

tried to deal with the PLO in Lebanon, as a primary threat requiring war: Speaking on Israeli army radio, he said, «Let's assume for a moment that Jews will not live in Nablus, and in the course of time terrorist activity begins in Nablus... it is reasonable to believe that the day will come when we have to shell Nablus.»

Yehoshafat Harkabi, retired head of Israeli military intelligence, maintains the opinion he has expressed since 1968, that guerrilla warfare and «sporadic subversion» are not a challenge to Israel; he believes that «Israel's overemphasis on terrorism is a mistake,» helpful only in public relations «as a way to castigate the PLO.» But he goes on to note: «A new phenomenon is 'private enterprise' terrorism, carried out by individuals, especially young people, which is not spectacular but hurts just as much - such as random stabbings with a kitchen knife... it may become a considerable threat.... This sort of terrorism is very hard to suppress; it has no command posts or headquarters to strike at, and attempts to counter it through increased repression and collective punishment are likely to lead only to an escalation in scale...» (*Israel's Fateful Decisions*, 1988, pp. 36 - written before the intifada).

TERRITORY AS SECURITY?

Territory could not but be the pillar of the Israeli security concept since the state exists by virtue of conquering others' land and procuring the required infrastructure. The multi-dimensional significance of territory was obvious in the appeal of Chaim Weizmann, Zionism's foremost pre-state leader, to US President Truman in the autumn of 1947, as the UN Partition Plan was being drawn up. Weizmann argued against the prevailing inclination to exclude the southern Negev from the proposed Jewish state, citing the importance of Aqaba as the only outlet to the Indian Ocean: «For the Jewish state this outlet will be one of the most important routes for commercial relations with that part of the world.» Citing the need to develop industry and commerce to absorb Jewish immigration, he said that the importance of Aqaba was much greater than just a piece of land, concluding «Aqaba in the hands of the Arabs, may be a permanent threat in the rear of the Jewish state» (quoted by Eban, op.cit., p. 442).

The quest for territory was expressed in Ben Gurion's concept of carrying the war into the enemy's territory, i.e., the land which the Palestinian peasants refused to sell or abandon. In 1948, the Zionist militias not only took control of the territory allotted by the Partition Plan, but carved deeply into the proposed Palestinian state which would have no chance to materialize.

After a brief interlude in the early fifties when Moshe Sharett, who had replaced Ben Gurion as prime minister, tended towards reaching an accommodation with Nasser, the territorial expansion option decisively won out: «Prior to 1967, Israeli military doctrine called for an offensive military strategy to compensate for its numerical disadvantage, lack of strategic depth, and the absence of acceptable borders with its neighbors. The concept of preemptive war and retaliatory strikes became an essential ingredient of Israeli military policy... linked... with a deterrent theory that advocated an Israel strong in both military manpower and weaponry» (Mroz, op.cit., p. 114).

In the 1956 attack on Egypt, Israel occupied the Gaza Strip and Sinai, and was the last of the attackers to withdraw. The pre-emptive war strategy reached its height in 1967. «It was only after Israel had acquired significant territorial gains in the Six-Day War that the formula of 'defensible borders' emerged... (which) essentially called for expansion of Israel's geographical security margin to enable her to absorb an enemy attack without a pre-emptive strike» (Horowitz, op. cit., p. 91).

Pre-emptive strikes did not stop, but the belief in the territorial component of Israeli security was strengthened across the political spectrum. The Whole of Israel movement was formed by prominent Labor intellectuals and politicians. Yigal Allon, Palmach commander and later foreign and deputy prime minister, declared that he would choose East Jerusalem over peace; Moshe Dayan, defense minister, said the same about Sharm al Sheikh in the Sinai.

The 1973 war showed that the «defensible borders» did not guard against surprise attack, and that occupation invited war. Though this sent shock waves through the Israeli military and political establishment and the public, it did not lead to deep questioning of the territorial option. «The Israeli public embraced the concept that Israel was saved in October, 1973, largely because the enemy had been at a distance when the war began, and there was sufficient time for mobilization to stop the several front attacks» (Mroz, op. cit., p. 45). After the war, the government rejected King Hussein's offer of a separate agreement, if Israel would withdraw 12 kilometers along the length of Jordan, because this would have denied the Jordan River as Israel's security border (Maariv, April 25, 1980). The main response of the Israeli leadership was to further build up the state's military might. Subsequent elections in 1977 brought in the Likud which unabashedly promoted an ideology of territorial expansion.

Yair Tsaban of the Mapam Party contends that Camp David greatly affected Israeli perceptions: «Before Sadat's trip to Israel, between 80 and 87 percent of the Israeli public supported Dayan's formula for Israeli security (that the Sinai and Sharm Al Sheikh was preferable to peace)... but then Dayan became one of the architects of a peace plan based not on a different percept but on its exact opposite... An overwhelming number of Israelis... changed their minds overnight. Why? Because before, their political imaginations had been unable to comprehend something other than war» (*Journal of Palestine Studies* 56, Summer 1985).

Other indications tend to modify this assessment: «Despite the peace treaty with Egypt, the majority of Israelis today still adhere to the view that defensible borders without peace are preferable to peace without defensible borders» (Mroz, op. cit., p. 38). Prominent Labor politicians and military men opposed the negotiations with Sadat on the assumption that he would demand a return to the 1967 borders. The former prime minister, Golda Meir, called Begin's «peace plan» a «concrete terrible danger.»

Mroz reports that «many Israelis believe that the retention of troops in the Jordan Valley is essential to guarantee the effective demilitarization of the West Bank and, in the event of another war, would make Jordan itself the front line» (op. cit., p. 115). There is broad consensus that the Golan Heights are ►