

‘Israel’ serve as imperialism’s forward base in the area. The Zionist lobby openly advertises for this function in its efforts to solicit massive US aid to ‘Israel’. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the most influential component of the Zionist lobby, published a booklet entitled «The Strategic Value of Israel» in 1982, timed to coincide with the invasion of Lebanon and the Reagan Administration’s military build-up. The topics of the booklet include: «Israel as a Prepositioning Site,» «Comparing Deployment Times» and «Comparison in Terms of Cost.» Based on the geostrategic location, political stability, reliability and «advanced society» of ‘Israel’, the AIPAC argues that US troops and military equipment positioned there could be more easily, speedily and cheaply be moved to the Gulf «in the event of Soviet aggression,» than from the US or existing US bases in the area.

The AIPAC moreover appeals directly for Israeli inclusion in NATO: «From the point of view of US defense planning, it has the potential to contribute in three theaters: the Gulf, the Mediterranean, and NATO’s Southern and Central fronts.» In future projection, this means not only Israeli involvement against the socialist community, but also against a revolutionary development occurring in Western Europe.

IN WORD AS IN DEED

Putting statements aside, historical reality provides the best evidence of the Israeli role in the Middle East. Most obvious are the five major Arab-Zionist wars, all generated by Israeli expansionism, in addition to continuous raids on neighboring countries in the interim. Another indication is that the Zionist state has developed its own atomic weapons in secret cooperation with the imperialist powers, and more recently joined the US’s SDI (Star Wars). Other evidence is seen in the regional and international alliances into which the Zionist state has entered, from the Phalangists in Lebanon and the Shah of Iran, to Somoza and now the contras in Nicaragua. Over the years, the experience gained in policing the Middle East has enabled ‘Israel’ to assume a leading position in exporting arms and military expertise to reactionary states and forces fighting liberation movements and newly independent countries.

The structure of the Israeli society itself has been determined by the military nature of the Zionist state’s role in the region. This is seen in the overlap between the Israeli political and military leadership, and the militarization of the economy and society in general. Zionist settlements in occupied Palestine serve as armed bastions in the midst of the Palestinian population, each a microcosm of the existence of ‘Israel’ as a garrison state in the midst of the Arab world.

Facts and figures attest to the Zionist state’s role as a strike force for imperialism: «Official government releases indicate that the IDF can deploy eleven divisions within seventy-two hours. Intelligence estimates, however, suggest that it can actually deploy almost fifteen divisions. If that estimate is correct, it makes the IDF one of the largest deployable ground forces in the Western world. By comparison, the United States army is able to deploy some sixteen divisions, but it would take an enormous amount of time and effort to fill them out with sufficient manpower and equipment (280 days according to one estimate)...»²

FROM PALESTINE 1948 TO LEBANON 1982

Many analysts of the 1982 invasion of Lebanon fall prey to the illusion that this war was basically different from the previous campaigns fought by ‘Israel’. It is said that this was

the first war which ‘Israel’ had not been forced to fight, or had not fought in ‘self-defense’. It was claimed that this was the first war when ‘Israel’ inflicted unnecessary civilian casualties, and fought for the sake of imposing a particular regime in the country invaded. Such reasoning is to accept the self-perception of the Israelis themselves, for it was in fact the first war where substantial portions of the population *realized* that they were not fighting a necessary war of self-defense. The war was prolonged by the tough resistance put up by Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian patriots. The resulting difficulties faced by the invading Israeli army enforced this realization upon Israelis and the world at large.

Yet the wars of 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973 were in essence no different. The October War in 1973 differed only in that technically it was begun by Egypt and Syria, but as an attempt to partially redress the results of the 1967 Zionist aggression against them. The major Arab-Zionist wars have been what the Israelis term ‘preventive strikes’, i.e., wars they themselves planned, provoked and launched to achieve expansionist goals. The goal of changing the regime of an Arab country was also included in the previous wars. In 1948, Zionist aggression imposed and expanded a Jewish state in Palestine at the expense of Palestinian statehood. In 1956 and again in 1967, a prime Israeli war aim was precipitating the downfall of Nasser. Just as in Lebanon 1982, ‘Israel’ has each time used phoney excuses for starting a war, violated ceasefires to its own advantage, and engineered its military campaign to mesh with imperialist interests. By reviewing these wars, we aim to illustrate the Israeli role in the region, while refuting the commonly accepted propaganda that Arab ‘aggression and intransigence’ are the cause of the Middle East conflict. Concrete facts expose the falsity of the Israeli claim to be a small state in the midst of Arabs who intend to «throw the Jews into the sea.»

We have put a detailed review of the 1948 war in a separate article in this issue, to mark the 39th year since the creation of the Zionist state. Below we will concentrate on the 1956 and 1967 Israeli aggressions.

JOINING THE COLD WAR AND THE CAMPAIGN VS. EGYPT

In the fifties, the US administration was formulating the Eisenhower Doctrine, wherein the Middle East was considered pivotal for containing the Soviet Union. David Ben-Gurion, the Israeli prime minister, sent a memorandum to President Eisenhower, which spelled out the Zionist state’s alignment in the US-inspired cold war: «Nasser’s take-over of the Arab Middle East, with the assistance of the tremendous might of the Soviet Union, would have serious implications for the West... We have begun to strengthen our ties with neighboring countries on the outer circle of the Middle East: Iran, Ethiopia and Turkey, with the purpose of creating a powerful dam against the Nasserist-Soviet torrent...»³ With Turkey a member of NATO, and Turkey and Iran in the Baghdad Pact, this marked the beginning of Israeli striving for integration into US-dominated military axes and strategy.

In 1954, Moshe Dayan, head of the Israeli army’s operations branch and on his way to be chief of staff, presented a plan for military moves against Egypt to precipitate a war. Defense Minister Lavon and Ben-Gurion proposed invading and occupying parts of Syria, to control the Jordan River headwaters, while demonstrating Israeli strength to the US. The three together forwarded the idea of precipitating a civil war in Lebanon and setting up a ‘Christian state’ under the leadership ►