

**THE ISRAELI SECURITY POLICY:
CHANGES AND CONTINUITIES**

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ABSTRACT

CHANGES AND CONTINUITIES IN ISRAELI SECURITY POLICY

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The objective of this thesis is to analyze the changes in Israeli security policy. The thesis consists of four main parts. In the first part, the factors influencing the formation of Israeli security policy such as history, religion, ideology and threat perceptions are examined. Israeli military doctrine and its offensive, defensive and deterrence strategies are identified as the most important subcomponents of the security policy. The following part analyzes the changes and continuities in Israeli threat perceptions and the implementation of the military doctrine during and after the six main wars of the War of Independence, the war against Egypt in 1956, the Six Day War, the War of Attrition, the Yom Kippur War and the War in Lebanon in 1982. In the third part, the changes in Israeli security policy during 1990s are scrutinized. With the peace process, Israel's existential threat perception decreased but new threat perceptions of terrorism and conventional and nuclear military buildup in the region emerged; therefore security was redefined by the Israeli political and military decision-makers. In the last part the impact of the collapse of peace process and Sharon's coming to power on Israeli security policy is analyzed. Sharon's period can be defined by offensive security strategies aiming at preventing terror which has been the top security problem since the Al Aqsa Intifada. As a result, this thesis argues that Israeli security policy did not indicate significant changes until 1990s, however during 1990s Israeli security situation and security policy changed as a response to the regional and international developments. Post-2000 period witnessed changes as well with Sharon's returning to offensive strategies.

Key words: Israeli security policy, Sharon's security policy, Israel's military doctrine, Israel's threat perceptions, terrorism in Israel

ÖZ

İSRAİL’İN GÜVENLİK POLİTİKALARINDAKİ DEĞİŞİMLER VE SÜREKLİLİKLER

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, İsrail’in güvenlik politikasındaki değişimleri analiz etmektir. Buna göre tez dört ana bölümden oluşmaktadır. Tarih, din, ideoloji ve tehdit algıları gibi İsrail’in güvenlik politikasının oluşturulmasını etkileyen faktörler birinci bölümde ele alınmıştır. Güvenlik politikasının en önemli tamamlayıcısı olan İsrail’in askeri doktrininin oluşmasında yer alan etkenler ve bu doktrinin saldırgan, savunmacı ve caydırıcı stratejileri de yine bu bölümde incelenmiştir. Bir sonraki bölüm Bağımsızlık Savaşı, 1956 Mısır’la Savaş, Altı Gün Savaşı, Yıprandırma Savaşı ve 1982 Lübnan Savaşı süresince ve sonrasında tehdit algılarının nasıl değiştiğini ve askeri doktrinin nasıl uygulandığını analiz etmektedir. Üçüncü bölümde 1990lar boyunca İsrail’in güvenlik politikalarındaki değişimler derinlemesine incelenmiştir. Barış süreci ile İsrail’in varlığına yönelik tehdit algıları azalmış ama terör, bölgede artan konvansiyonel ve nükleer silahlanma ile farklı tehdit algıları güçlenmiştir. Bu yüzden, İsraili siyasi ve askeri karar alıcılar güvenliği yeniden tanımlamışlardır. Son bölümde barış sürecinin çökmesi ve Sharon’un iktidara gelmesinin İsrail’in güvenlik politikasına etkisi ele alınmıştır. Sharon dönemi, Al Aqsa Intifada’sından sonra en önemli güvenlik problemi olan terörün engellenmesini amaçlayan saldırgan güvenlik stratejileriyle tanımlanabilir. Sonuç olarak bu tez, İsrail’in güvenlik politikalarının 1990lara kadar önemli değişimler göstermediğini ama 1990lar boyunca önemli değişimler geçirdiğini iddia etmektedir. 2000 sonrası dönem ise Sharon’un tekrar saldırgan stratejilere yönelmesiyle yine değişimlere tanıklık etti.

Anahtar kelimeler: İsrail'in güvenlik politikaları, Sharon'un güvenlik politikaları, İsrail'in Askeri Doktrini, İsrail'in tehdit algıları, İsrail'de terör.

*Sevgili Aileme,
Koşulsuz sevgileri ve destekleri için...*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Security includes diverse notions as the political and territorial integrity of states; the survival of individuals; fulfillment of human needs like recognition and identity; social justice; economical interests; environmental concerns and societal values.¹ Nevertheless, national security policies mainly refer to a military and political based security definition of the pursuit of physical and psychological safety which is largely the responsibility of national governments, of preventing direct threats from abroad jeopardizing the survival of these regimes, their citizens² and their identity and the territorial integrity and inviolability of the state. This is not because the importance of economical, societal and environmental values in security, which should also be examined in security studies according to Buzan, Waever and Wilde, is ignored³, but because security issues are approached basically as militarily and politically by the political and especially military decision-makers.

A nation's feeling of security or insecurity bases on different internal and external factors like threat perceptions, real threats, internal resources and capabilities of manpower and weaponry, geography, historical experiences and changes in domestic, regional and international environment. All these factors have deep impacts in the formation of security policies through which a state tries to meet one of the pivotal needs of herself and her nation's security. According to Frank N. Trager and F.N. Simonie:

¹ Bowker, Robert, *Beyond Peace: The Search for Security in the Middle East*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996, p. 6

² Mandel Robert, *The Changing Face of National Security, A Conceptual Analysis*, London: Greenwood Press, 1994, p. 21

³ Buzan, Barry, Waever, Ole and De Wilde, Jaap, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998, p. 1

*National Security is that part of government policy having as its objective the creation of national and international political conditions favourable to the creation or extension of vital values against existing and potential adversaries.*⁴

National security policy of a state should first identify potential threats to the state's security and then should take political, economic and military measures against these threats and develop political and military strategies according to their resources and capabilities.

Threat perceptions of a state are one of the basic elements having influence on the formation of security policies. Perception is awareness, understanding and assessment of an actor, event, situation or process which is not very obvious⁵ but is largely influenced by historical experiences, ideologies, culture and characteristics of military and political elites. Since these threat perceptions are taken into account in the formation of security policies as well as the real threats coming from enemies, they are as important as reality itself. The threats which are perceived by evaluating another's intentions, policies and capabilities may seem unrealistic or exaggerated to an outside observer, yet they are quite real to a threatened state's public or military elites and policy makers.⁶ The perceived threats do not mean that they are always misunderstood or exaggerated of course, but since threats are so ambiguous and knowledge of them is constrained, they vary enormously in range and intensity and the possibility of incorrect assessment and calculation does exist.⁷

The real military and political threats which are more obvious, accepted and understood ones are the center of national security concerns. Especially primary threats of a full-scale armed attack with the aim of giving physical harm and

⁴ Buzan, Barry, *People, States, Fear; The National Security Problems in International Relations*, Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books Ltd, 1983, p. 217

⁵ Mroz, John Edwin, *Beyond Security: Private Perceptions Among Arabs and Israelis*, New York: Pergamon Press, 1981, p. 27

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32

⁷ Buzan, *op. cit.*, p. 88

damage to the state, its territory, population and institutions have the highest priority in states' security understandings. Even though not perceived as that much damaging, secondary threats like partial annexation, war of attrition, terrorism and increasing minority population in the sovereign states, can be at the top of security concerns from time to time. While primary and secondary military threats take place at the center of security policies, non-security military threats like regime changes, lack of alliances or support of big powers, cultural penetration and economic crises have also influence in the formation of security policies. In short all these threats accepted as sources of insecurity, set the agenda for national security policies of the states.

Apart from the threats and threat perceptions, the geographic vulnerability resulted from the size of territory and lack of strategic depth; traumatic historical experiences of enemy attacks aiming at destruction of the state or controlling their territory; insufficient army resources of population and arms and even the characters of the political and military leaders have significant roles in the security perceptions and understandings of the states.

The security understandings heavily influence the formation of national security policies of sovereign states. Nevertheless the attempts of states to meet their security needs through these policies may lead to rising insecurity for other states as each state interprets its own measures as defense and the measures of others as threats. This idea of "security dilemma" was introduced in early 1950s by John Herz⁸ has become one of the main tenets of realist school in international relations which is the most appropriate one to explain politics in the Middle East in general and security policy of Israel in specific. Israel, as a security obsessed country, is very sensitive to the security measures taken by her enemies, the Arab countries. As security dilemma explains clearly, she interprets them as threats; and with the claim of meeting these threats, she does not shun from following policies, which increase insecurity for both herself and for her neighbors.

⁸ Ibid, p. 3

For the State of Israel, security has been the most significant political-military issue since the very beginning of its establishment. In addition to the terrible historical experiences, the immediate attack of the Arab states after her establishment strengthened the Israeli feeling of being annihilated. It was so obvious that the Arabs did not want Israel, which was created on mostly the Arab territories as a neighbor; therefore, they would attack whenever they were ready to destroy Israel. The existential threat perception took its prior place in Israel's security policy from the very first day so strongly that it remained as the most dangerous threat perception for the Israelis for decades. The serious security threats like existential threats justify the use of force by the states⁹ and Israel has used this right even when her existence has not been threatened.

Besides the existential threat perception, Israel had other primary and secondary military, and political security threats and threat perceptions after she was established. These threats and threat perceptions had a very significant role in the formation of the Israeli security policy in addition to the other factors of history, geography, army capabilities and regional and international developments. The internal, regional and international environment has a permanent and changing effect on the Israeli security owing to the alterations like the end of threats, emergence of new sources threats, wars, peace agreements, changes in geographic and demographic balances and the relations between Israel and the other countries. In order to have an effective, beneficial and functioning security policy, Israel had better kept in step with those alterations when necessary. Did Israel really change her security perceptions and policies in accordance with the modifications around her?

In this thesis I examine which reasons contributed to the creation of the Israeli military doctrine and security policy, how those reasons have changed in time and how Israel has responded to those modifications. I argue that despite crucial alterations in those factors, especially in the threats against Israel, and despite Israel's temporary or slight changes in her security policies, Israel did not make a drastic change in the basic

⁹ Buzan, Waever and De Wilde, *op. cit.*, p. 21

parameters of her security understanding and consequently of her security policy until the 1990s and kept her offensive strategy.

The 1990s however, witnessed dramatic alterations all over the world, and Israel was no exception. With the demise of the Soviet Union and later the defeat of Iraq by the US-led coalition forces during the Second Gulf War, Israel's enemies were weakened whilst Israel gained additional power for her security in the US's new world order. The beginning of the peace process was another development enhanced Israel's security with the signing of the Declaration of Principles and the 1994 Peace Treaty with Jordan. In this period the existential threat perception of a conventional collective attack of the Arab states decreased significantly, but a new source of threat replaced it; terrorism.

The nature of the main threat to the Israeli security changed since it was not against the state, but the individuals. Moreover Israel had a new threat perception of both conventional and non-conventional attacks from her remote neighbors. Because of all these positive and negative developments, I argue in the second half of my thesis that, although the very basic principles of the Israeli military doctrine remained the same, they were questioned a lot and the security policy changed as the nature and the sources of threats against Israel altered.

Since the last decade of the 20th century, the prior threat has not been to the security of the state, but to the survival of the individuals due to the terrorist attacks. This new source of threat of terrorism has reached its peak after the Al-Aqsa Intifada which resulted in a terrorism-centered security policy. Unfortunately and ironically, the lack of the other basic security threat perceptions did not change Israel's traditional offensive strategy; on the contrary, it reached to an unbelievable level against the Palestinians as a result of Sharon's policies strengthening after some crucial international and regional developments like September 11 and the War in Iraq.

This thesis aims at explaining Israeli security policy mainly from a military and political perspective and showing the modifications in Israel's security situation as a result of internal, regional and international developments. It argues that Israel has strengthened her security in years; however she hardly changed her security understanding and policies until 1990s. During 1990s Israeli security policy shifted to a less threatened perception and less offensive strategy which was a real change for Israel. The developments in the post-2000 period enhanced the Israeli security, but ironically it has been one of the most offensive policies Israel pursued until now.

In order to understand the changes in the Israeli threat perceptions, military doctrine and security policies, it is necessary to examine the threat perceptions and basic tenets of the security policy of Israel since 1948. The first chapter is about how history, religion, ideology, threats and threat perceptions affected the creation of the Israeli security policy. It deals with Israel's primary military-security threat perceptions of the Eastern front attack and the establishment of a Palestinian State; the secondary military-threat perception of terrorism; and the non-military threat perceptions of problematic relations with the superpowers and increase in the number of population of the Arab Minority. Later, the most important subcomponent of security policies, the Israeli military doctrine which depended on Israel's being a small state and her geographical vulnerability is scrutinized. In the last part of that chapter, the basic pillars of Israeli military doctrine; deterrence, defensive strategy and offensive strategies of preventive and preemptive strikes are examined.

After that general information about all parameters of Israeli security understanding and military doctrine, their implementation during and after the six major wars of Israel are examined in the second chapter. The well-known Six Days War provided strategic depth to Israel the lack of which made Israel geographically vulnerable to an all-out conventional attack; therefore reduced the threat to Israel's existence significantly, however the Israelis did not change their existential threat perception. Six years after the war, Israel was shocked by an Egyptian-Syrian surprise attack which shook Israel's deterrent power and self-confidence deeply. However,

Israel's success in spite of the unprepared IDF once again proved the impossibility of defeating and destroying Israel, but the Israeli fear of being destroyed by the Arabs did not disappear, on the contrary this war indicated the ongoing risk of a collective Arab attack according to some Israelis. The war got Israel to follow a defensive strategy for a few years, but it was not a permanent change. A permanent change occurred and improved the Israeli security after the peace treaty with Egypt in 1979 though. Nevertheless, even that improvement did not alter Israel's offensive strategy and Israel invaded the Southern Lebanon in 1982 so as to reach some political gains as well as military-security goals. In this chapter my argument will be the continuation of Israel's existential threat perceptions which justified her offensive policies in the eyes of the Israelis despite real changes in her geostrategic position and the positive developments in her manpower, weaponry, her deterrence capability and her relations with the US.

The next chapter is about the developments influencing Israeli security perceptions and security in the 1990s like the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Second Gulf War, the impact of the ongoing Intifada and the Peace Process. As I mentioned before I argue that the real change in Israeli security understanding and security policy arose in that period owing to the shift from a neighbor-state based threat perception to a remote neighbor-state based threat perception like the WMDs in Iran and to a terror-centered threat perception. Nonetheless, the new peace-expected period was not a unified one because there were significant differences between the threat perceptions and the security understandings of the governments coming to power. Those differences derived from the different ideologies and points of view of Rabin-Peres, Netanyahu and Barak which indicated how ideologies affected security policy of Israel and how security issues were used as an excuse for offensive and expansionist policies of some governments.

Sharon is one of the Likud leaders – may be the most hardliner – who has used security issues as an excuse for his aggressive policies for the last four years. The fourth chapter is about the Israeli security policy after the year 2000. With the eruption of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, the terrorist threat against the survival of the individuals reached its peak which deteriorated all peace expectations and the

relations between the Israelis and the Palestinians as well. September 11 and the War in Iraq increased the US involvement in the region paving the way for more freedom of action of Sharon who has followed the most offensive security policies ever. His unilateral disengagement plan including a separation barrier and a unilateral withdrawal has been claimed to base on security interests, but it has had clear political goals without any doubt. In short, Sharon's security policy centered on putting an end to terror in order to provide the security of the individuals who elected him mostly due to the security problems.

CHAPTER 2

THE FORMATION OF ISRAELI SECURITY POLICY

*“...If there is security, there is
is everything, , if there is no
security, thete is nothing.”¹*

David Ben-Gurion

The Jewish State, which is surrounded by the Arab and mostly Muslim countries, has always felt threatened by multiple sources of threat, and thus has placed security issues at the top of her political-military agenda since her establishment. As Zionism dictated that the first and the most important duty of the state has been to survive so as to provide the security, well-being and the survival of the Jewish people, security policy has profoundly affected foreign and domestic policies. As a community, which suffered the dangers of extermination in several parts of the world throughout the course of history, this security priority of the state and its governments has been popularly endorsed by the Israeli populace. The dominant role of military over civilians in security issues indicates the significance of security in Israeli politics. Although Israel has a western type of democracy which requires for the civilian dominance over military, the penetrated military into politics and society by the retired generals who become politicians after their retirements proves the opposite.²

This over-sensitivity concerning security stemmed from various international, regional and internal elements in the formation of a security policy including threat

¹ Kober, Avi, “Israeli War Objectives into an Era of Negativism”, in Uri Bar Joseph (ed.), *Israel's National Security Towards the 21st Century*, London: Frank Cass, 2001, p. 177

² For more information see Cohen, Stuart A., *The Scroll or the Sword? Dilemmas of Religion and Military Service in Israel*, Amsterdam: Harward Academic Press Publishers, 1997 and Peri, Yoram,

perceptions, real threats, domestic resources like capability of manpower and weaponry, geography, historical experiences and modifications in internal, regional and external environment. All these factors influenced the Israeli security policy and military doctrine when they were first formulated after the 1948 Israeli War of Independence. In this chapter I will examine these factors in detail and then scrutinize the Israeli military doctrine which was created by depending on Israel's geo-strategic vulnerability and her being a small state.

2.1. THE FACTORS AFFECTING ISRAELI SECURITY POLICY

After two thousand years of exile and Diaspora life fearful of extermination by massacres, pogroms or the Holocaust, history brought a legacy of deeply felt insecurity to the newly established State of Israel. In this sense, historical experience can be examined as the first element influencing Israel's national security conception. According to Uri Bar-Joseph, the national security conception of any state is affected by the reality of environmental and internal resources (the operational milieu), and by as perceived and processed in the minds of her political and military elite (the psychological milieu); Israel's present national security conception results from both the operational and psychological milieus of the Jewish Yishuv and the War of Independence of 1948³ as well as the Nazi Holocaust.

The insecurity derived from the persistent Arab hostility towards the Jews in Palestine, and the trauma from the Nazi Holocaust of the Second World War was consolidated by the Arab attacks in the immediate afterwards of the establishment of Israel, and hence created an entrenched belief, which can hardly be deleted from Jews' minds even today that Arab states' first foreign policy priority is the destruction of Israel. These historical experiences, together with the cultural-religious believe in the concept of 'chosen people' (*am nivchar*) and the strategic disadvantages of Israel, created a sense of *exceptionalism* in terms of security

The Israeli Military and Israel's Palestinian Policy from Oslo to Al-Aqsa Intifada, Washington DC: US Institute of Peace, 2002.

³ Bar-Joseph, Uri, "Towards a Paradigm Shift in Israel's National Security Conception", *Israel Affairs*, Spring-Summer 2000, Vol. 6, Issue 3/4, p. 99

among most of the Israeli leaders and society which resulted in a formation of the national security aim in negative and extreme terms.⁴

The second element that affected Israeli national security conception was religion and the Zionist ideology. Warfare played a significant role in the development of Jewish identity in the Bible; in the *Tanakh*, the Jews' holy scriptures, Israel's God is mentioned repeatedly as the 'Lord of Hosts'.⁵ Later, the medieval Jewish theologian to Malmonides, widely regarded as the single most authoritative interpreter of traditional Jewish teachings, conceived two kinds of just war in Judaism: obligatory war (*milkhemet mitzvah*) and discretionary war (*milkhemet reshut*, an optional war translated usually as a war fought for a religious reason).⁶ Whether Israeli military doctrine and her wars indicate obligatory or optional wars will be scrutinized below; that is why simply mentioning that although none of the wars Israel launched depended solely on religious causes, her policy of not withdrawing from the territories occupied in 1967, which are seen by many as holy for Judaism, indicates the impact of religion in her security understanding.

This war-prone heritage of Judaism is supported by some ideological streams of Zionism, according to which the use of force is the only means to solve all sorts of security problems; other sections of Zionism, though, noticed the limitations of military solutions. The military and political elite of Israel have not espoused one approach to the use of force, however, especially in the early 1950s and late 1960s when the fear of complete destruction was at its peak, the use of force was believed to be the only solution to security.⁷ The first Prime Minister of Israel David Ben-Gurion mentioned the necessity of using force for Israel since she could expect to

⁴ Merom Gil and Jervis Robert, "Israel's National Security and the Myth of Exceptionalism", *Political Science Quarterly*, Fall 1999, Vol. 114, No. 3, at http://infotrac.london.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/750/481/44564601w7/purl=rc1_EAIM_0_A57589974&dyn=17!xrn_3_0_A57589974?sw_aep=telaviv

⁵ Cohen, Stuart A., *The Scroll or the Sword? Dilemmas of Religion and Military Service in Israel*, Amsterdam: Harward Academic Press Publishers, 1997, p. 1

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9-11

⁷ Bar-Joseph, *op. cit.*, p. 106

deter Arab attacks only by pursuing a tough reprisal policy.⁸ This conception of the use of force coincided with another basic tenet of Zionism, namely ‘self-help’.

Self-help (or self-reliance) simply results from the belief that states, in order to ensure their survival, should rely on their own military power rather than external powers and agreements or defense pacts with them. Israeli security policy included this self-help principle both because of Jewish history and the Zionist mistrust to any kind of external power due to the experiences in Diaspora. Self-reliance is crucial because it not only prevents vulnerability when the ally or the big power changes her policies and stops supporting the state, but also provides freedom of action to pursue the national interests of the state. This freedom of action which can be limited by the powers for any reason, paves the way for the use of force; therefore, the use of force and self-help are interconnected.

However, the self-help principle creates a significant contradiction with one of the basic principles of Israeli military doctrine enlisting the support of a big power and even making alliances if possible. Being surrounded by her Arab enemies to which she has been inferior in terms of weaponry and manpower, Israel has deeply needed superpower support but has not wanted to be in contradiction with the basic Zionist tenet of self-reliance. Which of these principles has been more important for Israeli policy-makers and whether they could find a middle way for the contradiction will be examined in the subject of Israeli-Superpower Relations below.

2.2. THREATS AND THREAT PERCEPTIONS IN ISRAELI SECURITY POLICY BETWEEN 1948 AND 1990

The most important influences on Israeli national security policy are threats and threat perceptions. The factors of history, religion-ideology have deep roots in Israeli security policy and so do not change as a result of internal, regional or international changes. Nevertheless threats and threat perceptions may change after such alterations like regime changes, creation of new alliances, modifications in international system, wars and peace treaties. The changes in threats and threat

⁸ Roberts, J. Samuel, *Survival or Hegemony: The Foundations of Israeli Foreign Policy*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, (Studies in International Affairs, no: 20), 1973, p. 115

perceptions reflect to the national security policies of states; therefore I will examine the alterations in the post-war and post-peace periods in Israel in detail. But I want to mention major threats and threat perceptions after the establishment of Israel, some of which have shown continuity in spite of changes in different areas and remained to be the basic factors, in addition to others, in the formation of Israeli national security policy.

Israel had two types of threat perceptions; external and internal, and the former one was mostly related to the Arabs. There were three possible types of military operation between the Arab states and Israel, the first two being primary military security threats and the last being the secondary military threat for Israel. The least possible but most dangerous type was an unlimited war in which a coalition of Arab states could attack to Israel with unlimited political objectives such as Israel's destruction; the second one was the limited attacks like a mobile war or war of attrition to achieve limited military and political goals; and the last one was the subwar violence like terrorist and guerilla attacks⁹ which has been seriously an increasing threat for the last three decades for Israel.

2.2.1. Primary Military Threat Perceptions

2.2.1.1. The Threat of Eastern Front Attack

Since the very first day of the establishment of the State of Israel, the biggest Israeli perception – both public and political-military elite alike – of threat has been the external threat to Israel's existence through a coordinated attack, the all-out case, from the Eastern Front: Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Egypt combined. The Arab states refused to recognize Israel as a legitimate sovereign neighbor and perceived the existence of that Jewish State in the heart of the Middle East as a threat to themselves, objecting therefore to the UN Partition Plan of 1947 and declaring war against Israel immediately after her declaration of independence. Despite her victory, Israel believed that the Arabs would never give up the idea of accepting

⁹ Evron, Yair, "Some Political and Strategic Implications of An American-Israeli Defense Treaty", Tel-Aviv: Tel Aviv University, (paper), 1980, p. 9

Israel as their number one enemy and would never hesitate a coordinated attack in order to destroy her. In 1948 and afterward, the elimination of the Zionist entity constituted a declared goal in inter-Arab discussions, therefore the most dangerous threat perceived was being conquered in Tel Aviv and Haifa, and the destruction of the state.

When the first decades of the state which witnessed the 1948 and the 1973 Arab attacks, are taken into account, the possibility of a total scenario was not unreal actually because the Arabs at least tried to destroy Israel even if they were not able to do so. Therefore, total or individual Arab attacks were sources of threat especially until the 1973 War, although after that war the likelihood of this threat being realized declined while war of attrition, guerilla warfare and terrorism were replacing it. Individual Arab attacks by Egypt, Syria and Jordan were serious threats as well, but Israeli victory over individual countries at once was more likely than over a united attack of the Arabs, the latter of which was commented on thus by an Israeli general:

What would be worse would be a widespread, coordinated attack on all our borders. Perhaps they (Arabs) do not today have the coordination or political will to work together, but when that day comes, it will be a realization of the nightmare every Jews dreams could happen.¹⁰

2.2.1.2. The Establishment of a Palestinian State

The second threat perception in Israeli security policy was the establishment of a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza. At first it was not Israel who prevented the creation of a Palestinian State because when she accepted the UN Partition Plan of 1947 suggesting the establishment of two independent states of Israel and Palestine it was the Palestinians and the Arab bloc that declared war against Israel and were defeated in the year 1948. Israel did not perceive the Palestinian State as a major threat until 1964 when the PLO was established. In the PLO's Palestinian Covenant of 1968, the armed struggle against the illegitimate

¹⁰ Mroz, John Edwin, *Beyond Security: Private Perceptions Among Arabs and Israelis*, New York: Pergamon Press, 1981, p. 50

Zionist State, which should be annihilated, was legitimized for the liberation of Palestine, and after this official threat the establishment of a Palestinian State was seen as a threat for the existence of Israel. Actually Israel was aware of the fact that the Palestinians could never threaten Israel's existence without the support of the other Arab States. One of the two security problems posed by the creation of a Palestinian State was the possibility of its being used in the critical area of the West Bank as a springboard for the invasion of Israel by the other Arab States individually or in alliance.¹¹ This threat perception was a kind of Eastern Front attack perception because it depended on the fear of a collective attack from Iraq, Syria, Jordan and possibly Iran against Israel from Israel's most vulnerable border, the eastern border, in case of the creation of a Palestinian State in the West Bank after the Israeli withdrawal.

This threat perception was exaggerated in order to find an excuse to prevent the creation of a Palestinian State because the Palestinian problem was among the integral components of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the creation of a Palestinian State would terminate one of the fundamental sources of Arab hostility against Israel; the establishment of a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza would not increase the possibility of an Eastern Front attack, but on the contrary it would decrease it.

The second and more dangerous threat perception related to the establishment of a Palestinian State was potential Palestinian irredentalism.¹² In one of his speeches, Dayan claimed that Palestinian self-determination would rapidly lead to the destruction of the Jewish State since the Palestinian leaders would not be satisfied with a Palestinian State neighboring Israel, but would fight to replace 'the Zionist Entity'.¹³ This perception based on PLO's declaration of Israel as illegitimate and legitimization of armed struggle to end the Zionist State. Another reason for

¹¹ Slater, Jerome, "A Palestinian State and Israeli Security", *Political Science Quarterly*, 1991, Vol. 106, No. 3, p. 414

¹² *Ibid*, p. 414

¹³ Liden, Anders, *Security Perception: A Study of Change in Israel's Official Doctrine 1967-1974*, Lund: Distribution Studentlitteratur, 1979 p. 171-172

supporting this threat perception was that some Palestinians, according to their ‘doctrine of phases’, were dreaming of liberating the rest of Palestine after the first stage of the establishment of Palestine, although even the extremist and rejectionist factions within the PLO reacted angrily against this doctrine which was far from being practical.¹⁴ They were aware of the fact that an armed attack of a Palestinian State with its small population and army without any modern and nuclear weapons, against world’s one of the most powerful army and weaponry would be choosing a complete defeat from the beginning. Therefore, a future Palestinian State would hardly take the risk of attacking Israel, but it pursued the aim of having armed struggle against the Jewish State through terrorism. It is also noteworthy to mention that if Israel had withdrawn and Palestinians had violated peace by attacking Israel, Israel would never have tolerated and would have destroyed the Palestinian State immediately. Consequently Arafat would have not allowed such attempts, which would endanger an independent Palestinian State.

2.2.2. Secondary Military Threat Perceptions

2.2.2.1. Terrorism

Until the 1987 Intifada, which will be examined below in detail, Israel did not perceive terrorism as a primary military-security threat but still it was the third threat perception as a secondary military-security threat in Israeli security policy, especially after the 1967 Six Days War. Terrorism was not only a threat to individual life, but also to economic stability and psychology of the society. Another aim of Palestinian terrorism according to ex-British Defense Attaché in Tel Aviv Colonel Andrew Duncan, was to provoke Israel into reacting or over-reacting which would lead to international condemnation of Israel with the initial provocation conveniently forgotten.¹⁵ This might be the case for a few times in order to divert the attention of the international community to their conflict, but for

¹⁴ Bar-On, Mordechai, “Past Lessons and Future Logic (National Security Considerations for Peacemaking in the Middle East – The Israeli Perspective)”, *Monography Series Paper*, No.1, University of Maryland at College Park, May 1994, p. 30

¹⁵ Duncan, Andrew, “The Military Threat to Israel”, in Charles Tripp (ed.), *Regional Security in the Middle East*, Aldershot, Hants. : Published for the International Institute for Strategic Studies by Gower, 1984 , p. 106

a terrorism strategy which turned out to be the only way of fighting continuously, this can not be one of the aims because even the countries which supported Palestine politically like European countries, had hardly advocated terrorism on the way to their independence. On the contrary, terrorism had put Palestinians in an unjust position in their just desire of having their independent state on their own territories.

Moreover, just like the threat of the ‘doctrine of phases’, the leaders of the independent Palestinian State wouldn’t have allowed terrorism, and even they would have tried to end terrorism, which would have been in favor of the Israeli security. Palestinian terrorism resulted from the need and wish to create a Palestinian State, so if the Palestinian people had reached their aims, why would they have continued to terrorism? Even if the radical Islamic groups had continued terrorism, the political and military leaders would have tried to stop them not to jeopardize their independence and existence.

In short, all these threat perceptions related to the Arabs and especially of Palestinian State between 1948 and 1990 occurred due to the fact that Israel preferred interpreting them as threats because of the lack of trust. This does not mean that Israel had no reason to feel threatened, but mutual good intentions could have led Israel to see some of these threat perceptions in different perspectives, which could have paved the way to live in a more secure environment.

2.2.3. Non-Military Threat Perceptions

2.2.3.1. Poor Relations with the Superpowers

The next external threat perception for Israel was non-military and less direct: poor relations with the superpowers during the Cold War. This threat perception had two dimensions, the first of which was the relationship with Israel’s enemies’ patron the Soviet Union. Israel had never been under a direct threat from the Soviet Union, but in her wars against the Arabs, the possibility of a Soviet Union intervention perceived as a threat to the Israeli national security and interests. The second dimension of this threat was a modification in the Israeli-US relations, but I will write about this change as a threat while examining the 1973 War because this

threat perception was not a prevailed one to all 1948-1990 period, but just limited with a few years after the 1973 War.

2.2.3.2. Increase in the Number of Population of the Arab Minority

The last threat perception of Israel was internal and non-military: the Arab minority in Israel. Obviously the military-security based external threats constituted the basics of the Israeli threat perceptions, but this internal threat should not be ignored especially when the increasing challenge and the measures taken to meet this challenge are taken into account. After the 1948 War, 750.000 Arabs left Israel while 160.000 stayed there. The official policy regarding the Arabs was based on the assumption of their potential disloyalty, so they were suspected of espionage, guerilla warfare, collaboration with terrorism and involvement in political struggle to internationalize their problem and damage Israel's image in the world.¹⁶ The only problem with the Arab minority was not mistrust to them. As the protection of the Jewish character of the Israeli State has always been a significant priority, the increasing population of the Arabs has created an internal threat for Israel. The support of immigration since the very first day of the state and putting immigration at the top of the security problems in 1949 by Ben-Gurion¹⁷ was not only due to the need to increase manpower in the army, but also to protect the majority Jewish number of Israel against the Arab minority.

2.3. MILITARY DOCTRINE AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR SECURITY POLICIES

States, as the highest form of political order, are expected to provide security both for themselves and their citizens, and national security policy is a political-military theory of a state to meet this expectation of providing security. After identifying potential threats as the first step in the formation of the national security policies, political and military measures and strategies should be determined according to

¹⁶ Smooha, Sammy, "Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution, National Security and the Arab Minority", in Avner Yaniv, (ed)., *National Security and Democracy in Israel*, Boulder: Lynne Rienr Publishers, 1993, p. 112

¹⁷ Lissak, Moshe, "Civilian Components in the National Security Doctrine", in Yaniv, 1993, *op. cit.*, p. 67

capabilities of the state. As the number of possible threats is great while the resources are limited to meet these threats, the most appropriate military means should be selected to achieve the political success in the end.¹⁸

Defining threats, taking political measures, having political-diplomatic relations and making diplomatic alliances are mostly political part of the national security policies although some of them are also related to military concerns, but as security is deeply related to military issues, the most important subcomponent of security policies is “military doctrines”. In order to have a successful national security policy, a state should structure it in a coherent and fully synthesized body of doctrine because pursuing goals incompatible with strategies may end with a failure.¹⁹ Therefore, if a military doctrine is not integrated with the political objectives of a state’s national security policies and cannot respond changes in political circumstances, it may give harm to security interests of the state.

While generalizing military doctrine, a number of prescriptions must be formulated specifying how military forces should be structured and employed to meet threats. This formulation is made by professional military officers and to a lesser but still crucial extent by political leaders in order to find the most advantageous military doctrine, which maximizes the efficiency of the military capability of the state in pursuing its national interests.²⁰

Military doctrines depend on three different types of military operations: offensive doctrines aiming to disarm an enemy and to destroy its armed forces; defensive doctrines aiming to deny an adversary of the goal it tries to reach; and deterrence aiming to punish an aggressor by raising its costs without reducing one’s own.²¹

¹⁸ Posen, Barry, *The Sources of Military Doctrine; France, Britain and Germany between the World Wars*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984, p. 13

¹⁹ Singer, David J., *Deterrence, Arms Control and Disarmament; Toward a Synthesis in National Security Policy*, Lanham: University Press of America, 1984, p. 239

²⁰ Gal-Or, Noemi, “The Israeli Defense Forces and Unconventional Warfare: The Palestinian Factor and Israeli National Security Doctrine”, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Summer 1990, Vol. 2, Issue 2, p. 213

²¹ Posen. op. cit., p. 14

The main factors affecting the choice of one of these doctrines are principally its security policy in which all possible threats are identified the country's geo-strategic condition, and its technological and manpower resources. When all these factors are taken into consideration, it is obvious that Israel has an offensive military doctrine despite her deterrence policies and defensive posture from time to time.

2.4. ISRAEL'S MILITARY DOCTRINE

Israeli security doctrine was formulated at certain times by key personalities of Israeli political and military elites, yet Israel does not have a written official doctrine. Israel's unwritten military doctrine was developed in 1950s and early 1960s as a direct result of the prevailing political and strategic circumstances at the time.²² Yigal Allon's following passage explains fundamental assumptions in Israeli strategic thinking affecting Israeli military doctrine:

*From a demographic point of view, Israel's two and a half million Jews (in 1950s) had to contend with more than a hundred million Arabs from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf. Geostrategically speaking, Israel was a narrow strip of land, had its back to the sea, and was surrounded; the lands of the enemy, by contrast, formed a subcontinent. Israel was a country desperately poor in natural resources pitting itself against countries possessing almost inexhaustible natural wealth: oil, big rivers, vast areas of arable land, about half of the world's hydrocarbon reserves. Both in its own region and in the larger world, Israel was uniquely isolated. Apart from its bonds with world Jewry, it had no ethnic or religious links with any other nation.*²³

The main factors, which Allon mentioned in the formation of Israeli military doctrine, can be categorized under the titles of **being a small state** and **geostrategic vulnerability**.

²² Naveh, Shimon, "The Cult of Offensive Preemption and Future Challenges for Israeli Operational Thought", in Efraim Karsh, (ed)., *Between War and Peace, Dilemmas of Israeli Security*, London: Frank Cass, 1996, p. 169

²³ Yaniv, Avner, "A Question of Survival: The Military and Politics Under Siege", in Yaniv, 1993, op. cit., p. 88

2.4.1. Being a Small State

While mentioning insecurity of a state, just examining threats is not enough; vulnerabilities should also be examined. If a state is accepted as insecure, it must also be vulnerable to the threats from external powers or adversary neighbors and to its indefensible borders, limited population and poor resources.²⁴ If a state is relatively small, in terms of territories, population and resources, it should formulate its military doctrine according to principles that can compensate these weaknesses. Being a small state made Israel accept two realities and constitute its military-security doctrine by taking into account those realities, which she can never ignore. The first one is its wars would be ‘few against many’ which indicates asymmetry between armies (both in manpower and weaponry), and the second one is it needs superpower support which is related to its political relations.

2.4.1.1. The Asymmetry in Manpower and Weaponry

Since the very first day of the State of Israel, inferiority in balance of forces has been one of the basic problems of military in spite of the fact that the military/population ratio in Israel is among the highest in the world. In 1948, Israel had a Jewish population of less than a million people, while the neighboring Arab States’ populations were many millions.²⁵ Ben-Gurion concerned about this asymmetry problem and stated:

We have a unique military problem – we are few and our enemies are many...Even if our (population) grows, and it will grow...but even if it is doubled and tripled and quadrupled, we will still be in a situation of the few against the many, because there is no objective possibility that we will ever be comparable in numbers to our actual and potential enemy in the future. And see, you know, is a major factor in an army – usually a decisive factor.²⁶

²⁴ Buzan, op. cit., p. 73

²⁵ Kober, Avi, “A Paradigm in Crisis? Israel’s Doctrine of Military Decision”, in Karsh, 1996, op. cit., p. 190

²⁶ Levite, Ariel, *Offense and Defense in Israeli Military Doctrine*, Jerusalem : Published for the Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies by Jerusalem Post and Westview Press, Boulder, Colo., 1989 p. 31

He, as the main character in the formation of Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), in addition to then Chief of Staff Yigal Yadin, tried to solve this problem by establishing a three-tier structure with a small cadre of officers, a large number of conscripts and a trained civilian reserve. This structure, in spite of the fact that the standing army of conscripts and professionals provided the only forces immediately available for combat and the military strength of Israel, finally depended on reserve forces because reservists belong to specific combat units, support forces or staffs and upon mobilization they join their own operational units.²⁷ The small standing army depends mostly on young men and women doing their compulsory services respectively thirty-six and twenty-one months respectively and reserve forces consist of males serving in the army for about one month per year after finishing their compulsory service.²⁸

This army structure called ‘nation in arms’ structure basing primarily on reservists, brings its own limitations; first of all Israel doesn’t have the option of making a strategic surprise attack because it cannot launch a war without first calling up reserves, and any kind of prolonged warfare is disadvantageous for her, so she might escalate intentionally to end the war immediately in order to release reservists.²⁹ The second limitation is also one of the reasons why Israel can not have a defensive doctrine: since the army depends on reservists who are civilians, the country’s economy can not tolerate long wars; hence Israel needs to initiate short and decisive wars with conclusive victories in the end.³⁰

The third limitation of this asymmetry is the necessity to minimize the duration of wars and to avoid wars like wars of attrition, which in the end would be in favor of the Arabs. Finally the asymmetry makes it necessary for Israel to follow a strategy

²⁷Littwak, Edward and Horowitz, Dan, *The Israeli Army 1948-1973*, Cambridge: Allot Books, 1983, p. 77

²⁸ Schiff, Ze’ev, “Fifty Years of Israeli Security: The Central Role of The Defense System”, *Middle East Journal*, , Summer 1999, Volume 55, No. 3p. 436

²⁹ Lissak, *op. cit.*, p. 66

³⁰ Mandelbaum, Michael, “Israel’s Security Dilemma”, *Orbis*, Summer 1988, Vol. 32, No. 3, p. 357

to destroy enemy's manpower and material resources; however, this gives only a temporary advantage to Israel because Arab world resources are unlimited.³¹

Actually, especially in the first twenty years of the state, due to this asymmetry in manpower as well as in weaponry and territory, and due to bad reminiscences of the Holocaust and 1948 War, Israel pursued strategically and politically defensive posture, but in operational level she has always had an offensive doctrine which will be examined below.

The second solution for the asymmetry in population was to support an extensive and rapid mass immigration. This political solution, which was also quite important for military aims, was accepted as one of the first security problems of the newly established state. The mass immigration started in 1949 and continued until 1952 by when the country's population had doubled and the new comers' integration process to the army and training of them were given under the responsibility of the IDF.³²

Few against many problem applied not only to population and manpower in the army, but also to weaponry in Israeli army compared to weaponry in total Arab armies. The strategy developed to overcome this numerical disadvantage was the **'quantity versus quality'** strategy, which aimed at compensating the quantity gap with high quality military personnel and high-tech weaponry. The most important factors of Israeli qualitative superiority over the Arab states are first in Israel's technology, which provides air and navy superiority with sophisticated missiles and ground superiority with mobile artillery units; second in high level of pilots and combat officers; and third in a more economically developed and well-educated society.³³ This qualitative superiority brought serious advantages to Israel during wars despite the Arab quantitative superiority, but still she was aware of the necessity to increase the number of weaponry in all air, naval and ground forces, hence after 1973 there was an enormous increase in quantity of Israeli weaponry.

³¹ Levite, *op. cit.*, p. 34-35

³² Littwak and Horowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 81-82

³³ Horowitz, Dan, "The Israeli Concept of National Security", in Yaniv, 1993, *op. cit.*, p. 77

Nevertheless, both having qualitative superiority and increasing quantity required a huge budget for military spending which proves the limitations of qualitative superiority and increase in number in weaponry as well. Israel allocates over one third of her annual budget for defensive expenses in spite of high political, social and economic costs.³⁴ By spending so much money on technological researches, development and production of weapons, Israel reached self-sufficiency in some of arms production to an extent and even exported arm product to more than 50 countries by the 1980s.³⁵ However, the need for the weapons that she could not produce and her huge budget for defense expenditures increased Israel's dependency on the US, which Israel did not prefer. Indeed not only for weapons, but also for other military, political and economic reasons, Israel, as a small state, displayed great dependency on a big power, especially the US.

2.4.1.2. Need for a Big Power Support

The second reality related to being a small state, which affected the military doctrine of Israel as an important factor, is her need for a big power support. In fact this need creates a contradiction with the basic Zionist principle of 'self-reliance' based on, as mentioned before, memory of the Holocaust and the Arab attacks before and after the establishment of Israel. The belief of 'chosen people' was strengthened with these bad experiences and emerged as 'People Apart Syndrome'³⁶ which reflects the mentality of providing their own protection and not trusting others. The principle of self-reliance passing from the Jewish Community to Israel as a legacy requires to be militarily, economically and politically self-reliant. Israel should be strong enough not to need big power support not only to meet her national interests and to provide national security, but also not to be restrained in

³⁴ Shimshoni, Jonathan, *Israel and Conventional Deterrence From 1953 to 1970*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988, p. 32

³⁵ Sanders, Ralph, *Arms Industries: New Suppliers and Regional Security*, Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 1990, p. 62

³⁶ Arian, Asher, "A People Apart: Coping with National Security, Problems in Israel", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, December 1989, Vol. 33, No. 4, p. 610

her freedom of action. But, this has never been realized and Israel has needed great power support from the very first day.

Being a small state with limited resources, surrounded by the hostile Arab countries, and full of insecurity and isolation made it impossible for Israel not to need for a big power's support to protect her territories, to get arms and to be recognized as a legal state in the region especially in first few decades after she was established. Indeed, as a young state newly-established in the bipolar world system, she looked for support both from the West and the East; that is why she tried to pursue a 'non-identification' policy between 1948 and 1950 in order to be neutral, yet the immigration from the Eastern Bloc and strength of leftist parties in the Israeli politics then made Israel inclined to the Soviet Union.³⁷ The Soviet Union's desire to have good relations with Israel was another reason for the USSR-leaning policy of Israel, which did not last long. In the changing Cold War atmosphere in the Middle East, Israel had already started to lean toward the Western powers, respectively to Britain, France and the US.

The demand to be self-reliant and the need for all kinds of a major power support put Israel in a significant dilemma. Indeed, this dilemma was also seen in Zionist ideology itself due to the fact that, while ideologically supporting self-reliance principle, the Zionist leaders like Herzl and Weizmann practically assessed that the existence of a strong Jewish Community would be provided by protection and assistance of a patron.³⁸ However, since it was obvious that the Jewish Community and Israel were inevitably dependent on a superpower, they followed the second alternative to provide security, which also meant survival to them. Particularly during the Cold-War era, against the USSR, the supporter of the Arab countries, Israel had an obligation to have good relations with the US, which not only provided her with a deterrence power, but also decreased the possibility of a USSR

³⁷ Podeh, Elie, "The Desire to Belong Syndrome: Israel and Middle Eastern Defense", *Israel Studies*, Fall.1999, Vol. 4, No. 2
http://infotrac.london.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/750/481/44564601w7/purl=rc1_EAIM_0_A59624704&dyn=9!xrn_1_0_A59624704?sw_aep=telaviv

³⁸ Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 111

intervention in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Therefore, despite Ben-Gurion's doubts about the intentions of the great powers and Dayan's similar perspective, which was stated as "*In time of peace there is no need for them, and in time of crisis they are useless.*"³⁹, the US support was accepted as one of the basic pillars of political dimension of Israeli military policy.

That reluctance to depend on big powers never practically implemented because the Israeli leaders were aware of economic, military and political limitations of their country. Nevertheless, the dependency was also criticized by some decision-makers who claimed that it restrained Israel from following her national interests through interventions of superpowers in some of the Arab-Israeli wars while the Arabs were about to be defeated by Israel.⁴⁰ Although there were cases when the US did not support Israel, they did not prevent Israel from using force whenever fundamental Israeli interests were perceived to be endangered. Moreover, superpower interventions were in favor of Israel in most of the cases except the 1956 War. As a result, Israel noticed that superpower support has been beneficial for Israeli security interests and so it should not be undermined at the expense of being self-reliant. This, in fact, did not mean that she would just wait for the support of a big power and ignore the principle of self-reliance completely, but instead she would try to create a balance between the these principles in order to overcome the dilemma. Ben Gurion's following quotation is necessary to understand Israeli position in this dilemma:

*I do not say that no material aid will come from outside, but if there is any hope for such a help – and this hope does exist – then to the degree that we demonstrate to the world that we are not dependent solely on outside help, to that degree such help may be forthcoming. Even God himself helps only those who help themselves.*⁴¹

For the relations with the US specifically, there is a different perspective on the other hand supporting the idea that Israel is a strategic asset for the US, that is why

³⁹ Liden, *op. cit.*, p. 118

⁴⁰ Kober, *op. cit.*, p. 191

⁴¹ Levite, *op. cit.*, p. 30

the relations with her did not totally based on dependency. In the Cold War era, Israel was a strategic asset for US national interests as an anti-communist ally against a USSR supported Arab environment in the region by the 1970s, and in the post-Cold War era, as a political ally against the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East.⁴² This point of view is not completely wrong, yet when the deteriorated relations between the US and Israel in the immediate aftermath of the 1973 War and the oil-crisis are examined, it is obvious that there were some periods that the Arabs were also important for the US's economic interests, and she did not shun from following her national interests even if they were against Israeli national interests. This is because Israel was not a strategic asset for the US, but a client in the Cold War era. The support of the US to Israel mostly depended on her domestic politics in which the Jewish lobby had a very powerful stand, rather than her foreign policy. As a result, Israel has always been militarily, economically and diplomatically dependent on a big power, especially US support which can be proved by the following data: By the year 1991, 98% of Israel's arms imports were from the US and the IDF was totally dependent on the US for access to advanced technology despite Israel's arm productions and export; and from 1949 through 1984, Washington provided Israel with over \$28 billion in military and economic assistance.⁴³

2.4.2. Geostrategic Vulnerability: Lack of Strategic Depth

The second and the most influential factor in the formation of the pillars of Israeli military doctrine is Israel's lack of strategic depth. According to Aharon Yaniv, strategic depth is the space between the furthestmost line at which a country may maintain military forces for its defense without impinging upon the sovereignty of another country and its own vital area which, if occupied by an enemy, signifies an end to the sovereignty of that state, and in case of Israel also the physical liquidation of the state.⁴⁴ The vital area of Israel is the Jerusalem – Tel Aviv – Haifa triangle and it is accepted as the heartland of Israel. The 1949 borders of Israel did not

⁴² Slater, *op. cit.*, p. 424

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 425

⁴⁴ Yaniv, Aharon, "Strategic Depth", *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, Fall 1980, No 17, p. 3

provide security when the distance between the forward line and vital area of Israel is taken into consideration; therefore, those borders were deemed insecure and indefensible. These borders were accepted as insecure borders because of not only the short distance to vital areas, but also the topographic nature of them. Particularly in the northeast, the Golan Heights were under the control of Syria, giving considerable strategic depth to one of Israel's most dangerous enemies, and in the north there was no natural barrier on the Lebanon border where the territory was not suitable for deployment of forces. Both of these created topographic advantage for the Arabs.

The insecurity defined related to the eastern border with Jordan mainly depended on its short distance to population and industrial centers of Israel. This proximity consolidated Israel's sense of insecurity and threat perception of a coordinated Arab attack from the Eastern border which could take a few hours for the Arab armies to enter the heartland of Israel and to destroy her. The southern border with Egypt was different because there was not much of strategic depth, which could constitute a serious threat to Israel's basic security, but rather the threat derived from relative strength of Egypt's standing army compare to other Arab armies.⁴⁵

This territorial asymmetry and lack of strategic depth between the Arabs and the Israelis after the 1949 Armistice led to a deep feeling of insecurity and vulnerability among the Israelis and it continued until the 1967 War, until the occupation of the territories. Therefore, lack of strategic depth, as the main factor of military doctrine of Israel, oriented Israeli political and military elite to create offensive pillars in the military doctrine in order to overcome this problem. After the Six-Days War of 1967, Israel gained strategic depth with the occupied territories and has not withdrawn from the occupied territories by claiming that they are primarily important for Israeli security. However, these new territories created new security problems for Israel security in spite of the strategic advantage they provided, which will be examined in the next chapter.

⁴⁵ Horowitz, Dan, "Israel's Concept of Defensible Borders", Jerusalem: Jerusalem Post Press, 1975, p. 11

2.5. BASIC PILLARS OF ISRAELI MILITARY DOCTRINE

Geography does not create security, yet lack of minimum geography – or strategic depth – guarantees defeat⁴⁶ for Israeli military and political decision-makers; therefore, Israeli military doctrine reflects the pillars to deal with this problem as well as with the other factors of asymmetry in manpower and weaponry, and their threat perceptions. The solution to the dilemma of lack of strategic depth was enunciated by Ben-Gurion in 1948 as ‘**transfer of war into the enemy territories**’⁴⁷, but this solution is for war conditions. However, the first pillar of the Israeli military doctrine is deterrence, which requires for the attempts to deter enemies from attacking to Israel. Should deterrence fail, the early warning is the next pillar and the last one is a decisive victory through transfer of war and first strike.

2.5.1. Deterrent Strategy

Deterrence is a form of coercion, the latter of which defined by Klaus Knorr as

When power is used coercively, an actor (B) is influenced if he adapts his behavior in compliance with, or anticipation of, another actor's (A) demands, wishes or proposals, B's conduct is then affected by something A does, or by something he expects A to do. In consequence, B will modify his behavior (if he would have done so otherwise), or he will not modify his behavior (if he would have altered it in the absence of external influence). But not all influence is coercive: It is coercive when B's conduct is affected by his fear of sanctions of one kind or another that is some threat, actual or expected, to his goal achievement. B's choice of behavior is consequently restricted by A's influence.⁴⁸

Hence, deterrence is a specific coercive method; a defender's dissuasion of an opponent's intention to undertake or expand violent action through the use of implied or explicit threats. Deterrence can also be explained as the ability to dissuade an enemy from conducting hostile acts by demonstrating him that it is not

⁴⁶ Begin, Ze'ev, "The Likud Vision for Israel at Peace", *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1991, Vol. 70, no. 4, p. 26

⁴⁷ Horowitz, in Yaniv, 1993, *op. cit.*, p. 20

⁴⁸ Shimshoni, *op. cit.*, p. 5

worth his while, in other words, it is trying to prevent war and violence by discouraging an enemy from initiating war through threatened punishment.⁴⁹

Deterrence, indeed, does not only mean the attempt to prevent direct military attack, but it also means the endeavor to prevent all other acts which might endanger the national interest of a state like nuclear blackmail, 'outrageous', diplomatic provocation, or limited war.⁵⁰ In order to be successful in deterrence policy, the deterrer should have credibility, which means unless the deterred enemy believes that the warning threats of the deterrer will be implemented, deterrence shall fail. The implementation of deterrence bases on both willingness and the capability of the deterrer, and if the willingness and the capability are not enough to persuade enemy, deterrence does not work.

Israeli deterrence strategy aims at preventing a collective or individual Arab attack, this is obvious, but her method for deterrence is interpreted in two different approaches. According to the first approach, Israel's military doctrine has been based on the assumption that deterrence and military decision are two sides of the same coin and therefore Israel constitutes her deterrence strategy through not punishment, but prevention.⁵¹ This approach supports the idea that punishment can not be a part of Israeli military doctrine since Israel had already realized the fact that she can never force the Arabs to acknowledge the Israeli desires in a military way. Israel was not able to turn military victory into political success of her own, while the Arabs were quite successful in winning political victory sometimes even without military success. However, Israeli deterrence did not always work to prevent wars as a result of which wars were inevitable.

The second approach, on the contrary, claims that Israel can only prevent the Arabs from attacking to Israel through 'deterrence by punishment', which means Israel's

⁴⁹ Levron, Aharon, "The Decline of Israeli Deterrence", *ACPR Policy Papers*, February 2001, No. 113, p. 15

⁵⁰ Singer, *op. cit.*, p. 76

⁵¹ Tal, Israel, "Israel's Security Policy in the Eighties", *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, Fall 1980, Number 17, p. 14

deterrence can not depend on pure threats or denial of final Arab war aims of destruction of Israel due to not only the Arab overwhelming superiority in staying power but also Israel's strategic vulnerabilities both of which encouraged the Arabs to attack Israel with a 'step-by-step approach'.⁵² Israeli deterrence in that sense could reach success only if Israel gains a humiliating defeat in terms of casualties, destruction and loss of territory, which in the end makes Israel follow offensive strategies in her military doctrine in order to have decisive military victories.

When Israel's sources of deterrence are examined one can easily conclude that her deterrence policy includes both prevention and punishment because for Israel, attacking to an Arab state first is also a part of deterrence in order to prevent it from assaulting Israel in the future. The first source of deterrence for Israel is her strategic ties with the US and her efforts to prevent the Arab states from forming such ties with the West as well in order to be sure that no arms sales to the Arab states are done.⁵³ An Israeli author Amos Kenan explains this policy as "*making the West always choose between us and them (the Arabs), and if it is not us, we will create enough trouble to make sure that it must be us.*"⁵⁴

The second and most powerful source of deterrence is Israel's nuclear power, although by the year 1991 she did not want to accept officially that it had nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, it was as early as 1955 that Israel started nuclear projects with the great support of Ben-Gurion who believed that only a developed science and technology could bring a crucial advantage in terms of security over her Arab adversaries.⁵⁵ The Arab leaders claimed that in the late 1960s Israel had already had nuclear weapons to use against the Arabs if her heartland was threatened, and it was believed that Israel's nuclear deterrence prevented both Syria and Egypt from

⁵² Levite, *op. cit.*, p. 43

⁵³ Telhami, Shibley, "Israeli Foreign Policy: A Static Strategy in a Changing World", *Middle East Journal*, Summer 1990, Vol. 44, No. 3, p. 401

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 401

⁵⁵ Cohen, Avner, "Before the Beginning; the Early History of Israel's Nuclear Project (1948, 1954)", *Israel Studies*, Spring 1998, Vol. 3, No. 1, and http://infotrac.london.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/750/481/44564601w7/purl=rc1_EAIM_0_A54197386&dyn=7!xrn_6_0_A54197386?sw_aep=telaviv

planning to attack Israel within her 1967 boundaries in the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and persuaded Anwar Sadat to make peace with Israel many years later.⁵⁶ However, the fact that despite Israel's nuclear capability, the Arabs attacked within the pre-1967 borders should not be ignored.

The assumption of 'losing a war meant losing the state' in Israeli military doctrine had Israel develop her nuclear deterrent capability⁵⁷ because it was seen as the only way to compensate with conventional weapon asymmetry. Moreover, during the Cold War era the likelihood of Arab nuclear proliferation backed by the USSR increased Israeli desire to have nuclear capability. However, due to the potential danger of a nuclear 'balance of terror' between Israel and the Arab States the latter of which would venture the loss of a few million Arabs' lives in order to annihilate Israel as the King of Saudi Arabia stated, the longer Israel could postpone that unstable nuclear balance of terror, the better for her security.⁵⁸ Thus Israel should not have been the one who brought the nuclear weapons into the region in order to prevent both the Arab attacks and the possible pressure from the great powers as well.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, as she did not want to be one step behind of the Arabs in terms of nuclear power and as she believed that nuclear power would be a bargaining card in the future, she developed her nuclear capability.

In fact, rising in Arab nuclear proliferation has accepted as a security threat against Israel especially in the post-Cold War era. Hence, it will be examined in detail in that period, but it is noteworthy to mention a discussion in Israeli military doctrine whether the era of nuclear proliferation limited the power of strategic depth. This assessment was found groundless for believers in the importance of geographical-strategic depth because first of all the enemy could not conquer the land by

⁵⁶ Slater, *op. cit.*, p. 426

⁵⁷ Schiff, 1999, *op. cit.*, p. 437

⁵⁸ Ne'eman, Yuval, "Conceiving a Balanced Defense for a Budding Nation", in Zvi Lanir (ed), *Israeli Security Planning in the 1980s*, New York: Praeger Special Studies, 1984, p. 12

⁵⁹ Handel, Michael, "Israel's Political-Military Doctrine", *Occasional Papers in International Affairs*, July 1973, No. 30, Center for International Affairs (Harvard University), p. 48

bombing and victory could not be reached without occupation for them, and secondly strategic depth itself might be a deterrent factor.⁶⁰

Deterrence is one of the basic pillars of Israeli military doctrine and is the only, non-offensive principle. Although her nuclear proliferation may have offensive goals, until now Israel has not used it even as retaliation in the Gulf War when Iraq sent more than 30 Scud missiles to Israel. Nonetheless, it must be kept in mind that if a state has nuclear capability, there is always the possibility to use it when she needs it or just for offensive aims. Consequently, Israel's nuclear proliferation may be source of offensive goals in the future although she claims that it is only for deterrence.

2.5.2. Defensive Strategy

Deterrence has a central place in Israeli military doctrine, yet it was not successful all the time, and so could not prevent the outbreak of war between the Arab states and Israel. The other basic pillars of the military doctrine base mainly on offensive strategies although there are defensive measures taken against a surprise attack. As the first defensive measure, Israel created a well-developed intelligence service to provide an early warning to prevent to be attacked from the beginning or to be well prepared for a coming war. Early warning was necessary to make effective mobilization and deployment of forces possible in case of a surprise attack to which Israel was vulnerable due to the lack of strategic depth particularly before 1967. The Air Force had to cover mobilization and deployment process by protecting the forces against air raids and support the standing army by its fire power until the main ground forces can rally their full strength; and the Navy had to maintain a permanent presence at sea both in peace and wartime.⁶¹ Early warning and intelligence systems have not been established just as defensive objectives, they have also been used for preparations for a preemptive strike.

⁶⁰ Yaniv, Aharon, *op. cit.*, p. 6, 7

⁶¹ Tal, Israel "Israel's Doctrine of National Security: Background and Dynamics", *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, No. 4, Summer 1977, p. 46

According to the information gathered through early warning and intelligence, the reserve should mobilize as soon as possible, hence making speed was an important factor for defense. But, again speed also constituted one of the crucial elements of offense because it was necessary during the war not only to win quickly in one area in order to concentrate forces in another area, but also to reduce the casualties by shortening the duration of the war.⁶² Finally, a border settlement policy was adopted as an element of defensive strategy to hold the first line of defense by its own efforts.⁶³ They were expected to be a part of early warning as well as to take initial responsibility for defending the region until reserve units become available, and to stop invading Arab forces if possible.⁶⁴ The settlements' contribution for Israeli security in terms of early warning and defense cannot be neglected, however they might create a serious evacuation burden to the IDF in times of major conflict.⁶⁵ Moreover, they, especially those in the occupied territories after 1967, caused additional security problems because they provoked the Arabs who interpreted the settlement policy as the end of the possibility of the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories.

2.5.3. Offensive Strategy

2.5.3.1. Transfer of War into Enemy Territories

If deterrence fails and war breaks out, the most important tenet of Israeli military doctrine requires the transfer of war into enemy territory as rapidly as possible.⁶⁶ This strategy was formulated by the first Prime Minister and Minister of Defense in 1948 as an offensive principle:

⁶² Wurmser, David, "The Evolution of Israeli Grand Strategy; Strategy, Tactics and the Confluence with Classic Democratic Philosophy", Michigan: University Microfilms International Dissertation Service, A Bell and Howell Information Company, 1991, p. 5-6

⁶³ Handel, *op. cit.*, p. 4

⁶⁴ Averick, Sara M. and Rosen, Steven J., "The Importance of the West Bank and Gaza to Israel's Security", *AIPAC Papers on US-Israel Relations: 11, American-Israel Public Affairs*, 1985, p. 26

⁶⁵ Cohen, Saul, "Israel's Defensible Borders: A Geopolitical Map", *JCSS Paper*, No. 20, Tel Avivi: 1983, p. 24-25

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 11

If we are attacked and war is again forced on us, we shall not adopt defensive strategy, rather we will move to an attack on the enemy – and as far as possible, in the enemy territories... If they attack us as they did this time – we shall transfer the war to the gates of their country... If they attack us again in the future, we want the war to be waged not in our country, but in the enemy's country and (we want) not to be defensive but to attack.⁶⁷

Since the population, military and civilian installations of most of the country were very close to the borders due to lack of strategic depth, transfer of war into the enemy territories was a good solution against the destruction of these centers and the whole country after the 1948 War. Nonetheless, it remained one of the basic pillars of Israeli military doctrine even after the additional strategic depth in the post-1967 War era. It is argued that this principle has a great impact on Israel's deterrence capability because the transfer of war into the enemy territories would increase the possibility of victory which would deter the Arab states from attacking Israel again.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, this might have an opposite effect and might motivate the Arabs to attack Israel to compensate their defeat. Therefore it cannot be accepted as a strategy for strengthening deterrence, but obviously an offensive strategy, which is complemented by the offensive concept of first strike.

2.5.3.2. First Strike

Unlike deterrence and transfer of war into enemy territory principles, first strike principle was not formulated in 1948, because Israel was more vulnerable to the Arab attacks and the strategy was mainly depended on preventing the attack, and if they could not, then counterattack, transfer and offense were required. However, with the changing politico-strategic circumstances, the idea of taking the first strike started to be adopted in Israeli strategic thinking in the middle 1950s, by Moshe Dayan.⁶⁹ There are two types of first strike: preventive wars and preemptive wars.

⁶⁷ Levite, *op. cit.*, p. 49

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 88

⁶⁹ Horowitz, in Yaniv, 1993, *op. cit.*, p. 20

A preventive war bases on the assumption of the offender that the enemy plans to attack her sometime in the future, therefore the preventive war, which aims at preventing a medium or long-term deterioration of the military situation, can be launched without the existence of an immediate threat to the political or territorial status quo.⁷⁰ The preemptive strike, on the other hand, is launched by depending on all the signs and careful information, against an enemy who is about to start an attack⁷¹, so it aims at forestalling an imminent threat. Yigal Allon defines the preemptive strike as:

*an operational initiative ...against concentrations of enemy forces and the capture of vital strategic targets on enemy territories at a time that such enemy is preparing to attack you, before he has succeeded in actually launching such an attack.*⁷²

The first strike requires gathering information for early warning and Israel had a well-developed early warning and intelligence system as mentioned before. Nevertheless, despite well-developed intelligence, it is hard to be sure about enemy's plan of when and how to attack unless it attacks; hence the legitimacy of preemptive strike falls into crisis. Both the transfer of war and the preemptive strikes, as the complementaries of the offensive doctrine, aim at destruction of enemy forces and material resources, conquest of Arab territories and having a quick victory as soon as possible. Destruction of forces brings only a temporary advantage because Arab manpower and material resources are unlimited, compared to those of Israel; however, conquest of Arab territories brings a territorial-strategic advantage if Israel does not withdraw or a bargaining card in peace negotiations if she acknowledges to withdraw in favor of peace.⁷³

⁷⁰ Kober, *op. cit.*, p. 199, 200

⁷¹ Yaniv, Aharon, *op. cit.*, p. 11

⁷² Kober, *op. cit.*, p. 200

⁷³ Tal, 1977, *op. cit.*, p. 45

The offensive elements of Israeli military doctrine were formulated in order to compensate for the asymmetry in territory – lack of strategic depth - and in the manpower relying on reserve forces. These factors also led military decision-makers give a quick decision for war and to end the war as quickly as possible. The offensive aims of destruction of enemy's strategic assets of command, control and communication modes, airfields, air defense and ground-to-ground missile batteries have a deterrence objective as well as the offensive one, because it is believed that such a humiliating defeat would dissuade the Arabs from attacking Israel,⁷⁴ yet as mentioned before, it might escalate the problem and the Arabs might retaliate to get what they lost and to give similar damages to Israel. Occupation of territories on the other hand can also create more problems instead of solving problems during negotiations because Israel has hardly withdrawn from the territories she occupied which brought other security problems, but this will be examined later while writing about the 1967 War.

As examined above Israeli security policy depends on political and military concerns like various security threats and her own geopolitical, material manpower vulnerabilities, and her military doctrine was formulated by taking into account all these security problems. Although the military doctrine includes deterrence and other principles of transfer of war into enemy territory, preemptive and preventive wars with the aim of destruction of enemy forces and conquering enemy territories are quite offensive in nature despite their deterrence objectives. Actually due to her vulnerabilities to serious threats from neighbors and manpower-weaponry asymmetries, Israel had a defensive stand after her establishment, but operationally she pursued offensive strategies especially between the 1950s and the 1973 War.

Since the security policies and the military doctrines are formed mainly according to the threats against a state's security, threat perceptions and countries' own geostrategic situation, modifications are expected in the security policies and military doctrines as change occurs in one or some of these elements. After the establishment of the state, Israel witnessed changes in some of these elements due

⁷⁴ Levite, *op. cit.*, p. 100

to significant wars or alterations in internal or regional politics. The next chapter will be about how these wars and changes affected Israeli security policy and military doctrine.

CHAPTER 3

THE CHANGES IN ISRAELI SECURITY POLICY BETWEEN 1948 AND 1990

“Si vis pacem para bellum”¹

In order to have a functioning, effective military doctrine, the military and political decision makers should adapt changes in the status quo to the military doctrine. In Israel's case, despite rigidities in the doctrinal level, the changing circumstances brought temporary changes in the implementation of the military doctrine. Until the 1990s, the Israeli security understanding resulted from the threat perceptions, had not changed much since 1948 because of the continuity in the existential threat perception. Both the Six Days War and the Yom Kippur War brought alterations in Israeli threat perception and in the implementation of the military doctrine according to their outcomes in spite of the continuity in the basic pillars of the doctrine. This chapter will analyze the changes and continuities in Israeli security policy in a changing environment after Arab-Israeli wars in terms of threat perceptions, superpower relations, geographical and quantitative asymmetries, and the basic pillars and implementation of the military doctrine; deterrence, transfer of war and first strike.

3.1. THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Israeli security concept was formed after the first Arab-Israeli War of 1948, mostly by the first Prime and Defense Minister David Ben-Gurion, according to past experiences, external threat perceptions to her existence from her Arab neighbors, their quantitative asymmetry in manpower and material resources, and the lack of strategic depth as mentioned in the first chapter. As the past experiences of the

¹ If you want peace, prepare for war. Cohen, Stuart A., “Towards a New Portrait of a (New) Israeli Soldier”, *Israel Affairs*, Vol. 3, Spring/Summer 1997, p. 77

Holocaust and the Arab collective attack were still fresh, one of the most important necessities of the security concept was to decide the Israeli stand and relations with superpowers in the Cold-War. The 'non-identification' policy of the first two years was not only due to the need for the support of the both sides, but also due to the distribution of the Jewish people all around the world. As Ben-Gurion stated:

About two thirds of our people in the Diaspora are scattered among the Western nations, and one-third in the East. This decisive fact which will not speedily be altered, is enough in itself to compel us in the Land of Israel to follow a foreign policy of peace and good will towards all nations in the world...²

As a solution to the problem of having a small population, immigration was at the top of the security policy of young Israel; that is why good relations with the Eastern bloc from which massive immigration was expected, was as important as the relations with the American Jewish Community, whose strength to help Israel was acknowledged by Ben-Gurion. This short-time balance policy was also coherent with the Israeli desire for self-reliance stemming from the lack of trust to the big powers, yet it did not take too long for Israel to understand her need for Western support which would serve her interests best. However, the West's interests were not analogous, as evident in the Tripartite Declaration in May 1950 which specified that both the Arabs and Israel should maintain a sufficient level of armed forces in order to provide internal security and legitimate self-defense, and to be important actors in the defense of the region.³ Moreover, in the US-UK initiative of the Middle East Defense Alliance in 1951, Israel was not invited to take part, while Israel's most dangerous enemy Egypt was.⁴ From then on, Israel, for her

² Telhami, Shibley, "Israeli Foreign Policy: A Static Strategy in a Changing World", *Middle East Journal*, Summer 1990, Vol. 44, No. 3, p. 404

³ Podeh, Elie, "The Desire to Belong Syndrome: Israel and Middle Eastern Defense", *Israel Studies*, Fall.1999, Vol. 4, No. 2, at http://infotrac.london.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/750/481/44564601w7/purl=rc1_EAIM_0_A59624704&dyn=9!xrn_1_0_A59624704?sw_aep=telaviv

⁴ Tal, David, "The American-Israeli Security Treaty: Sequel or Means to the Relief of Israeli-Arab Tensions, 1954-1955", *Middle Eastern Studies*, October 1995, Vol. 31 no. 4, at http://infotrac.london.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/750/481/44564601w7/purl=rc1_EAIM_0_A17784309&dyn=9!xrn_2_0_A17784309?sw_aep=telaviv

security interests, pursued a two-folded policy of trying to prevent arms shipments to the Arab states and convincing both the British and the US to accept Israel as a central security asset against the communist threat in the region.⁵ These negative developments in relations with the superpowers strengthened Israel's desire to remain self-reliant, despite the aforementioned political, economic and security related realities.

Israel had no time to deter enemies before she was attacked in the 1948 War. In the aftermath of that war she was in a defensive position not only because of external and internal political circumstances and but because the IDF's capabilities were inadequate to implement a doctrine permitting first strikes. The principle of first strike was irrelevant until 1955, but the principle of transferring the war into the enemy's territory was implemented during 1948 and became a legacy from that war. The transfer of the war was necessary due to lack of strategic depth and unless it had been successful, Israel would not have been today's Israel; therefore transfer of war was adopted as a main principle of Israeli military doctrine.

3.2. THE 1956 WAR

Due to British arms sales to the whole Middle East, particularly to Egypt, Anglo-Israeli relations were delicate and ambivalent in the first half of the 1950s. This persisted in spite of Israel's efforts to turn it into her advantage due to her need to procure arms from Britain.⁶ Israel's endeavors continued to make mutual alliances with both the UK and the US, with the latter of whom a security treaty was needed, according to Ben-Gurion and his successor Moshe Sharett. To Dayan, though, such a treaty would severely confine Israel's maneuverability.⁷ In spite of Israel's efforts to make alliances with those powers, two events occurred in 1954 which demonstrated that the West's priority in the region was not Israel, caused

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Zach Levey, "Anglo-Israeli Strategic Relations, 1952-56", *Middle Eastern Studies*, October 1995, Special Studies: Israel, at http://infotrac.london.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/750/481/44564601w7/purl=rc1_EAIM_0_A17784309&dyn=9!xrn_2_0_A17784309?sw_aep=telaviv

⁷ Tal, op. cit.

Israeli threat perceptions to strengthen: first, the West's negotiations with Turkey and Iraq to conclude a cooperation treaty culminating with Baghdad Pact of 1955; and second, the Egyptian-Anglo agreement to end British presence in the Suez Canal region which would not only remove a buffer between Egypt and Israel, but also would provide British military assets to Egypt.⁸

The deepening threat perceptions were reinforced by Nasser's announcement in 1955 that Egypt had signed a massive arms deal with Czechoslovakia, which transformed her, for Israel, from a potential adversary into a vital danger and the Israeli government decided to focus its efforts on maintaining the flow of arms instead of security treaty attempts.⁹ Although the Egypt-Czechoslovakia arms deal put an end to discussions about a security treaty with the US, it did not change the Israeli need for Great Power support, which especially after the 1956 War undoubtedly connoted US support.

Israel cooperated with two declining powers, Britain and France, in the Middle East in 1956 and launched a preventive war against Egypt with completely different reasons and aims than those of her allies; she was not concerned about the nationalization of the Suez Canal, but she was worried about the increasing military gap between Egypt and Israel due to the reinforcement of the Egyptian army with modern weaponry and the *fedayyun* attacks directed by the Egyptians against Israeli targets.¹⁰ The principle of launching the first strike for the first time was a result of the improvement in IDF's operational capability as well as the increasing threat perceptions.

Unlike the 1948 War, in this case the threat was stemmed from just one Arab country, Egypt, which was accepted as the most dangerous enemy. The increased gap in the asymmetry in weaponry was consolidated by both the agreement on the

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Schiff, Ze'ev, "Fifty Years of Israeli Security: The Central Role of the Defense System", *Middle East Journal*, Summer 1999, Vol. 55, No. 3, p. 438

British evacuation of the Suez Canal which would leave all military assets to Egypt and the Egyptian-Czech arms deal. The latter one was one of the main reasons of the Israeli attack which was in coherence with her military doctrine determining her offensive strategies by depending on the assumption of quantitative asymmetry as well as the other elements mentioned above.

One of the motives behind Israel's Sinai Campaign was her implicit aim of expanding her territory¹¹, and this offensive objective of conquering enemy territories was fulfilled successfully in the Sinai Peninsula with the implementation of the principles of pursuing a short and a decisive victory, however in spite of the support of Britain and France, Israel could not turn her military victory into a political victory due to the lack of the US support. The need for the US support became one of the most important political-security aims of Israel especially after she had to withdraw from the territories she conquered during the war. Nevertheless, she would understand very soon that accepting withdrawal in 1957 would not only create a de facto situation in which the waterway to the Red Sea remained open, the Sinai Peninsula was demilitarized and the terrorist attacks from the Gaza Strip stopped, but it also provided Israel a long-term US backing giving Israel more strategic advantages like actual occupation of Sinai and other territories in 1967.¹²

The deteriorating relations between the US and Egypt after the rise of Nasser and his concurrent rise in popularity in the Arab world as a hero against the West was another reason for the increasing US support to Israel after 1956. As a result, although in the beginning this war deteriorated the US-Israeli relations, it paved the way for the US support for Israel at the end of the day. This was more important for Israel than gaining strategic depth in Sinai because good relations with the US meant a strong deterrent power against the Arabs to force them accept her existence

¹¹ Lanir, Zvi, "Political Aims and Military Objectives-Some Observations on the Israeli Experience", in Zvi Lanir, *Israeli Security Planning in the 1980s: Its Politics and Economics*, New York: Praeger Special Studies, 1984, p. 20

¹² Bar-On, Mordechai, "Past Lessons and Future Logic (National Security Considerations for Peacemaking in the Middle East – The Israeli Perspective)", *Monography Series Paper*, No.1, University of Maryland at College Park, May 1994, p. 10

in the region and dissuade them from attacking. In short, the 1956 War was unsuccessful in gaining strategic depth, but brought a more significant outcome to the beginning of good relations with the US and increasing deterrent power. It provided Israel with ten and a half years of nearly uninterrupted peace, giving the IDF a significant measure of self-confidence as well as deterring power.¹³

3.3. THE SIX DAYS WAR

Between 1948 and 1967 Israel created a security dilemma according to '*ein breira*' (no choice) policy, according to which Israel had no choice but to be strong and unphased by the danger of provoking the Arabs who were seen as already hostile; that is why she tried to increase her economic and military capabilities to deter the Arabs.¹⁴ According to Michael Mandelbaum, each state's security bases partly on her actions and partly on the other states' actions and security dilemma arises since these two aspects are related in unpredictable way: If a state increases her military capability, the other state may be deterred, become less hostile and create security for the other, or she may accept this development as a threat, increase her own military capability and make the environment less secure. In case that state decreases her military capability, the other may perceive this as weakening of a threat, become less hostile and make the environment more secure, or she may see the military build-down as a weakness of the other, become more hostile and make the other less secure.¹⁵ In the Israeli case, the Arab military build-up was perceived as an increasing threat and that she had been provoked, not deterred because of the lack of trust to each other; and military build-down has hardly occurred. However, although Israel hasn't been deterred, but rather provoked, she expected to deter the Arabs with her military build-up and with the US prop to her.

¹³ Handel, Michael, "Israel's Political-Military Doctrine", *Occasional Papers in International Affairs*, No. 30, 1973, Center for International Affairs:Harvard University, p. 37

¹⁴ Mandelbaum, Michael, "Israel's Security Dilemma", *Orbis*, Summer 1988, p. 357

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 355

Before 1967 Israel was a strong state backed by the US and with an impressive army, but her threat perceptions from the Arabs – either by Egypt individually or by a collective attack under the Egyptian auspices – were still in the agenda of Israeli security policy. Indeed, given that Egypt announced that it did not plan to attack to Israel and even if it had attacked first, Israel would have won easily,¹⁶ why did Israel launch a preemptive strike against Egypt and Syria in June 1967? Although Nasser was not ready to attack first, he took provocative steps to invite Israel to attack as he mentioned in his famous sentence “*Nasser waits for Rabin*”.¹⁷ Israel could choose not to initiate a war because there was not a direct threat, yet not the objective situation, but rather the subjective view of the Israeli leadership believing that the IDF’s deterrent capability was not functioning and needed to be reconstructed made Israel launch a preemptive strike.¹⁸

When the post-war policy of Israel of not withdrawing from the occupied territories is examined, her offensive aim of conquering enemy territories to have secure borders and strategic depth, which were lack in Israel’s 1949 armistice lines, seems quite plausible. The time was ripe to end fears resulting from the lack of strategic depth, because she strengthened her army, reinforced her weaponry and got the US support to transform the military victory into political gains. She also had the opportunity to legitimize herself by accusing her neighbors, especially Nasser, of provoking Israel during a period when Egypt became a threat against the West as a powerful client of the USSR.

3.3.1. The End of the Lack of Strategic Depth Problem

Israel’s victory over the Arab states brought changes in her geographic, military and psychological situation, but surprisingly it did not lead to changes in basic principles of Israeli military doctrine. The most dramatic modification which stemmed from the Six Days War was the strategic depth that Israel gained with the occupation of the West Bank, the East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, the Sinai

¹⁶ Telhami, *op. cit.*, p. 408-409

¹⁷ Bar-On, *op. cit.*, p. 13

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 13

Peninsula and the Gaza Strip. Not only did major centers like Jerusalem and Tel Aviv have additional distance from enemy forces, but also Israel collectively gained topographical advantages from controlling the heights overlooking nearly most of the eastern approaches to Israel with the occupation of Golan, Judea and Samaria, and the entire length of the Jordan River.¹⁹ These new territories' strategic depth provided psychological assurance to the Israelis because the borders which were vulnerable to a surprise Arab attack replaced with borders which gave topographical and territorial advantages to Israel.

Unlike the 1949 lines described as 'indefensible borders', the 1967 ceasefire lines brought the new concept of 'secure borders', or 'defensible borders' whose strategic significance was defined by Abba Eban as "*borders which can be defended without a preemptive initiative*".²⁰ Nonetheless these new security concepts could not do much to alter the principle of first strike in Israeli military doctrine due to the fact that the possibility of a coordinated Arab threat from Egypt, Syria and Iraq against the Israeli existence remained, although strategic depth of the new borders were believed to be an important deterrent factor.²¹

One of the main discussions related to the new borders was whether they brought deterrence and security, or on the contrary insecurity because of the prospect of the increasing attacks from within the occupied territories. For the supporters of the first argument, the security aspect of the Golan Heights and Judea and Samaria not only resulted from their additional distance to the heartland of Israel, but also derived from their rugged topography which would protect Israel from a surprise massive attack. According to those people supported the second argument, on the other hand, since these territories lacked mutually agreed boundaries, having secure

¹⁹ Becker, Abraham S., *Israel and the Palestinian Occupied Territories: Military, Political Issues in the Debate*, California: Rand Cooperation, 1971, p. 21

²⁰ Horowitz, Dan, "The Israeli Concept of National Security", in Avner Yaniv (ed.), *National Security and Democracy in Israel*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993, p. 23

²¹ Becker, *op. cit.*, p. 23

borders by force couldn't seem possible as Eban mentioned in 1967: "*Dictated boundaries are not secure*"²², so the conflict between the parties would continue.

3.3.2. New Boundaries, New Threats

Although the new boundaries would diminish the possibility of a coordinated attack from the Arabs, they brought a different kind of threat which was terrorism; thus the new borders which provoked the Arabs, especially the Palestinians, rather than deterring them, caused insecurity for Israel after the 1967 War. Nevertheless, the Chief of Staff during the 1967 War, later Prime Minister and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, for whom in the post-1967 War period the basic threat was still in "*the likelihood of war the purpose of which is the annihilation of the State of Israel*", saw terrorism as a 'cruel and annoying war' but one which does not annihilate.²³ As parties of the discussion, the Labor Party Leaders including Allon, preferred secure and recognized borders²⁴, while Likud leaders with their strong commitments to Zionism, rejected the idea of withdrawing from the Golan Heights and the entire area of Jordan River especially Judea and Samaria due to their vitality for Israeli security.²⁵

The rejection of withdrawal from some of the occupied territories was not only about security issues, but also equally about their religious-Zionist ties to Eretz Israel and the right of Jews to live Judea and Samaria. If it had been merely related to security issues, Israel could have accepted demilitarization of those territories that would eliminate the danger of war as she did in case of Sinai in the next decade.²⁶ Again if the occupation of the territories had solely depended upon

²² Liden, Anders, *Security and Recognition: A Study of Change in Israel's Official Doctrine 1967-1974*, Sweden Student Literature Lend, 1979, p. 123

²³ Galor, Noemi, "The Israeli Defense Forces and Unconventional Warfare: The Palestinian Factor and Israeli National Security Doctrine", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Summer 1990, Vol. 2, Issue 2, p. 215

²⁴ Becker, *op. cit.*, p. 31

²⁵ Begin, Ze'ev, "The Likud Vision for Israel at Peace", *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1991, Vol. 70, No. 4, p. 30

²⁶ Duncan, Andrew, "The Military Threat to Israel", in Charles Tripp, (ed.), *Regional Security in the Middle East*, Research Associate IISS, Hants: Gower Publishing Company Limited, 1984, p. 111

security, the question of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip would not have been developed into the complex issue it is today. The issue developed this way due to the Israeli belief in the 'right to settle anywhere and everywhere in the West Bank'.²⁷ Actually, the settlements, which would consolidate the Jewish presence in the occupied territories, were supported by the Israeli Governments of post-1967 period with the claim that Israeli settlement policy depended on security aspects.²⁸ Actually, the settlement policy worked during the first days of the 1967 War in Upper Galilee, as while the army was busy elsewhere, settlements engaged the Syrian forces.²⁹ As such, the settlement policy continued to be followed as a part of military doctrine in the occupied territories in the post-1967 period.

The security aspect of settlements was related to war conditions because it was claimed that during peace-time they would be bargaining cards for future negotiations analogous to the occupied territories themselves, from which most have not been withdrawn even for the sake of peace, so they created more security problems. According to Michael Mandelbaum, the problem of the exchange of land for peace was that, it would be an asymmetrical exchange since Israel would give up territories and military assets which were central to her security; whereas the Arabs would only say they changed their mind and accepted Israel as a legitimate state.³⁰ If their withdrawal would prevent all kinds of war like a coordinated attack or terrorist attacks which were quite important security threats to Israel, and bring peace, why not? The party, which attacked first and occupied the territories, was Israel; therefore, she was the one who had to take concrete steps for peace and for her own security interests.

²⁷ Avineri, Shlomo, "Ideology and Israel's Foreign Policy", *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 1986, No. 37, p. 4

²⁸ Liden, *op. cit.*, p. 132

²⁹ Ne'eman, Yuval, "Conceiving a Balanced Defense for a Budding Nation", in Lanir, 1984, *op. cit.*, p. 10

³⁰ Mandelbaum, *op. cit.*, p. 358

Another security dilemma Israel had to face with after the 1967 War, after the occupation of territories, was the increase in Arab population. Between 1949 and 1967 less than a 15% Arab minority used to live in Israel, while after 1967 the Arab population increased to nearly 2.1 million, 1.4 million of which were living in the occupied territories.³¹ This dramatic change in the population of Israel brought a new question about the state's character: Did Israel prefer being a big state with geographically secure borders but with a huge Arab population, or should she remain as a Jewish state whose security borders would not be fixed by the physical factors of geography, but by the character of the people and the Jewish culture?³² The high birth rate among the Arabs endangered the population rate in Israel, and for some, being a Jewish state was more important than having strategic depth.

The problem of high Arab population resulted from not only its threat to the character of state, but also the untrustworthiness of the Arab minority for the Israelis. A poll after 1967 indicated that half of the Arab minority did not recognize Israel's existence in the region and 75% advocated the right of Palestinians to have their own independent state on the West Bank.³³ While the Palestinian nationalism appeared as a serious security threat after 1967, as mentioned in the first chapter, the possible collaboration of the Arab minority inside Israel with the Palestinians in their terrorist attacks enhanced the threat perception of Israel in the occupied territories.

3.3.3. The Effect of the War on the Israeli Military Doctrine

As clearly seen, the 1967 borders, which provided to Israel strategic depth, the lack of which created serious security threats for Israel, brought different security problems for Israel as well. Thus, there was not an alteration in Israeli military

³¹ Bergus, Donald, "Forty Years on Israel's Quest for Security", *Middle East Journal*, Spring 1988, Vol. 42, No. 2, p. 207

³² Tal, Israel, "Israel's Doctrine of National Security: Background and Dynamics", *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, Summer 1977, No. 4, p. 52

³³ Mroz, John Edwin, *Beyond Security: Private Perceptions Among Arabs and Israelis*, New York: Pergamon Press, 1981, p. 54

doctrine in terms of launching first strike formulated as a solution to strategic depth, though the necessity of it was discussed after the 1967 War. Of course, the concrete and psychological benefits of the new territories due to the decreased possibility of being conquered in a few hours could not be ignored. Nevertheless, nothing could make Israel feel secure enough; even if defensive policies started to be supported after gaining strategic depth, offensive principles were kept as the basics of military doctrine.

In terms of deterrence, actually this war proved that being offensive through preemptive or preventive strikes were not working as a component of deterrence. As mentioned before, it was believed that a humiliating military victory over the Arabs would either push them to negotiate or deter them from attacking Israel. The war was effective enough to indicate that Israel was so powerful that the Arabs could not destroy her easily; however, the Arabs would not give up and would attack Israel through terrorism, war of attrition and the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Therefore, the 1967 victory which could not compel the Arabs to negotiate with Israel, but rather exacerbated and intensified the conflict between the parties, failed as regards the deterrence strategy.³⁴

3.3.3.1. Relations with the US

Having good relations with the US as one of the basic pillars of Israeli security policy reached its peak in military and political terms during and after the 1967 War which precipitated Israel's victory during the war and protected Israel from being isolated in the post-1967 War era. When the USSR threatened the US that unless Israel had stopped attacking, she would have launched attacks against Israel, the US, even at the risk of war with the USSR, clearly gave the message that she would protect her client.³⁵ In spite of the fact that Israel had been so much criticized after her occupation of the territories by the UN which refused to accept the post-1967 boundaries as legal and made the UNSC Resolution 242 requiring the Israeli

³⁴ Levite, Ariel, *Offense and Defense in Israeli Military Doctrine*, Jerusalem : Published for the Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies by Jerusalem Post and Westview Press, Boulder, Colo., c1989, p. 90

³⁵ Tahtinen, Dale R., "The Arab-Israeli Military Balance Since October 1973", Washington DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1974, p. 33

withdrawal from the occupied territories, Israel has not taken such poor relations with the international community into account because the support of the US was enough to be strong and offensive, and to ignore the rest of the world. She was so sure of the US' backing in the post-1967 period since Israeli interests did not clash with the US' interests in the region particularly in terms of the latter's relations with the Arabs' who were the clients of the USSR and had not yet used oil as a political weapon.³⁶

The US support to Israel was not only political, but also economic and military which fortified Israeli weaponry, but Israeli strong desire to be self-reliant in arms production resulted from the post-war French arms embargo, was the other explanation for the well-equipped Israeli army after the war. Israel reached technological superiority in air and navy in this period against her enemies³⁷ as clearly mentioned in 1969 by the then director of Israel's Military Industries, Yitzhak Ironi:

*We have doubled manpower and tripled production since the Six Day War. We were not surprised by the extension of French embargo in January of 1969, since we began tool in May 1967 and have prepared dies for the most critical items. When we can not buy abroad, we will make ourselves and there is nothing we can not produce in the way of arms, ammunition and accessories in the next 12-15 months.*³⁸

It is clear that the 1967 War had the potential to be a turning point for the Israeli security policy and the basic pillars of the military doctrine because the outcome of the war brought many changes for Israel and for her Arab neighbors. Although her deterrence failed before the war that provoked Israel, she implemented preemptive strike successfully as a result of which Israel gained strategic depth. Nevertheless though this was a quite important change, it did not alter Israeli security policy's

³⁶ Telhami, *op. cit.*, p. 409

³⁷ Rodman, David, "Israel's National Security Doctrine: An Introductory Overview", *Meria*, September 2001, Vol. 5, No. 3, at <http://www.biu.ac.il/Besa/meria/journal/2001/issue3/jv5n3a6.html>

³⁸ Sanders, Ralph, *Arms Industries: New Suppliers and Regional Security*, Washington DC: National Defense University, 1990, p., 51

and military doctrine's fundamental characteristics. The new borders, which made absorption of the enemy's first attack possible, were easy to defend; therefore a new option of a static type of defense along fortified defense lines was created.³⁹ Hence, the military victory, and the occupation of territories improved Israel's strategic situation and self-confidence dramatically which led to the loss of preemption's earlier tenuous status in the military doctrine, but the IDF did not completely give up its desire to preempt in a future war.⁴⁰

The new defensible borders were not able to change Israeli threat perception of annihilation, but I think nothing else than exaggerating. Instead of concentrating on new threat of terrorism, she continued to see existential threat at the top of the security agenda. After 1967 Israel did not have a threat of being destroyed although she perceived so, because the new borders made it possible for Israel to absorb an Arab first attack. Actually this was also why some people supported a defensive posture after that war, but the general continuity in the fear of annihilation made them go on supporting offensive strategies.

The other two important pillars of security policy were also implemented successfully after this war: good relations with the US as well as being self-reliant in terms of weaponry. Both of these developments were not dramatic changes, but a continuation of a process started after 1956, yet they would change after 1973, which will be examined below.

3.4. THE WAR OF ATTRITION

The War of Attrition of 1968-1970, launched by Egypt along the Suez Canal, was the first proof that although the 1967 War decreased the possibility of an all-out attack, it brought new threats of prolonged, low-intensity war like war of attrition or terrorism, rather than passifying the Arabs. It is also obvious that the expected quiet after Israel's victory over the Arabs was not achieved in the post-1967 War. Rather, it resulted in the attack of Nasser who could not tolerate a humiliated defeat and

³⁹ Handel, *op. cit.*, p. 51

⁴⁰ Levite, *op. cit.*, p. 58

undertook a prolonged war in order to exact revenge upon Israel, although his people suffered more than Israelis did.⁴¹ Thus, Israeli security policy-makers understood how enemy motives were crucial and should be taken into consideration in the formation of threat perceptions and security policy.

During the war, the IDF did not have to mobilize its reserve forces, but in order to deal with the enemy, a significant rise in military spending and a dramatic growth in size of standing forces were inevitable.⁴² Nonetheless, despite the gross expenditure on military and huge amount of losses of lives, the War of Attrition against Egypt was the first war in which the IDF could not achieve a decisive victory; therefore, the military doctrine's war objectives of having a short and decisive victory by annihilating the enemy and conquering enemy territories failed, and the post-1967 defensive strategy of fortified defense lines was questioned.⁴³ Moreover, this war increased the Israeli dependency on the US crucially because the need for the US' active role in the region to protect the Israeli security increased dramatically especially after the USSR's direct involvement in this war in 1970 on the Egyptian side.⁴⁴ The increased dependence on the US was on political, military and economic levels due to US' veto power in the UN which could prevent sanctions, resolutions against Israel; the necessity to get high-tech arms; and the need to finance the huge military expenditures respectively.⁴⁵

The high dependency on the US made good relations not a preference but an obligation for Israel. The policy of strengthening relations with the US was not something new for Israel; on the contrary, it was part of Israeli security policy since the beginning. However, the balance swung between American support and American dependency. The earlier political and military elite mentioned the importance of having self-reliance in order not to be a strategic asset for the US

⁴¹ Bar-On, op. cit., p. 18

⁴² Ibid, p. 16

⁴³ Lanir, op. cit., p. 29

⁴⁴ Liden, op. cit., p. 100

⁴⁵ Horowitz, in Yaniv, 1993, op. cit., p. 35

against the communist USSR. Israel was not completely dependent on the US, but it is also hard to talk about an interdependency between the US and Israel. For the US, Israel was important in the region, but not as an ally, just as a client which was the enemy of the clients of the USSR. Despite the one-sided dependency, good relations between Israel and the US were protected until the outbreak of 1973 War, which not only altered the relations between the two, but also led to new discussions in Israeli security policy and military doctrine.

While the guerilla war of Egypt against Israel threatened Israeli security, the Palestinian attacks occurring as another serious threat against Israel were ended by the Jordanian massacre of Palestinians in late 1960s. While the IDF failed in the operation against the Palestinian guerilla base in Karame in 1968, the guerilla warfare was terminated during 'Black September' by the Jordanian King Hussein. He was motivated principally by domestic concerns and did not want to take the risk of allowing terrorist bases in his territories, which might have resulted in Israeli attacks in her border.⁴⁶ The onslaught against the Palestinians by the Jordanians was a two-folded development for the Israeli security: the Palestinian terror from Jordanian border stopped and it was done by another hostile country, Jordan, which was accepted as a contributor to a potential attack in a coordinated eastern front attack. This did not mean a normalization of relations with Jordan and Israel or the end of Israeli threat perception of an attack from this front because King Hussein did not massacre the Palestinians in order to help Israel to get rid of Palestinian threat, but to prevent any attack from Israel due to Palestinian terrorism. Nevertheless, whatever the motives were, Black September helped the IDF who concentrated on Egyptian Front during the War of Attrition instead of making efforts to stop Palestinian threat in another border and weakening power there. The cessation of the Palestinian threat on the Jordanian border ended neither terrorism, nor the threat of the establishment of a Palestinian State for Israel in the next decades, as will be discussed later.

⁴⁶ Bar-On, *op. cit.*, p. 17

3.5. THE YOM KIPPUR WAR

The 1973 War was another turning point for Israeli security policy because the surprise Arab attack shattered Israel's confidence and the basic pillars of its national security policies which started to be questioned after the war.⁴⁷ As confidence in the post 1967 period derived from the defensible borders of Israel as well as on the good relations with the US changed after the outbreak of the 1973 War, the immediate aftermath of which was dedicated to regaining confidence; restructuring the IDF weakened with high casualty and loss rate; strengthening of Israel's defensive posture of absorbing an Arab first attack to be followed by an Israeli counterattack; and dealing with isolation by strengthening her self-reliance.⁴⁸ All these characteristics of the post 1973 period indicate both changes and continuities in the Israeli security environment and fundamentals of military doctrine some of the latter of which were criticized after the war either since they could not prevent the war or since they were not implemented successfully.

3.5.1. The Weakened Israeli Deterrence

To begin with, it was the second time that the 1967 War was not successful as it was expected at deterring the Arabs from attacking Israel after they were humiliated militarily and psychologically. The Arabs, Syria and Egypt, in 1973 knew that it would be difficult to defeat Israel because of Israel's advantageous position on territories and her powerful army. This showed that Israeli deterrence worked in terms of making the enemy know that they could hardly win. Nevertheless at the end of the day, the deterrence failed when the two Arab countries launched the first strike against Israel since it was an obligation for them to challenge the status quo, which was in favor of Israel; even they had doubts about achieving a victory.⁴⁹ The next failure of Israel was in her early-warning system, as the Intelligence Corps and the Air Force did not fulfill the expectations as one of the fundamentals of Israel's military doctrine. Nevertheless, it retrieved the relevant information, failed to

⁴⁷ Inbar, Efraim, "Israeli Strategic Thought in the Post-1973 Period", *Jerusalem: Israeli Research Institute of Contemporary Society*, 1982, p. 1

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Bar-On, op. cit., p. 19

evaluate and interpret the intentions of the enemy, and to give the army time for mobilization and deployment.⁵⁰

Indeed, Israel was aware of the fact that Egypt and Syria were about to launch a war which according to the Israeli military doctrine, should have been responded to by a preemptive strike, but she did not attack Israel was less obsessive about being destroyed by her enemies' first strike after getting strategic depth, but also due to political reasons. The good relations with the US was so important for Israel that Kissinger's warnings not to launch a preemptive strike before October 1973 was taken into consideration by the Israeli government which did not prefer an aggressive image of Israel and thus decided not to attack first.⁵¹ Israel had the first strike in 1967 and did not withdraw from the occupied territories in the post-1967 period because she knew that she had the support of the US, but in 1973 had she attacked first without the consent of the US, she would have been alone and isolated completely; therefore, she could not take that risk. However, after the war, some of the generals and politicians seriously criticized the decision not to implement one of the basics of the military doctrine for the sake of political concerns as former Chief of Staff Lt. General Rafael Eitan did:

A first blow should have been at least against the Syrians at the stage when it was clear that they were about to launch a war – an air strike of this kind could have disrupted their opening moves... Afterwards it was explained by the late Golda Meir, with other politicians voicing the same line that a preventive blow was ruled out for political reasons, so that Israel would not be blamed for starting the war. I can not conceive of any greater folly, when the existence of a nation is in the balance and its military is not mobilized and the mass media are shut down because of Yom Kippur and there is no possibility of mobilizing the reserves quickly via a public call up, the political consideration has the lowest possible priority, and the question of what will be said about Israel is of absolutely no importance.⁵²

⁵⁰ Tal, Israel, 1977, op. cit., p. 51

⁵¹ Inbar, op. cit., p. 3

⁵² Levite, op. cit., p. 59

3.5.2. The Increasing Importance of the Defensive Strategy

Despite these criticisms, in the post-1973 period Israel decided to pursue a defensive strategy due to the growing international pressure, diminished deterrence and military factors. It was claimed that when an army was well prepared for a coming attack, it was much easier to destroy the enemy when on defense like Israel did to the Syrian army in the Yom Kippur War.⁵³ Nonetheless, still it was not easy for Israeli political and military leadership to turn away from their adherence to traditional offensive approach, although they were aware of the necessity to fortify the country's defensive ability and even took steps according to that doctrine.⁵⁴

The defensive trend stemming from having secure and defensible borders in the post-1967 period turned into a necessity after 1973 during which the importance of having a strong defensive strategy as much as having an offensive strategy was understood. Consequently, though incomplete, a change occurred in Israel's traditional offensive strategy. Nevertheless, it was argued that Israel could hardly win a war by defense alone with her limited resources against the Arabs, who could have used their rich material and manpower resources to attack Israel if Israel had given up all of her offensive measures; therefore, finally Israeli strategic doctrine would be based on the objectives of destroying enemy forces before the intervention of superpowers; getting territorial achievements to gain better negotiations; and having deterrent power to dissuade the Arabs from launching war against Israel.⁵⁵

One of the reasons for the need for a defensive strategy was the diminished deterrence resulting from the destruction of the Israeli invincibility after the Arab's success in the first days of the war and the deteriorated relations with the US as well.⁵⁶ Moreover, despite Israeli military victory over the Arabs in the end, the former could not turn that victory into a political victory; on the contrary the Arabs turned their military defeat into political victory after the war that is why military

⁵³ Inbar, *op. cit.*, p. 4

⁵⁴ Kober, *op. cit.*, p. 196

⁵⁵ Inbar, *op. cit.*, p. 4

⁵⁶ *Ibid*

success lost its power as a deterrent factor against the Arabs. Nevertheless, the most important factor of the diminished deterrence was the lack of the US support due to US' increasing interests in having good relations with the Arabs after the 1973 oil-crisis. The rising leverage of the oil-producer Arabs in the international politics and the good relations between Egypt and the US negatively affected Israeli security due to not only the decreasing US support for Israel, but also dramatic rise of arms race in the Middle East both in quality and quantity, after the flow of petrodollars to the Arab countries which resulted in the higher dependency of Israel on the US.⁵⁷

3.5.3. The Adverse Effect of War on the US-Israeli Relations

Israel was dependent on the US both as her only arms supplier and as the primary source of economic aid to obtain and produce arms. Procuring more arms in this arms race was also derived from the poor experience suffered by Israel during the first days of the war when she experienced heavy losses in manpower and weaponry, which persuaded the IDF that 'quantity has a quality of its own'.⁵⁸ Since the beginning, the IDF has tried to fill the qualitative gap between the Arab arms and her own through a "quality-versus-quantity" approach, but it understood the importance of quantity in 1973 and spent huge amounts of money on military expenditures in order to compete with Arabs' arm quantity and manpower.⁵⁹ By June 1977, Israel had not only replaced all its weaponry losses in the 1973 War, but also increased her tank force 50%, the artillery 100%, armored personnel carriers 800%, and aircraft 30%.⁶⁰

The deep Israeli dependence on the US' military, economic and political support let the US use her power over Israeli policy: She, at first forced Israel to stop her operations in the last days of the war when Israel was in an advantageous position against Egypt, and later during the negotiation period with Egypt, she again put

⁵⁷ Horowitz, in Yaniv, 1993, op. cit., p. 32

⁵⁸ Rodman, op. cit.

⁵⁹ See Tahtinen, op. cit., for detailed tables indicating increase in Israeli weaponry and qualified manpower, p. 20-28

⁶⁰ Inbar, op. cit., p. 7

pressure on Israel to make concessions to reach an agreement.⁶¹ In 1975 the US implemented an arms embargo on Israel until Israel and Egypt signed the Sinai II disengagement agreement in September 1975.⁶² These developments prove the how false Donald Bergus' claims about how the US strengthened her ties with Israel since 1974 without endangering her own interests in the oil-producing states.⁶³ On the contrary, the tense relations between Israel and the US had continued until Israel signed a final peace treaty with Egypt in 1978. Between 1973 and 1979 Israel signed five agreements with Egypt and withdrew from Sinai step-by-step, but she signed them not just due to US pressure because if US pressure had been harmful to Israel's vital security interests, she would not have accepted to withdraw in return for peace. During the negotiation process Israel obtained very crucial gains like Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977 indicating Egypt's acceptance of Israel's legitimacy which was proved by his words: "*Today I tell you and declare it to the whole world that we accept to live with you in permanent peace*".⁶⁴

3.5.4. The Camp David Peace Treaty

The 1979 Camp David Accords, the final peace treaty with Egypt, was a real turning point for Israel, which had an impact on Israeli threat perceptions and security policy. The first peace treaty with her strongest Arab enemy weakened the Arab coalition and ceased the possibility of Egypt's attack which eliminated one of the two Arab war fronts for Israel. Nevertheless, the end of the Egyptian threat, which altered the Israeli threat perceptions in one way, did not change Israeli military doctrine and security policy that much due to the fact that Israeli threat perception of a coordinated attack from the Eastern Front – Syria, Iraq and Jordan – still constituted the most dangerous threat for Israel in 1970s.⁶⁵ The decisive military victories of 1967 and especially 1973 when Israel defeated the Arabs despite the Arab first attack, once again showed that there was not an existential

⁶¹ Mandelbaum, op. cit., p. 361

⁶² Horowitz, in Yaniv, 1993, op. cit., p. 33

⁶³ Bergus, op. cit., p. 203

⁶⁴ Mandelbaum, op. cit., p. 363

⁶⁵ Mroz, op. cit., p. 47

threat for Israel, but the latter also indicated that the Arabs could attack without expecting to defeat Israel. Actually, it was clear that the Arabs had to accept the presence of Israel in the region, and they had not been able to be an existential threat to Israel. Therefore, the Israeli obsession with the threat of annihilation was away from being real after those wars and the peace with Egypt. However, Israel did not change the fundamental pillars of her strategic thinking except for erasing Egypt from the list of hostile countries.

What affected Israel's decision for withdrawal and starting to negotiations was also the demilitarization of the areas she would withdraw which would provide her warning space and a political obstacle to a surprise attack, due to the presence of the UN in those areas.⁶⁶ Israel could have signed demilitarization agreements for the rest of the occupied territories, the Golan Heights, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, but she refrained not only because those territories were seen as the guarantor of Israeli security, but also because Israel did not trust Syrians' and Palestinians' good intentions.⁶⁷ The latter claim might reflect Israel's hesitation, but cannot explain the reasons behind not negotiating, because before negotiations with Egypt, she was also suspicious about Egypt's good will, so why did she not give a chance to Syria and Palestine?

Demilitarized areas would create buffer zones which would decrease the possibility of a surprise attack while extending the warning and mobilization periods in case of a surprise attack,⁶⁸ so demilitarized areas could have been a substitute for post-1967 'defensible borders' concept. However, hawkish politicians and military elite who did not trust the Arabs were against the idea of demilitarized zone and claimed that the Arabs could bring arms those areas even by smuggling and could make surprise attacks, especially from the West Bank, before Israel could move any forces⁶⁹.

⁶⁶ Inbar, *op. cit.*, p. 5

⁶⁷ Mandelbaum, *op. cit.*, p. 367

⁶⁸ Horowitz, Dan, "Israel's Concept of Defensible Borders", *Jerusalem Papers on Peace Problems*; 016, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1975, p. 18-19

⁶⁹ Averick, Sara and Rosen, Steven, "The Importance of the West Bank and Gaza to Israel's Security", *AIPAC Papers on US-Israel Relations: 11, American Israel Public Affairs*, 1985, p. 32

According to Horowitz, demilitarized zones could be protected by an agreement stipulating that a breach of the demilitarization would constitute a *casus belli*; supervision of the demilitarization by joint patrols; and a UN presence and great-power guarantees in those areas.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, Israel was not in favor of demilitarized zones in Golan, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, owing to not only their more important strategic positions than Sinai's, but also the religious ties and the belief in the right to settle in those territories. The dramatic increase in the number of the settlements in Golan and the West Bank in the post-1973 War indicated this reality clearly.

As an extending part of the defensive posture of Israel in July 1974, IDF General Staff renewed territorial defense concept and called for an increase in number of settlements, fortifying each of them, and supplying with tanks, anti-tank guns, missiles, recoilless guns and mortars and modern communication equipment in order to resist enemy attacks.⁷¹ If settlements had not been fortified with technological weapons, they would have been a burden for Israel in time of war, but fortified settlements as a result of new settlement policy were expected to defend the land in case of an attack as well as to consolidate Israel's control over those territories; therefore, they were believed to be one of the vital factors for security. However, the increasing number and extent of fortification of the settlements in the occupied territories provoked the Arabs, as it was a strong sign that Israel had no intention to evacuate the settlements and to withdraw from the occupied territories.

3.5.5. The Threat of a Future Palestinian State

Signing a peace treaty with Egypt did not help Israel rid of her number one threat perception of a coordinated eastern front attack; hence, terrorism was still the secondary threat perception for Israel. As long as the Palestinians continued terrorism in the 1970s, they would not be accepted as a primary threat perception, yet when the establishment of a Palestinian State in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Eastern Jerusalem came to the agenda seriously, they started to be accepted

⁷⁰ Horowitz, 1975, op. cit., p. 19

⁷¹ Inbar, op. cit., p. 8

as a more dangerous threat for Israel.⁷² An independent Palestinian State would be risky for Israeli security and existence not only because of the terrorism, but also of the necessity to withdraw from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the East Jerusalem, which brought strategic depth and secure borders to Israel after 1967. Moreover a Palestinian State, Israel believes, would take place in a coordinated attack of the Arab states to destroy Israel.

Another claim about a future Palestinian State was that if it had been established, it would have been a politically and economically weak one which meant a potential instability and chaos adjacent to Israel.⁷³ The people fighting against poverty due to lack of job opportunities and fighting against an enemy which occupied her territories and prevent the creation of a Palestinian State had nothing to lose, hence they supported Islamic terror organizations, or they themselves participated in terrorist activities. Nevertheless, had Palestine been established, they would have had a state to lose despite their economic weaknesses which would also have decreased after the establishment of the state because they would have been recognized by the other states and would have brought foreign investments, trade and foreign aid. Consequently, as I mentioned in the first chapter, a Palestinian threat would not be a source of threat for Israel as she mentioned after the 1973 War.

To sum up, the first period after the 1973 War, until 1980, as stated above, can be defined as a period to regain confidence, to fortify the army with modern weaponry and to support a defensive strategy to absorb an Arab first attack and counter-attack later. Although her defensive posture was initiated after the 1967 War, after 1973 that strategy was strengthened, so it was not a change in Israeli strategic thinking and security policy. Nonetheless, changes occurred due to the significant rise in the weaponry and skilled manpower in the army, the new fortified settlements, and the increased dependency on the US with her irritant economic and political interests contrary to Israel's. Although the historic 1979 Egyptian-Israeli Treaty which made Israel relax at least on one of the fronts did not end Israel's strategic dilemmas

⁷² Mroz, *op. cit.*, p. 50

⁷³ Liden, *op. cit.*, p. 172

owing to Israel's continuing eastern front threat, a gradual change towards offensive strategies were emerging in Israel's political and doctrinal level of security approach in 1980s deriving from different leaders and their ideologies.⁷⁴

3.6. THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT OF THE 1980s

Having witnessed significant changes in international, regional and domestic politics, the 1980s brought not sharp, but gradual changes to Israel's security policy in terms of threat perceptions, military doctrine and relations with the US. First of all, with the end of detente, the rising rivalry between the US and the USSR was felt deeply in the Middle East, especially by Israel which for the first time mentioned a source of existential threat to Israeli security other than the Arab States: the Soviet Union. As Sharon stated:

...our main security problems during the 1980s will stem from the external threats...from two sources, namely: One – the Arab confrontation; second – the Soviet expansion which both builds on the Arab confrontation and at the same time provides it with its main political and military tools.⁷⁵

Because of the threat of the Soviet expansionism in the region, the Israeli government decided to broaden its strategic and security interests to the countries in the periphery of the Middle East like Turkey, Iran and Palestine who were not under Soviet influence and even in African countries like Ethiopia according to her 'periphery doctrine'⁷⁶, but that policy was not realized successfully due to both the modifications in some of the peripheral countries and the continuity of the centrality of the Arab-Israeli conflict in Israeli security policy.

Indeed, the geostrategic situation in the region in 1980 was in favor of Israel first, because some of her traditional enemies provided her with a unique 'window of strategic opportunity' like the Iran-Iraq War which neutralized Iraq as a threat to

⁷⁴ Inbar, *op. cit.*, p. 1

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 10

⁷⁶ Alpher, Joseph, "The Decade of the 90s' Strategic Challenges for Israel", *JCSS Memorandum*, No. 31, June 1990, Tel Aviv University, p. 6

Israel while isolating Syria in the Arab world due to her support to Iran.⁷⁷ This war decreased the possibility of an eastern front attack of Syria, Iraq and Jordan altogether since both it diverted all Iraq's attention and effort to her war with Iran and eliminated Syrian-Iraqi cooperation even if it would be against Israel. Nevertheless, Israel again found a reason to feel threatened after the removal of Iraq as a threat in an eastern attack: Iraq's nuclear program. For Begin, the spread of nuclear weapons to Iraq created a danger of the total destruction of the Jewish State, a new Holocaust; consequently, the Israeli government in 1980 approved military action against the Iraqi nuclear reactor, which resulted in the end of Israel's nuclear fears after the successful air strike of June 1981.⁷⁸ This attack, which was followed by the annexation of the Golan Heights, was a clear indication of the removal of the post-1973 defensive policy because it was a preventive strike against the Iraqi nuclear capability. This offensive posture led to US' sanctions, but Israel was able to withstand as she was well-equipped, which provided her with greater freedom of action.

3.6.1. The Developments Strengthening Israel's Security

The 1981 attack not only raised the problem of Israel's international justification in doing so⁷⁹, but also brought Israel's double standard policy and security dilemma into the world agenda because while perceiving Arab states' nuclear capability as a threat for her security, she continued strengthening her own nuclear capability. For Israel, her nuclear proliferation was a part of her security policy because it was a significant deterrent factor against the Arabs not to attack Israel. Despite the different approaches of nuclear hawks who believed that since the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region was unavoidable, Israel should develop a nuclear option apart from her conventional military thinking, and the doves who mentioned that the Israeli nuclear option would make it easier for the Arabs to get nuclear

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4

⁷⁸ Efraim Inbar, "Israeli National Security, 1973-1996", *The BESA Center for Strategic Studies, Bar Ilan University, Security and Policy Studies No 38*, February 1998, p. 68

⁷⁹ Horowitz, in Yaniv, 1993, *op. cit.*, p. 47

weapons⁸⁰, the former ones took the initiative, and in addition to the resources for conventional warfare, more and more resources have been used for unconventional warfare preparations since the 1980s.⁸¹

Besides the nuclear capability, Israel continued to her traditional policy of trying to end the military asymmetry between her and the Arab states, and to tell the truth, she reached a ratio of 1:3 with respect to the combined Arab arsenal, and still had an advantage of quality of her manpower and weaponry. The powerful army with high-tech weapons and nuclear capability constituted a deterrent policy, but the image of the hawkish Begin Government, which was ready to use force for the interest of Israel, enhanced her deterrence more than the army itself.⁸²

The next situation, which developed in the process of strengthening Israel's strategic situation in the 1980s, was her improving relations with the US which was still one of the most crucial elements of Israel's security, as in previous decades. The second Begin Government had greater freedom of action because there was a sharp ideological shift in the Reagan Administration's view of Israel which started to be accepted as an 'ally' with her strong army and democratic regime against the Soviet expansion.⁸³ Israel, as a strategic asset, was successful at convincing the US to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Cooperation (MOU) in 1981 with which Israel, for the first time identified the USSR as its enemy.⁸⁴ However, after the annexation of the Golan Heights, the US decided to cancel to sign the MOU, so it was signed two years later, in November 30, 1983.⁸⁵ The

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 44-46

⁸¹ Rodman, op. cit.

⁸² Inbar, 1982, op. cit., p. 12

⁸³ Lewis, Samuel, "An American Perspective on Strategic Cooperation", in Robert Satloff (ed.), *Strategy and Defense in the Eastern Mediterranean: An American Dialogue (Proceedings of a Conference; July 7-9 1986, Jerusalem)*, Washington DC., Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1987, p. 97-98

⁸⁴ Inbar, 1982, op. cit., p. 11

⁸⁵ Meron, Menachem, "An Israeli Perspective on Strategic Cooperation", in Satloff, 1987, op. cit., p. 108

institutionalized relations between Israel and the US with that MEMO and some other cooperation agreements derived from the expansionist threat of the USSR and the end of the Arab leverage on the US after the decline of oil as a political weapon in 1980s as well. Moreover, Israel signed a peace treaty with Egypt as a result of US pressure, so deserved to have better relations with the US in the new decade.

The strengthened US-Israeli relations due to these developments increased Israel's deterrence against the Arabs as well as Israel's peace treaty with Egypt which minimized the possibility of an individual Egyptian attack or her joining an Arab coalition against Israel. It also increased Israel's deterrent capability by making Israel focus on one front with all her capabilities instead of dividing her power on two separate fronts. Although Israel lost strategic depth after her withdrawal from Sinai, it brought other gains like better relations with the US and increased deterrent power; hence that peace was one of the best developments in Israeli security policy in 1980s.

The developments of early 1980s increasing Israeli deterrent capability and geostrategic situation resulted in a recovery of self-confidence and return to an offensive security policy. Moshe Dayan's suggestion of a new conception for Israeli national security strategy before he died in 1980 required a decrease in conflicts intensity through territorial concessions in addition to a formidable deterrent against a decisive war including nuclear capability and powerful conventional forces which was formulated to provide reasonable security at a reasonable cost, however this suggestion was ignored by the Israeli Government.⁸⁶

3.7. THE 1982 WAR

In spite of the regional and geostrategic changes in favor of Israel and of enhanced confidence owing to her increased deterrence, the second Begin Government still felt threatened, which I believe was an excuse to follow its preconceived offensive strategies. It claimed that the territorial advantages of Israel in Judea, Samaria and the Golan Heights were gradually neutralized by the size and the quality of the

⁸⁶ Uri-Bar, Joseph, "Towards a Paradigm Shift in Israel's National Security Conception", *Israel Affairs*, Spring-Summer 2000, Vol. 6, Issue 3-4, p. 111

arsenals of Jordan, Iraq, Syria and even Saudi Arabia⁸⁷; thus they had very same defense problems, they had as on their old 1967 lines. However, the most serious Arab threats for Israel in the early 1980s were the PLO and Syria in Lebanon, the former of which had its headquarters in Beirut, and the latter of which had political leverage over Lebanon. During the Lebanese Civil War, which was turned into a playground for regional competition between Israel, Syria and PLO⁸⁸, Israel supported the Phalangists against Muslim sects in general, and the Palestinians and PLO in particular which made terrorist attacks against Israel stop her support of the Phalangists among other reasons. Finally, the Israeli cabinet approved the launching of an operation in Lebanon and explained the goals of the operation as to destroy the PLO's infrastructure in Southern Lebanon; to keep the civilian population in the Galilee away from the range of the terrorist fire; not to attack Syrian army if they does not attack Israeli forces; and to sing a peace treaty with Lebanon.⁸⁹ The majority of the cabinet members objected to the acknowledgement of anything but a limited operation, but Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, who ordered the IDF to implement his more ambitious plan, tried to keep the IDF and the cabinet distant from each other in order to act independently of the cabinet opposition.⁹⁰

3.7.1. The Return to the Traditional Offensive Strategy

The sings of change in Israel's security policies were ubiquitous with the alterations in the leadership of the political-military elite who undermined the only legal war aim accepted by the national consensus – 'preventing a threat to the country's existence' – and took the war decision in order to achieve political aims.⁹¹ Even Sharon accepted that the war aims of Israel in the Operation Peace for Galilee were more than basic defensive-existential aims, and Begin acknowledged that the Lebanese War was a "war of choice" by stating that only wars begun by the enemy

⁸⁷ Inbar, 1998, op. cit., p. 7

⁸⁸ Winslow, Charles, *Lebanon World and Politics in a Fragmented Society*, New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 219

⁸⁹ Rabinovich, Hamar, *The War for Lebanon*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984, p. 123

⁹⁰ Yaniv, Avner, "A Question of Survival, The Military and Politics Under Siege", in Avner Yaniv, 1993, op. cit., p. 99

⁹¹ Horowitz, in Yaniv, 1993, op. cit., p. 41

such as the War of Independence or the Yom Kippur War were “wars of no choice”.⁹²

The preemptive strike Israel launched in Lebanon in order to reach political aims like terminating Syrian leverage over Lebanon and supporting the creation of a pro-Israeli regime in Lebanon proved her return to the traditional offensive strategy. Another indication of the departure from the strategic thinking of the previous decade was the reintroduction of ‘cassi belli’, which had been absent since 1967; and the abandonment of ‘secure borders’ defined as the borders which can be defended without a preemptive initiative.⁹³ The offensive military doctrine and cassi belli saw preemptive strike as an important pillar of Israeli military doctrine especially because of the neutralized strategic depth advantage.

The offensive period of Israeli security policy changed with the end of the Sharon’s tenure due to his culpability in Sabra-Shatilla massacres of September 1982. With the appointment of Moshe Arens as Minister of Defense, the process of returning to the principle of launching a preemptive strike only when war is essential for Israeli security started, and it continued during Rabin’s tenure as Minister of Defense after 1984, both of which paved the way for the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon except for the security zone.⁹⁴ The US intervention in the war, which was a failure according to US former under-secretary George Ball⁹⁵, was an influential factor in Israel’s withdrawal as well. However, it was not a pressure like the one on the 1979 Peace Treaty. At first there were some American politicians opposed the idea of the operation because it would consolidate the anti-US feelings in the Arab world, jeopardize the stability of conservative pro-US regimes in the Middle East, and give the USSR the opportunity to increase its influence in the region.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, the opposition of the US government to the operation with the fear of endangering

⁹² Ibid, p. 41

⁹³ Inbar, 1982, op. cit., p. 13,15

⁹⁴ Horowitz, in Yaniv, 1993, op. cit., p. 43, 44

⁹⁵ Gilmour, David, *Lebanon: The Fractured Country*, London: Sphere Books Lmt., 1987, p. 201

⁹⁶ Rabinovich, op. cit., p. 126

Israel's withdrawal from Sinai and the stability of the new Mubarek regime in Egypt changed in favor of Israel. Therefore, the 1982 invasion didn't deteriorate relations between Tel Aviv and Washington, of course, with the effect of the other reasons mentioned above.

Israel did not reach the goals of putting an end to Syrian influence in Lebanon and establishing a pro-Israeli government in Israel, hence the 1982 War did not solve Israel's security problems derived from Lebanon: Despite their influential positions, Maronites could not regain their decisive position in Lebanese politics and Syria continued to involve itself deeply in Lebanese politics. The third and most important goals of the destruction of PLO's military and political infrastructure in Lebanon and the removal of PLO's headquarters from Lebanon were reached, but the Palestinians and the PLO did not give up their war against Israel and in the long-run they threatened Israeli security through the '*intifada*' which erupted in 1987. The intifada took its place in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict's history as an uprising through which the Palestinians took the initiative to shape their future as an independent nation. Although it started in the late 1980s, it will be examined while writing about 1990s, because it continued until 1993 and changed Israel's main threat perceptions in the 1990s when terrorism became the most dangerous threat against Israeli security, although it was not a threat to existence but to the individuals living inside it.

Israeli security policy showed some changes according to political and strategic situations before and after the wars against the Arabs as scrutinized in this chapter. However, the principles of military doctrine and security policy formulated mainly after the 1948 War remained the same despite changes in Israel's threat perceptions, territorial situation, number of enemies and quantity and quality of weaponry and manpower because the basic fear of being attacked never disappeared in Israel even after all the military victories between 1948 and the 1990s. 1990 witnessed drastic changes in international, regional and domestic politics, and these modifications affected Israel's security policy. The main subject of this thesis, the changes in Israeli security policy will be focused mainly on the changes after the 1990s which will be examined in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER 4

ISRAELI SECURITY IN THE NEW ENVIRONMENT OF THE 1990s

“We live today in a period in which the threat to the very existence of Israel has been reduced.”¹

Yitzhak Rabin

The drastic changes occurring in the international system and in the regional politics in the 1990s directly affected the Arab-Israeli relations and the Israeli policies as a result. The demise of the Soviet Union meant that the Arab States, which were the enemies of Israel, lost their political and military protector against Israel. In the absence of their patron, the Arabs would psychologically and materially lose power against Israel while the latter one would gain strength in the US's new world order. This positive development for Israel followed by a regional surprise which also paved the way for a more secure environment for Israel; the Gulf War. Although the Gulf War brought up some problematic points in Israeli military doctrine and security policy, its overall impact for Israeli security can be accepted as constructive.

These two very important alterations, together with the other developments like the Palestinian uprising, the Madrid Peace Conference and Rabin's Labor Party's coming to power in Israel in 1992 led to a new era of the peace process for both the Arabs and the Israelis. Obviously the peace process, during the last decade of the 20th century, created more security for both of the sides as a result of the decreased threats against each other; however it was still hard to claim that Israel started to

¹ Inbar, Efraim, “Contours of Israel's New Strategic Thinking”, *Political Science Quarterly*, 1996, Vol. 111, No. 1, p. 46

feel secure due to the new threat perceptions of her. The traditional threat perceptions from Israel's Arab neighbors were replaced with the new threat perceptions from the remote neighbors in the region. In this chapter I am going to examine how all these international and regional developments affected Israeli security understanding and security policies in the 1990s. Did this new era witness crucial shifts in Israeli threat perceptions, security policies and military doctrine? My argument will be; although the very basic principles of Israeli military doctrine remained, it was questioned a lot and the security policy changed as the nature and the source of the threats against Israel changed. Nevertheless it is noteworthy to mention that the peace process can not be scrutinized as a whole in terms of security policies because there were significant differences between the Labor governments and the Likud governments regarding the continuities and the changes in traditional security policies.

4.1. THE END OF THE COLD WAR

The end of the Cold War, one of the historical modifications of the 20th century had different impacts on the Middle Eastern countries. This modification affected the Israeli security policy as one of the actors of the Cold War period in the region. First and foremost effect of it was the end of the Soviet Union's political and military support for her Arab allies. The Arab states' superpower umbrella which limited Israeli strategic calculations and security policies disappeared, hence Israel would no more be deterred by a direct military attack or intervention on behalf of the Soviet Union's Arab clients.² Due to the lack of the Soviet arm supply, not only the Arab states will not be able to replace their arms quickly and cheaply in a future war if Israel destroys their military infrastructure and arms, but also Syria lost the opportunity to get military superiority over Israel in order to defeat her without the need for the help of the other Arab States.³

² Inbar, Efraim, "Israel's Security Environment in a New International Environment", in Efraim Karsh (ed.) *Between War and Peace: Dilemmas of Israeli Security*, London: Frank Cass, 1996, p. 33

³ Duncan, Andrew, "Land For Peace: Israel's Choice", in Efraim Karsh (ed.) *Between War and Peace*, London: Frank Cass, 1996, p. 60

The second effect of the end of the Cold War was the new unipolar international system: While the Soviet Union found herself in a weak and ambiguous fragmentation, Israel's ally, the US, emerged as the only hegemonic power of the 'new world order'. When the importance of the US support for Israel's deterrent power is taken into account, the strengthened stand of Israel against the Arab states become more obvious. Nevertheless even these positive impacts of the new international environment for Israel were interpreted as negative by one the most famous scholars of Israel, Efraim Inbar.

Inbar did not ignore the positive developments, but he, as a person who is enormously suspicious about the Arabs and who is oversensitive about the Israeli vulnerability in security issues, found negative side of the new unipolar system for the Israeli security. He claimed that the lack of superpower competition would bring greater freedom of action to Syria, Egypt and Iraq⁴ which was dangerous for Israeli security. I agree with him that during the Cold War, the superpowers shunned from military escalation but especially between themselves. In the absence of the superpower restriction, the Arabs could have had freedom of action if both of the superpowers had lost their effects in the region. However, in the new international system which has been led by the US, Arab freedom of action was restricted; therefore the end of bipolarity did not have a negative impact on Israeli security in terms of increasing the Arab threat.

The negative aspect of the end of bipolarity for the Israeli security was not greater Arab freedom of action, but the less freedom of action of Israel due to the loss of her strategic value for the US. During the Cold War Israel was a strategic asset for the US against the Soviet expansionism in the Middle East, therefore Israel had a card in her hand to decrease her dependency and to have a relationship based on interdependency. Losing value in the eyes of Washington as a strategic ally and the US pressure on Shamir government to change its policies on territorial and settlement issues which will be examined later deteriorated the relations between

⁴ Inbar, Efraim, "Israel's Predicament in a New Strategic Environment", in Efraim Inbar and Gabriel Sheffer (ed.), *The National Security of Small States in a Changing World*, London: Frank Cass, 1997, p. 169

the US and Israel; hence Israeli freedom of action was restrained in the post-Cold war era. However the limitations on the Israeli freedom of action with the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the bipolarity still can not be compared with their negative effects on the Arab states that weakened them against Israel and that restricted their freedom of action under the US hegemony.⁵

The last impact of the end of the Cold War on Israel was the huge number of immigration from the former Soviet Union countries. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the small number of population has always been a big problem for the Israeli security when the millions of Arabs have been thought. Consequently, the immigration of more than half a million people after the dissolution of the Soviet Union strengthened Israeli manpower for the army and enhanced Israeli security resultantly. Moreover, another threat perception related to demography, the threat to the Jewish character of the state of Israel due to the Palestinian population-growth in the West Bank and Gaza, was reduced by the massive Soviet Jewish immigration. As a result, the pressure on the Shamir Government to withdraw from the territories to rid of the ‘ticking demographic bomb’ was frozen.⁶

4.2. THE GULF WAR

The second important development which had a crucial effect on Israeli threat perceptions and her military doctrine was a regional one; the Gulf War. The effects of it can be examined under three subtitles: The negative effects on the Israeli threat perceptions, the positive effects on the Israeli threat perceptions; and the effects on Israeli military doctrine.

4.2.1. The Positive Effects of the War on the Israeli Threat Perceptions

Saddam Hussein’s Iraq was considered as one of the most dangerous Arab threats by Israel with her potential in joining a possible Eastern Front attack by entering

⁵ Inbar, Efraim, *Rabin and Israel’s National Security*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999, p. 135

⁶ Telhami, Shibley, “‘Israeli Foreign Policy: A Realist Ideal-Type or a Breed of Its Own?,” in Michael Barnett (ed.), *Israel in Comparative Perspective: Challenging the Conventional Wisdom*, State University of New York Press, Albany, NY, 1996, p. 42

Jordan and deploying her forces there. An Eastern Front attack of Syria, Jordan and Iraq had been the nightmare of Israel as the most perilous external threat to the existence of Israel. Apart from the Iraqi threat of joining to an all-out ground attack against Israel, Saddam's conventional missile strike threat to Israel, which was proved during the Gulf War, and her potential unconventional missile strike threat were other sources of threats deriving from Israel.⁷ The defeat of Iraq and the destruction of her capacity to wage a war during and after the Gulf War by the US served Israel's most vital security concerns.⁸ The Gulf War, hence, reduced the Israeli threat perception of the possibility of a conventional war from the Eastern Front by weakening one of the most dangerous Arab countries for Israel and enhanced the Israeli security.

The second positive effect of the Gulf War to the Israeli threat perceptions was its contribution to the future peace negotiations. It paved the way for the Madrid Peace Conference of 1991 and 1993 Declaration of Principles owing to two different developments during the war: First of all, even though Israel was not a member of the anti-Iraq coalition, for the first time in the history some of the Arab countries – Saudi Arabia and Syria – and Israel were on the same side of the war against a common enemy, Saddam Hussein. The Arab contribution to the anti-Iraq camp and especially Syria's collaboration with the new leader of the world just after the dissolution of the Soviet Union made a US initiative for a regional peace conference easier.⁹ In fact the Madrid Peace Conference was not accepted as a positive development by the Shamir government since it was forced by the US to join to the Conference, but in terms of Israeli security it was an improvement because it was the first step for the peace with some of the Arab countries which had never come to the negotiation table before.

⁷ Feldman, Shai, "Israeli Deterrence and the Gulf War", in Joseph Alpher (ed.), *War in the Gulf: Implications for Israel*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1992, p. 189

⁸ Ben-Zvi, Abraham, "The Prospects of American Pressure on Israel", in Alpher (ed.), 1992, *ibid.*, p. 104

⁹ Karsh, Efraim, "Cold War, Post-Cold War: Does it Make a difference for the Middle East?", in Inbar and Sheffer (ed.), 1997, *op. cit.*, p. 99

The other aspect of the Gulf War that precipitated the beginning of the peace process was the PLO's support for Saddam. After the PLO's support for Saddam, the organization was isolated in the region because it was the only Arab party siding with Iraq. The Arab monarchies blamed Arafat for betraying them because they had always supported Palestinians financially in their war against Israel but they had cut off their financial support for the PLO one month after the end of the war.¹⁰ The lack of financial aid and international sympathy made the PLO closer to peace and to the Declaration of Principles whose effects will be examined later.

The Palestinian support for Iraq was popular among the residents of the West Bank and Gaza, however so as not to endanger the political benefits of the ongoing *Intifada* at that time, they did not resort to terrorism.¹¹ Actually when the war broke out the Palestinians were motivated to escalate the struggle, but their attempt was prevented by Israel from the beginning by isolating the Territories and imposing a curfew on the entire population¹², so Israel did not have to deal with another problem during the Gulf War.

4.2.2. The Negative Effects of the War on the Israeli Threat Perceptions

The end of the war and its results brought enhanced security for Israel but, Israeli security had been threatened during the war. Since her establishment, Israel was for the first time attacked only and directly by a country that is hundreds of miles away from Israel, without any common border.¹³ This attack indicated that Israel was under the threat of limited surface-to-surface missile attacks, and physical closeness was not necessary any more to be attacked.¹⁴ Although these ballistic missiles did not create important existential threats unlike a massive ground attack, they could

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 100

¹¹ Kurz, Anat, "The Gulf Crisis, International Terrorism and Implications for Israel", in Alpher (ed.), 1992, op. cit., p. 215

¹² Ibid

¹³ Levite, Ariel, "The Gulf War: Tentative Military Lessons for Israel", in Alpher (ed.), 1992, op. cit., p. 148

¹⁴ Inbar, Efraim and Sandler, Shmuel, "Israel's Deterrence Strategy Revisited", *Security Studies*, Winter 1993/94 Vol. 3, no. 2, p. 335

give damage to the cities and civilian population, therefore Israel did not belittle them as a negligible threat or a simple nuisance to Israel's security.¹⁵ This new conventional threat from remote countries and Israel's response to it according to her military doctrine were deeply questioned after the war.

The next side-effect of the Gulf War to the Israeli security was the increasing military build-up in the region. Due to the Gulf War, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States provided Syria with additional funds to pay for her arms imports including tens of advanced aircraft.¹⁶ The Arab states found the surface-to-surface missiles and firepower more preferable than ground troop assaults, and inclined to buy them, therefore, the scope of military threat to Israeli security broadened.¹⁷ Nevertheless, while the neighbors and the remote Arab states were building-up militarily, Israel did not just look at them: she also increased her military capability as will be examined below. As a result, this conventional military build-up did not increase her threat perceptions enormously.

4.2.3. The Effects of the War on the Israeli Military Doctrine

Just like after all other wars, the traditional Israeli military doctrine was questioned after the Gulf War to understand whether the traditional military doctrine was implemented well and the implementation of the traditional doctrine was still working in favor of Israel's security or did it need to be changed. Israeli deterrence and her defensive strategy the latter of which was accepted as a deviation from the traditional offensive military doctrine were criticized a lot after the war.

The first criticism was related to the Israeli deterrence: Why Israel could not prevent Iraq from launching conventional missiles against her? In spite of the fact that Israel threatened Iraq that she would retaliate in case of an Iraqi attack against

¹⁵ Levran, Aharon, *Israeli Strategy after Desert Storm: Lessons of the Second Gulf War*, Oregon: Frank Cass, 1992, p. 125

¹⁶ Inbar and Sandler, *op. cit.*, p. 335

¹⁷ Levran, *op. cit.*, p. 131

Israel before the war, her threats fell on deaf ears after the Iraqi attack.¹⁸ Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's warning on August 30, 1990: "*In the past Israel has demonstrated its capacity to defend itself. If we are attacked by Iraq, we will repel the attack and the attacker will regret his action.*"¹⁹ was only one of such threats against Iraq in order to deter her from attacking Israel; however the Israeli deterrence did not work. Nevertheless Shai Feldman, one of the most well-known experts on Israeli military issues, rejected to call the situation a failure of Israeli deterrence due to the fact that if Israel had retaliated she would have served Saddam's interests: Saddam launched strike against Israel because he hoped to be retaliated and to transform the crisis into an Arab-Israeli War in order to break the anti-Iraq coalition.²⁰ This shows that Israeli deterrent was so powerful that Saddam was sure to be attacked, but Israel did not retaliate not to hinder the participation of the Arab states in the US-led coalition.

The US restrictions on Israel not to retaliate and Israel's limited ability owing to the need for the approval of the allies if Israeli air assets were to be introduced into an area that constituted part of the coalition's theater of operations made hard for Israel to retaliate as well.²¹ As a result, no matter what the reason was, Israel was attacked and her deterrence failed to stop Iraq. Not to retaliate might be in favor of her interests in the sense that she did not break the coalition; did not let Iraq transform the war to an Arab-Israeli war; and gained the US appreciation which would turn to Israel as economic and political support, yet this did not change the result of the failure of Israeli deterrence while questioning Israeli military doctrine. If the Arabs came to the conclusion that the US could prevent Israel from retaliating, the credibility Israel's deterrence would be undermined.²²

¹⁸ Zakheim, Dov S., "Peace and Israeli Security", in Efraim Karsh (ed.), *Peace in the Middle East: The Challenge for Israel*, Ilford, Essex: Frank Cass, 1994, p. 20

¹⁹ Feldman, *op. cit.*, p. 197

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 189, 190

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 193

²² Steinberg, Gerald, "Israeli Responses to the Threat of Chemical Warfare", *Armed Forces and Society*, Fall 1993, Vol. 20., No.1, at http://infotrac.london.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/647/51/52055243w4/purl=rc1_EAIM_0_A14892307&dyn=5!xrn_13_0_A14892307?sw_aep=telaviv

On the contrary to the conventional deterrence's failure, Israel's non-conventional deterrence succeeded during the Gulf War. Iraq was dissuaded from using chemical weapons since Saddam was aware of the fact that Israel's retaliation would have been inevitable after a nuclear attack. Israel's deterrence by punishment worked in the non-conventional threat without any doubt, but the impact of deterrence by denial consisting of passive and active defense should not be ignored either. In spite of some opposition, the war made it clear that Israel needed to reevaluate her defense priorities. During the war the Israeli rear became front since the Scuds fell – and there was the likelihood of the fall of chemical warheads – in and around the population centers and these attacks-potential attacks had Israel take additional defensive measures.²³

New defensive measures of passive defense included more effective organizational structure and allocation of resources, and changes in operational doctrine which needed to be improved in terms of civilian protection.²⁴ Civil defense measures of distribution of gas masks and informing people on the preparation of sealed rooms were adopted because of public demand despite the opposition of Defense Minister Arens and Chief of Staff Shomron who believed that such a defensive strategy would cause panic and would undermine the credibility of the Israel's deterrence.²⁵ Like those two top military men, Aharon Levran supported the idea that the defensive policy of the implementation of civilian self-protection measures weakened Israel's overall security posture and image of national strength especially in terms of strategy and psychology and criticized the civilian measures since they gave legitimacy for the aggressors to use chemical weapons against the civilian population.²⁶ To him, these measures were harbingers of the departure from

²³ Cohen, Eliot, Eisenstadt, Michael and Bacevich, Andrew, *Knives, Tanks and Missiles: Israel's Security Revolution*, Washington DC., The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1998, p. 89

²⁴ Levite, *op. cit.*, p. 150, 151

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Levran, *op. cit.*, p. 142

deterrence since deterrence is provided by the ability to win; and the capability to win is possible through offense, not defense.²⁷

In order to make an active defense against possible Iraqi strikes with chemical warheads, the Israel Air Force was placed on the highest alert status and intensified its air patrols dramatically and this gave Israel a clear deterrent dimension.²⁸ The active defense strategy was also implemented against the conventional attack of ballistic missiles by hitting the mobile launchers from the air, and by attacking the airborne Scud itself with the Patriot anti-missile missile; however in both cases success was very limited.²⁹ They neither destroyed a huge number of the Iraqi mobile launchers, nor went beyond having psychological effect on the population to calm it down.³⁰

The active defense attempt was limitedly successful, but Israel had to try harder in order to make it more effective and to adopt it as a new central option in her military doctrine in dealing with the growing threat of surface-to-surface missiles because Israeli offensive deterrence was not sufficient to prevent that conventional threat.³¹ The adoption of a new active defense strategy did not mean a radical change in the basic principles of the traditional military doctrine of offensive posture, but it required changes in the old weaponry. An active defense policy needed for active missile defenses like the Arrow missile system and Israel developed Arrow despite criticisms to the defensive nature of the system and its high cost due to both her need for an effective missile defense and the US economic support to take her defense budget's burden.³²

²⁷ Ibid, p. 142, 143

²⁸ Feldman, op. cit., p. 199-200

²⁹ Bonen, Zeev, "Technology in War – Preliminary Lessons from the Gulf War", in Alpher (ed.), 1992, op. cit., p. 177

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Levran, op. cit., p. 126-127

³² Cohen, Eisenstadt and Bacevich, op. cit., p. 41

Both active and passive defense policies highlighted the importance of more influential intelligence and early warning systems. For an active defense policy they were necessary so as to activate active defense units and to give them relatively more chance to succeed; and for passive defense policy they were crucial in order to alert the general public as soon as possible to keep the number of casualties low.³³ Hence, the basic tenets of Israeli military doctrine demonstrated how valid and important they were even for the implementation of the new pillars in the military doctrine. In one of his announcements after the Gulf War Yitzhak Rabin, as the Minister of Defense, mentioned the importance of prevention of war in the Israeli security – the deterrence – but as the deterrence could not work in all the cases, Israel needed an offensive military army that would reverse the war from defensive to offensive action, transfer the war into the enemy's territory and attain a decisive victory as quickly as possible.³⁴ This explanation is a harbinger of the continuation of the offensive military doctrine when necessary as in the traditional military doctrine.

4.2.4. Relations with the US during and After the Gulf War

As mentioned before with the end of the Cold War the threat of the Soviet Union eliminated, that's why Israel's importance as a major strategic asset for the US in the Eastern Mediterranean was over. The end of the East-West rivalry made the participation of the Arab states in the US-led anti-Iraq coalition easier while leaving Israel out of the coalition. Israel was, for sure, against Iraq but she did not join the anti-Iraq coalition because of the US pressure on her not to do so. Not to endanger the coalition, Washington warned Israel to maintain 'a low profile' in the course of the crisis; moreover, Israel had to assure the US not to become actively involved in the Gulf before getting Patriot surface-to-air missile batteries from the US to defense herself against the Iraqi Scud attacks.³⁵

³³ Levite, *op. cit.*, p. 153

³⁴ Rabin, Yitzhak, "After the Gulf War: Israeli Defense and its Security Policy", *the BESA Center Strategic Studies, Security and Policy Studies No. 25*, at <http://www.biu.ac.il/soc/besa/books/25/memorial.html>

³⁵ Ben-Zvi *op. cit.*, p. 99

In the cost-benefit analysis of Israel, the acknowledgement of the US demands – either as a result of pressure or common interests – has always been added to the benefit side for Israel and the relations during the Gulf War was no exception. Israel did not retaliate and contributed to the continuation of the coalition, in return she gained US's consent and support which was more important than anything else in adverse strategic, economic and political circumstances of Israel. As a well-known fact, Israel has never welcomed such pressures restraining her freedom of action; however her growing economic dependency on the US assistance as a result of the war expenditures and the new wave of immigration from the former Soviet Union countries did not leave her another option, but to obey. That pressure-obey style of relationship was the harbinger of changes in the US-Israeli relations in the early 1990s.

The tense relations and the pressure from Washington became more obvious after the war, especially during the US initiative for holding a regional peace conference in the region. Israel demanded for compensation for the direct and the indirect cost of the war and for economic aid to absorb the new wave of immigration. After a few times of refusal, US accepted to make financial aid to Israel, yet she did not shun from threatening Israel with possible cancellation of additional housing loan guarantees unless Israel changed her position on the issues of the planned regional conference and the participation of the Palestinian delegations to the negotiations.³⁶

Another source of tension between the two countries was the US demand of a total Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, especially from the Golan Heights and the West Bank based on the UN Resolution 242.³⁷ After the Gulf War, the American belief that territory was not important for security in the missile age was reinforced, as President Bush stated: “*we've learned in the modern age, geography cannot guarantee security.*”³⁸, and so he tried to convince Shamir to withdraw in order to pave the way for peace. The Bush administration had been, indeed sensitive

³⁶ Ibid, p. 105

³⁷ Gold, Dore, “The Gulf Crisis and US – Israel Relations”, in Alpher (ed.), 1992, op. cit., p. 87, 89

³⁸ Ibid, p. 74

about the occupied territories and especially settlement policies there since it came to power and had continuously warned Israel to stop new settlement activities, yet Shamir did not.

In the post-Gulf War era, those warnings turned into pressures and Bush postponed loan guarantees for housing Jewish immigrants six months due to the ongoing settlement policy of Shamir.³⁹ Israeli settlement activity in the occupied territories was a legitimate right of the Jews according to Shamir government whereas it was illegal and an obstacle to peace for the Bush administration as mentioned by Secretary of State James Baker: *“I do not think that there is any bigger obstacle to peace than the settlement activity that continues not only unabated but at an enhanced pace.”*⁴⁰

In the New World Order, the US wanted to show how eager she was to bring peace as the leader of the world. Especially after the Gulf War she tried to give the message that she was not only launching war, but also making efforts to bring peace by using her hegemonic power. After her coalition with the Arabs during the Gulf War, she had better relations with the Arabs, that’s why the time was ripe to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict which would be an important test case for her peace initiative. Nevertheless the US pressure did not work during Madrid Peace Conference because Shamir did not change his steadfast position. He said:

*On the fundamental life-and-death issues – such as security, Jerusalem, the 1967 borders, the danger of a Palestinian state – we have no choice but to stand by our position firmly, strongly and clearly – even against our great friend the United States.*⁴¹

The Madrid Peace process failed eventually and this failure badly effected the US-Israeli relations, however it is hard to claim that the special relation between the two

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 89

⁴⁰ Reich Bernhard, “Reassessing the US-Israeli Special Relationship”, in Karsh (ed)., 1994, *op.cit.*,p. 73

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 77

deteriorated. Furthermore the changes of the leaders in both countries would improve the relations in a short period of time.

To sum up, the Gulf War had significant results for the Israeli security since it led to changes in Israeli threat perceptions and military doctrine as well. While eliminating the most dangerous threat perception of Israel – the likelihood of an Eastern Front attack against Israel – it created new threat perceptions of conventional and non-conventional attack from the remote countries. This new threat resulted not only in the questioning of the success of the Israeli deterrent power, but also in a crucial shift from traditional offensive strategy in military doctrine to a defensive one the latter of which was harshly criticized by some of the military elite and some scholars as well. The new environment in the post-Gulf war era was more secure for Israel as one of her most dangerous enemy was defeated and her weaponry was destroyed. The new threat perception of ballistic missiles was less perilous because missiles and air attacks cannot conquer land unlike ground wars. The increasing threat of non-conventional missiles, which will be examined in detail below, has been extremely dangerous on the other hand, but they can be used only as a last resort; therefore a non-conventional war is unlikely to be happening.

The two significant developments of the end of the Cold War and the Gulf War had impacts on the Arab-Israeli relations, which paved the way for peace. However the peace process was a result of so many other factors resulting from both the Arab and the Israeli side. One of the fundamental reasons that brought Israel to the negotiation table in 1993 was *intifada* which will be examined below as one of the main threats against the Israeli security during the late 1980s and the early 1990s.

4.3. HOW DID INTIFADA AFFECT THE ISRAELI SECURITY?

The intifada, the Palestinian uprising, erupted in December 1987 was not the first low-intensity conflict that Israel had to deal with, and just as the previous low-intensity conflicts it had relatively low priority in the Israeli military agenda than the major security threat of a ground war against regular forces of the Arab states. Nonetheless, the scope, intensity and duration of the uprising changed the first

evaluation of accepting it as a minor security threat and confirmed its goals as Israel's withdrawal to the 1967 borders and the establishment of a Palestinian state.⁴² When the limited capabilities of the Palestinians are taken into consideration, it was hard to claim that Intifada was a security threat to the existence of Israel, but it threatened public security of Israel.

The Intifada was started in the Gaza Strip by the Palestinians and spread quickly among all the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories. In addition to the Palestinians, after the intifada broke out, the Israeli Arabs were suspected of being threat to the public security due to their solidarity with the Palestinians and the Intifada. In fact during the first years of the Intifada, both the scale and the frequency of security violations like act of sabotage, violent assaults, shootings, arsons and etc., by the Israeli Arabs rouse enormously, but they did not join the Intifada.⁴³ Consequently, the Intifada did not lead to additional threats to the Jews by the Israeli Arabs, but the uprising itself turned out to be a more serious threat to Israel year by year.

During the first years of the Intifada, the Palestinians took the matters into their own hands, put their problem at center of the Arab-Israeli conflict and succeeded in putting the Israeli government under pressure not only by the Israeli population, but also by the international community.⁴⁴ Nevertheless the real success of the Intifada was proved after 1991 since when it was no longer a collection of stone-throwing youths and women in the refugee camps but a new form of a well-organized uprising with three different features:⁴⁵ The successful political dimension of the Intifada with a well-publicized expression of the Palestinian struggle for self-

⁴² Inbar, Efraim, "Israeli National Security, 1973-96", *BESA Center for Strategic Studies, Security and Policy Studies*, February 1998, No. 38, p. 69

⁴³ Smooha, Sammy, "Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution: National Security and the Arab Minority", in Avner Yaniv (ed.), *National Security and Democracy in Israel*, Boulder: L. Rienner, 1993, p. 116

⁴⁴ Hollis, Rosemary, "Israel's Search For Security", *Asian Affairs*, October 1991, Vol. 22, Issue 3, p. 277

⁴⁵ Cohen A., Stuart, "How Did the Intifada Affect the IDF?", *Conflict Quarterly*, Summer 1994, Vol. 14, No. 3, p. 8

determination and national liberation from the Israeli occupation; the coordination between mass demonstrations and riots and public resistance like boycotts; and the mutation of the Intifada into a terror campaign. The increasing success of the Intifada in the early 1990s resulted in the shift of the ranking of Israeli threat perceptions. The Intifada replaced with the conventional warfare and became a more important threat for Israel, which was a significant shift in traditional Israeli threat perception priorities.

The Intifada had great psychological impacts on the public as the attacks destroyed people's sense of safety in their daily lives. Both the political leaders and the public started to think about Israel's position in the conflict with the Palestinians and about the future of the territories in a more concrete and realistic manner than they did before.⁴⁶ The threat of the Intifada was not to the survival of the state, but to the survival of the Israelis, that's why the security policy of the state and the military doctrine had to be focused on how to provide security to individual life rather than how to deal with a ground attack from the Arabs in order to protect the existence of the state. This change in the security priority of the state required modifications in the military doctrine and in IDF's traditional thought and behavior as well.

Since the traditional Israeli military doctrine was formulated against existential threat of an all-out ground attack, it did not have a proper principle related to the Intifada, so the IDF's adaptation to the Intifada can be defined as a process of trial-and-error.⁴⁷ In early stage of the Intifada, the troops, unit commanders and junior- and middle-rank officers in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip fighting against the rebels were not specially trained for that kind of conflict, yet after 1991, command quality was upgraded at all levels with most talented officers and specially trained forces.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Arian, Asher, "Public Opinion and National Security", in Yaniv (ed.), 1993, op. cit., p. 143

⁴⁷ Cohen, op. cit., p. 11

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 9

Regarding the changes in military doctrine; it did not take too long to understand that Intifada could not be suppressed in a single decisive blow; therefore, in contrast to the traditional principle of 'sharp and short', IDF's response to the Intifada was a strategy of attrition.⁴⁹ As Rabin mentioned in 1988: "*(the Intifada) cannot be resolved in one go. What will bring the violence to an end are a cumulative process of physical and economic fatigue and the disruption of the frameworks of (Palestinian) daily life.*"⁵⁰

Despite those different strategies, Israel could not be able to end the Intifada until the Declaration of Principles of 1993. The Intifada was accepted as one of the most crucial factors, which precipitated the Israeli side's starting to the peace negotiations due to the fact that with the Intifada the Israelis questioned their presence in the occupied territories seriously and became more eager to make territorial concessions. The number of the Israelis who supported the establishment of a Palestinian state in the Palestinian occupied territories after the withdrawal of Israel was doubled from 37% in 1990, to 74% in 1994.⁵¹

4.4. THE ISRAELI SECURITY POLICY DURING THE PEACE PROCESS

One of the factors that led to the Peace Process in 1993 besides the end of the Cold War, the Gulf War and the Intifada, was the Labor Party's electoral victory in Israel in 1992. Rabin's Labor government gave the signals of a totally different security understanding and policy from Shamir's Likud government as soon as it came to power. The international and regional developments were acknowledged as a 'window of opportunity' for Israel's new strategic evaluation after the elimination of the 'Soviet umbrella' for Israel's Arab enemies; and after the defeat of Iraq, by the new Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin who was optimistic about peace and the Israeli security.⁵² The replacement of Shamir's Greater Israel belief which was supported

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 11

⁵⁰ *Ibid*

⁵¹ Bowker, Robert, *Beyond Peace: The Search for Security in the Middle East*, Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers, 1996, p. 75

⁵² Inbar, Efraim, 1999, *op. cit.*, p. 133

by settlers, religious rightists and security hawks with Rabin's State of Israel understanding⁵³ was another reason of the progress in peace negotiations.

The Israeli leftist political elite in power, wanted to rid of the Jewish heritage of the basic senses of insecurity and isolation deriving from a ghetto mentality, which create obstacles in front of the peace process.⁵⁴ Rabin mentioned the need for changes in traditional Israeli belief in isolation and self reliance:

Israel is no longer a people that dwells alone...and has to join global journey toward peace, reconciliation and international cooperation”, and emphasized, “the world is no longer against us. ...we must think differently, look differently, look at things in a different way. Peace requires a world of new concepts, new definitions...”⁵⁵

With this statement he expunged ideology and religion from the Israeli security policy which made the Israelis believe in the ‘people apart’ syndrome and put an end to the existential isolation.⁵⁶ Rabin's reassessment of the new global and international changes as positive affirmative developments for the Israeli security clarified the reduced Israeli threat perception to her existence, which was for the first time mentioned by a Prime Minister of Israel.

4.4.1. Reduced Threat Perceptions

Rabin's different approaches to the political and security policies of Israel and to the chronic problems between the Arabs and the Israelis from Shamir, precipitated the initiation of the peace process in 1993. The Declaration of Principles (DOP) of September 1993 signed between Israel and the PLO was the first success of the Oslo process. It was a historical moment for both of the sides since they recognized each other and took the first step to live together in peace. The importance of the

⁵³ Barnett, Michael, “Culture, Strategy and Foreign Policy Change: Israel's Road to Oslo”, *European Journal of International Relations*, 1999, Vol. 5(1), p. 19, 20

⁵⁴ Inbar, Efraim and Sandler Shmuel, “The Changing Israeli Strategic Equation: Toward a Security Regime”, *BESA Center for Strategic Studies, Security and Policy Studies*, June 1995, No 23, p. 54

⁵⁵ Inbar, Efraim, “Yitzhak Rabin and Israeli National Security”, *BESA Center for Strategic Studies, Security and Policy Studies*, No. 25, at <http://www.biu.ac.il/Besa/books/25/analysis.html>

⁵⁶ Barnett, *op. cit.*, p. 21

DOP for the security of Israel was the alterations that would take place in the PLO Covenant, which supported the destruction of Israel with all possible ways plus the promise to renounce the use of terrorism.

The following treaty, which enhanced the Israeli security during the peace process, was the one with Jordan in 1994. The most perilous threat perception of Israel since her establishment, the so-called Eastern Front that weakened with the defeat of Iraq during the Gulf War, almost disappeared with this treaty because it eliminated the possibility of a Jordanian attack against Israel. However the most significant point of the treaty, which minimized the likelihood of the Eastern Front attack, was Jordan's commitment to prevent any third army from entering her territory.⁵⁷

The DOP and the 1994 Peace Treaty with Jordan totally diminished the only possible military threat from Egypt as well since they legitimized the latter's peace with Israel and put an end to Egypt's being the only Arab state signing peace treaty with the Jewish state.⁵⁸ As a result, the peace process seriously decreased the chances of a large-scale conventional war which had been the nightmare of Israeli security since 1948 and so enhanced Israel's security.

As an initiative of attempts to bring the deadlocked negotiations back on track, to cope with the violations of agreements and to support the friendly regimes⁵⁹, the Middle East Peace Process was the most important endeavor to bring peace and security for the parties until then. Obviously it could not remove all the hostilities and the threats emanating from different sources and actually it was not realistic to expect magic from the process to change the whole situation, yet there were enough improvements to be optimistic for both the Israelis and the Arabs. First of all one of the greatest achievements of the peace process was the transformation of the Arab-

⁵⁷ Shahak Israel, *Open Secrets: Israeli Nuclear and Foreign Policies*, London: Pluto Press, 1997, p. 78

⁵⁸ Inbar, in Karsh (ed.), 1996, *op. cit.*, p. 33

⁵⁹ Kober, Avi, "Israeli War Objectives into an Era of Negativism", in Uri Bar Joseph (ed.), *Israel's National Security Towards the 21st Century*, London: Frank Cass, 2001, p. 191

Israeli conflict from being an existential conflict to be a conflict about how the Arabs and Israelis could live peacefully with each other.⁶⁰ Secondly, Israel started to enjoy a level of security against a conventional attack greater than at any time since her establishment.⁶¹ These positive developments had resulted in the redefinition of security among the Israeli political/military elite and the Israeli public: Since the early 1990s, Israeli existential threat perception of a conventional-collective Arab attack has replaced with a different nature and sources of threat; terrorism. Even Rabin, who had not accepted terrorism as an important threat until the early 1990s, changed his mind and viewed it as a 'strategic threat'.⁶² Shortly there were new kinds of threats in 1990s, with different nature and from different sources, but the positive contributions of the peace process to the Israeli security should not be ignored.

4.4.2. New Threat Perceptions

According to a skeptical, security obsessed group of academics and the political/military elite, even if the peace process seemed as a security breakthrough in the short run, since it would terminate neither the threats facing Israel, nor the need for Israel to preserve strong defenses it could be misleading and nothing could be more dangerous for Israel than a false sense of security.⁶³ These highly suspicious approaches resulted basically from the Israeli mistrust to the Arabs' real intentions. The declarations such as the one made by the Israeli Arab scholar Azmi Bishara after the signing of the DOP included claims supporting their view:

Israel will never be an integral part of the Middle East, because the compromise it is making with the Arab peoples is diplomatic rather than historic. Hence it will remain suspicious and suspect. Therefore

⁶⁰ Said Aly, Abdel Monem, "The Road Map: Detours and Disengagements" at <http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2004/AlyTestimony040720.pdf>

⁶¹ Cohen, Eliot A., Eisenstadt, Michael J. and Bacevich, Andrew J.. "Israel's Revolution in Security Affairs," *Survival*, Spring 1998, Vol. 40, No. 1, p. 51

⁶² Rynhold, Jonathan, "Constructing the Fence and Deconstructing Disengagement: Identity, Norms and Security in Israel", paper presented at "*Israel: The Prospects for Reinvigoration*", *Association of Israel Studies*, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, June 13-16, 2004

⁶³ Zakheim, *op. cit.*, p. 18

*Israel must not itself, in the aftermath of the peace agreements, as a part of the Middle East, to hope benefit from them...*⁶⁴

The explanation made by one of the Israeli Arab scholar did not reflect the intention of the entire Arab world. There were, of course, people opposing the peace with Israel just like the Israelis who were not in favor of peace, but this did not mean that peace was accepted by the parties not due to their desire but obligation. On the contrary both the Arabs – especially the Palestinians – and the Israelis had been tired of fighting for years; that's why peace was expected and supported sincerely more than anything else by them. The Palestinian, Israeli and even American flags that were swung all together by the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories; the enthusiasm and happiness on their faces; and the pro-peace demonstrations in Israel⁶⁵ can be accepted as the indicator of their real feelings. However it is noteworthy to remind that while claiming the good intentions of the Arabs I excluded the terror organizations and their supporters which will be examined below as one of the main sources of threats against Israel during the peace process.

It should be kept in mind on the other hand that realpolitik is not determined according to the feelings: Even if the Arabs did not accept Israel by heart, they were aware of the fact that they had no other choice, but to face up to live together since no one could notice better than the Arabs how all their attempts to win Israel failed until then. The rule of realpolitik – the stronger wins and the weaker loses – was approved once more by the bad experiences and the disappointments of the Palestinians. The Arabs recognized that a political solution, and peaceful coexistence were in their interest, and that the military option was counterproductive and highly destructive for their assets.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Alpher, Joseph, "Israel's Security Concerns in the Peace Process", *International Affairs*, 1994, Vol.70, Issue 2, p. 241

⁶⁵ Enderlin, Charles, *Shattered Dreams* (documentary), directed by Setton, Dan and Ben-Mayor, Tor, 2003

⁶⁶ Alpher, *op. cit.*, p. 233

Long-lasting hostilities and uncertainties concerning the peace process supported the criticisms about the high expectations for a more secure environment in Israel. It was hardly possible to claim the presence of a pure security for Israel, therefore the desire for deliberate steps for a more flexible security policy was quite understandable, nevertheless the ignorance of the positive developments for the Israeli security provided by the peace process and the assertion of an ongoing existential threat during the peace process were not acceptable.

In Israeli case having false sense of security due to the enhanced existential security of the state was out of question because the security policy makers some of whom were even suspicious about positive developments, had already found out the new threat perceptions during the 1990s which can be examined basically under the subtitles: Conventional Military Build-up, Non-Conventional Military Build-up, Radical Islam and Terror.

4.4.2.1. Conventional Military Build-up

The Peace Process removed the potential threats of a large scale or a limited conventional attack from her neighbors against Israel except for Syria. Israel did not make a peace treaty with Syria, so the latter's potential to launch a war of attrition or a limited conventional war to get the Golan Heights back was going on. The political dominance of Syria in Lebanon and her support for the ongoing terror attacks of Hizbullah against Israel from southern Lebanon was another threat for Israel. When the end of the Soviet political-military support to Syria, the reduction of a chance of an Eastern Front attack and the loneliness of Syria against Israel after her previous allies' peace treaties with Israel are taken into account, it is easy to come to the conclusion of a limited likelihood of a Syrian attack. Nonetheless the threat emanating from Syria was also a result of the balancing factor of her increasing military capability.

In the post-Cold War era, the US flow of arms to the region in general and to Syria in particular after the Gulf War as a prize for her participation in the anti-Iraq coalition strengthened Syria's military capability; therefore, in spite of Israel's continuing qualitative advantage in weaponry and training of her military personnel,

for the first time in the Middle East, a state – Syria – became capable of defending herself effectively against an Israeli attack.⁶⁷ This challenge to her military superiority, which was one of the fundamental principles of Israeli military doctrine, offset Syria's other weaknesses and made her a potential threat against Israel during the Peace Process.

The other Middle Eastern countries also engaged in military buildups after the end of bipolarity as a result of being a potential market for arms sell for the US, Western Europe and Russia; and during the peace process they strengthened their weaponry not only due to the uncertainty and reversibility of the peace process, but also the other security threats unrelated to the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁶⁸ However they were not threats to the Israeli security as much as neighbor Syria and 'second ring' states of Iraq, Libya and especially Iran, which had nuclear weapons.⁶⁹

4.4.2.2. Non-Conventional Military Build-up

The shift in the nature and the source of the threats against Israel during the peace process was a consequence of the reduced threats from some of Israel's neighbors and the rising threats from the 'second tier' countries such as Iraq, Libya and Iran.⁷⁰ The nuclear program of Iran was embarked by the Iranian Shah in late 1950s, and Iraq launched her nuclear program in 1970s due to shah's nuclear ambitions; that's why the nuclearization was not a new phenomenon in the region.⁷¹ However their coming out as nuclear threats against Israel coincided with the developments in their nuclear capability during the Iran-Iraq War, and then Iraq's missile attacks against Israel during the Gulf War, which indicated that Israel was vulnerable to missile attacks.

⁶⁷ Shahak, *op. cit.*, p. 93

⁶⁸ Inbar, Efraim and Sandler, Shmuel, "The International Politics of a Middle Eastern Arms Control Regime", in Efraim Inbar and Shmuel Sandler (ed.), *Middle Eastern Security, Prospects for an Arms Control Regime*, London: Frank Cass, 1995, p. 178

⁶⁹ Inbar, in Karsh (ed.), 1996, *op. cit.*, p. 37

⁷⁰ Inbar, *op. cit.*, <http://www.biu.ac.il/Besa/books/25/analysis.html>

⁷¹ Karsh, Efraim and Navias Martin, "Israeli Nuclear Weapons and Middle East Peace", in Karsh (ed.), 1996, *op. cit.*, p. 79

Although during and after the Gulf War Iraq's nuclear capability was almost destroyed – which became clear after the War in Iraq in 2003 – Saddam was accepted as a potential nuclear threat by Israel until the end of his regime. Nevertheless, since Iran became more powerful than ever after the Gulf War due to not only Iraq's defeat, but also her huge expenditures on her nuclear program,⁷² Iran was addressed as the main threat to Israel's security by Rabin.⁷³ Iranian threat was strengthened by her desire to expand her regime and her support for the Islamic terror organizations, especially Hizbullah in Lebanon as well.

The policy Israel followed against nuclear threat was to prevent the nuclear proliferation of the surrounding countries with all possible political and military ways. She therefore supported the extension of arms control and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in the region, but not for herself because the security assurances discussed in the context of NPT extension were not sufficient to meet Israeli concerns⁷⁴, so she took her own measures and improved her own nuclear capacity. While Israel expected to prevent the Arabs from having nuclear weapons, for Israel, her own nuclear program was a stabilizing effect in the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁷⁵ In spite of the positive modifications that the peace process brought, some of the Israeli decision makers believed that even the peace process could not end conventional and nuclear threats and Israel's ambiguous nuclear option was the most effective deterrent power against the threats to her national survival.⁷⁶

It was such a double-standard policy that Israel pursued since she believed to have the right to have nuclear capability as a deterrent and stabilizing factor in the region while accepting the other states' nuclearization as an existential threat against

⁷² Ibid, p. 80

⁷³ Shahak, op. cit., p. 82, 83

⁷⁴ Steinberg, Gerald M., "Israel and the Changing Global Non-Proliferation Regime: The NPT Extension, CTBT and Fissile Cut-Off", in Inbar and Sandler (ed.), 1995, op. cit., p. 71, 73

⁷⁵ Karsh and Navias, op. cit., p. 87

⁷⁶ Steinberg, op. cit., p. 71

herself. If the nuclear programs of the other regional states had been prevented, so should have been Israel's. If Israel claims that she improved her nuclear capability as a deterrent factor against the regional nuclear threat, the other regional states can also claim that they did the same against Israel's nuclear power. Israel argued that her nuclear power was not a threat against the others because she would use it only as a last resort,⁷⁷ what about the others? No one knows who would use it, therefore claiming one's own nuclear power as deterrence and the others' as threat is just a double standard.

In short, there were no policy changes in Israel during the peace process regarding the nuclear issues. The traditional policies of not being the first to introduce nuclear weapons to the region, but also not being the second to do so; and preventing such capability in the region continued in the 1990s.⁷⁸ Although Israel was in not favor of the 'balance of terror' in the region, she kept developing her nuclear program as her most powerful deterrent card during the peace process and contributed to the nuclear proliferation in the region.

Another continuity in her nuclear policy was the policy of ambiguity. Israel has never acknowledged to having nuclear weapons because of three basic reasons: the Arab states believed that Israel had already nuclear weapons in order to use in a situation of last resort; the policy of nuclear ambiguity had succeeded until then; and an explicit nuclear policy could bring unnecessary and dangerous regional tensions.⁷⁹ This policy made it easier to live in the region Israel believes, it does not make any sense to me though while everybody knew that Israel had nuclear weapons and especially after the confession of Mr. Vanunu in late 1980s about Israel's nuclear capacity.

⁷⁷ Levrán, *op. cit.*, p. 149

⁷⁸ Leran, *op. cit.*, p. 148

⁷⁹ Landau, Emily, "Change in Israeli Nuclear Policy?", *Strategic Assessment*, April 1998, Vol. 1, No. 1, at http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v1n1p2_n.html

4.4.2.3. Radical Islam

1990s was a decade, which could also be defined by the rise of radical Islam in the Middle East, after the Gulf War and the peace process of course. The bad economic situation in the Arab countries and particularly in Palestine accompanied with the pessimism about future among the new generation and made it easier for the radical Islamic organizations to convince people to join them who promised economic, social and moral supports to the members and even to their families. The young people finding a new identity for themselves were ready to be a part of the threat against the secular regimes in general and against Israel in particular.

The radical Islamic organizations like Hamas, Hizbullah and Islamic Jihad have obviously rejected the existence of Israel however they have not been able to destroy Israel, that's why they have been far away from being an existential threat to Israel, yet they have been threats for the Israeli security. Since they have not recognized Israel, they rejected any agreement made with her, which means they were totally against the peace process, so they were accepted as threats to the peace process as well.

The Islamic regimes in the region like Sudan and Iran have not posed a direct conventional military challenge for Israel yet Iran's support for Hizbullah in terms of money, the supply of anti-tank/anti-aircraft missiles ⁸⁰ and training of the terrorists as well as her WMD capabilities, not only strengthened the radical Islamic organizations, but also made Iran a more threatening country in the eyes of the Israelis. Hizbullah's low-intensity conflict in the south Lebanon and Hamas' terror became the real, concrete threats to the peace process and to Israelis' security.

4.4.2.4. Terrorism

Terrorism has not been something new for the Israelis as they have had to live with that since 1920, and especially since the occupation of territories in the 1967 War. Nevertheless the way paved by the intifada for increasing terror attacks in Israel and in the occupied territories turned out to be more dangerous than ever during the

⁸⁰ Inbar, in Inbar and Sheffer (ed.), 1997, op.cit, p. 160

peace process that Israel wrote terrorism at the top of the list of threats against Israel, even above the traditional threat of a large scale all-out war. This was an important change for Israel's security understanding since the number one threat has threatened not Israeli national security, but the personal security of the Israelis which was called as 'current security' threat by Rabin since terrorism has taken its place as the first security challenge in Israel while conventional war options has reduced significantly. Although this challenge has not been against the State's existence, it has demoralized the civilian Israeli society enormously and shaken the feeling of personal security of those people.

Providing security is one of the most important duties of all the states, but it is extremely important for Israel due to the fact that according to a major Zionist claim, the only guarantee for the physical safety of Jews is an independent and strong Jewish state, however it has been undermined by the terrorist attacks.⁸¹ This trust reduction to the protection of their physical safety has damaged the Israelis psychologically, which adversely influenced Israel's flexibility during the peace negotiations.⁸²

There were two terror sources against Israel during the peace process; the Hizbullah in Lebanon and the Palestinian terror mainly directed by Hamas in the occupied Palestinian territories. The latter one was a more dangerous obstacle in front of the peace process. As the security responsibility was transferred to the Palestinian Authority (PA) with the DOP, Cairo and Taba Agreements, the Palestinians were accused of not preventing terrorism, which at the end of the day put the establishment of a Palestinian State into danger. I am not going to discuss whether the establishment of a Palestinian State would increase terror or reduce it because I explained it in detail in the first chapter, nevertheless I want to mention the reasons why the PA did not stop Hamas: First of all, the terror attacks were planned by

⁸¹ Barzilai, Gad and Inbar, Efraim, "The Use of Force: Israeli Public Opinion on Military Options", *Armed Forces and Society*, Fall 1996, Vol. 23, Number 1, p. 51

⁸² Shmuel Limone, "The Arab Threat: The Israeli Perspective", in *National Threat Perceptions in the Middle East*, UNIDIR, UN Institute for Disarmament Research, September 1995, Research Paper No. 37, p. 14

Hamas which was against the PA's policy of making peace with Israel and it was not easy for the PA to totally stop Hamas due to internal political reasons. Hamas has been accepted as a terror organization by Israel, but it has been accepted as a legal organization which also supported poor people financially like a charity organization in the Palestinian territories, therefore it was not easy to destroy Hamas for the PA.

Secondly, even if the PA had had the chance to stop Hamas, it would not have done so due to the fact that the ongoing terrorist attacks provided the PA a card for the negotiations. The negotiations paved the way for the establishment of a Palestinian state, but some of the main problems between the sides could not be solved and the establishment of a Palestinian state was not possible without solving them. That is why the PA did not want to lose the resistance power of the Palestinians in case of a failure of the process and the establishment of the state. Hence the terror attacks went on being threats to the Israelis even after the agreements. Nonetheless if the Palestinian State was established, the terrorism would be over not only because there would be no reason to attack against Israel for the ones who supported terror in order to have a state in the occupied Palestinian territories, but also because the PA would fight against terror which would be perilous for both itself and the future of the Palestinian state.

The second source of terrorist threat to Israel during the peace process was Hizbullah's attacks from Lebanon to the north of Israel. So as to force Israel to withdraw from south Lebanon, Hizbullah conducted a low-intensity conflict against the IDF and against Israeli civilians in the north of Israel until the withdrawal of Israel in the year 2000. Due to its Khomeinist ideology and its fight against Israel, Iran supplied important new weapons like the Sagger anti-tank missile and Katyusha artillery rocket which threatened the civilian security in the Israeli towns and Kibbutzs in the north.⁸³ Hizbullah's sole supporter was not Iran, another regional state having problems with Israel spurred the organization; Syria.

⁸³ Inbar, in Inbar and Sheffer (ed.), 1997, *op.cit.*, p. 160, 161

Syria supported Hizbullah because of firstly her good relations with Iran, and secondly and more importantly, that support provided Israel the principal means of putting pressure on Israel.⁸⁴ Israel, which had already been critical about the dominance of Syria in Lebanese politics for years, was disturbed by Syria's pressure on herself to get an advantage while negotiating on the Golan Heights by using the increasing Hizbullah attacks against the Israeli civilians. The Hizbullah, Syria and Israel relations and Lebanon problem will be examined below, but it is important to mention that with the support of Syrian diplomacy, Hizbullah's terror activities against Israel escalated year by year especially during the peace process: there were 19 Hizbullah attacks in 1990, 52 in 1991, 63 in 1992, 158 in 1993, 187 in 1994 and 344 in 1995.⁸⁵

An analyst in Israeli Ministry of Defense claimed that the peace process did not eliminate existential threats to Israel but on the contrary its positive developments might induce fundamentalists to further enhance their endeavors of undermining the peace.⁸⁶ I am against his claim because the radical movements, which increased during the peace process, were not able to be existential threats to Israel since they were not as strong as states, especially as Israel. There have been a continuous, intensive terror threat to Israeli security; however it has never reach to the stage of an existential threat.

There was another source of threat to Israel that has to be mentioned in a few sentences although it was not as dangerous as external terrorist threats; the threat of Jewish terrorism. The different parts of the Israeli society represented different identities of the society; nationalist, religious or secular. The conflicting visions of the different sides have always been in Israeli politics, but the radicalization of the religious part was enhanced after the initiation of the peace process. This radicalization reached its peak with the assassination of Rabin in 1995 after which

⁸⁴ Murden, Simon, "Understanding Israel's Long Conflict in Lebanon: The Search for an Alternative Approach to Security During the Peace Process", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 2000, 27(1), p. 35

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ Limone, op. cit., p. 15

Jewish terrorism was considered as a real threat to democracy and a strategic threat to Israeli society.⁸⁷

During the peace process the threat perceptions of Israel changed as scrutinized above. The reduction of the traditional large scale war threat, particularly from the Eastern Front; the emergent threats of nuclearization in the region, Radical Islam and terror; and the peace process itself resulted in changes in the military doctrine of Israel.

4.5. CHANGES IN ISRAELI MILITARY DOCTRINE

The peace process made it difficult for Israel to pursue her traditional security policies shaped according to the traditional threat perceptions. The acceptance and recognition of Israel by some of her long-lasting enemies required an alteration in the principles of military deterrence and the use of force. Before her recognition, Israel implemented deterrence and use of force strategy by depending on the regional hostilities and threats against herself, yet the peace process restrained Israel's freedom of action as result of the acceptance of peaceful co-existence.

The limitations on the use of force adversely affected the deterrence posture of Israel because her deterrence policy based on Israel's capability and willingness to use of force which dissuades the Arabs from attacking. The limited freedom of action for the use of force would reduce the effectiveness of Israel's deterrence strategy. Israel on the one hand, did not want to activate the traditional Arab fears of Israeli militarism and expansionism through the use of force, on the other hand she believed that the lack of an influential deterrence and the use of force would weaken her against the Arabs since only a strong Israel secure recognition in the region.⁸⁸ Hence during the peace process, Israel had to think the military impact of actions on relations with her neighbors and to avoid undesirable political consequences.⁸⁹ However, according to Inbar and Sandler, following a strategy to minimize the Arab

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 14

⁸⁸ Inbar and Sandler, op. cit., p. 51

⁸⁹ Cohen, Eisenstadt and Bacevich, 1998, op. cit., p. 127

fears which would undermine deterrence was problematic.⁹⁰ The objection to the restricted use of force due to its negative effect on deterrence was a harbinger of not accepting the positive changes in the political/military situation of Israel and the reality that the doctrine did not suit to the realities of the peace process. During peace process, strategies had to be determined under peace conditions, not war.

The new security environment limited the implementation of preemptive and preventive strike principles of offensive strategy due to greater political constraints during that period. However, it was impossible to claim that the offensive principles were totally given up after the operations in Lebanon during the peace process. The change in the doctrine was mainly in the sense that, when a war was erupted in spite of those constraints, then the seizure of terrain principle would not be implemented since the 1967 and 1982 wars proved how problematic the additional territories, yet enemy forces and weaponry would be destroyed since the end of the Soviet umbrella would make it difficult for the enemies to be reconstituted once they were destroyed.⁹¹

The next doctrinal change during that period was about the traditional self-reliance principle. As the thought of being an isolated state, which could not trust, any other state changed, Israel started to look for new alliances in the region. Of course the support of a superpower – the US – remained as the core element of the military doctrine, especially as a result of the developing relations with the US both because of the Labor Party's in Israel and the Democrats' in the US coming to power. The US was still very crucial for Israel for the access to US's technology and weaponry as well as for her economic and political support. Nonetheless, as opposed to pre-peace process period, Israel was incline to develop her relations with countries that have common or similar threats and interests like Jordan and Turkey without endangering her relations with the US.⁹² The developing relations with Turkey

⁹⁰ Inbar and Sandler, *op. cit.*, p. 347

⁹¹ Cohen, Eisenstadt and Bacevich, 1998, *op. cit.*, p. 128

⁹² Sherman, Martin, "Diversifying Strategic Reliance: Broadening the Base of Israel's Sources of Strategic Support", *Strategic Assessment*, January 1999, Vol. 1, No. 4, at http://www.tau.ac.il/jess/sa/vln4p4_n.html

turned out to be a strategic alliance after the mid-1990s, which indicated a shift in traditional military doctrine of Israel. It was hard to claim that the self-reliance policy was completely abandoned, but it was more flexible for sure.

The final change in Israel's military doctrine was a structural one related to the 'nation in arms' concept. The symptoms of change in IDF embarked in 1990 when the reserve ceiling was lowered to age 45 in combat units and to age 51 in rear echelons and continued with the reduction in female conscript terms in 1993.⁹³ However, the most significant alteration was military service's losing its importance. The motivation for the military service declined especially among the young people having a secular and middle-class background from 82% to 68% over the period 1986-95, and in spite of a small percentage like 5%, a decline of national-religious youth's motivation for conscription was also figured out over the same period.⁹⁴ These changes in both IDF and the motivation of the Israeli youth resulted from the changes in the strategic environment of Israel in 1990s. In a period when the fundamental threat perceptions to the Israeli security were low and the peace expectations were high, the young people were not as eager as their ancestors to do military service. It is possible to come to the conclusion that the Israelis have no more been afraid of an existential threat since if they had expected an attack to their existence, they would not have been lost their motivation.

The changes in Israeli threat perceptions and the Israeli military doctrine during the peace process were examined in general above; nevertheless it is not possible to assert that the Israeli security policy demonstrated no modifications when the governments changed during that period. It is a well-known fact that the Labor and Likud Parties had mostly different approaches to different problematic issues in the Israeli security and in peace process. Although there were some fundamental issues on which they had similar policies, Labor's understanding that has supported to sustain without territories and to make progress for peaceful coexistence were quite

⁹³ Cohen, Stuart, "The IDF: From a Peoples's Army to a Professional Military – Causes and Implications", *Armed Forces and Society*, Winter 1995, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 238, 239

⁹⁴ Cohen, Stuart A., "Towards a New Portrait of a (New) Israeli Soldier", *Israel Affairs*, Spring/Summer 1997, Vol. 3, p. 107

different from Likud's policy which was based on the Jewish history, persecution and redemption and the protection of the mission to settle the whole of Israel and the occupied territories.⁹⁵ This differentiation has come from the ideological division between those two: Labor has been less ideological and religious while Likud has been territorially more expansionist and ideologically more ambitious.⁹⁶ Hence it is necessary to show the differences in security policies of Israel between Rabin, Netanyahu and Barak Governments in order to understand how ideology influences the security policies.

4.6. THE DIFFERENCES IN THE SECURITY POLICIES OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENTS DURING THE PEACE PROCESS

4.6.1. Mr. Security (Rabin) – Peres Period

Rabin was the key political actor in Israel who started to Oslo Peace negotiations and signed the DOP with Arafat and the 1994 Peace Treaty with King Hussein of Jordan. His optimistic approach to a possible future peace reflected to his policies towards many of the critical security related issues. Labor government's point of view during the negotiations with the PLO was to reduce the existential threats in order to improve 'basic security' as an exchange for accepting greater threats to the routine life of the Israelis which was 'current security' then.⁹⁷ The reduction of existential threat was more important than the threat of terrorism because terrorism could not threaten Israel's existence that's why strategically and in the long run that policy made sense, but it was problematic for the security expectations of the individuals.

The most challenging threat during the Labor government was the increasingly ongoing terror attacks despite the peace negotiations and agreements. After the suicide bombings in 1994 Rabin defined the terrorist activities by Hamas and the other Islamic radicals as "*a form of terrorism...different from what we once knew from the PLO terrorist organizations*" and for him the only way to deal with them

⁹⁵ Barnett, *op. cit.*, p. 17

⁹⁶ Telhami, in Barnett (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 36

⁹⁷ Inbar, in Karsh (ed.), 1996, *op. cit.*, p.40

was through “*a combination of a political and military action.*”⁹⁸ However he also mentioned that, as the Islamic terrorist organizations easily found new members due to the bad economic situation, “*practically only way to dry the swamp of radical Islam is through economic development and an improved standard of living*”.⁹⁹

The emphasis on the economic factors in political/security issues was one of the most significant alterations brought by Rabin. He and his team believed that military power alone should not be the only guarantor of their future security, but cooperative political and economic relationships would also contribute to the Israeli security since they would strengthen the Arab states which would make them be able and eager to control Islamic radicalism.¹⁰⁰ The expected regional and bilateral economic cooperation could not be realized unfortunately, but concrete steps were taken for political cooperation, especially with the Palestinians.

The first historic step was the DOP of 1993 by which Israel and the PLO recognized each other. The accord was a turning point for the Israeli security understanding because it was the first document confirming that Israel did not accept the establishment of a Palestinian state as a serious threat against its security any more. This new approach was supported by the following two agreements of the Gaza-Jericho Agreement of 1994 and the Taba Agreement of 1995 both of which were crucial attempts for the creation of a Palestinian State in the occupied Palestinian territories. The first one gave the control of the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area to the PA, and the second one required for the Israeli withdrawal from six major cities in the West Bank.

The withdrawal decision – land-for-peace policy – of the Labor government indicated another alteration in traditional security policy’s point of view and Israeli military doctrine’s principle concerning the strategic importance of territory. According to the dovish Labor government, the strategic importance of territory

⁹⁸ Inbar, 1999, *op. cit.*, p. 142

⁹⁹ Inbar, *op. cit.*, <http://www.biu.ac.il/Besa/books/25/analysis.html>

¹⁰⁰ Murden, *op. cit.*, p. 30

diminished, especially the Gulf War indicated how secure borders should not be defined with strategic depth. The dovish thinking believed in the changes in the notion of defensible borders basing on topography and geography in the past and accepted only mutually agreed borders as secure.¹⁰¹ This understanding made it possible to withdraw from parts of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and to be ready to make territorial compromise on the Golan Heights.

Syrian leader's announcement regarding his commitment to peace after the Asad-Clinton summit of 1994 made Rabin announce his intention to hold a referendum if withdrawal from Golan would be needed for a peace with Syria.¹⁰² While offering full withdrawal from Golan, Israeli Prime Minister said that the Golan settlements were not security assets.¹⁰³ The strategic settlements of the past were accepted as obstacles to peace and peace with Syria was more important than the settlements for that period's political/military elite like Maj. Gen. Zeev Livneh who stated, "*peace is the best security*".¹⁰⁴ In return for withdrawal and peace, Israel insisted on a Syrian guarantee to prevent a war of attrition from southern Lebanon since the terror attacks of Hizbullah put both the peace process and the public support for Rabin into danger as they threatened the Israeli civilian security.

The Rabin government wanted to pursue a policy on Lebanon that would be in consistency with the peace process but it did not. As it could not make peace with Syria, the decision for withdrawal was not given unlike other territories. In spite of its peace-prone policies and the reassessment of the traditional proactive security doctrine, the Labor government decided to launch two intensive air and artillery campaigns in Lebanon: Operation Accountability in July 1993 and Operation Grapes of Wrath in April 1996. Both of the operations aimed at putting an end to Hizbullah's Katyusha attacks against Israeli civilians in the north by destroying Hizbullah's weaponry, yet it was not all. Bombarding Lebanese villages and forcing

¹⁰¹ Inbar, Efraim, "Israeli Negotiations With Syria", *Israel Affairs*, Summer 1995, Vol.1, No.4, p. 94

¹⁰² *Ibid*, p. 91

¹⁰³ Duncan, *op. cit.*, p. 65

¹⁰⁴ Inbar, 1996, *op. cit.*, p. 51, 56

tens of thousands of refugees to move northward was also part of Israel's objectives so as to make life difficult for Lebanese civilians which would pressure Syrian and Lebanese governments not to support Hizbullah.¹⁰⁵ Neither of the operations was compatible with the security understanding of the peace process despite Peres' opposite explanation that:

*(Grapes of Wrath did not represent) any deviation from the path of peace. On the contrary, it is necessary precisely in order to save the peace. This is not an operation of choice, but rather one of no alternative, it is the fulfillment of a national duty of clear self-defense, on the other hand, and overcoming the attempt to eliminate the peace process on the other.*¹⁰⁶

It was not expected Israel to connive terrorist attacks of Hizbullah, however since the operations were also directed towards the innocent civilians, they reflected the anticipated political interests from the operations; as a result, Israel had to face with political pressure from the world, especially from the US which made lots of efforts to convince the sides to compromise during the whole peace process. Israel did not prefer deteriorating her relations with the US, which was started to improve after Rabin came to power, but she did not shun from making operations in Lebanon mostly due to domestic political concerns. The second operation launched in Peres' tenure was related to the rising Hamas's suicide bombings in 1996. As a reply to public criticism, Peres, just before the elections, wanted to show how tough he was on security issues, but even his tough measures did not help him and the peace process entered a new phase with the election of Netanyahu in 1996.

4.6.2. A Return to Hawkish Policies with Netanyahu

The Netanyahu government had mostly different point of views from its predecessor concerning the peace process and the security issues. The national security policy returned to its roots as if no improvement was provided during the peace process. First of all it objected the land-for-peace principle meaning the government rejected any territorial compromise in return for peace. As territory did

¹⁰⁵ Murden, *op. cit.*, p. 36

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*

not lose its strategic value even in the nuclear era for the Netanyahu government, making territorial concessions was out of question. The government consisted of security hawks some of who were against withdrawal from the territories, especially from the West Bank and the Golan Heights, due to the security concerns; and ideological hawks who opposed withdrawal due to the ideological commitments to those lands.¹⁰⁷

The Netanyahu government accused the Labor government of initiating territorial concessions which could have led to a domino affect and could not have been stopped at the Green Line, for example if Israel had lost control in Hebron, she would have had to defend Tel Aviv.¹⁰⁸ Even just this claim is enough to understand not only the perception and policy differences between the Labor and Likud governments but also how the latter one can exaggerate the security issues not to make territorial concessions. Another difference between the two was in their settlement policies. Not only the territories, but also the settlements on those territories had vital importance for the Israeli security according to the Likud government.

Since the Golan Heights was accepted as essential to the security of the state, Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights would be the basis for an arrangement with Syria according to the government.¹⁰⁹ Netanyahu's uncompromising stand was proved by his following declaration:

*...when we enter this negotiation, we will enter it with a demand identical to that of the Syrians. If they demand all of the Golan Heights, so will we. I don't see any reason why we should diminish our demands...*¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Slater, Jerome, "Netanyahu, A Palestinian State, and Israeli Security Reassessed", *Political Science Quarterly*, 1997-1998, Vol. 112, No.4, p. 679

¹⁰⁸ Mor, Ben D., "The Middle East Peace Process and Regional Security", in Zeev Maoz (ed.), *Regional Security in the Middle East; Past, Present and Future*, London: Frank Cass, 1997, p. 188

¹⁰⁹ Murden, *op. cit.*, p. 39

¹¹⁰ Mor, *op. cit.*, p. 189

The next crucial change in the security policy of Netanyahu was over the establishment of a Palestinian State. The establishment of a Palestinian State could not be compatible with the security understanding of him according to which such a state was a real threat to Israel. Palestinian terror undermined the trust to the PA and strengthened Likud's point of view of putting security prior to peace. However after the tunnel incident, the lack of trust became mutual which endangered the peace process.

Netanyahu's skepticism about the Palestinians did not solely derived from Hamas terror attacks, but also from Palestinian irredentalism which would have extended to the Arab nationalism if the Palestinians had given the right of self-determination, therefore he suggested autonomy excluding East Jerusalem where the ultimate authority would be given to Israel, particularly in the security issues.¹¹¹ Fortunately that groundless suspicion and unjust suggestion did not end the peace process between the two sides and continued with the 1997 Hebron Protocol and the 1998 Wye Memorandum through which the principle of partition was accepted by the Likud-led government.¹¹²

Despite the last two documents, real steps for the establishment of a Palestinian state were not taken during Netanyahu's period. His government did not produce policies in accordance with the peace process in other issues either. Unlike Rabin who preferred to reduce defense budget for the expenditures like ATBM Systems, Netanyahu called for significant increase in defense expenditures to develop an Israeli missile force and an anti-missile defense system.¹¹³ These plans for a more powerful weaponry showed that the peace agreements were not substitute for military power. This understanding reflected how Netanyahu still found the peace process insecure, did not trust peace and prepared for war.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 194

¹¹² Heller, Mark, "Israel's Dilemma", *Survival*, Winter 2000-01, Vol. 42, No. 4, p. 24

¹¹³ Mor, op. cit., p. 188

Netanyahu's security policies were again different from Rabin's, about Lebanon, however surprisingly it was a positive change in favor of withdrawal. It was understood that use of force did not work in Lebanon and it was difficult to impose violent diplomacy while the UNSCR 425 was the basis for the international criticism against Israel. In addition to the adverse international stand, the domestic pressure played an active role in the shift of the politics in Lebanon. When two Israeli helicopter ferrying soldiers to the Lebanese front crashed, 73 soldiers died and the public started to question the Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon, which resulted in a strong public pressure on the government.¹¹⁴

Besides the international and domestic pressure, withdrawal discussions took place in the government's agenda due to the changes in the perspectives of the political elite. Some Likud MKs supported the withdrawal from Lebanon because they thought, unlike the leftist political elite who believed that a withdrawal would bring peace with Syria, that unless they withdrew, a prolonged low-intensity war in Lebanon would lead to an increasing public pressure to make an agreement with Syria which might lead to withdrawal from the Golan Heights.¹¹⁵ Nonetheless the shift in Likud not only derived from its relevance to Syria, but also the questioning of the effectiveness and the necessity of the security zone in the north led to significant modifications as well.

Ariel Sharon, who had been in favor of expanding the Security zone, drastically changed his mind, accepted it as a 'liability', and offered a gradual withdrawal from Lebanon.¹¹⁶ A second withdrawal proposal based on UNSCR 425 was presented by Defense Minister Mordachai suggesting disarmament of Hizbullah but neither Syrians accepted it, nor did they let Lebanon accept it. Still withdrawal decision

¹¹⁴ Kaye, Dalia, "The Israeli Decision to Withdraw from Southern Lebanon: Political Leadership and Security Policy", *Political Science Quarterly*, Winter2002/2003, Vol. 117, Issue 4, at http://infotrac.london.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/924/296/75698100w3/purl=rc1_EAIM_0_A97531824&dyn=16!ar_fmt?sw_aep=telaviv

¹¹⁵ Ibid

¹¹⁶ Murden, op. cit., p. 40

preserved its popularity in the government and even Netanyahu began expressing support for the unilateral withdrawal due to the ineffectiveness of the security zone:

*Rocket attacks cannot be prevented by territorial occupation, because Katyushas can have a longer range...The only thing we can do to prevent missile attacks on our territory until suitable technology is developed...is to deter...*¹¹⁷

It was not possible to perceive how he serious and sincere was in his desire for a unilateral withdrawal though, because of the government change in Israel in July 1999.

4.6.3. Increasing Hopes for Security with Barak

After coming to power, Barak gave the signals of a Rabin-like peace-prone policy, and he stated that Israel was strong enough to overcome any excessive fears concerning insecurity and to get rid of the siege mentality as well.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, although he confirmed his approach with his withdrawal from Lebanon, he challenged to his statement above with his later declarations and policies especially towards the Palestinians. One of the most urgent security problems that had to be solved when Barak came to power was Lebanon. As the Lebanon problem and the agreement with Syria were interrelated, it was hard to solve for Barak too just like his predecessors.

Barak's support for withdrawal from Lebanon began with his election pledge to 'bring the boys home'¹¹⁹, so when he came to power he knew that he had to keep his promise, but how? The rising public criticism due to the Israeli vulnerability in casualties and his pledge to withdraw was accomplished with his belief that the security zone was undermining rather than enhancing Israeli security made him give

¹¹⁷ Kaye, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁸ Murden, *op. cit.*, p. 44

¹¹⁹ Luft, Gal, "Israel's Security Zone in Lebanon – A 'Tragedy'?", *Middle East Quarterly*, September 2000, Vol. 7, Issue 3,

the decision of withdrawal from Lebanon. There was another motivation behind this decision; the expectation to make peace with Syria, yet since the Israeli-Syrian talks failed in the spring of 2000, Barak had to withdraw unilaterally on 24 May 2000.

The withdrawal from Lebanon marked a crucial change in Israeli society's political culture: The public pressure for the withdrawal due to huge number of casualties challenged the traditional public support for self-sacrifice for common good.¹²⁰ This pressure also indicated how public started questioning state's policies even on security issues most probably because of the peace process and increasing feeling of security.

The Israeli withdrawal from the southern Lebanon was harshly criticized due to two basic reasons. First one based on the claim that the withdrawal would not stop Hizbullah, but rather the terrorist attacks would enhance against the Israeli civilians in the north. Time proved the invalidity of that pessimistic-hawkish claim as no Israelis have been killed until now since the withdrawal. The second criticism about the withdrawal was its influence on the other terrorist organizations which started to believe in the vitality and the efficiency of terrorism in making Israel give greater concessions.¹²¹ Unlike the former criticism, this claim was not groundless because it deteriorated Israel's deterrence and got the Palestinian terrorists think that the Israeli public was quite vulnerable to casualties which could lead to strong public pressure to the government to give more concessions.

Barak's security policy was peace oriented, yet it was not basically due to his desire for peace, instead his finding no alternatives. His *'Emotionally I feel like a right-winger, in my head I am realistic, pragmatic'* statement underlines his real thoughts which convinced him that it was not possible any longer to rule over the Palestinians without continued violence and destruction of Israeli democracy.¹²² His

¹²⁰ Kaye, *op. cit.*

¹²¹ Ben-Israel, Isaac, "The Crisis in the Oslo Process Through the Prism of Israeli Deterrence", *Strategic Assessment*, August 2002, Vol. 5, No. 2, at <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v5n2p6Ben.html>

¹²² Slater, Jerome, "What Went Wrong? The Collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process", *Political Science Quarterly*, 2001, Vol. 116, No. 2, p. 179

threat perceptions were alike Likud's, but unlike Likud, he preferred overcoming those threats with peace:

*Israel is galloping toward disaster...If we do not reach a solution and the window of opportunity closes, we will find ourselves in a very sharp deterioration. It is impossible to set a timetable. It is impossible to know exactly what the trigger will be. Large-scale terrorists attacks...or a fundamentalist wave of operations against us – which the Americans and the rest of the world will be wary of dealing with for fear of their own interests – and with simple nuclear instruments and means of launching in Arab states in the background...Therefore, I understand that we have an interest of a very high order in trying to reach agreements now.*¹²³

It is possible to come to three main conclusions about Barak's security understanding with his statement above: He could not think according to peace conditions and perceived threats as a security obsessed rightist; he mentioned the possibility of both a large-scale conventional and a nuclear attack; and he stated his mistrust to a UN support. In spite of his emphasis on peace, he pursued policies which jeopardized the peace process: He did not accept to implement the Israeli troops' phased withdrawals required by the agreement signed during the Oslo process; he did not withdraw from many Arab villages neighboring Jerusalem despite his promise; he followed closure policies which destroyed the economy of Palestinians; and he allowed the continuation of the Israeli road building and settlement expansion in East Jerusalem and the West Bank at the greatest rate since 1992, even higher than that of the Netanyahu period.¹²⁴

Barak's stand in the negotiations with the Palestinians was surprisingly different from his policies mentioned above. Without any doubt, he was the one who gave the largest concessions ever during the Camp David Summit of July 2000, the failure of which paved the way to the collapse of the Oslo peace process. Since it was the beginning of the end as a turning point in the eruption of the second intifada, which totally altered the Israeli security policy, I will examine the Camp

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 180

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 181

David summit, the collapse of the peace process and the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada while writing about the Israeli security policy after the peace process in my last chapter.

CHAPTER 5

CHANGES IN ISRAELI SECURITY POLICY AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE PEACE PROCESS

“The guerrilla wins if he does not lose; while the conventional army loses if it does not win.”¹

Henry Kissinger

5.1. A PERFECT FAILURE: CAMP DAVID II

The failure of the Camp David II was the beginning of the end for the history of the Israeli-Palestinian peace endeavors, which had been going on for nearly a decade. The expectations of both sides to come to an end in the chronic conflict were not be realized due to the insoluble key problems between the parties. Since it was the most generous offer made by the Israelis until then, Arafat’s uncompromising manner was highly criticized by not only Israelis, but also the international community, yet the most generous offer of all did not mean that it was fair. Despite his offers, Barak was continuously violating the spirit of Oslo by allowing the settlement activities proving the spread of occupation as Ze’ev Schiff mentioned:

...the relentless expansion of the existing settlements and the establishment of new settlements, with a concomitant expropriation of Palestinian land...in and around Jerusalem, and elsewhere as well...(the Palestinians had been) shut in from all sides.²

¹ Luft, Gal, “Who Is Winning the Intifada?”, *Commentary*, July 2001, Vol. 112, Issue 1, p. 33

² Slater, Jerome, “What Went Wrong? The Collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process”, *Political Science Quarterly*, 2001, Volume 116, No. 2, p. 184

5.1.1. The Importance of the Refugee Problem

The Palestinians did refuse the offers that would turn the Palestinian areas into enclaves by the Israeli settlements, highways and roadblocks, but there was a more significant problem making them leave the negotiation table; the refugee problem. They insisted on the right of return of the refugees to their homes in Israel and the solution of this problem was a **sine qua non** for them. For the Israelis, on the other side, the return of the refugees would mean the loss of the Jewish character of the State of Israel and even the destruction of the state in the long run, that's why it has been one of the biggest threats for the Israeli security. While the high birthrate among the Palestinians in the occupied territories and the Israeli Arab minority have been accepted as a threat to the Jewish character of the State, the possibility of a direct increase in the Arab population with the return of refugees inside Israel have been more perilous for the Israeli security.

The insistence of the Palestinians on the right of return is understandable because since 1948 they have been living away from their homes, in refugee camps or in other countries, with financial difficulties. Their right to go back home should not be interpreted as an ongoing desire to terminate Israel as a Jewish State but rather a humanitarian desire to return home, however, since Israelis feel threatened due to demographic realities, they ignore this fact. The two different approaches make the problem intractable, but it must be solved for the sake of a future settlement.

The end of the refugee problem must be reached in order to make a settlement in the conflict but as it is a quite sensitive issue, both the rights of the refugees and the security concerns of Israel should be taken into account. To be logical and realist, the acknowledgement of the return of a huge number of refugees – a number between three and four million – to Israel whose Jewish population is 5 million and Arab population is 1 million, can not be expected. A relatively less number of refugees can be accepted by Israel but their homes or even their villages might not exist any more or the Jews live there, therefore they can be located among the

Israeli Arabs.³ For the rest, Israel should accept her political and moral responsibilities and should resettle them either in the new Palestinian state – especially in a good area obtained by the Palestinians in a territorial exchange – or in a third, preferably an Arab, country with generous financial compensation.⁴ Living among people sharing the same language, culture, religion and habits and being ruled by them not only will make the lives of the refugees easier if they are supported with a good amount of financial aid, but also the security needs of Israelis will be met. Should those refugees, who are potential terrorists of the terror organizations because of the lack of job, money, good life and a predictable future, integrate in a normal life; the Israeli security will also be enhanced.

At Camp David Israel did not accept the right of return while the Palestinians did not give up that right, but later they were convinced for the implementation of it in a way that protected the Israeli security and demography as Arafat stated in February 2002:

*We understand Israel's demographic concerns and understand the right of return of Palestinian refugees, a right guaranteed under international law and United Nations Resolution 194, must be implemented in a way that take into account such concerns.*⁵

Nevertheless the stubborn approaches of both sides during the negotiations at Camp David led to a historical failure, which changed the relations of Israel with the Palestinians, the internal political parameters both for the Israelis and the Palestinians and security concerns of both sides.

³ Agha Hussein and Malley Robert, "The Last Negotiation: How to End the Middle East Peace Process", *Foreign Affairs*, May/Jun2002, Vol. 81 Issue 3, at http://www.arts.mcgill.ca/MEPP/PRRN/papers/agma_malley_faffairs.html

⁴ Slater, *op. cit.*, p. 195

⁵ Pressman, Jeremy, "Vision in Collision: What Happened at Camp David and Taba", *International Security*, Fall 2003, Vol. 28, No. 2, p. 30

One of the most important consequences of the failure was the common harsh criticism against the Palestinians in general and Arafat in particular in Israel leading to the lack of trust to their partners. This was a golden opportunity for Likud and the hard-liners, who supported that Oslo was a real strategic mistake for Israel, to prove their righteousness about Arafat whose final aim was not peace but the destruction of Israel.⁶ The disappointment and mistrust among the Israelis –even the leftist peace camp – was enhanced by such political incitements, which paved the way for the increasing popularity of the right-wingers.

The failure had similar results among the Palestinians who also lost their hopes for peace, which would bring the end of the occupation and the establishment of a Palestinian State. The Tanzim leaders wanted the PA leadership to change its policy of negotiating and to pressure the Israeli government by ending security cooperation with Israel, by increasing the cost of the occupation like Hizbullah did and by returning to the Palestinian struggle until the full Israeli withdrawal to the pre-1967 borders, the complete dismantlement or evacuation of the settlements and the recognition of right of return.⁷ The first call of Tanzim is an indication of the belief that the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon was a success of Hizbullah, so the Israelis understood only the language of force. This belief and the general frustration of the Palestinian people for the failure were accompanied by these calls of Tanzim leaders above, all of which increased the prop for hard-liners and even for the radicals. Nevertheless, despite those calls and the increasing tension in the West Bank and Gaza, an armed struggle was not launched by the Palestinians until the famous provocative visit of Sharon to the Haram al-Sharif on September 28, 2000.

5.2. THE AL-AQSA INTIFADA AND ITS IMPACT ON THE ISRAELI SECURITY POLICY

It was two months after the failure of the Camp David when Sharon, the leader of the opposition in Likud, made a visit to the Temple Mount with the main aim of

⁶ Barari, Hassan A., *Israeli Politics and the Middle East Peace Process, 1988-2002*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, p. 131

⁷ Usher, Graham, "Facing Defeat: The Intifada Two Years On", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Winter 2003, Vol. 32, No. 2, p. 24

provoking the Palestinians because he had already noticed that they were ready to fight but they needed for a spark. The timing was arranged cunningly; the time was ripe for the Palestinians to start to a military act and the expectations for peace was nearly dead, so it was the right time to destroy the peace process completely. This visit succeeded not only in his aim of putting an end to the Oslo process, but also in his plans of gaining popularity both against his rival Netanyahu in Likud⁸ and against the failed and weakened Barak who lost support due to the concessions he made and the failure of Camp David.

All these developments resulted in a second Palestinian uprising known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada, the second *Intifada*, which has changed the Israeli-Palestinian relations drastically after a relatively stable period and marked the beginning of a new era. The second Intifada was neither just the result of Sharon's visit, nor was an outcome of a strategic planning, but rather it was a spontaneous act which turned into a mixture of riots and strategic attacks with the participation of radical Islamic Organizations like Hamas and Islamic Jihad.⁹ The reason why it did not remain as a reaction to the visit but escalated in a short time was the immediate retaliation of the Israeli police and the excessive use of force of the Israeli security forces. Since after the outbreak of the first Intifada Israel did not respond sharply, the Palestinians expected the same, nevertheless, on the contrary IDF reacted massively so as to make the Palestinians understand that they would pay a very heavy price for the second wave of violence.¹⁰ However the Israeli expectations to stop the Palestinians were just a miscalculation and they realized the fact when the violence was escalated: being strong and showing this strength when necessary in order to provide deterrence did not work and a vicious circle began.

⁸ Barari, *op.cit.*, p. 131

⁹ Schulze, Kirsten E., "Camp David and the Al-Aqsa Intifada: An Assessment of the State of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, July-December 2000", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2001, Vol. 24, p. 220

¹⁰ Peri, Yoram, *The Israeli Military and Israel's Palestinian Policy from Oslo to Al-Aqsa Intifada*, Washington DC: US Institute of Peace, 2002, p. 31

The seriously shattered trust to the Palestinians after the failure of the Camp David was destroyed completely with the second uprising, which was a clear indication that what the Palestinians really wanted was not negotiating, but violence according to the Israelis. Arafat was no longer a partner, but a real threat to the Israeli security, an enemy for Israelis since he supported the violence. It is not possible to prove his direct backing to the violence, but it was clear that he did not take a step to stop it. He and the PA were aware of the fact that if they had tried to restrain it, the uprising against the occupation might have turned into a revolt against their authority.¹¹ Furthermore, by basing on the experience of the first *Intifada*, they expected to have a bargaining chip for the future negotiations, for this reason they prefer not preventing the ongoing violence.

The clashes between the Palestinian police and the IDF put an end to the attempts to create a “security partnership” to end terrorism.¹² This was an important change for the Israeli security policy because they lost their partner to fight against the Palestinian terrorism. Actually the PA did not fight against terrorism as the IDF did, but they helped the Israelis in some cases that enhanced the Israeli trust to them. The Israeli decision-makers accepted the Intifada not as a political, but as a security crisis, which strengthened Israel’s “siege mentality”.¹³ This was a big alteration for Israelis’ threat perceptions as during the peace process they got rid of that mentality of being surrounded by the enemy who wanted to destroy the Jewish people. Indeed there were Israelis who had that mentality even during the peace process, but they did not consist of the majority of the population. Nevertheless, after the second Intifada, the belief that Israel is not wanted in the Middle East prevailed once more among the Israelis 68% of whom believed in 2002 that the Arabs wanted to kill much of the Jewish people or their purpose was to conquer Israel whilst this rate was 47% in 1999, before the Intifada.¹⁴

¹¹ Usher, *op. cit.*, p. 25

¹² Andoni, Ghassan, “A Comparative Study of Intifada 1987 and Intifada 2000”, in Roane Carey (ed). *The New Intifada: Resisting Israel’s Apartheid*, London: Verso, 2001, p. 213

¹³ Schulze, *op. cit.*, p. 221, 222

¹⁴ Arian, Asher, “Israeli Public Opinion on National Security 2002”, *Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies (JCSS) Memorandum*, July 2002, No. 61, p. 21

The feeling of isolation was not only based on the Palestinian Intifada, but also on the reactions of the other Arab states to the Israeli use of force against the Palestinians without any differentiation between the terrorists and the civilians, in the immediate afterwards of the outbreak of the uprising. Arafat's call for support was first replied by Saddam Hussein who threatened Israel to lead a movement to put an end to Zionism.¹⁵ At the Arab League Summit in October 2000, the Secretary General of the League, Amr Musa's statement below was an invitation for the Arab solidarity:

*The peace process, as we have known it during recent years, is finished...Nobody among the Arabs, and especially among the Palestinians, will agree to return to the negotiating table on the basis of the old criteria and standards. Right now, the resolute stance taken by the Palestinian people, and its resistance to Israel's conquest, is the top priority.*¹⁶

However what Israel scared of did not happen and despite the first condemnations of Israel and the call for ending the normalization with her, the usual Arab disunity started and not any serious step was taken against Israel: The next day of the summit King Abdullah of Jordan went to the US to sign a trade agreement with Israel's patron while Egypt unwillingly recalled her Ambassador to Israel after six weeks, but could not go further as she needed the annual US aid.¹⁷ Indeed some radical Arab states like Iraq and Yemen – but not Syria – were in favor of a military response against Israel, yet Egypt and Jordan rejected such a deterioration of relations¹⁸, therefore the threat of Intifada did not spillover and the other Arab states did not create new sources of threats to the Israeli security.

¹⁵ Podhoretz, Norman, "Intifada II: Death of an Illusion?", *Commentary*, December 2000, Vol. 110, Issue 5, p. 37

¹⁶ Schulze, *op. cit.*, p. 221

¹⁷ Said, Edward W., "Palestinians Under Siege", in Carey (ed.), 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 29

¹⁸ Feldman, Shai, "The Second Intifada: A New Assessment", *Strategic Assessment*, November 2001, Vol. 4, No. 3, at <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v4n3p2Fel.html>

While the Arab states were trying to decide how to support the Palestinians without destroying their relations with Israel and the US, the mutual violence was continuing. In order to end the violence, some attempts were made the first of which was the Sharm al-Shaykh summit in October 2000, but it could not accomplish. The endeavors continued with a US initiative, the Clinton Plan of December 2000 that proposed the creation of a sovereign but non-militarized Palestinian state. Despite Barak's positive approach to the plan, the Chief of General Staff Shaul Mofaz was against the Plan, which he defined as "a danger to the state" because he said that: *"The IDF sees peace as important to Israel's security and supports continuation of the negotiations with the Palestinians but these security arrangements will destroy the peace agreement and present a significant threat to Israel."*¹⁹ However the Plan could not succeed not only because of Israeli opposition, but also because of the Palestinian objection. The next peace endeavor between the sides was the Taba talks on January 2001 when the negotiators declared that they had never been that closer to reaching an agreement, but the result of the coming elections demised all the peace hopes for both sides.

5.3. THE SECURITY POLICY OF THE SHARON GOVERNMENT

Ariel Sharon reached his aims by provoking the Palestinians with his visit by which he gave the signals of his tough attitudes towards the Palestinians: the latter ones launched the uprising and the Israelis started to support harsh policies towards them while avoiding from peace-inclined negotiation sided policies. In such an atmosphere, the Israelis highly criticized Barak who shored up The Clinton Plan and Taba Talks after the outbreak of Intifada, since he violated the Israeli stand that they do not negotiate under fire.²⁰ Not only the Palestinians could interpret making negotiations during the ongoing violence as accepting the violence and its rightness, but also the primary place of security in the Israeli politics would be replaced with making negotiations due to Barak's policies. According to the most of the Israelis Barak could not provide personal security for them, but rather he paved the way for the escalation of the Palestinian violence by trying to negotiate with them. All these

¹⁹ Peri, *op. cit.*, p. 33, 34

²⁰ Andoni, *op. it.*, p. 213

lack of trust to the Palestinians and the increasing support for cruel policies against them led the Israelis elect Sharon against Barak.

Sharon's coming to power deteriorated the already collapsed relations with the Palestinians instead of improving them. His security policies have been intifada-oriented because the top threat perception of Israel has been the Palestinian terrorism arising from the Al-Aqsa Intifada. Sharon was aware of the fact that he was elected because of the expectations to halt the terrorism and to bring personal security even if it would be realized through massive use of force; but the result has been a disappointment since he has brought neither security nor peace until now. Nevertheless he tried his best to meet the expectations of Israelis and did not shun from taking harsh measures against the Palestinians. Sharon's security policy in this sense focused on ending terrorist attacks in the occupied territories and inside Israel; preventing escalation of assaults of Hizbullah; and protecting the Jewish character of Israel by not accepting the right of return of the Palestinian refugees in negotiations. Since the previous state based threats from Israel's close and remote neighbors has not been as perilous as before, they have no more serious threats to the Israeli security.

While examining the developments in Sharon's tenure, the deviation from the peace seeking, and compromising – except Netanyahu period – policies of the peace process will be overtly seen. Sharon's uncompromising and excessively ruthless policies deteriorated the security of Israelis as the extremists of both sides provoked each other. In order to understand his policies, it is noteworthy to know that he has dedicated his career to establishing Israeli sovereignty and control over as much Palestine as possible whilst denying the Palestinian political rights by repressing the Palestinian national movement.²¹ It was this career of him as a hard-liner making him be elected in 2001.

²¹ Slater, Jerome, "Ideology Vs. the National Interest: Bush, Sharon and US Policy in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", *Security Studies*, Autumn 2002, Vol. 12, no. 1, p. 177-178

5.3.1. Terrorism: A Vicious Circle

The Intifada has been made identical with the Palestinian terrorism that weakened the self-confidence and personal safety drastically. Although a leading Shi'i Arab cleric and religious authority Shaykh Muhammed Husayn Fadlallah mentioned that the aim of the Palestinian peoples' war – he did not want to call it terror – is not to kill civilians but rather to kill the Israeli project of “Israeli security” and the Ariel Sharon's government²², Israel suffered from a huge number of civilian casualties as a result of terror attacks. Terrorism has been the most dangerous threat to the Israeli security for more than a decade; however it has never reached such a terrible level of violence and has never escalated by any Israeli government by using those inconceivable offensive policies. While the Palestinians were criticized strongly as the responsible side of the failure of the Camp David and of terrorism, Sharon's offensive policies increased the intolerance against Israel by the international public – except for the US – as well.

The Al-Aqsa Intifada's strongest weapons have been the suicide bombers. Suicide bombing was not a new type of terrorist attack, but it has never been that massive and never caused that much casualties in a short period of time. While it was accepted as an expression of religious radicalism, which most Palestinians were against, with the second Intifada, it turned out to be a strategic weapon supported by most Palestinians.²³ The terrorist attacks have been taken place in the occupied territories usually by Fatah and Tanzim forces and inside Israel by Hamas and Islamic Jihad. After the failure of the Camp David and especially the excessive use of force by the IDF against the Palestinians, the sympathy, support and participation in these groups increased. The suicide bombers of these groups have been composed of the religious fanatics, who aim at fulfilling the requirements of jihad; the nationalist fanatics whose main goals are to end the Israeli occupation and to struggle for the establishment of a Palestinian state; the avengers who want to take

²² An interview with Shaykh Muhammed Husayn Fadlallah, “11 September, Terrorism, Islam, and the Intifada”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Winter 2002, Vol. 31, no. 2, p. 80

²³ Luft, Gal, “The Palestinian H-Bomb: Terror's Winning Strategy”, *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2002, Vol. 81, Issue 4, at <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20020701facomment8514/gal-luft/the-palestinian-h-bomb-terror-s-winning-strategy.html>

personal revenge either for a family member or a friend killed by the Israelis, or a general revenge against Israel; and finally the exploited people accused of collaborating with Israel or women accused of desecrating family honor.²⁴ The rising strength of the terrorist groups is based on these support and participation from the different segments of the society.

Against these groups, Sharon has followed an offensive strategy because he believes only in the use of force as a solution and resists understanding that use of force has not worked to stop those people motivated with very strong religious, nationalist, political and personal reasons and venturing everything to serve their holy goals. He immediately attacked the Palestinians as retaliation to the first suicide bombings by sending helicopter gunships and F-16s systematically to destroy the military and institutional bases of them and assassinate and arrest the Fatah leaders.²⁵ Although Israel claimed that those attacks were only against the terrorists and their leaders, a number of civilians, including children, were also killed; therefore Sharon's policy has been criticized by the international community and surprisingly sometimes even by the US politicians. After the first raid into Gaza in April 2001, the US Secretary of State Colin Powell condemned the Israeli attacks and described them as "excessive and disproportionate", yet as the time passed, those raids became such a common practice that the international community ceased paying attention.²⁶

Apart from those incursions into the Palestinian territories in order to arrest or assassinate the terrorists – and the civilians most of the time – while intimidating the rest of the population to make them deter from attacking the Israelis, Sharon pursued a strict closure policy against the Palestinians. Closure policy has been followed for more than a decade in the Occupied Palestinian Territories in order to deprive the Palestinian inhabitants of their right to free movement, which has made

²⁴ Kimhi, Shaul and Even, Shmuel, "Who are the Palestinian Suicide Terrorists?", *Strategic Assessment*, September 2003, Vol. 6, No. 2, at <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v6n2p5Kim.html>

²⁵ Usher, *op. cit.*, p. 27

²⁶ Luft, 2002, *op. cit.*

the life really hard for the Palestinians, but since the outbreak of the second Intifada the damage it has given has reached undreamed of proportions.²⁷ The aim of this strategy has been to prevent the terrorist infiltrations into the Israeli territories, but it has not gone further and made the Palestinians' life difficult and enhanced their hatred. It could not succeed in restricting the terrorist attacks because if anyone decides to die for the sake of an ideal, no precautions can stop him/her.

In short, Sharon's policy towards the Palestinians included harassment measures and collective punishment as Camille Mansour explained:

*“encirclement of Palestinian towns in areas A; quasi-permanent controls along the roadway and around the villages in areas B; ban on travel between the West Bank and Gaza; separation of East Jerusalem from its hinterland around Bethlehem and Ramallah; the virtual impossibility of traveling between West Bank Towns...disruption of economic, social, family and educational life for the majority of the population...the destruction of hundreds of homes...preplanned assassinations that kill not only the targeted individuals; disproportionate use of war equipment...the bombing, including F-16 fighter planes, of building belonging to the Palestinian Authority.”*²⁸

Since the beginning of the second Intifada there has been an asymmetrical war between the sides and as the Israeli pressure and military punishment has continued, the terrorist attacks have been intensified because terrorism cannot be defeated through massive use of force the latter of which provide deterrence up to a limited level. One of the reasons why Sharon acted freely in using excessive force against the Palestinians instead of trying to find a more moderate way like making negotiations during his first tenure was to show the Israelis who elected him that he was not doing Barak's mistake of endangering the Israeli security by negotiating with the Palestinians under fire. The second and most probably the most important reason for his unrestrained aggressive policy was the change in the Middle East

²⁷ Hass, Amira, “Israel's Closure Policy: An Ineffective Strategy of Containment and Repression”, *Journal of*

Palestine Studies, Spring 2002, Vol. 31, no. 3, p. 6, 10

²⁸ Mansou, Amille, “The Impact of 11September On The Israeli-Palestinian Conflit”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Winter 2002, Vol. 31, No. 2, p. 11, 12

Policy of the new US government. During Clinton governments, the US made many efforts to bring both sides to the negotiation table and did not abstain from making pressure when necessary. Since having good relations with the US had been one the most important pillars of the Israeli security policy, Israel had not objected to the superpower and her main supporter.

5.3.2. Relations with the US

The new Bush Administration was critical of the Clinton Administration, which pursued political and economic multilateralist diplomatically and even militarily intervenist policies since it preferred unilateralist and largely exclusionist foreign and defense policies.²⁹ Actually Bush was not uninterested in the Middle East, but he wanted to focus on the Gulf region, rather than the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.³⁰ This policy would enhance Sharon's freedom of action, so it was what Sharon exactly wanted. Nevertheless it did not take too long for the new US administration to notice the fact that it could no longer ignore that conflict, so a number of shifts have been made in its policies since the beginning of the Al-Aqsa Intifada.

The fear of being interpreted as the de facto supporter of Israel since its "benign neglect" approach had the US change her policies and attempt to stabilize the conflict not to lose the Arab world's cooperation with the US on a number of issues.³¹ The Mitchell Report – although it dated back to Clinton Era, the new administration supported its main tenets – and the Tenet Plan were such attempts, which required for freezing all settlement activity of Israel in the West Bank and for taking necessary measures of the PA to prevent terrorist attacks. However the real shift in US policy making her involve in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was experienced after September 11.

²⁹ Ben-Zvi, Abraham, "The Bush Administration and the Middle East: In the Shadow of September 11", *Strategic Assessment*, February 2002, Vol. 4, No. 4, at <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v4n4p4Ben.html>

³⁰ Feldman, November 2001, *op. cit.*

³¹ Ben-Zvi, *op. cit.*

5.3.2.1. The Effect of September 11 on the Israeli-US Relations and the Israeli Security Policy

The unexpected terrorist attack in New York on September 11 altered US policies drastically. The Bush Administration gave up its exclusionist policies and this modification reflected in its minimal involvement policies towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well. The US wanted to include the Arab states in her war on terrorism because she needed a broad coalition for identifying, catching and punishing the terrorists. So as to guarantee the cooperation of the Arabs, the US knew that she had to make some efforts to cease the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Sharon expected much to benefit from September 11 and US's involvement in the conflict, but he could not reach what he waited for. He and his hard-liners launched a campaign known as *hasbarah* in Hebrew in order to compare what the US did in Afghanistan with what Israel did in Palestine; Arafat with Bin Laden; and the PA with the Taliban, however in spite of its intolerance to terrorism, the US Administration repudiated to accept this approach.³² Rather, the US followed a two-sided policy of not enraging the Arabs whilst putting pressure on Arafat to stop terror attacks. This two-sided policy of the US was obvious in Powell's speech in November 2001 in which the establishment of a Palestinian state and an end to Israeli occupation and settlement activity were mentioned on the one hand and the Palestinians were seriously condemned for their use of terror, and warned to stop it immediately.³³

The US policy towards Israel and Palestine in the post-September 11 was not a real deviation from the traditional US policy of supporting Israel actually, yet in the immediate afterwards of the event the US did not want to exclude the Arabs from the anti-terror coalition to show that she did not believe in the claim that Islam was the source of terrorism. Nonetheless, this effort had never turned out to be a good friendship with the Arabs at the expense of Israel. Israel has been the most crucial

³² Barari, op. cit., p. 134

³³ Ben-Zvi, op. cit.

ally of the US in the region and this alignment has been one of the most important tenets of the former's security policy. When the developments of the following weeks are scrutinized, the positive influence of 9/11 on Israel's security is understood.

As the terror attacks inside Israel increased, Bush's backing for Israel's cruel responses to the Palestinians enhanced in the framework of war on terrorism. He recognized Israel's right to stop terror, protect her people, and empathized with Israel's security needs, and the best friends' strong relations have deepened.³⁴ Moreover, after the 9/11 attacks, the harsher have been criticisms and hatred of terror attacks in the US and world public opinion, the less came out sympathy for the Palestinians and the more bolster for the Israelis which reinforced Israel's international standing. Knowing that the world and the US would be less critical with his offensive policies, Sharon used security excuse frequently for the intensification of his preemptive attacks in the Palestinian territories. Hence, overall, Sharon was successful in portraying his policies as part of war on terror. The US's branding of Iraq and Iran as the members of "Axis of Evil, and Hizbullah as a terrorist organization was the final positive contribution of 9/11 to the Israeli security policy for the reason that Israel would also be propped up in her struggle with those actors.³⁵

Apart from the positive political sides of September 11 attack for the Israeli security, the War in Afghanistan after that attack taught a very important strategic lesson to Israel in her fight against terrorism: Thwarting the third party states from supporting and harboring the terrorist groups.³⁶ The Taliban regime was toppled with the purpose of putting an end to backing to Al Queda and deterring the other third parties from shoring up any terrorist organizations. Israel, on her side came to the conclusion that fighting directly against the terrorist groups was not enough to

³⁴ Ze'evi (Farkash), Aharon, "Israel's Strategic Environment", *Strategic Assessment*, August 2002, Vol. 5, No. 2, at <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v5n2p7Zee.html>

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Brom, Sholomo, "The War in Afghanistan – Lessons for Israel", *Strategic Assessment*, February 2002, Vol. 4, No. 4, at <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v4n4p7Bro.html>

end it completely, but rather the state sponsorship or other groups' support should be prevented as a part of security policy. This meant that the Sharon Government would force the PA and Syria-Iran by all possible political and military ways – if necessary – to cease holding up the Palestinian terror groups in the occupied territories and Hizbullah respectively. Israel's relations with Hizbullah and its sponsors Syria and Iran will be examined after the Iraqi War of 2003 when important changes took place.

5.3.3. An Ironic Defense: Operation Defensive Shield

By pleading an increasing pressure on terrorism in the aftermath of September 11, Israel continued its attacks on the Palestinians. After IDF's murder of 28 Palestinians, seven-day invasion of Jenin and later the killing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) general secretary, PFLP guerillas assassinated Israeli cabinet minister Rehavam Ze'evi on 17 October 2001 as retaliation.³⁷ Those events were the beginning of the most violent attacks of both the Palestinians and Israelis in the history of occupation. Israel invaded 6 West Bank cities but due to the US pressure recoiled its troops. Nonetheless, after the seizure of a ship loaded with weapons from Iran on its route to the Palestinian territories, Arafat's oath on not knowing anything about it finished his credibility in the US even as boosting support to Sharon.³⁸

The enduring violence and high casualty rates were tried to be ended by the Saudi peace initiative which became Arab League's official policy towards the conflict on March 27, unfortunately this effort had to be put aside owing to a suicide attack killing 28 Israelis at their Passover dinner.³⁹ This attack after which the Israeli public pressure on Sharon touched its peak to stop terror without delay, made Sharon having Bush's backing for Israel's right of self-defense against terrorism and launching his bloody Operation Defensive Shield – it is quite questionable

³⁷ Usher, *op. cit.*, p. 29

³⁸ Benn, Aluf, "The Last Patriarchs", *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2002, Vol. 81, Issue 3, at ebscohost.com

³⁹ Usher, *op. cit.*, p. 31, 32

whether it is true to call it defensive though – on March 28, 2002. He wanted to restore a feeling of security to the Israeli public while shaking the terrorists’ sense of security.⁴⁰

The Sharon Government declared the aims of the operation as to destroy the terrorist infrastructure in the territories and to arrest, punish or kill the terrorists and their leaders. With the intention of reaching those determined goals, the IDF reoccupied all the territories in the West Bank including refugee camps, obliterated all governmental, non-governmental, and civilian and security institutions of PA and killed terrorists and civilians as well, hence achieved its goals. However, even though Sharon wanted to convince the international community that the operation was inevitable for him to provide security for the Israeli people, in reality, he had further purposes.

The first of these purposes was to restore the deterrent power of Israel as the one of the basic pillars of the Israeli military doctrine necessitates.⁴¹ Initially the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and then the terror attacks taking place since the initiation of the Intifada – mainly the last ones – weakened the Israeli deterrence against the terror organizations. It became an obligation to reassert its deterrent power so as to assure those groups, which aimed at exhausting the Israelis that terrorism had not worked; on the contrary they would have to pay a heavy price for their terrorist assaults. When the Israeli army carried out military operations in two Palestinian refugee camps in February 2002, Brigadier General Efraim Eitan stated, “*If we carry out clear-cut missions in two or three refugee camps, the rest will crumble. They’ll ...understand there is no military benefit to their conflict.*”⁴² This explanation indicates how Israeli military believes in the power of military attacks in regaining deterrence. This approach surprisingly denoted the unchangeable Israeli miscalculation of the more have been followed offensive policies against the

⁴⁰ Ben-Israel, Isaac, “The Crisis in the Oslo Process through the Prism of Israeli Deterrence”, *Strategic Assessment*, August 2002, Vol. 5, No. 2, at <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v5n2p6Ben.html>

⁴¹ Peri, *op. cit.*, p. 42

⁴² Karsh, Efraim, “Israel’s War”, *Commentary*, April 2002, Vol. 113, Issue 4, p. 23

terrorists, the less would make attacks the terrorists as a result of oppression. Israeli military operation halted terrorist attacks in the occupied territories for some time, but it could not end the suicide bombings inside Israel.

The second tacit goal of the operation was to take the control of Area A and to weaken the PA and Arafat in an attempt to cause them to topple.⁴³ As evidence to this aim, Arafat was besieged and even forced to exile. This was one of the most humiliating experiences Arafat had had after which hatred among the Palestinians roused enormously at the same time as criticism against Sharon in world public opinion increased since it made clear how Sharon's real policy was more than bringing security to Israel. The real condemnation to Sharon, however, went up when 52 Palestinians and 23 Israelis were killed after the Israeli attack in Jenin refugee camp.⁴⁴ During that attack, thousands of Palestinians were left homeless and due to huge number of casualties and destructive assaults, the operation was later called as "Jenin Massacre".

Sharon understood the danger of a potential chaos that Israel could have hardly managed and of the high possibility of radical Islamic groups', particularly Hamas, coming to power if the PA had collapsed, that's why ended the operation. Additionally, the international, but especially the US pressure led him end both the operation and the siege. Despite its support to Israel, even the US administration rejected the total breakdown of the PA and Israel could not risk violating the red lines of the US since good relations with her protector US has been the basis of Israel's security policy. Nevertheless, in spite of Bush's refusal to Arafat's exile and the collapse of the PA, he called for a real modification through democratic elections, which was also welcomed by Israel, as it would mean an implicit removal of Arafat. In his speech in May 2002, Bush blamed Arafat for being reluctant to bring peace to his nation and being a serious threat to regional stability.⁴⁵ For Sharon on the other hand he had said "man of peace", a statement giving rise to

⁴³ Peri, op. cit., p. 42

⁴⁴ Usher, op. cit., p. 32

⁴⁵ Ze'evi, op. cit.

bitter humor in the Israeli press, which seriously criticized him for accepting the Israeli interpretation of the conflict and even being a “New Likud Member”.⁴⁶

This full prop to whatever Sharon had done, except the siege of Arafat, an eyes wide shut stand in other words endangered a future peaceful settlement because it made stronger the lack of trust among the Arabs to the US as a fair, impartial mediator. What is more, as the unconditional US support to Sharon made him extend the occupation, the Palestinian anger went up, suicide bombing increased and resultantly repression-violence vicious circle intensified. Again like a cycle, since the terrorist attacks raised, the support for Sharon’s policies enhanced.

Even if Sharon could not stop terrorist attacks and provide security, his popularity augmented day by day. His offensive security policies were held up by the majority of Israelis, even by the peace camp in Israel. The reason of the support was the belief that the attacks and the operation were to get security, yet after it was understood that they had some hidden political reasons the government was criticized. The criticism however was not that strong since when the Labor Party left Sharon’s National Unity Government in November 2002, Sharon was elected once more in the early elections in January 2003.

5.3.4. The New Peace Attempt of The Road Map

The year 2002 was such a terrible year that an all-out war would have been inevitable if it had gone on some more time because anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic angers prevailed enormously and the existence of Israel was jeopardized as it had not been for decades according to a columnist for the New York Post and Jerusalem Post.⁴⁷ This is one of the most narrow-minded hard-liner statements that we get used to read and raised the question that how come an analyst be so one-sided and wrong. First of all it is the anti-Israel feelings that have increased rather than the anti-Semitic feelings resulting from Sharon’s policies. Secondly the party, which faced with the danger of being terminated, was the PA, not Israel. It is a very well

⁴⁶ Slater, 2002, *op. cit.*, p. 190, 192

⁴⁷ Pipes, Daniel, “Does Israel Need a Plan?”, *Commentary*, February 2003, vol. 115, Issue 2, p. 19

known fact that through terrorism a state can't be annihilated, even if the terrorists dream about it. As the existential threat to Israel from its eastern front by a coalition of Arab states had already become history, which threat to Israel's existence did Pipes mention? The only point I agree with him was about the dreadfulness of that bloody year.

All those horrible mutual attacks terminated the trust to other side – if remained any – and killed the hopes of a peaceful solution in both societies especially during 2002. The desperation, fortunately, replaced with a new peace initiative called the Road Map. It was formulated and presented to the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority on 30 April 2003 by the US, EU, UN and Russia – the Quartet – which stipulated the end of terror and violence, reforms in Palestinian institutions and freezing of all settlement activities in the first phase; the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with provisional borders in the second phase; and a permanent status agreement which will end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the last phase.⁴⁸

Both the newly elected Palestinian Prime Minister Abu Mazen and Sharon accepted the Road Map in principle. Abu Mazen promised to end terrorism and Sharon committed, as consistent with his previous statement that occupation was not a viable long-term solution and peace would require “painful concessions”, of dismantling unauthorized settlements and encouraging the Palestinian territorial integrity.⁴⁹ This was a radical change for Sharon because he became the first Likud leader who publicly accepted the creation of a Palestinian State notwithstanding the binding resolution against the establishment of an independent Palestinian State adopted by the Likud central committee in June 2002.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Special Documents, The Road Map, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Summer 2003, Vol. 32, No. 4, p. 83-94

⁴⁹ Heller, Mark, “A Roadmap Leading Nowhere: The Israeli-Palestinian Impasse”, *Strategic Assessment*, November 2003, Vol. 6, No. 3, at <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v6n3p2Hal.html>

⁵⁰ Barari, *op. cit.*, p. 136

For many years he supported the idea that Jordan was Palestine because he had opposed the creation of a Palestinian state in the occupied territories. Moreover the instability in Jordan was preferable for Israel before she signed a treaty with Jordan, but in recent years Sharon has comprehended that a strong and stable Jordan would be more beneficial for Israeli security as a buffer state between Iran-Iraq and Israel.⁵¹ Whilst he changed his policies towards Jordan as a result of Israel's own interests, his insincerity about the modification in his approach to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state was questioned after his next explanations. Sharon gave a message opposite to the previous one that no concessions would be made in Israel's settlement policy as an inducement for the Palestinians to stop violence in support of negotiations.⁵²

In short, Sharon was neither in favor of a sovereign Palestinian state, nor of dismantling settlements. Abu Mazen on the other hand, was not powerful enough to end the terrorism and to overcome the dominance of Arafat, for this reason he could not give what he was expected. Consequently, the Road Map resulted in small steps like a six-week ceasefire (hudna) and dismantling a few settlement outposts and roadblocks, but it did not bring a real transformation. Israel went on operations to destroy the terrorist infrastructures while terrorist attacks started after a short time.

5.3.5. The Impact of the War in Iraq on the Israel Security

While the serious developments were taking place in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the war in Iraq launched in May, diverted the attention to another part of the Middle East. The war had significant results not only for the Iraqis, but also for most of the states in the region. Although the Israelis felt threatened when the war started owing to the possibility of a missile attack from Iraq as it happened twelve years ago, this threat perception did not come through and in the end, the war had, without any doubt, positive impacts for the Israeli security.

⁵¹ Feldman, Shai, "An Agenda for Israel's Newly-Elected Government", *Strategic Assessment*, May 2001, Vol. 4, No. 1, at <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v4n1p2.html>

⁵² Feldman, Shai, "Israeli-Palestinian Peacemaking After the War", in Shai Feldman (ed.), *After the War in Iraq Defining the New Strategic Balance*, Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2003, p. 121

Before the war embarked, the US took necessary precautions to defend Israel from the Iraqi missile attacks by deploying missile-defense units on the eastern border of Israel and providing access to battlefield intelligence.⁵³ Actually both Israel and the US knew that Iraq's WMDs were destroyed after the Second Gulf War, but being deeply obsessed with the idea that Saddam might have hidden the chemical and biological warheads, they took essential measures. Apart from those measures, preparations for passive protection were also made, yet there was no need to activate them.

Had Iraq attacked against Israel, the latter would most probably have retaliated in order to gain its deterrence, which she lost after in 1990, but this could have created problems in her relations with the US since Bush did not want the extension of the war. During the war the US again asked Israel to stay on the sidelines. However, without taking part in the war, Israel benefited from it as the balance of power in the region altered in favor of Israel.

The first result of the war that strengthened Israel's security interests was the elimination of Iraq as an important security threat against Israel. First of all, she totally removed from the radical Arab camp against Israel; in other words the possibility of an eastern front attack including Iraq ended. Indeed that threat had come to an end after the Gulf War, yet the Israelis could not be sure until Saddam was toppled. The next advantage of Saddam's defeat was the end of WMD threat perceptions from Iraq. Surprisingly however, there have been still claims that Saddam might have concealed the WMDs in places where nobody could find or kept all necessary data to produce them in the future if he has the opportunity.⁵⁴ These assertions are made by the security-obsessed politicians, academics or military elite only to prove how they are threatened and to justify their offensive and unfair policies. Hence, for Israel there have not been any conventional and non-conventional strategic threats from Iraq any more. Thirdly, Iraq had to cease to

⁵³ Sofaer, Abraham D., "The US and Israel: The Road Ahead", *Commentary*, May 2003, Vol. 115, Issue 5, p. 28

⁵⁴ Asculai, Efraim, "The Case of Iraq's Weapon's of Mass Destruction", in Feldman (ed.), 2003, *op. cit.*, 128, 129

support the Palestinians including the terrorist groups politically and economically, which weakened them against Israel whilst strengthening the Israeli security.

The second positive consequence of the Iraqi War for the Israeli security was the enhanced hegemony of the US in the region. This hegemony made the publication of the Road Map possible because the US wanted to show that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were not against the Muslims.⁵⁵ The Bush Administration focused more on the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and they did not shun from putting pressure on both sides to reach peace. The US tried to balance the pressure on both sides, right; however since she has been Israel's ally, the increasing influence of her in the region would mean the rising pressure on Israel's enemies in the middle and long run.

The final benefit Israel got from this war was the US's growing pressure on the "axis of evil" members Syria and Iran because of their support to Hizbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and Iran's WMD capacities.⁵⁶ As Iran has been one of the most significant threats against Israel both due to her WMDs and her backing to the terrorist organizations, this pressure has mitigated the Israelis. Both of Israel's enemies understood how the US could launch a preemptive strike when she wants, even without showing evidence to her claims, as the hegemonic power of the region; therefore both of them became less threatening against Israel at least by reducing their support to terrorist organizations mentioned above. During the peace process terrorism became the most important security threat to Israel, but this trend became stronger with the initiation of the Al-Aqsa intifada and later with this war which finished – at least drastically decreased – the threats from states; not only from Iraq, but also from Syria and Iran.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Feldman, Shai, "Dilemmas Facing the Second Sharon Government", *Strategic Assessment*, February 2003, Vol. 5, No. 4, at <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v5n4p2Fel.html>

⁵⁶ Feldman, in Feldman (ed.), 2003, *op. cit.*, p. 119

⁵⁷ Klein, David, "Israel's Home Front Policy", in Feldman (ed.), 2003, *op. cit.*, p. 156

Before explaining the threats from Syria and Iran, it is necessary to mention a negative impact of the Iraqi war for the Israeli security. The failure of the US in Iraq in establishing a democratic, pro-US government has challenged Israel's security which was enhanced after the US victory in Iraq. The increasing instability, ambiguity, uncertainty and unpredictability created a new source of threat for Israel. The conflict among the radical Islamic movements inside Iraq and against the US may result in the rise of a radical Islamic government in Iraq which may be threatening for the Israeli security. Moreover increasing power of Al-Qaida in Iraq which supported the Iraqi attacks against the occupation forces, especially the US has been a threatening for Israel.

5.3.5.1. The Decreasing Threat from Hizbullah, Iran and Syria

After the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, Hizbullah lost its significance as a serious threat to the Israeli security; however it has still been on the list of threat perceptions since it has kept a low profile conflict in the areas known as Shab'a Farms. Hizbullah's policies have been determined according to the international and regional developments since 2000; that's why the danger of escalation emerged for a few times but as the recent developments were supportive of Israel's security, Hizbullah has lost power and support to which it needed for escalating the conflict.

In order to show the Islamic solidarity and its prop to intifada, Hizbullah kidnapped 3 Israeli soldiers in October 2000. Later, however, with the September 11 attacks Hizbollah had to restrain itself due to the jeopardy of being one of the groups to be targeted by the US during the war on terrorism.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, with the escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the real menace of escalation and opening of a second front came out in late March 2002 when it launched a massive mortar attack and Katyusha in the Shab'a Farms area and the Golan Heights.⁵⁹ In May 2002, Hizbullah leader Nasrallah explained the reasons why they initiated escalation as to indicate his solidarity with the Palestinian struggle and to assure Israel that

⁵⁸ Feldman, February 2003, *op. cit.*

⁵⁹ Sobelman, Daniel, "Hizbullah Two Years after the Withdrawal – A Compromise between Ideology, Interest, and Exigencies", *Strategic Assessment*, August 2002, Vol. 5, No. 2, at <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v5n2p4Sob.html>

Hizbullah was capable of acting against her “whenever necessary”.⁶⁰ The attempts to escalate the conflict in the north of Israel were not realized because Israel did not respond to Hizbullah. Israel focused on dealing with her top threat, terrorism, and repressing the Palestinians by making operations in the Palestinian towns, thus she did not want to engage in another front which would weaken her power in the Palestinian front.

The next development affecting Hizbullah’s power and strategy was the War in Iraq. The rising pressure on Syria and Iran forced them to stop holding up Hizbullah politically, economically and militarily. Noticing the fact that it could no longer be dependent on its main supporters, which would not sacrifice their own interests for a terror organization, Hizbullah reevaluated its strategy⁶¹ and gave up its policy of escalation. In spite of the end of that threat, a dangerous arsenal of “strategic arsenal” which was bought by Hizbullah created a balance of terror, so it is still- or will be – a threat to Israel Shai Feldman claims⁶², but as the regional situation is in favor of Israel, particularly whilst the US hegemony is ruled in the region, I do not think that such a threat is a serious one.

In the post Iraqi War the pressure on Iran about his backing to Hizbullah and his WMDs, intensified which is good for Israel’s security, but as long as Iran had the ideology calling for the destruction of the Zionist State, Iran’s WMDs are strategic threats to Israel.⁶³ Sharon, himself on the other hand follows the way his predecessors opened by continuing the traditional nuclear weapon policy of ambiguity.

Syria, the long lasting enemy of Israel has been losing strength against Israel for the last few years as a result of the same developments. After the Israeli withdrawal

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ Halevy, Efraim, “Israel’s National Security Agenda in the Coming Year”, *Strategic Assessment*, September 2003, Vol. 6, No. 2, at <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v6n2p6Hal.html>

⁶² Feldman, February 2003, op. cit.

⁶³ Feldman, Shai, May 2001, op. cit.

from Lebanon, Syria lost its only pressuring power on Israel, but the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada gave Syria a temporary chance to enhance pressure on Israel by endorsing Palestinian terror organizations. After September 11, Syria diverted the attention of the US as a country ruled by an authoritarian regime, shoring up terror and having the ability to produce WMD, so she had all the characteristics of a full-fledged member of the axis of evil.⁶⁴ Being identified with Al Qaeda and axis of evil was damaging Syria's interests, thus she cooperated with the US, but after the War in Iraq, Syria became a US target again by depending on the ridiculous assertion that Saddam might have deployed her WMDs in Syria. With this peril of US attack, the strategic balance of Syria with Israel, which had deteriorated to the disadvantage of Syria since the collapse of the USSR, worsened for Syria.

As a response to the US pressure Bashar Assad wanted to start peace negotiations with Israel in 2004. Although this was a big opportunity for the Sharon government to end the chronic hostility with its last neighbor with whom Israel had not signed any agreements, they did not even take the offer into serious. The basic reason why Sharon refused to initiate the negotiations was the belief that Bashar did not make that offer since he really wanted, but he had to do it in order to get rid of the US pressure. The doubt derived from the reforms, which could not be done in Syria due to the hard-liners around Bashar, and the continuing presence of the Palestinian terrorist headquarters in Damascus, which were to be closed as promised to US.⁶⁵ Sharon preferred the ongoing US pressure on Syria instead of trying to negotiate with Syria since he was aware of the fact that without withdrawing from the Golan Heights, reaching to a final agreement would not be possible.⁶⁶ Such policies like not making any concessions for peace unless there is pressure may strengthen the mentality among the Arabs that should Israel not face with violence, she does not negotiate, and such an understanding can escalate the violence.

⁶⁴ Brom, Shlomo, "Israel-Syria Negotiations: A Real Possibility?", *Strategic Assessment*, May 2004, Vol. 7, No. 1, at <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v7n1p2Bro.html>

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Ibid

5.3.6. The Unilateral Disengagement Plan

The Israelis elected Sharon because he was expected to end terrorism and bring security, but neither could he stop violence, nor could he create any long-term deterrence. Indeed this is not astonishing because of the fact that the collective punishment and the closure policies have endorsed the motivation of terrorism while giving the Palestinians more propaganda credit in the Palestinian street and in world opinion.⁶⁷ Hence the Sharon government's strategy failed and they tried to find another solution to the security problems. The solution Sharon supported was the unilateral separation, which was put in security agenda first in Rabin period and later in Barak period due to intifada; nevertheless Sharon, at first, was against the idea of the unilateral withdrawal since it also required for unilateral withdrawal from the settlements. By saying, "*The fate of Netzarim is the fate of Tel Aviv*" his strict rejection to dismantle a single settlement even if it was a tiny and isolated one was indicated.⁶⁸ As the violence escalated in spring 2002 and public pressure increased incredibly, Sharon changed his mind and took concrete steps like constructing a security barrier for implementing the unilateral separation plan.

The Sharon administration explains the purpose of unilateral separation as providing security through separation fence that would prevent terrorists from infiltrating into the Israeli territories, shortly as ending terrorism. They take the separation fence in Gaza as a model, which reduced terrorist infiltration from Gaza dramatically since 2001.⁶⁹ The claim that the fence does not have any political goals is not believable though. Actually, even most proponents of the unilateral separation admitted that although it would help Israel defend herself against terrorism, the prevention of terror was not the main reason for the unilateral disengagement plan.⁷⁰ It has the political aim of protecting the Jewish character of the state: the

⁶⁷ Ben-Yishai, Ron, "Changing the Strategy to Combat Terrorism", *Strategic Assessment*, February 2004, Vol. 6, No. 4, at <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v6n4p4Ben.html>

⁶⁸ Luft, 2002, *op. cit.*

⁶⁹ Makovsky, David, "How to Build a Fence", *Foreign Affairs*, Mar/Apr2004, Vol. 83 Issue 2, at ebscohost.com

⁷⁰ Rynhold, Jonathan, "Constructing the Fence and Deconstructing Disengagement: Identity, Norms and Security in Israel", paper presented at "*Israel: The Prospects for Reinvigoration*", *Association of Israel Studies*, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, June 13-16, 2004

severe decline in Jewish immigration to Israel and the drastically high birthrate among Palestinians oriented Israelis to partition⁷¹, which will have an inevitable political implication of a de facto border between a future Palestinian State and Israel. Were the causes and effects that easy and constructive like the end of terrorism, protecting the Jewish character of the state and the creation of a sovereign Palestinian State as some academics and politicians argue, there would be no reason to oppose the plan, but unfortunately there are lots of problematic points in the plan.

The basic problem with the so-called security fence results from its route. The planned fence will be 300 km longer than the Green Line, annex 15% of the West Bank and separate 70.000 West Bank Palestinians and 200.000 East Jerusalem Palestinians from the rest of the West Bank.⁷² Obviously, this route is not acceptable for the Palestinians not only due to territorial lost, but also due to humanitarian reasons. The zigzag route of the fence creates enclaves leading to the separation of thousands of Palestinians from their agricultural lands, education and health services; and brings serious transportation problems between the Palestinian towns and between those towns and Israel where most of the Palestinians go to be cheap labors. If those people cannot go to work in Israel, the enormously high unemployment and poverty rate in the Palestinian territories will reach their peak and will increase support for the terrorist organizations. Actually, unless this route changes, the fence will exacerbate terrorism rather than strengthening security as the last Gaza Brigade commander Shaul Arieli explains.⁷³

If the fence is just for security reasons and if it will be a de facto border between Israel and Palestine, why isn't it exactly on the Green Line? The deviation from the Green Line is the annexation of part of the West Bank. This deviation comes out not only for having more territories in Judea and Samaria, but also for keeping the

⁷¹ Elizur, Yuval, "Israel Banks on Fence", *Foreign Affairs*, Mar/Apr2003, Vol. 82 Issue 2, at ebscohost.com

⁷² Rynhold Jonathan, "Israel's Fence: Can Separation Make Better Neighbors?", *Survival*, Spring 2004, Vol. 46, no. 1, p. 62

⁷³ Barzilai, Amnon, "The Fence: A Path to Voluntary Transfer", *Ha'aretz*, 18 February 2004

settlements there. Unilateral separation means both building a fence and unilateral disengagement from the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza because without full withdrawal from the settlements, it is not possible to talk about real separation and security.⁷⁴ If Sharon does not evacuate the settlements and annexes 15% of the West Bank in order to leave them in the Western side of the fence, he will have more Palestinians inside Israel as well and so he, himself will endanger the Jewish character of the state. Moreover the Palestinians in that part can be potential terrorists who will threaten the Israelis' security.

Unilateral disengagement however is a problematic issue in domestic politics. The settlers usually have strong religious and ideological commitments to the territories, and have financial aids from the state and they have high life standards, therefore it is really hard to convince them to leave the settlements. Nonetheless as Sharon embarked this process of unilateral withdrawal he has to meet its requirements one of which is the withdrawal from the settlements. Being aware of this fact, Sharon gave up his intransigent policy on settlements and decided to make unilateral disengagement from Gaza first. In February 2004 he stated:

*“As part of the disengagement plan I have to order an evacuation – sorry a relocation – of 17 (out of 21) settlements with their 7.500 residents, from the Gaza Strip to Israeli territory...not only settlements in Gaza, but also three problematic settlements in Samaria (northern half of the West Bank). In any case, there won't be any Jews left in Gaza after an agreement, while in Samaria there will be a few settlements.”*⁷⁵

Despite his statement above Sharon sometimes gives the signals of his hesitations by insisting that no settlements would be evacuated until a final “peace” materialized with the Palestinians.⁷⁶ He does not want to lose the control of Gaza and make the terrorist groups believe that the withdrawal will be their success like Hizbullah's success in Lebanon, and so he has intensified IDF's operations in

⁷⁴ Feldman, Shai, “Managing the Conflict with the Palestinians: Israel's Strategic Options”, *Strategic Assessment*, June 2002, Vol. 5, No. 1, at <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v5n1p2Fel.html>

⁷⁵ Rynhold, Spring 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 61

⁷⁶ “Gaza is not the Issue”, *Middle East International*, 20 February 2004

Gaza. Israeli army's deadly incursions and destructions in Rafah in spring of this year were both deterrence to the Palestinians and a message to the Israeli public that Israel has not given up her struggle against terrorists and security has been more important than anything else for Israel. One of other problems of evacuation for the Israeli security except deterrence is the vagueness in Gaza in the post-withdrawal period. Israel is afraid of the peril of a chaos, which may strengthen Hamas in Gaza, but Palestinian Authority National Security Adviser Jibril Rajoub tried to assure Israel that "*if they (Hamas) try to take power by using violence, we will on front them, and prevent that from happening*".⁷⁷ Apart from such problems, Sharon's own party Likud's opposition to the disengagement plan made Sharon's work harder, but it passed from the Knesset, so the withdrawal day has being waited in Gaza.

The unilateral withdrawal plan has been supported by the US, for this reason Sharon had the fence start building. However the US's backing resulted from the belief that Israel needed the barrier for security reasons, but she did not think that the barrier would guarantee the Israeli security⁷⁸ and moreover she was against other political reasons or Palestinian suffering at first. The US support has been so important for Israel that she has not taken the international criticisms into account and even turned into deaf ears against them. Despite ICJ's decision in June 2004 that the security barrier is against international law, it violates the rights of the Palestinians severely and this cannot be legitimized by the excuses of national security needs, therefore Israel should immediately stop building it and tear down the already built part of it,⁷⁹ Sharon refused to do what ICJ advised. The US's modified policy of full support to fence is understood by the following comment of White House spokesman Scott McClellan that the US does not believe that Hague is the place to solve a political problem and it clarifies Sharon's self-confident rejection as well.

⁷⁷ Harel, Amos, "Rajoub: No Power Vacuum If IDF Quits Gaza", *Ha'aretz*, 3 February 2004

⁷⁸ Rynhold, 2004, *op. cit.*

⁷⁹ "Duvara Dur Denildi", *Radikal*, 10 Temmuz, 2004

In short, with the failure of the Camp David and the following Al-Aqsa Intifada, the hopes of peace replaced with the increased violation in the Palestinian side and dramatically offensive security policies in Israel. The Israelis elected Sharon because they knew that he would not shun from retaliating the Palestinian terror by all possible and offensive means, and anticipated him to bring personal security. Nevertheless his policies did not go away from deteriorating the situation.

Sharon's primary goal has been to end the top threat perception of terrorism, but his policies have failed and he has not brought personal security. Despite big problems with the terrorist organizations in the territories however, he did not let Hizbullah escalate the situation, not to fight in a second front. The minimized backing to Hizbullah from Syria and Iran after September 11 and the War in Iraq was a significant improvement for the Israeli security. These regional and international developments helped the Israeli security as well since shortly Sharon got the US backing for being harsher against terrorists and used the advantage of the US hegemony in the region.

The isolation of Syria, increasing pressure on her and Iran and the defeat of Saddam Hussein were the other positive events endorsing Israeli security by reducing threat perceptions deriving from those countries, especially an Iraqi eastern front attack and her WMDs. The uncompromising policies of Sharon increased as the developments were in favor of Israel: he refused to discuss Bashar Assad's peace negotiation offer for example. Actually there were some peace efforts between Israel and Palestine, but they have not concluded positively. Both sides accepted the Road Map, but Sharon is against the Geneva Accords, which is the latest peace attempt initiated by non-governmental and non-official people from both sides with the aim of solving the major problems of borders, territory, security and refugees.⁸⁰

The refugee problem has become one of the biggest security threats to the Israeli security. In Geneva Accords the previous "land for peace" formula of the peace

⁸⁰ Halkin, Hillel, "Beyond the Geneva Accord", *Commentary*, January 2004, vol. 117, Issue 1, p. 22

process replaced by parameters of “ending the refugee problem for an end to the conflict”.⁸¹ The growing importance of refugee problem and Israel’s sensitivity on that subject has understood by Arafat as well. For the first time in history he recognized the Jewish character of Israel but he did not make any comments on how many refugees should go back to Israel.⁸² Even this, is a real change in Arafat’s position and for the Israeli security in recent time. In short, the post-2000 period has been full of positive developments which strengthened the Israeli security at the expense of her neighbors and enemies.

⁸¹ Cristal, Moty, “The Geneva Accords: A Step Forward in the Wrong Direction?”, *Strategic Assessment*, February 2004, Vol. 6, No. 4, at <http://www.tau.a.il/jcss/sa/v6n4p3ri.html>

⁸² Eldar, Akiva and Landau, David, “Arafat: Israel is Jewish; Won’t Cite Figure on Refugees”, *Ha’aretz*, 18 June 2004

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Protecting the political and territorial integrity of states, their identities, regimes and the survival of their citizens, providing security in other words, is the most important responsibility of the national governments. Security is very important for all states, but it is extremely sensitive and vital for some other states due to their different kinds of vulnerabilities or having serious threats from their enemies. Israel is a state for which security has been the most crucial issue since the very beginning of her establishment; therefore the security policy has formed the core of the Israeli politics. In the first half of my thesis, I examined the factors according to which the Israeli security policy and military doctrine were formulated, how they were implemented or changed during and after the major Israeli wars in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1968-1970, 1973 and 1982. In the second half of my thesis I tried to explain whether there have been radical changes in the Israeli security policies and military doctrine since 1990, if yes why and how.

There were various elements influencing the formation of the Israeli security policies such as real threats, threat perceptions, historical experiences, geography, the internal resources and capabilities of manpower and weaponry, and the relations with the superpowers, the last three of which had an essential role in the formation of Israeli military doctrine as well. As these factors change, the political-military leaders should adopt these modifications to the Israeli security policies and military doctrine, otherwise they become obsolete or even damaging to the Israeli security.

The Israelis have a strong feeling of insecurity due to their history full of the threats to their existence like the slaughters, pogroms or the Holocaust in their diaspora life. These experiences entrenched this sense of insecurity which had increased with the Arab attacks to the Jewish people in Palestine since 1920s and has been strengthened after the Arab collective attack as a response to the establishment of Israel in 1948.

Being aware of the fact that her Arab neighbors were against the presence of a Jewish State among the Arab-Muslim countries which might attack altogether to destroy Israel, she determined her security policy by focusing on the existential threat perception.

In addition to the Jewish history, religion and the Zionist ideology have also had effects on the Israeli security understanding. Zionism itself was also affected by the Jewish history and religion; that is why its influence on the Israeli security perception again based on the siege mentality and the lack of trust to the external powers that paved the way for the use of force as the only means to protect the Jewish State. This mentality and mistrust resulted in the “self-help” principle in the Israeli military doctrine, which, indeed, created a contradiction with the principle of getting the backing of a superpower for the security of the state. The security concerns of Israel have required the support of the US due to Israel’s being a small state; hence the importance of good relations with the US was embraced at the expense of the self-help principle. Since the late 1950s in accordance with this requirement, Israel has tried to develop her relations with the US, and has succeeded in her endeavors. In this context the 1967 War became a milestone in the US-Israeli relations. However the US concerns about her oil interests during the oil crisis of 1973 affected, though not enormously, these relations. Despite the US criticism against some of the offensive Israeli policies, the US economic, political and military support has increased since 1990s; therefore Israel’s policy has shown continuity in spite of the deviation stemming from US’s different interests.

The last but the most important determinant of the Israeli security policy has been the threat perceptions and real threats to the Israeli security and the threat perceptions of the Israelis. Instead of mentioning only threats, I preferred making a differentiation between the real threats and the threat perceptions because the security policy of a state is formed according to her perceptions of threat as well as, sometimes even rather than the real threats. As indicated above, the first primary militarily threat perception of Israel was the existential threat against her security when she was established, and it was a real threat. This threat depended on not only the danger of a collective Arab attack for Israel’s Eastern Front where Israel was lack of strategic depth, but also the quantitative asymmetry between the Israeli and Arab manpower and weaponry.

The existential threat from the Eastern Front was put at the core of the Israeli security policy so strongly that even after the decisive victory in the 1967 War and the 1973 War it remained at its central place. The Six Days War of 1967 brought the strategic depth Israel needed, but it could not remove the seriousness of the existential threat among the Israelis. Even the emergence of a new source of threat, the terrorist attacks in the newly occupied territories, did divert the attention of the Israeli decision-makers for whom terrorism was a secondary type of military threat. Therefore, although this war changed one of the basic vulnerabilities of Israel, it could not change the existential threat, which mainly resulted from that vulnerability.

The 1973 Yom Kippur War was a notorious experience that weakened the Israeli deterrence and defensive strategies. The Israeli military doctrine which was formulated according to Israel's geo-strategic vulnerabilities and her being a small state has had three main tenets of deterrence, defensive and offensive strategies. Deterrence has been vital for Israel as it aimed at discouraging the enemies from attacking Israel. However, the threat perceptions and the physical situation of Israel made her follow an offensive strategy composed of the transfer of war into the enemy territories, the first strikes of preemptive wars and a short and decisive victory which would end with the destruction of the enemy forces and infrastructure.

Israel implemented the basic pillars of offensive strategies in the 1956 and 1967 Wars but the failure of her defensive strategy, which required a good intelligence and early-warning systems in the 1973 War, made her grasp the importance of the deterrence and thus pursued a defensive strategy. This policy change was not a result of her victory, which proved that Israel was so powerful that even a surprise Arab attack couldn't defeat her, but of her desire to strengthen her defensive posture. This shift from offensive strategy was reinforced by the Peace Treaty with Egypt in 1979 which was a real change for Israel's security environment since Egypt was no more posing a threat to Israel's existence. Nonetheless, Israel still had an existential threat perception from her Eastern Front by Jordan, Syria and Iraq. Moreover, it didn't take too long to comprehend that this shift to the defensive strategy was a temporary one because after the hawkish political and military elite took office, Israel returned to her traditional offensive strategy and invaded the Southern Lebanon with some security reasons as

well as the political ones in 1982. As the primary threat perception did not change until 1990s, the security policy of Israel did not alter significantly and permanently either, in spite of real, big and positive modifications in her geo-strategic vulnerability, quantity of manpower and weaponry, and the number of enemies.

Finally in 1990s, for the first time in her history the Prime Minister of Israel, Rabin, acknowledged the reduction of threat to the existence of Israel as a result of drastic regional and international changes. With the demise of the Soviet Union, Israel's Arab enemies lost their economic, military and political backing whilst Israel's supporter, the US remained the only dominant power in the Middle East; hence the Arabs were weakened against the Israelis. Furthermore, the Iraqi threat from the Eastern Front was significantly decreased owing to US-led coalition's victory over Iraq in the second Gulf War. The Peace Process was another positive development for Israeli security, which reduced the possibility of a Jordanian participation in an Arab coalition attack due to the 1994 Peace Treaty with Jordan. Briefly, fading existential threat was a real big change in the Israeli security policy understanding in 1990s.

The second primary threat perception was the establishment of a Palestinian State, particularly after the creation of the PLO in 1964 whose covenant legitimized the armed struggle against the Jewish State in order to destroy her. The aim of the PLO and the Palestinians was threatening, yet the time proved the fact that the power deficiency of the Palestinians against one of the most powerful armies of the world did not let them reach their purpose. A future Palestinian State would not have been a threat since had the State of Palestine been established, the Palestinians would have dealt with their own social, economic and political problems instead of growing up their children with the strong hatred against the Israel. Besides, a future Palestinian State would have been a demilitarized one with a minimum number of security and police forces; therefore this threat was a perception rather than a real one until 1990s.

The PLO participating the Oslo Peace Process gave its tacit consent to the existence of Israel. This shift was reinforced with the Declaration of Principles and finally ended with the PLO's promise to change the PLO Charter, which depicted Israel illegal. This was a remarkable change indicating that a Palestinian State would not be a threat to Israel anymore. In spite of Rabin's crucial efforts for the creation of a Palestinian State

during the Peace Process, which was a harbinger of change, the Likud's Netanyahu could not give up perceiving a Palestinian State as a security threat to Israel despite some agreements signed. Actually, this exaggeration of weak threat and this difference between the Labor and Likud leaders during the Peace Process concerning this issue demonstrated the dominance of ideology rather than the security problems in the security perception from time to time. Likud leaders' insistence on not withdrawing from the occupied territories and not evacuating the settlements were also related to their ideological commitments to the land in addition to security concerns. These policies have derived from the expansionist strategy of the Jewish State and her offensive principles.

The Israeli concerns about the establishment of a Palestinian State resulted from the increasing terrorist threats as well. Terrorism was a secondary military threat for Israel especially after the occupation of the territories in 1967. Due to the threat of an all-out attack with the goal of destroying Israel; terrorism had remained a secondary threat until the first Intifada. After the first Palestinian uprising, terrorist attacks were perceived as a more perilous source of threat. The factors undermining the peace process were not only the Netanyahu's uncompromising and harsh attitudes but also the rising terrorist attacks against the Israeli civilians. Therefore, Israel's security understanding was redefined and her primary security concern has become the radical Islamic terrorist organizations rather than the Arab States.

As a small state, superpower relations were quite important for Israel since the very beginning and this understanding is still valid. Owing to the need for the economic, political and military aid from the US, good relations with her has been one of the basic elements of the Israeli military doctrine and the risk of the deterioration of relations has been perceived as a significant non-military threat against the Israeli security. Israel preferred an interdependency kind of relationship; however except the periods when the Soviet Union's communist threat was severe, it would be naive to talk about interdependency. It can be rather defined as Israel's dependency on the US, therefore sometimes she had to obey the rules of the US reluctantly such as during the 1973 War and its afterwards, and Shamir's going to the negotiating table in the Madrid Peace Conference in order not to anger the US and lose her support. Nevertheless, even such

contradictions and US' patronizing policies did not deteriorate the relations, and the US has continued to shoring up Israel. In short, Israel has succeeded in getting a superpower support as Zionism necessitates and has not even thought of changing that policy.

The second and last non-military threat perception of Israel was the potential increase in the number of the Arab minority's population. The Palestinians staying in their villages which remained in the Israeli boundaries became the Israeli citizens. The high percentage of the Arab birthrate posed a threat to the Jewish character of Israel. Furthermore, a significant number of the Arabs had to live in Israel after Israel's occupation of the Arab territories in 1967. Since the Israeli concerns were centered on the primary military threats, the threat of rising Arab population was relegated in the rank of the security threats of the state. However it has become one of the most dangerous threats to the Israeli security since the 'right of return' began to be discussed seriously in the negotiating table between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

One of the unresolved problems between the Palestinians and the Israelis in the Camp David of 2000 was the right of return. The number of refugees to return that the Palestinian side offered was three to four million. It was unacceptable for Israel as it would endanger the Jewish character of the state which has approximately five million Jewish and more than one million Israeli Arab citizens. During the negotiations, the completely different and uncompromising approaches of the parties rendered it impossible to bring solution to the matter. For Israel, the issue has become one of the most dangerous threats, which aimed at destroying Israel while for the Palestinians, it was a reasonable demand that they deserved. A recent declaration of Arafat however raised the hopes for the solution of the refugee problem as he claimed that they would take into account the Jewish sensitivity in this issue since they acknowledged that Israel was a Jewish State. Obviously, this declaratory shift on the Palestinian side can be regarded as a positive development for the Israeli security.

From the Israeli point of view the post-2000 period brought about crucial developments, which suited her interests and enhanced the Israeli security. First of all, September 11, not immediately, but in time, paved the way for combating against

terrorism through all possible means. Secondly the toppling of Saddam Hussein regime removed the threat of Iraq, which meant only Syria, and Iran left as potential enemies of Israel. Iran has been a potential enemy since the 1990s due to the WMD capabilities and her support to Islamist terrorist groups, but especially following the end of the Iraqi regime, Israel has focused mainly on the Iranian threat. The nuclear threat from the remote neighbors, Iran and Iraq, had been at the top of the security agenda in Israel even though the US destroyed Iraq's WMD infrastructures and the Iranian WMDs were controlled by the UN in the 1990s. With the Iraqi War of 2003, not only the threat from Iraq was over, but also the threats from Iran and Syria reduced since they have put under the US pressure. The US has become the hegemonic power of the region; hence Israel's freedom of act increased at the expense of the Syrians, Iranians and Palestinians decreased. Utilizing this advantageous position, Sharon has pursued the most offensive policies ever against the Palestinians since he came to power.

The outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada triggered Sharon's occupation of major cities of the West Bank from which Israel had withdrawn during the peace process. The IDF has killed hundreds of civilians and left thousands of them homeless. Sharon increased the frequency of the closures, which started in the 1990s, while putting the assassination of the terrorist leaders policy at the center of his fight against terrorism. Israel killed the spiritual leader and founding father of Hamas in April 2004 and later assassinated the successor of him, Abdul-aziz al Rantisi too. Although a big, immediate retaliation was expected, the terrorists did not retaliate until September, and it was not a big act as it was expected.

For many Israelis this relatively late and unproportional response was a success outcome of Sharon's new policy of unilateral separation. Unilateral separation plan consisted of two tracks: A separation barrier and unilateral withdrawal from the settlements and the territories. The problem with the separation barrier derives from its route and its purpose. In spite of Sharon Government's claim that it is being built only for security reasons of preventing the infiltration of the terrorists, this argument is not convincing because it has political reasons as well: Its route is not on the Green Line and annexes some of the Palestinian territories. In order not to withdraw from the settlements in the West Bank, Sharon put those settlements on the Israeli side of the

barrier. Moreover, the route turned the Palestinian villages into enclaves as it divided some villages into two parts that left the Palestinians on the one side, and their farms, schools, health institutions and jobs on the other side. This barrier has brought security by avoiding the infiltration of the terrorists. Nevertheless, unless this route which turned the lives of the Palestinians into hell, changes, the Israeli security will be endangered since such oppressive and offensive policies have hardly achieved their aims; on the contrary they have provoked the terrorist groups to attack against the oppressor. The Israeli decision makers had better remembered the possibility that this can be only the silence before a big storm and should stop building the fence as the ICJ decided and should withdraw from the settlements as soon as possible.

In addition to all these positive developments concerning the Israeli security since the year 2000, there is a peril for the security of Israel, which resulted from the ongoing situation in Iraq. The US' efforts in forming of a democratic Iraq governed by a pro-US leadership has failed and does not seem to turn out to be a success in the near future. The uncertainty and unpredictability of the future Iraqi Government and the threat of radical Islamic groups' using Iraq as a new arena may increase the Israeli feeling of being threatened.

By depending on the arguments above I can predict additionally that in the near future, there will not be drastic changes in Israel's reduced threat perception from her close and remote neighbors or in the threat perception of terrorism. The US pressure on Syria and Iran for their support to terrorism and WMD capabilities, will continue; that is why, they will not be able to threaten Israel seriously. Still this does not mean that Israel will not put security problems stemming from these countries to her security agenda, but the focus will most probably be on putting an end to her most important security problem, namely terrorism. Unless Sharon leaves the office or his offensive policies, terrorism will continue to be the most dangerous threat to the security of Israelis because attack brings counterattack and offense brings counteroffense and vicious circle remains. The mutual lack of trust, unfortunately, makes the Israelis support Sharon and his policy of dealing with the Palestinian problem militarily and offensively and this policy shelves the hope for peace.

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