



and now director of Tel Aviv University's Center for Strategic Studies. These officers call for withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, based on conviction that continued occupation is a security liability, and that peace would better serve Israeli security interests. Most favor demilitarization of the West Bank except for an early warning system and permanent Israeli intelligence facilities on the mountain ridge.

Israeli newspapers were soon reporting that 70-80% of the present general staff believe somewhat the same. Three Labor ministers, former chiefs of staff, including Rabin, were said to concur that the occupied territories are a burden in strictly military terms (*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, July 17, 1988). A poll commissioned by the new council showed that 20% of Likud voters would support territorial compromise if Israel's defense needs were guaranteed. A poll published in September 1988 showed almost 60% of Israelis supporting some kind of territorial compromise, whereas pre-uprising polls generally registered no more than 40% for this option.

There remains, however, a group of senior officers who insist that the 1967 occupied territories are decisive for Israeli security. An example is the former intelligence officer and reserve general, Lavran, who emphasizes Syria's growing air power and other Arab states' acquisition of ballistic missiles. This, in his view, makes it imperative to maintain control of the 1967 occupied territories to provide «strategic depth» that would limit Arab temptation to deal Israel a decisive blow (*Report on the Balance of Power in the Middle East*, 1988).

Such thinking parallels Zionism's historical position on territory, which is today upheld by Likud, as evidenced by Shamir's leadership. He is managing affairs of state so as to maintain the status quo, considering this preferable to a peace settlement that would involve concessions leading to a Palestinian state which is seen as a threat to Israel's very existence. Labor's historical slide to the right and the existence of the national unity government means that this position predominates in practice. This is the most immediate reason that the combined impact of the intifada and the PLO's peace offensive has not evoked any decisive change in official Israeli policy. Speaking on Israeli radio, January 16, 1989, Foreign Minister Arens spelled out why the government would not be affected by the new PLO policy: He said that Arafat's recognition of Israel was contingent on a Palestinian state, self-determination and return, which together mean the destruction of Israel.

Even those who advocate territorial compromise hedge their bets considerably. The generals of the Council for peace and Security prefer that the occupation be superseded by autonomy or federation of the West Bank with Jordan, rather than Palestinian independence. Abba Eban is perhaps the most famous Israeli to have reversed his position on territory. From being the foreign minister of the 1967 war, justifying territorial acquisition on security grounds, he today finds the status quo untenable, and advocates peace and withdrawal. However, an interview with *Middle East*, May 1989, is enlightening. Asked if the PLO was required to recognize Israel's pre-1967 borders in

order to meet Israeli security needs, Eban answered: «You can't guarantee Israel's security needs by newspaper or radio interviews. There has to be meticulous negotiations about every square kilometer, about every hill, about every valley. And the only thing that's quite obvious is that you cannot secure it by any mechanical formula, such as going back to previous lines - because the previous lines, for example, were dividing Jerusalem...I believe Israel would be well advised to make only those territorial changes which do not involve exercising our jurisdiction over additional populations in any large numbers.» Here Eban mixes security concerns with Zionist territorial ambitions concerning Jerusalem, and does not depart from the Alon Plan (Labor's traditional model) which involves annexation of as much as one-half of the West Bank.

Most of the advocates of territorial compromise are somehow tied to the traditional Labor concept, and Rabin's position exemplifies where that leads. Although reportedly viewing the territories as a military liability, he has repeatedly proclaimed that Israel will never return to the pre-1967 borders. His direction of the war on the intifada serves to delay any withdrawal at all costs. According to *Haaretz*, September 4, 1989, he even has a problem with Mubarak's proposal that the army should withdraw from the polling areas during elections in the occupied territories.

Even those prepared for substantial withdrawal and dealing with the PLO under certain conditions (Peace Now, Mapam, the Citizens Rights Movement) have avoided support to those refusing service in the occupied territories. This would be the most powerful means of pressuring the Israeli government towards territorial compromise, but this «left» is still caught up in the Zionist security rationale where the military remains a sacred cow. Crefeld, the military historian previously quoted, wants immediate withdrawal. He says, «Everybody agrees there has to be a great wall between us and them, and the only argument between Ghandi (Ze'evi, the Moledet MK who advocates «transfer») and Shulamit (Aloni of the Citizens Rights Movement) is on the location.» He would prefer transfer himself, but finds it unrealistic, so he is for a wall «located where we choose, so that there are as many Arabs as possible outside.»

Years of Zionist ideology and practice, cloaked in security jargon, have erected a barrier in the minds of even those Israelis who aspire for peace. This leaves a big gap between recognition that the occupation is untenable, and the obvious conclusion of unconditional withdrawal. A few Israelis have written about this problem. Meron Benvenisti, former mayor of Jerusalem, who became famous for his studies about the occupation, says, «...The Israelis cannot acknowledge the fact that there is another collective identity or entity on this land...That is why, whatever is being said in Algiers or Stockholm does not mean anything to the majority of Israelis.» He is not optimistic about the uprising breaking the impasse: «...the uprising has already become a way of life for both Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs (and I include among them Israeli Arabs). The communities in the land are slowly adjusting to the low-intensity inter-com-