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ISRAELI-ARAB CONFLICT

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ISRAELI-ARAB CONFRONTATION FROM THE SIDE UNDER SIEGE

At the Munich airport, security procedures for El Al travelers to Israel are extraordinary. Voyagers go through five checkpoints in a separate building, move down a long hall bristling with soldiers and into a room monitored by a soldier on a raised platform with a Tommy gun. The questions asked and the searches conducted are precise and skillful. Outside protection includes an armored personnel carrier which flanks the plane's takeoff, searching for ground-to-air missiles. As one climbs onto the El Al plane — parked far out in the airfield to keep it away from potential terrorists — under the watchful eye of vigilant young Israeli guards, one feels as if one were participating in the ingathering of exiles from a threatened land.

But can Israel itself be made a place of security for Jews? Since the State of Israel had been declared on May 14, 1948, there had been four wars with the Arabs.

General Abraham Tamir

The morning after our arrival we began our discussion of these questions with General Abraham Tamir, who with two hats is head of operations and planning of the Israeli Defense Forces. General Tamir noted that even the superpowers are not engaged in "full peace normalization" since they continue to maneuver against each other. The world is really one of conflicts: potential, hidden and real. The Israeli goal therefore is simply to ensure that the Arabs do not use military means to achieve political ends.

The problem with regard to Egypt and Syria is a problem of political borders. But whatever country is to the east of Israel (e.g. the Palestinian state) should have a border that is "administrative" rather than a "security" border.

This was our first introduction to the Israeli notion of "functional division" on the West Bank. When the Israelis overran the West Bank in the 1967 war, they occupied a territory of 2200 square miles called the "West Bank" in which 700,000 Arabs, and almost no Jews, had lived. No Palestinian state had actually been organized on this territory, as had been envisaged by the U.N., because the Arabs had rejected the partition plan. Instead Jordan had annexed the West Bank — an annexation recognized only by Great Britain and Pakistan.

The question of what to do with the West Bank is the most complex of Israel's security problems. Were there no Arabs in the territory, most Israelis would certainly wish to annex it. Some do, including Prime Minister Menahem Begin, notwithstanding the presence there of the Arabs. He refers to it by its Biblical name of Judea and Samaria and, by reference to that period, considers it part of "Eretz Yisrael" (i.e., the land of Israel).



Jerusalem

On the other hand, Zionism always envisaged a Jewish state. The demographic implications of absorbing a rapidly growing population of 1,100,000 Arabs (including 400,000 in Gaza) into a state of 3,000,000 Jews appall most Israelis; they might find themselves, in time, a ruling minority analogous to white Rhodesians or South Africans. Thus polls show many Israelis opposing annexation. As the Mayor of Jerusalem Teddy Kollek later suggested to us, the one million Arabs were a greater danger to the state inside it than outside. Others, like General Tamir, considered annexation a formula for "permanent war".

On the other hand again, giving up control of the West Bank could be dangerous from a military point of view.

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FAS SEEKING BACKGROUND ON MIDEAST PROBLEM

In late August — between attendance at a Munich Pugwash Conference and a Brussels conference on conventional weapons sponsored by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) — FAS Chairman George W. Rathjens, Jr. and Director Jeremy Stone spent 11 days in Israel and the occupied territories.

The Mideast has become a central focus on the problems of war and peace with which FAS has grappled for three decades. It is an inadvertent proving ground for new conventional weapons, a location of recurring wars, and a possible point of initiation of a new world war. On all counts, FAS seemed to need more background. If possible, a trip to several Arab states will provide a complement to this report. No attempt has been made, at this point, to include any reflections about this fast-moving controversy.

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From the West Bank to the Mediterranean, the narrow waist of Israel measures only 9-12 miles; the country could be cut in half in tens of minutes. Indeed, Hawk air defense missiles owned by Jordan, if placed on the West Bank, could prevent Israeli planes from taking off from all its major airfields. Terrorists on the West Bank could lob shells into the major cities, and so on.

In General Tamir's mind, the resolvent of these political-military considerations is some kind of plan to give up the West Bank slowly, in stages, in return for ever more tangible indications of peace: halts to terrorism, stable diplomatic relations, trade, and so on. Israel would retreat to the 1967 borders, with minor modifications here and there, over a period of two decades or so.

Another older approach had been the "Allon plan" to build a picket line of Jewish settlements along the Jordan River to guard against infiltration of weapons into the West Bank and to anchor Israeli ability to control the West Bank militarily. But this seemed unacceptable to the Arabs and much less useful militarily than it would have been 3 years ago, when the military problem was Arab marauders. Today, settlements seem to some a military liability.

Still a third approach was one Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan later brought to Washington. Israel would split the administration of the area with the Jordanians. Israel would be responsible for military matters and Jordan would administer the territory in all other ways. In time, perhaps at the end of 15 years, the West Bank would become part of either a Jordanian or an Israeli federation or become independent but under control of a confederation authority. Part of the goal of these security arrangements is to make it possible for Israel to do other than rely on preemptive attack in threatening situations.

According to General Tamir, Israel made the mistake in the 1967-73 period of extrapolating increases only in the quantity of Arab weapons, but has found, in addition, increases in their quality.

General Tamir is a vigorous, open, and engaging man who approaches his work with some philosophic depth. What, he asked, is the meaning of "winning"? To his mind, it is to persuade the other side to make a political agreement; from this, one can conclude that certain victories can, in fact, be counterproductive.

In the conversation it became clear that Israel is thinking, if war reoccurs, certainly not of a war of attrition against the numerically superior Arab forces but rather of ways and means of paralyzing the enemy offensive war machines; in this effort, the most skilled and highly trained enemy officers will be an ever more central object of attack.

General Shlomo Gazit

We next met General Shlomo Gazit, Director of Military Intelligence and formerly Military Coordinator of Activities in the Occupied Territories. Confronted with five opening questions, General Gazit proceeded to answer them all skillfully without notes and in his own order. Israel, he said, had been ready to retreat to pre-1967 borders and the Americans had made this clear to the Arabs.

But since then, the quantity and quality of arms in the Middle East made it "practically impossible" to hold the

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Fortification on Golan Heights

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1967 lines against an Arab threat, especially if it came from surprise. In addition, the quantity and quality of terrorist activities, if placed on the West Bank or Gaza, would no longer be pinpricks but could inflict severe damage. Questioning Arab sincerity as he did, and in view of the instability of Arab regimes, would it be wise to give up the occupied territories?

The Arabs have already been violating the disengagement agreement, he felt, by fortifying certain areas and increasing troops stationed there. And while obligated to refrain from anti-Israeli initiatives, Egypt had encouraged many states to disrupt relations with Israel.

The root problem, he observed, is the importance of resettlement of Arab refugees in Arab countries; whether or not there is a Palestinian entity formed out of the West Bank would not solve that problem.

Later, talking to another Israeli military strategist, we discovered the first traces of ambivalence about King Hussein; a colonel said he was a minority of one expressing the view, but he believed it might have been better if the Palestinians had succeeded in overthrowing King Hussein. With their own state in Jordan, Palestinians might have become less interested in trying to overthrow Israel. (Indeed, the PLO has historically been ambivalent as to whether its first priority was overthrowing reactionary Arab regimes or Israel.)

A Dove at Weizmann

Voyaging to the famous Weizmann Institute outside Tel Aviv, we talked to a professorial dove. In his view, a West Bank Palestinian state might not be unacceptably dangerous, and could defuse the situation. It was largely the aspirations of Egypt for leadership in the Arab world that kept it locked into the Arab-Israeli struggle, but Sadat seemed sincerely interested in peace, and his interest in keeping the Canal open gave him reasons to be so. However, Egypt could not agree to peace without the support of the Saudis.

The professor saw three alternatives: (1) Begin would give in and change his policy of holding onto the West Bank; (2) negotiations with Sadat and Assad would look toward a new interim agreement in which additional parts of the post-1967 occupied lands would be ceded back; or (3) alternatively, there would be a new war. In answer to a question, he agreed that, with the exception of another interim agreement, no overall settlement could be secured that was not "imposed" from without.

Jerusalem

On Monday, we toured Jerusalem, saw the Museum of the Holocaust, and, before our return, met with the President of the Israeli Academy of Sciences, Dr. Aryeh Dvoretzky. He was especially interested, of course, in the plight of Soviet Jewish scientists. We discussed a number of cases on which FAS has worked, and the growing interest in the international scientific community in supporting colleagues everywhere against political pressures.

On Tuesday morning, we turned out to be the first appointment of the newly appointed head of research and development of the Israeli Forces, Brigadier General Bet Halachmi, an Air Force officer. It was evident that the Egyptian and Syrian air defenses were a major Israeli pre-occupation — these air defenses employed more men than



Site where Bible anticipates Armageddon

the corresponding air forces! Their numbers required more than such tricks as electronic countermeasures (ECM). Real-time reconnaissance was necessary. He was confident that with it, Arab defenses could be neutralized.

The Israeli interest in concussion bombs, which had aroused so much emotion in America, had been for their use in detonating fields of minelets (small mines laid by air on artillery). The possible use of these readily dispersed mine fields is a new feature of conventional war, likely to show up first in the Middle East. A second use, we later read, was on Arab airplane hangars — to crack them open.

In our conversation, it became evident that it was not enough for the Israelis to be able to tap into the armory of the United States to maintain the qualitative advantage they needed: they would like also to be able to influence the American R&D process. Existing U.S. programs, of the kind they have wanted, have often not been pushed with urgency consistent with their sense of priorities.

Indeed, it seemed that our R&D programs might benefit by giving more weight than we do to Israeli experience and priorities.

U.S. objections to Israeli use of American technology usually turned on the issues of: (a) secrecy and (b) industrial proprietorship. (But, the Israelis argue, the French have been selling the Arabs French-built weapons embodying American technology.) Often Israel decides in desperation to allocate its own limited R&D resources to a specific program only to discover belatedly that the U.S. is ready to share its results.

General Y. Harkabi —

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister

Rushing from General Halachmi's office in Tel Aviv to the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem, we met an hour later with Major General Yehoshafat Harkabi, who was Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Intelligence. General Harkabi had been Chief of Military Intelligence from 1955 to 1959 and had then become Israel's first real student of Arab-Israeli affairs with his 1967 Hebrew University Ph.D. thesis, "Arab Attitudes toward Israel" (Keterpress Enterprises, Jerusalem, 1972).

His most recent book, *Arab Strategies and Israel's Response* (Free Press, 1977), which we had read in America, suggested that there were three Israeli attitudes, which he described as hawk-hawk, dove-hawk, and dove-dove. In the first case, Israelis hypothesized a hawkish attitude on the part of the Arabs and asserted the propriety of a

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hawkish response of their own. (An example might be the Prime Minister's approach.) In the second approach, which characterized General Harkabi, one continued to hypothesize immutably hawkish Arab attitudes but considered dovish Israeli initiatives to be an appropriate response — one primary reason being to maintain international and especially American support. The final approach, that of dove-dove, believed that dovish Israeli initiatives might evoke some softening in Arab attitudes.

From an examination of his collection of essays, *Palestinians and Israel* (Keterpress, 1974), it had become apparent that General Harkabi disagreed with the Prime Minister on several central issues. He thought it unrealistic to try to maintain present borders and to refuse to abandon settlements. Refusal to recognize the PLO when it had been recognized by close to 100 states, seemed to him "misguided" and "burying our heads in the sand". And on the order in which matters should be negotiated, he considered it better to discuss the Palestinian question first rather than last.

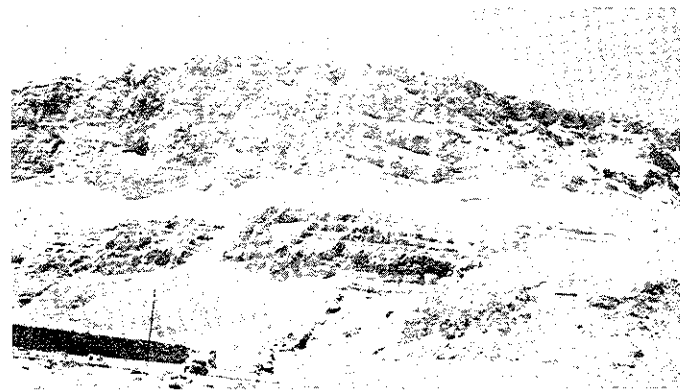
We opened the conversation with expressions of admiration for General Harkabi's writings — which are objective, deeply philosophical, as well as learned and written with the elegance of a stylist. He seems to be the Israeli George Kennan. But we wondered how he could serve a Prime Minister with such different views. To our dismay and surprise, he responded that he was, in fact, resigning the next day to return to the Israeli academic world.

General Harkabi has some physical resemblance to the late Prime Minister Ben Gurion. He has a very active and inquiring mind (e.g. asking of the Arabs, "Why do they mutilate the bodies of the Jews killed?") and an incisive way of formulating his conclusions ("The problem for us is that we cannot translate military success into political gains.") No one seems more aware of the many ambivalences that float through the Arab world.

Racing back to the Tel Aviv area we attended a lunch hosted by Dr. Michael Sela, President of the Weizmann Institute. Inescapably challenged to give our views, despite a highly limited exposure to Israel of three days, we stirred up a hornets' nest. One cannot really do justice to the complexities of the Arab-Israeli confrontation in luncheon conversation. One's suggestions are rapidly extrapolated into unworkable "solutions". One of the six Israelis present had voted for Begin, and her comments revealed the intellectual makeup of some of his supporters: deep distrust of — and feelings of rejection by — the outside world; traumatic remembrance of the holocaust in which one-third of world Jewry was killed; certainty that strategies based on other than military strength would lead to destruction.

Masada

On Wednesday we drove to Masada, an impregnable mountain fortress along the Dead Sea on which King Herod had built a hideaway refuge palace in the year 40 B.C. When the Jews revolted against Roman rule in 66 A.D., their five-year revolt both began and ended here. One thousand Jewish zealots retreated to Masada after the fall of Jerusalem and climbed the snakepath entry to the 1200-foot mountain. They were put under siege by the Romans; a legion was recalled from Britain to sub-



Masada — Snake path shown on right

due them. After the siege had been underway for three years, the Romans bridged an enormous chasm in the rear of the mountain with wood driven into the side of the mountain and, piling sand upon it, built a ridge along which they fought their way to the top. Even at 10:30 in the morning, the Dead Sea heat is oppressive. And it is hard to imagine 1,000 persons living on a square-kilometer rocky surface for three years in these conditions.

The evening the Romans had shown they could reach the top, the zealots, realizing they were defeated and, upon the urging of their leader El'azar, decided to kill each other rather than submit. Drawing lots, one man would kill ten until finally one was left to kill himself. The Romans, reaching the top, were stunned to find no resistance. El'azar's speech was made known by two women and five children who had hidden in the cisterns and told the story to the observer and historian Josephus.

Except for a later short-lived revolt in A.D. 132, this was the last time Jews lived in freedom in Palestine until 1948, and the memory of the zealots is cherished. A pamphlet on Masada calls it "the anvil on which the younger generation of Israel forges its awareness of history". And it has become customary for new Israeli soldiers to swear their oath on top of the mountain.

Arie Eliav — Founder of Sheli

Back in Tel Aviv that evening, we were favored by a visit to our hotel from Arie Eliav, former leader of the Labor Party. He had resigned this high position over political differences, to found his own dovish splinter party, Sheli ("Peace Unto Israel"). Like so many Israelis in the political world, Eliav had a distinguished military background including World War II, organizing post-war "illegal" immigration of Jews to Palestine and commanding a secret operation to evacuate Egyptian Jews in 1956. A student of farm economics and business administration, he had pioneered in settlement planning.

To understand the significance of Sheli, which commands only 2 votes of 120 in the parliament, one must understand that the Israeli voter has a choice of only three approaches to dealing with the Arabs. Until recently, Israel had always been ruled by a socialist labor coalition earlier centered around the Mapai Party and later termed the Labor-Mapai Alignment. This party favored "flexibility" in dealing with the Arabs but wanted to play its bargaining hand close to the chest.

For example, one of its leaders, Prime Minister Golda Meir, had viewed the diplomatic process as if it were an

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Arab bazaar, according to Eliav. The Arabs, she felt, were asking, as it were, a price of "1,000" and she was pointedly offering "two" in anticipation of subsequent tough bargaining. Eliav would insist: "But Golda, it's not a bazaar!"

Eliav's party, Sheli, offered an alternative strategy of outlining to the Arabs in advance what the Israelis would be willing to do in return for real peace. (Here, he agreed with General Harkabi, who wrote, "I think Israel would be wise to declare openly its readiness to withdraw as part of a peace settlement".)

Begin's Likud Party flanked the Labor Party's policy on the other side. The signals the Likud was giving off were those of owning the West Bank and of planning to annex it. Immediately before our arrival in Israel, the Prime Minister had announced he was planning to equalize social services on the West Bank and in Israel. (The Labor Party promptly called this announcement not only gratuitous but unworkable.) When he legalized the status of three settlements on the West Bank, the United States called the actions illegal, but the Prime Minister told the Israeli parliament (the Knesset):

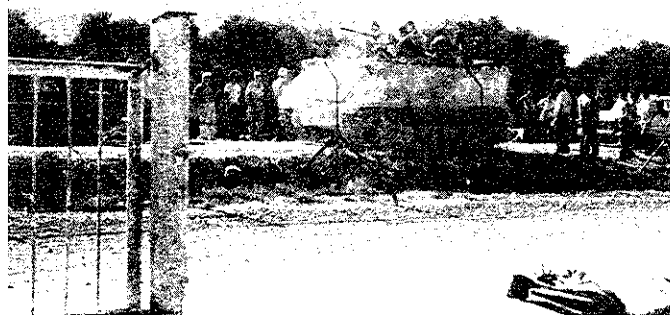
"Israeli rule in Eretz Yisrael (Hebrew for the land of Israel, ed. note) is not an occupation regime. The Knesset decided this in 1967. In that year, the Knesset adopted a law which said: the Government is authorized by order to apply the jurisdiction, law and Administration of the state to any area of Eretz Yisrael as shall be specified by order . . . In other words, we, by that law, proclaimed to all the nations that no part of Eretz Yisrael constitutes occupied territory." (July 27, 1977)

The declaration of intent which Mr. Eliav had in mind would suggest that: Sinai would be returned to Egypt but demilitarized; the Golan Heights would be demilitarized; and a Palestinian state to be established in Gaza on the West Bank would agree to military inspection in return for rights of military inspection in Israel.

Mr. Eliav complained that the traditional Israeli posture was to deny that Palestine was the land of the Palestinians' fathers, as well as "our" fathers. Golda Meir used to say, "There are no Palestinians", and Begin still says, "I'm a Palestinian". The way to solve the "head-on clash" between two national movements was to "halve the loaf" — recognize the rights of Palestinians along the lines of the 1967 borders, negotiate with any who claim to represent the Palestinians, and leave the name and composition of the Arab state up to the Palestinians. Mr. Eliav would bargain hard but he would not "create facts" by authorizing settlements that had zero military importance and, indeed, could be a military liability. "Israel should stay where it is". The declaration of intent, he felt, would improve Israel's image, smooth relations with America and Europeans, and advance peace negotiations.

In Eliav's view, the big problem is that Israel had trapped a million Arabs "in our midst", and that they had become the "hewers of wood and carriers of water" without civil rights. The real danger was a "creeping erosion of Zionism", in which Jews would be ruling others and destroying their own moral fiber. Gaza would become an Israeli Soweto.

Asked why Israelis took Begin so seriously, he said that Israel was on an LSD trip which had begun at the



Lebanese APC refueling at Israeli border

time of Entebbe and had been encouraged by Begin's unyielding optimism. The PLO and Begin were feeding on each other's intransigence.

Golan Heights and Good Fence

On Thursday, we went to Golan Heights, where the Syrians had come so close to breaking through in 1973. A brilliant 31-year-old Israeli lieutenant colonel briefed us. Before 1973, the Syrians had quietly, patiently, and gradually rearranged their forces over the course of a year until they were in attack, rather than defense, formation. The attack had developed along what seemed a "Russian way of thinking" — massive and preplanned, without reliance on improvisation. Had the Israelis been in the Syrian position, we were told, they would have reached Tel Aviv.

Our briefer's professionalism extended to a lucid explanation of military styles. Israelis, he noted, typically responded to orders skeptically and outspokenly, saying such things as, "Why? — I think a better route would be on the *other* slope". But if one knew how to work with this mentality, we were told, one could get "very good results". After all, the war was being waged not by generals behind maps, but by the men in the field. Thinking by soldiers could be very valuable. As another example of differences in mentality, an Israeli officer never had to question, or confirm, reports which his soldiers made; these were invariably objective and precise. The other side had quite a different problem, with exaggerated descriptions of opposing forces.

The Syrians have about 2,000 tanks available for this front. The Israelis have 3,000 tanks for all their fronts. More startling, the Israeli "zoo" of captured, retrofitted, and remodeled tanks of all varieties are lacking in some crucial qualities. Their night-fighting capacity, and new precise range-finders, are not up to the capabilities of Soviet tanks. Also, the single-shot kill probabilities of Soviet tanks, at the usual ranges tanks employ, are higher. As a result Israeli tank commanders try to engage Soviet tanks at distances over 1.5 kilometer. Still another problem is the reliance on a reservist army; reservists must fiddle with gun controls and try to regain familiarity with tank weapons even while traveling into battle.

The situation on this border is very tense, and within the last few years, there have been perhaps 10 to 12 times when high commanders thought Syrian attack was imminent. Israeli alertness, sharpened by the 1973 war surprise, is now especially taut. Even a deputy brigade commander goes nowhere without his radio man so that he

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will be in constant touch at every moment with any development.

This readiness on both sides, coupled with the strategic advantages of preemption, provides a situation in which "reciprocal fear of surprise attack" could trigger war unnecessarily. This may have been a factor in the 1967 War, when Egyptian maneuvers in Sinai figured importantly in the Israeli decision to attack.

In conversation, it became apparent that the Israeli military officers are alarmed over a number of indications they have received that American military men do not give sufficiently serious thought to conventional warfare. The questions our visiting generals ask the Israelis, and what the Israelis have learned about our NATO deployment, leave them bemused. There is an imbalance in motivation between the Israeli army on the one hand and the NATO armies on the other, enhanced by the fact that the Israeli officer corps probably includes a higher fraction of the nation's most talented young men. Also our military bureaucracy is focused on high-technology strategic warfare. All in all, we are clearly less knowledgeable about, and less prepared for, conventional war than the Israelis. We could learn a great deal from them. An uncensored Israeli report on NATO preparedness would be scathing.

In the evening, we met with two former leaders of the Moscow scientific seminar, Alexander Voronel and Mark Azbel. This was my first meeting with Azbel since 1975 in Moscow; he had been permitted to leave only a few months before, and I discovered to my surprise that approval was granted only a month after an FAS letter on his behalf, to which he attributed his final release.

The Weekend

On Friday, we flew for the day to Elat on the Gulf of Aqaba to get a feeling for the Negev, and for Israel's access to the Red Sea. Here King Solomon had his mines. Pottery and jewelry are the export staples. Bedouins from the Negev sell souvenirs to the tourists. And a few minutes away by plane is Mount Sinai, where Moses received the Ten Commandments 3,500 years ago.

Back in Tel Aviv on Saturday, the Sabbath, it seemed appropriate — and useful — to read the Old Testament. By its account, Abraham journeyed from Mesopotamia to Canaan (now Israel and Jordan) about 4,000 years ago, and the Lord promised the land of Canaan to his descendants. The Hebrews are considered to be Abraham's descendants through his son Isaac, while the Arabs are his descendants through Abraham's son Ishmael. When famine struck, he and his twelve children — the fathers of the 12 Hebrew tribes — moved to Egypt, from which, after a later enslavement of 400 years, they were led back into Sinai by Moses. Moses eventually led the 12 tribes up along the Jordanian (East) Bank of the Jordan River rather than directly up the better defended West Bank. As a result, when Moses' successor, Joshua, began the conquest of the West Bank of the Jordan, some of the Hebrew tribes were already settling the East Bank.

In modern-day terms, this means that the same claim to West Bank territories now implied by calling them "Judea and Samaria" could, in principle, also be made to half of Jordan. Since Prime Minister Begin puts great stress upon the historical claim ("Whoever fails to recog-



Israelis at the beach at Elat

nize our right to the entire homeland, does not recognize our right to any of its territories.") we later asked former Minister of Defense Shimon Peres whether Mr. Begin claims parts of the state of Jordan as well. His amused response was: "Begin used to make this claim 30 years ago, but now he has bought history by half".

Peres — Leader of the Labor Party

Peres is the present leader of the Labor Party and we met with him on Sunday morning. Peres had become Director General of the Ministry of Defense in 1952 before he was 30 and has been a major figure in Israeli politics since. He has held two cabinet positions: Minister of Defense and Minister of Communications. Peres is a marvelous phrase-maker and disposes of problems easily. Asked whether Begin might not be succeeding skillfully in getting domestic political support, he said: "Soon, Begin will have to perform, not just sing."

The Labor Party wants a real peace with the Arabs and feels that within the context of such peace, all problems can be solved. It prefers ultimate Jordanian control of the West Bank and, for the moment, a functional compromise in which Israel controls military aspects of the West Bank and the Arabs (or Jordanians) handle all other administrative responsibilities. To Labor's mind, a functional compromise is richer in possibilities than a territorial compromise — but it does not reject a territorial compromise.

The basic negotiating problem, Peres thinks, is that the Arabs are "united in war but not in peace". To understand what was happening in the Middle East one had to focus on "developments rather than events". Developments were leading to peace and Israel should have the "patience to sail with basic winds"; it could be fatal, however, to try "to span the chasm in one jump." Labor wanted to be "determined in strategy but flexible in tactics" and to remain mobilized in a positive direction.

Immediately after meeting Peres, we rented a car with driver and drove the 50 miles from Tel Aviv to the Gaza Strip. There, despite the Moslem holiday of Ramadan and the midafternoon hour, we were able to arrange to visit the home of Gaza Mayor Rashad el-Shawwa and to talk with him for an hour.

We opened by asking whether economic conditions in the Gaza had improved. (Statistics show that average wages in both the West Bank and Gaza went up 600% from 1970 to 1975, while the consumer price index went up only 400% from 1968-69 to 1975.) Mayor Shawwa rejected the relevance of economics ("What if Hitler had

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raised economic conditions?") and said it was American dollars that had made the Negev bloom, not the Israelis. As for Israeli Biblical claims, the Arabs had controlled much of Spain for six centuries; should they claim it? Israel could not stay in the Middle East unless integrated into the Arab world. While Israel was strong in the short run, it was sure to lose in the long run; the Israeli leaders had, in fact, miscalculated everything.

For example, Arab families had 8-12 children and could much more easily afford to lose a child than could an Israeli family. (He noted contemptuously and with wonder that the Israeli Government had almost been toppled by the fact of 2,000 deaths in the 1973 war and the resulting hysterical mothers.) The Israelis were living on the idea of war — it was how they got their American support — and they had somehow persuaded the American Government that Israel was some kind of Middle East guarantor when, in fact, Israel was the cause of all the trouble.

Asked about the PLO, the Mayor said that immediately after the 1967 capture of Gaza he had asked Moshe Dayan for the right to organize politically to negotiate with Israel over Gaza, but he was refused.

Everyone in Gaza who wants to work can do so, but there is a labor exchange that spreads out unemployment so that, currently, people are working 3 weeks a month. In 1975, one third of the 75,000 employed persons in Gaza were commuting to Israel to work.

Raviv — Head of American Desk

On Monday, we went to Jerusalem and met with Moshe Raviv, head of the American desk in Foreign Ministry, and with the Deputy Head of Israeli Estimates Shlomo Marom. In light of President Carter's recent expressions of readiness to recognize the PLO if only it accepted U.N. Resolution 242, Mr. Raviv felt that the United States was renegeing on September, 1975 commitments not to recognize the PLO until it also recognized Israel and (a Kissinger commitment) changed its "National Covenant" charter to delete suggestions that Israel should be destroyed.

U.N. Resolution 242, adopted on November 22, 1967, asks:

- i) withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;
- ii) termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.

PLO acceptance of this resolution could perhaps be stretched to mean that it recognized Israel but changes in the PLO "National Covenant" are another matter. In any case, the PLO had just rejected President Carter's request to accept Resolution 242 and, in effect, thus saved the Israeli hard line from considerable embarrassment.

When we argued that every sign seemed to show the Begin Government intent on annexation of the West Bank, Mr. Raviv demurred and referred to a September 1 speech of Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, which said:

"We believe that the settlement concerning Judea and Samaria and the Gaza Strip should be based on our living together with the Palestinian Arabs in these

areas, and not on partition of the territory but should the Arabs propose partitioning these territories between ourselves and them, we would discuss and examine their proposals . . ."

Earlier before accepting the post of Foreign Minister, Mr. Dayan had asked for assurances that Mr. Begin was not intent upon annexation. The Prime Minister had advised Mr. Dayan that he would not annex the area while negotiations were underway. (This can be interpreted to mean everything or nothing, depending on whether one believes negotiations have or have not been underway for a decade.) Meanwhile the Labor Party was accusing Mr. Begin, apropos ceding back West Bank territory, of having said "not one inch". Mr. Begin denied the quotation and dared anyone to find such a phrase. In fact, in 1972, Mr. Begin closed the introduction to his book on the Irgun ("The Revolt") by saying that the "artificial line" dividing Israel's historic homeland had disappeared in June, 1967, and:

"Since then, it is our duty, fathers and sons, to see to it that the artificial line which disappeared, never returns. We must not yield our natural and eternal right."

Asked why the Arabs did not organize themselves politically, Mr. Raviv first said they were afraid. When we reported that Mayor Shawwa had asked, and been denied, the right to organize, Mr. Raviv said permission might now be forthcoming.

In the evening we dined with the Hebrew University scholar and strategist Mordechai Abir. He is hawkish, pragmatic, and surprisingly confident. He believes that Israel should speak with two voices ("as the Arabs do") and thus "keep them guessing". In his writings, he observes that Israel can have "negative asset value" to the U.S. as well as positive value, by which he seems to suggest that, if pressed too hard, Israel could cause the U.S. troubles in the Middle East with respect to oil in particular.

To the extent that the Arabs think Israel irrational, he welcomes it. When the risks of war about every seven years are contrasted with the risks of peace, he observes, "In the Middle East, seven years is a long time". He believes Israel should have realized that U.S. interests might diverge from those of Israel — e.g., in response to the danger of losing oil supplies — and concludes therefore that Israel should not have drifted into a U.S. satellite posture. With regard to oil, he considers fighting inevitable even if Israel were to disappear.

Two West Bank Mayors

On Tuesday, we hired an Arab Christian driver and a car and drove to Hebron, the home of Abraham, and one of the largest towns in the West Bank. After touring Abraham's tomb and the Hebron marketplace, we met with Mayor Fahd al-Kawasma. The Mayor complained that the West Bank mayors were not allowed to meet (e.g., seven months ago, they had wanted to meet with the Red Cross in Jerusalem to try to settle a two-month-old strike but had been told not to.) While Israeli sources later denied this example, they admitted that formal meetings of West Bank mayors were not permitted.

Mayor Fahd said that less than 10% of the West Bank population wanted to be part of Jordan and that, if permitted, the mayors would send for a PLO leader from

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Beirut to organize them. After the Palestinians had a nationality in a state of their own, they could and would negotiate with Jordan about suitable links. The Mayor felt that considerably fewer than 500,000 refugees would want to return to the West Bank from the Arab countries, and that there was room for them, if there were money from America and elsewhere to help settle them. Asked about the dangers that Israel sees in a militarized West Bank state, he said: "Does the lion need protection from the rabbit?" Security for the West Bank state would arise, in any case, from peaceful relations with neighbors, as in the case, he said, of Switzerland.

We drove for an hour to Jericho, which is the oldest site of continuous habitation in the world; there man has been sustained by Jericho's spring for 10,000 years. Mayor Abdelaziz Swaiti wanted a separate state and said the Jews would have to leave the West Bank. They had not, he said, lived in the West Bank before 1967, and they were, for the Arabs, a kind of cancer. He also complained about Arab mayors not being allowed to meet.

In the afternoon, an editor on the moderate Arabic newspaper *Al Kuds* (circulation 16,000) thought a U.N.-supervised plebiscite might be useful in determining whether the West Bank should be joined to Jordan or independent.

Shalevet Frier

In the morning, we spoke again with our friend Shalevet Frier, former head of the Israeli Atomic Energy Commission. To his mind, the essentials were these. The Jews wanted a country, felt strongly about it, thought they had a mission, and wanted to excel in civilized occupations as a great national social experiment. They wanted a Jewish state built on Jewish labor and were perfectly happy to take care of everything. After Ben Gurion, there had been an absence of spirituality at the top. Israel would be, he felt, quite happy to give up the West Bank land if only it could, in so doing, divest itself of the one million Arabs involved and preserve a Jewish state.

Jordanian Defense Minister Nuseibeh

At noon, we met for an hour with the former Defense Minister of Jordan, Mr. Anwar Zeki Nuseibeh, who lives in East Jerusalem. Mr. Nuseibeh is an urbane man of western ways, with a son in post-graduate philosophy

studies at Harvard. He fended off a number of questions diplomatically but indicated that Israel had been made aware, at very high levels, that an Israeli assurance that it was "ready to withdraw" would start negotiations. He doubted that a solution would be "imposed" by the major powers; there was no evidence of the kind of determination that Eisenhower had shown in 1957. He did not see much chance of progress but, observing that the Israeli leaders (Begin, Dayan, Weizmann) were strong men, he felt they could negotiate, if they wanted to, without being charged with weakness.

That afternoon, trying to understand what the Arab mayors represented, we met for background purposes with the chief adviser to the Israeli Government on the occupied territories, Colonel Menahem Milson.

Teddy Kollek — Jerusalem's Mayor

In the evening, we managed to arrange a half-hour interview with Jerusalem's very popular Teddy Kollek, mayor since 1965. In advance, we read reprints of his July, 1977 *Foreign Affairs* article in which he calls for an undivided Jerusalem that is the capital of Israel. (Perhaps the most controversial result of the 1967 war was Israel's insistence on annexing East Jerusalem and moving the Israeli capital to Jerusalem.) The impacted nature of the Arab-Israeli struggle is best reflected in the fact that the Arabs' most cherished shrine in Jerusalem (the Dome of the Rock from which Mohammed is said to have ascended to heaven) is physically on top of the Temple Mount, the ancient site of the Temple of the Jews; thus even archeology becomes controversial.

Under Mr. Kollek's hard-working leadership, Jerusalem has been calm, and he travels around the city and works without guards in an atmosphere safer than that of New York. Underlying his diplomatic success is a common desire of all Jerusalem inhabitants to keep the city safe for the tourists upon which it depends.

Mr. Kollek is a no-nonsense, blunt person, and he sees present history from the perspective of one who is mayor of a city that has witnessed a dozen conquerors. From his point of view Islam is now on the march, and will continue to be so long as the oil holds out. Many of the Arab-Israeli problems, and certainly that of Jerusalem, are therefore problems without "compromise" solutions.

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