in setting policy and civil control of the military sharply to the fore. During this dynamic period, the military had initiated the peace process, conducted negotiations, and later steered a course toward violent confrontation with the Palestinians. The Israeli case has an importance that goes beyond this specific case study, both because it points to a problem that will emerge more and more as subconventional wars continue and spread, and because it raises ethical and theoretical issues that existing theories are inadequate to deal with (Bland 1999). The key to good civil-military relations is the military's respect for the principle of civilian supremacy. Kemp and Hudlin maintain that this principle in fact has two parts: (1) that civilians in the end decide on policy, and the military is responsible for the means; and (2) that civilians decide where the line between the end and the means is drawn. "In other words, the military are to be policy implementers, not policymakers" (Kemp and Hudlin 1992, 8).

The history recounted in these pages shows how simplistic this distinction is. Even if the military does not want to participate directly in policymaking, do not its assessments and evaluations influence, and sometimes dictate, decisions? On the other hand, even if politicians do not want to intervene in determining the means of implementing policy, could they leave them to the military, knowing that the actual choice of means has a decisive influence on the political outcome of military action? Furthermore, Israeli politicians and the military have agreed on the aim—to stop the Palestinians' use of violence. But how should we evaluate the argument of the military that the actual existence of political contacts with the Palestinian Authority during the Intifada reduces the possibility of achieving this aim? The hybrid situation that prevailed in 2001 makes the old distinctions somewhat simplistic. We need a more sophisticated analysis.

What is the source of the problem? In the Israeli case, the answer lies in the fact that there is a subconventional war that (1) is by nature a political war and (2) requires a limited application of military force. It is a war conducted within civilian territory, in the heart of a civilian population. It is designed not to conquer territories or to destroy enemy formations, but first and foremost to break the enemy's will to continue with its resistance, to conquer the heart of the insurgent population, and to win the battle of domestic and international public opinion. For all of these reasons, restraint and limited use of force are more important than using massive force. Exaggerated use of arms (such as using assault aircraft) invites international criticism; wanton injury to defenseless civilians raises doubts at home about the justness of the war; use of excessive force only increases the adversaries' motivation to join the ranks of the suicide-bombers. In the classic distribution of roles between civilians and officers, the officers have "operational autonomy" with regard to tactics (Bland 1999), but it is very hard to preserve this principle in low-intensity conflict. Such a war invites friction between the civil and military echelons (Dunlap 1992–93).

The problem becomes more complicated in the case of a nation-in-arms and a "citizens' army" such as the IDF. Such militaries share permeable boundaries with civil society and are penetrated by the state of mind in civilian society. Therefore, various schools of thought existing within the government encourage those in the military command who share such views. A high level of civilian involvement in the military can, in certain circumstances, strengthen the civilianization of the military, and thus also its subordination to the political echelon. But in other circumstances, it can be a recipe for friction and lead in the end to the strengthening of the military side.

Positive and harmonious relations between society and the military tend to create a pattern of civilian direction, not control, of the military (Bland 1999). This less authoritarian pattern characterizes the political-military partnership of a citizens' army in peacetime conditions. But during war there is a tendency for the military to become stronger in the equation of power (as happened in France during World War I and in the United States during the Gulf War). When this happens to a military that is in partnership with the political level, the military is liable to cross the threshold of legitimate activity, even to the extent of threatening the democratic process itself.

In Israel at the beginning of the twenty-first century, a combination of factors and conditions has led to the weakening of civilian control over the military, along with a rather

high level of influence of the military over policy. In the policy sphere these factors include dependence on the military monopoly on information; a relatively weak institutional system of civilian control that depends more on internalization of the principle of civil supremacy and less on strong constitutional mechanisms; and the absence of coordinating organs between the military and the civilian side. The weakness of civilian control is further accentuated by the political impasse and the politicians' avoidance of decisions that might have a high electoral price.

On the military side these factors include weakness of the mechanisms that are supposed to separate the military from politics (for example, by creating obstacles to a swift transition from military service to a political career); traditional resistance to the creation of checks and balances to military power such as a powerful council for national security; a command style that fosters a relatively high level of autonomy for the various levels of command; and an organizational culture of bonhomie, of equality in a negative sense, that can foster defiance of formal authority.

The fact that the IDF is a citizens' army that is devoid of corporatism helps preserve its civilian character and gives it many advantages. But these same characteristics might be a disadvantage in certain circumstances. In a society as divided as Israel is today, with a prolonged political crisis and a long, low-intensity war, friction between the political and military echelons is hard to avoid, and the military can easily transgress the boundaries permitted in a democracy, with the ailing political system unable to counter such a shift in power.

But perhaps, after all, in the case of Israel we should see that the cup is half-full and not half-empty. The revelations of the extent of the military leaders' influence on policy in the United States (Halberstam 2001), the description of the power wielded by the CINCs as a parallel diplomatic arm of U.S. foreign policy (Priest 2000), and the Bush administration's style of conducting the war against international terrorism perhaps highlight Israel's achievements as a state. Despite being in continual armed struggle since its very foundation, Israel has nevertheless managed to preserve its democratic structure. Even if it is sometimes blurred, an impressive civil-military balance still exists in the country.

At the same time, the Israeli case may shed important light on the future of civil-military relations in the United States, European countries, and other postmodern societies. The blurring of politics and military affairs, the influence of generals at the highest levels of policymaking, the ability of one overzealously destructive soldier to radically alter public policy: these dramatic trends may form the wave of the future. Advanced democracies are increasingly undertaking the same type of military interventions that Israel has carried out for decades—counterterrorism operations, subconventional warfare, and peacekeeping missions—the kinds of operations that were the direct cause of the current transformation in Israeli civil-military relations. The current war on terrorism, so strikingly similar to Israel's armed struggle, may even be the catalyst for such change.

Nine

Moving Forward: Recommendations for Improving Civil-Military Relations in Israel

The question that arises, therefore, is what can be done to improve civil control under conditions of low-intensity warfare. In Israel, the major factors that upset the stability of relations between the civil and military wings were the weakness of the political system and the ongoing situation of subconventional war. Assuming that these two conditions will not change, a real remedy requires a radical change in Israel's political culture. Such transformations might include a change in the political channels of mobility—that is, reducing the weight of the military as a route of mobility and creating frameworks for the development of political leaders from the private sector, academia, and other arenas.

In other words, it is possible to achieve a radical change in the extent of the IDF's influence over the political echelon and create a healthier balance between it and the civil systems if there is increased awareness of the need to strengthen civil society. This awareness has been developing in Israel since the 1980s, but it still needs fostering and cultivating. It is particularly vulnerable in times of crisis, when a worried public is too ready to accept the penetration of the state into civil society. Short of such long-term revolutionary change, there are several practical solutions that would remedy this problem in the short to medium term.

The major thrust of such reforms must be to prevent the military command from penetrating the top political echelons. It is essential, therefore, to first define a significant and mandatory "cooling-off period"—not less than three years—for retiring senior officers, and particularly for the chief of staff, before they can enter political life. In addition, senior officers' involvement in the policy sphere should be restricted in practice. This can be done by reducing the number of officers who take part in cabinet meetings and limiting their participation to sessions in which the cabinet discusses strictly military matters. It is even possible to limit the duration of their participation, as is done in the cabinets of many democratic countries, such as the United Kingdom. Such procedures allow military officers to join the meetings mainly at the reporting stage and participate less at the discussion and decision-making stages.

All of these recommendations relate to the innermost pole, where policy decisions are made. But it is also essential to restrict the range of the military's influence in the opposite direction, at the most open and public level. The senior staff's free access to the media in connection with political matters is a powerful tool for unduly influencing the political process and must be substantially restricted. Senior IDF officers, and particularly the CGS, his deputy, and the heads of Intelligence and Planning, should avoid announcing their political views in public. In many news media interviews conducted in recent years, the officers gave lip service to the ideal of keeping the military sphere separate from politics, but

in practice they expressed themselves freely on political issues. For example, the head of Intelligence, Maj.-Gen. Aharon Ze'evi Farkash, said recently of Arafat, "He isn't, and cannot be, a partner to a peace agreement" (interview with Smadar Peri, *Yediot Aharonot*, May 16, 2002).

Since the culture of leaking information is so deeply rooted in Israeli politics, military personnel must find a way to guard their tongues even in closed circles, because things said there somehow nearly always find their way to the media, whether this was intended or not. For example, in May 2002 the CGS-designate, Moshe Ya'alon, attacked the Foreign Ministry (and more specifically, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres) for continuing to relate to Arafat as the legitimate chairman of the Palestinian Authority, and the reporter was able to add that similar criticism had been voiced in the corridors of the General Staff by other high-ranking officers (*Yediot Aharonot*, May 14, 2002).

Another fundamental change must be to reduce the dependence of the civil authority on information and assessments from military sources. This can be done in several ways. First, the supplying of comprehensive assessments of the national situation should be taken out of the hands of the Intelligence Division and given to another, broader body, which would include representatives of the military, the Mossad, the General Security Services, the Foreign Ministry, and civilian strategists. Such a variegated group would take factors into consideration in addition to purely military ones. The new body could also be a modified national security council.

Furthermore, during policy meetings, senior IDF officers should not recommend to the political echelon only one plan of action but rather should suggest alternative plans, explaining the implications of each one. The case of the peace treaty with Egypt can serve to illustrate this point. In the discussions regarding Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai peninsula, it was easy for Prime Minister Begin to withstand the opposition of CGS Gur and his head of Intelligence, who had strongly opposed a comprehensive peace settlement and cession of the whole peninsula. Other military officers had provided alternative assessments—for instance, the head of Planning, Maj.-Gen. Tamir, had voiced support for full withdrawal—which substantially eased the pressure on Begin.

Perhaps the most important way to remedy the faults exposed in recent years in political-military relations is to place the matter on the national agenda for open, public discussion. The myth that "the IDF does not engage in politics" is so deep-rooted that it blinds both the political elite and the general public to the extent of military influence on policymaking. Recognition of the fact that the prevailing pattern in Israel is in fact military-political partnership and clarification of the model's implications for the democratic system are preconditions for reform.

Although CGS Mofaz's conduct during the Al Aqsa Intifada aroused public criticism, the critics came only from the left side of the political map. Such politicization of the issue is a sure recipe for preventing its being addressed, and yet Israelis who are interested in keeping Israel an accountable, democratic state must begin to concern themselves with this problem. The fact that the military was deeply involved both in seeking a peace treaty

at the beginning of the 1990s and in directing the war at the end of that period is the best proof that the problem is not related to the political divide between Left and Right. The problem is not the content of the military's political views but the very fact of its powerful influence on the policy sphere. Such influence goes beyond the level acceptable in enlightened democratic regimes and must not be tolerated any longer.

Notes

1. Since the mid-1990s a radical school of Israeli sociologists has argued that Israeli society is militaristic. The most prolific members of this school are Baruch Kimmerling (2001) and Uri Ben-Eliezer (1998).

2. Another expression of the political-military partnership model is that the military serves as a major route of mobility to the top of the political pyramid. Since the beginning of the 1970s some 10 percent of Knesset members and 20 percent of cabinet members have been retired senior officers. This relationship is even more apparent at the highest levels of government. Out of seven prime ministers and eight defense ministers, five and eight, respectively, have been senior military officers.

3. In discussing the IDF in this paper, I mainly refer to the senior professional officers in the regular services. These are the element relevant to the analysis of political-military relations, while for general civil-military analysis the most relevant fact is the nature of the IDF as a citizens' army, or nation in arms.

4. The concept "policy sphere" is used to distinguish it from the "public sphere." This is the more important sphere, where political decisions are made, while the public sphere is where the public discourse takes place (see Bennet and Entman 2000).

5. Rabin in a speech on June 10, 1991, "After the Gulf War: Israel's Defense and Its Defense Policy," which appeared in the collection *Yitzhak Rabin and Israel's National Security* (Ramat Gan: BESA Center, Bar-Ilan University, 1996).

6. Interview, July 2001. Some of the interviews with senior officers were conducted on the condition that the officers would not be quoted by name. The same view was expressed by Ehud Barak in an interview in *U.S. News and World Report*, December 1994.

7. For the best treatment of this subject, see Cohen et al. 1998.

8. Between these positions, he served for a very short period as minister of internal affairs and foreign minister.

9. This was the explanation offered by Eitan Haber, Rabin's aide and confidant, and from my own knowledge of Rabin I tend to accept it. Another interesting explanation, suggested by Peres's aide, was that Rabin was afraid that the officers would demand more precise formulations of security matters, delaying the progress of the talks and resulting in the fact of their having taken place being leaked, which in turn might have led to the breakdown of the process (see Makovsky 1996, 101).

10. Changes in U.S. law in recent years, such as the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, and the establishment of regional commands headed by commanders with extremely broad diplomatic as well as military responsibility are a recent subject of interest to scholars of civil-military relations; see, for example, Priest 2000.

11. These dramatic accusations were published by none other than the IDF journal *Bamahane*, December 28, 2001. Revelations of a more serious nature involving soldiers and officers injuring Palestinians were published in a statement of reserve officers declaring their refusal to serve in the territories; see *Yediot Aharonot*, January 25, 2002.

12. For details of this incident, see Eli Kamir, *Ma'ariv*, September 19, 2001.

13. The former category includes Maj.-Gen. Rehavam Ze'evi, founder of Moledet, which supports the transfer of Palestinians from the West Bank; Lt.-Gen. Raphael Eitan, founder of Tzomet; and Colonel Prof. Yuval Ne'eman, who was involved in developing Israel's nuclear capability and is one of the leaders of Tehiya. The latter category includes Colonel Meir Pa'il and Colonel Mordecai Bar-On, both members of left-wing parties in the Knesset; Maj.-Gen. Matti Peled of the Israel-Palestine Council; and former head of Intelligence Maj.-Gen. Aharon Yariv, author of "The Yariv-Shemtov Formula," which proposed compromise with the PLO.

14. See Amir Oren, *Ha'aretz*, January 6, 2002.

15. This point has been raised repeatedly by some, including Eitan Bentsur, past director-general of the Foreign Ministry, in an interview in July 2001.

16. See, for example, the comments of Saib Arikat in an interview with Amira Hass, *Yediot Aharonot*, January 26, 2001.

17. About a year before the Six Day War, senior IDF officers discussed the question of how to act in the West Bank if the IDF conquered it during a war. The majority opinion in the General Staff was to transfer the territories as soon as possible to the jurisdiction of the United Nations.

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