

'Israel' in Crisis

For 'Israel', the importance of the strategic alliance agreement is clear. The Zionist entity has been created, maintained and expanded by the use of force. Thus it needs a huge military force with the latest technology, backed up by a strong economy. 'Israel' cannot finance its expansionist ambitions or act as imperialism's 'big stick' in the Middle East without US aid. A large part of the agreement focused on more such aid.

Today more than ever, 'Israel' needs US aid. Since the invasion of Lebanon, it has been experiencing the worst economic crisis in its history, affecting all sectors of the population. The deteriorating economic conditions fuel the political dissent which emerged sharply with the 1982 invasion. In the past, 'Israel' could ignore such dissent because it was confined to a very small group, but today, it is spreading to a sizeable minority.

This crisis in turn threatens the demographic situation of the Zionist state. Because of its nature as a settler state, 'Israel' depends on immigration for survival. To fulfill its stated role as a problem-free homeland for the Jews of the world, it must appear as an attractive place in which to settle. Today the situation is not attractive due to the economic crisis, added to the Israeli military failure and daily losses in Lebanon. The Zionist state's reduced ability to attract new immigrants, coupled with increasing emigration, could, in the future, cause a shortage of manpower for new military adventures.

These developments are very alarming not only to the Zionist leadership, but to the US leaders as well. For 'Israel' to act at a moment's notice on behalf of US imperialism, its internal situation must be stable.

Seen in this perspective, the strategic alliance agreement, and the extra aid that flowed with it, mark the Reagan Administration's tangible re-endorsement of the Likud government. Legitimate arguments have been advanced that the US would prefer the return of the Labor Alignment to power. However, at present, these arguments pale in the light of the Reagan Administration's global stress on militarism. At present, the Reagan Administration is working to more closely link all foreign aid to US foreign policy objectives. This means ever increasing emphasis on military aid and exclusively to states that politically and in practice support US imperialism's global counterrevolutionary crusade. Increased aid to 'Israel', to alleviate the Likud's problems, falls in line with this.

Rewards for 'Israel'

As part of the strategic alliance agreement, the US agreed to give artificial respiration to the Israeli economy through an even broader range of economic and military aid. For one, the US agreed to negotiate a free-trade pact that would eliminate the 10-15% tax now imposed on imported Israeli textiles and wood products. US trade representative spokesman William Brock pointed out, "The US has no such arrangements with any other country". This will contribute to reducing the Israeli balance of trade deficit, which reached \$2.94 billion in 1982, and is projected at \$3.6-4 billion for 1983. However, the consequences of cheaper Israeli products competing with US products, in already recession-troubled US economy, can endanger more US workers' jobs.

The Reagan Administration also agreed to give 'Israel' \$1.7 billion in military aid for the 1984 fiscal year that began on Oct. 1st. Half of this is to be repaid with interest, but the other \$850 million will be given as arms grants. 'Israel' is also to receive \$910 million in economic grants, which will be used to offset the repayment of previous arms loans. In 1985, 'Israel' is scheduled to receive \$1.4 billion in military aid, all as a grant.

Israeli capacity to produce its own weaponry was also boosted with \$550 million in US military credits to fund the development of the Lavi aircraft. Moreover, the Israeli arms industry will be allowed to share in the production of US weaponry, financed with US aid. The US also agreed to buy \$200 million worth of Israeli military equipment, as well as products and raw materials worth 15% of the military aid to 'Israel' - amounting to \$250 million.

Washington also lifted the suspension of cluster bombs to 'Israel', though Shamir did not pledge to sign an agreement to use them for defensive purposes only. Clearly, the US umbilical cord to the Zionist state allows it to continue its genocidal war against the Palestinian people and fulfill its hunger for Arab lands.

Arab reaction's dilemma

The US-Israeli agreement, as the overt formalization of the organic and privileged relationship which 'Israel' has with the US, places Arab reaction in a difficult position. In line with their class nature and ties with imperialism, the US clients can only acquiesce to this agreement, even though it complicates efforts to justify their policies in the eyes of the Arab masses. This dilemma led these regimes to be unclear in their position on the agreement. Even on the verbal level, their reaction was mild.

The reactionaries' dilemma poses problems to the US as well. Although the alliance with 'Israel' is the cornerstone of US Middle East strategy, this strategy cannot be fulfilled without the total participation of Arab reaction. At present US imperialism needs Arab reaction's help to revive the Reagan plan and apply Camp David throughout the area. The Israeli refusal to accept the US's providing advanced weaponry to Arab regimes and setting up a Jordanian strike force, were discussed at the Reagan-Shamir meetings without eliciting any change in the Israeli position. Instead, the strategic alliance agreement deals with this issue by raising the possibility of joint US-Israeli efforts to "protect" the Gulf oil fields. In this, 'Israel' has overlapping interests with US imperialism in ensuring the flow of oil to the capitalist world.

Countering Zionist-imperialist military cooperation

The PFLP has always contended that the number one enemy of the Palestinian and Arab people is world imperialism, led by the US, and that 'Israel' is its forward base in our area. The strategic alliance agreement makes this relationship official. To those who have defined the enemy primarily as 'Israel' the agreement serves notice that the US is an active party to the conflict in our area, and that Zionism can only be combated in the context of anti-imperialist struggle. The counter-force to escalated Zionist-imperialist cooperation is based on strengthening the alliance between the popular revolutionary forces and the nationalist regimes in the area. It must draw strategic strength from alliance with the socialist community, headed by the Soviet Union, as well as with liberation movements and progressive forces globally.

Zionist-imperialist strategic collaboration has international as well as regional aims. It is part of the US's global strategy, the same that installs new nuclear missiles in Europe and invades Grenada. Specifically, the agreement provides for 'Israel' increasing its role as imperialism's surrogate arms merchant by giving permission for it to sell weapons produced with US technology to third countries. It is natural and necessary that this be confronted by increased international solidarity in the anti-imperialist camp, as the only way to redress the balance of forces in favor of the people's victory over imperialism, Zionism and reaction.