ISRAELI POLITICS AND THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS, 1988-2002

Edited by Hassan A. Barari

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Israeli Politics and the Middle East Peace Process, 1988–2002

This book argues that domestic Israeli politics have been a key factor in determining Israeli–Palestinian peacemaking in the period from 1988 to the present. It traces developments over this period, showing how coalition-building, personalities, and differing views of how Israel should develop, and of how Israel should interact with Palestinians, all had a crucial influence.

In particular, the book provides an explanation for the rise and decline of the peace process in the years between 1988 and 2002. During this period, Israel concluded the Oslo Accord and a peace treaty with Jordan. Yet the second half of the period saw a major breakdown in the peace process. Part of the story is an understanding of certain key moments in the formation of Israeli thinking about moving towards a peace with the Palestinians.

The study, therefore, examines the impact of the Intifada on Israeli thinking as well as detailing crucial turning points in domestic politics, such as Labour's electoral victory in 1992 and the subsequent formation of the most dovish government in Israel's history. The book also pays attention to the politics of personality and the role of key figures, such as Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, in the politics which permitted Israel's move to peace. The most dramatic part of the story, however, as the book argues, is that changing domestic political factors also led to the breakdown of the peace process. Overall, the book demonstrates that, although external factors were certainly important, the decisions about peacemaking were rooted in the dynamic, complex domestic politics of Israel.

Drawing on primary sources and interview material, this book is written by a Jordanian scholar and is suitable for students of international relations, the Middle East, and the Arab–Israeli conflict, as well as the general reader interested in the Middle East peace process.

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This book is dedicated to my late parents

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Introduction

No single political issue in the post-decolonized Middle East has captured the attention of observers, analysts, and politicians as much as has the Arab–Israeli conflict. Given the widely perceived intractability of the conflict, a working solution that addresses the ostensibly irreconcilable historical claims by the antagonists of the conflict seemed to be in need of a divine miracle. However, events that have unfolded since the demise of the Cold War have proved that the conflict is not as knotty as many thought and, indeed, is amenable to a solution. On 26 October 1994, Israel and Jordan signed a fully fledged peace treaty thus ending 46 years of formal enmity. The treaty came almost a year after the celebrated and highly symbolic handshake between the then Israeli Prime Minster, Yitzhak Rabin, and the chairman of the PLO, Yasser Arafat, at the White House. Thanks to these events there was a widespread conviction throughout the Middle East that Israel and its neighbours had at long last started a process of what might be termed historic reconciliation. It is not unnatural that the Israeli decision to take steps towards peace had not come overnight, but had evolved gradually during decades of war with the Arabs.

Notwithstanding that the Arabs and the Israelis were gearing into a historic reconciliation, new developments that have taken place since the second half of the 1990s have considerably contributed in a total breakdown in the Middle East peace process, particularly the Palestinian–Israeli track. Many are still puzzled by this rather tragic development that peaked in September 2000 when the disgruntled Palestinians launched what is known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada. Violence, counter-violence, and mutual incrimination and demonization replaced dialogue and peaceful coexistence. The rise and decline of the peace process is, therefore, an interesting case to be investigated and thus is the focus of this book.

Of course, there are many politicians, analysts, and researchers who have looked at Israel and the peace process. Gilead Sher, *Just Beyond Reach: The Israeli–Palestinian Peace Negotiations 1999–2001* (in Hebrew), Yossi Beilin, *A Manual for a Wounded Dove* (in Hebrew), Efraim Inbar's *War and Peace in Israeli Politics: Labor Party Positions on National Security*,

David Makovsky's *Making Peace with the PLO*, Yossi Beilin's *Touching Peace*, Yehuda Lukacs' *Israel, Jordan, and the Peace Process*, and Moshe Zak's *Hussein Makes Peace* (in Hebrew), are just examples. However, there are few, if any, academic studies which seek to utilize internal explanations to explore the shift within Israel from war to peace. Peacemaking that entails territorial compromise in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has become a hotly debated domestic issue that no Prime Minister has been able to push forward successfully over a significant duration of time. Indeed, on occasions the level of internal political tension within Israel has manifested itself in the form of violence, as was the case with the former Prime Minister. Rabin was assassinated by an Israeli religious zealot after he had signed the Oslo Accord without carefully balancing all of the domestic opposition. Herein lies at least part of the contribution of this book. The uniqueness of this study rests in the fact that it is a new interpretation of Israel's foreign policy that regards domestic politics, personality, ideology, and the dynamics of intra- and inter-party politics as the key to understanding Israel's peace strategies in the 1988–2002 period. In doing so it employs theoretical concepts from different approaches of foreign policy analysis.

Themes, observations, and assumptions

Moulded as a national security matter, Israeli foreign policy is an interesting case. Before 1967, there had been a wide consensus in Israel over the issue of national security. The image propagated by Israeli leaders, that society should be united behind its leadership in the face of the imminent existential threat allegedly posed by the Arabs, helped keep at bay the inherent debate within Zionism over the exact physical borders of the state. Nonetheless, the stunning victory of 1967 removed that perceived existential threat and subsequently led to the breakdown of the national consensus within Israel on security. This matter became sharper as a result of Israel's invasion of Lebanon and the eruption of the Palestinian Intifada in December 1987. The debate about security and the future of the Occupied Territories became blurred. As a consequence, though Israel's foreign policy is still shaped in the language of national security, it is about defining both the political boundaries of Zionism and the borders of the state.[1] Hence, nothing short of an examination of the internal working of the state can account for Israel's leaning to peace and also later for the breakdown of the peace process. One should look within the internal scene in Israel to account for such vacillation.

The primary assertion made by this study is, and here lies the crux of the issue, that Israeli foreign policy regarding peace is determined *primarily* by internal political inputs. Therefore, the process that took Israel on the peace road and the subsequent reverse in the peace process was the upshot

of an evolution of the domestic political milieu. Specifically, the nature of intra-party factional politics, inter-parties politics, personality, and ideology are the keys to understanding Israeli behaviour regarding the peace process. Interestingly, variables derived from domestic politics must be studied for a full appreciation of the rise and decline of the Israeli–Palestinian peace process. However, a distinction is made here between what is *necessary* and what is *sufficient* for peacemaking. The *necessary* conditions established the pre-conditions needed to provide the right international environment to which domestic politics could respond positively. The *sufficient* conditions entailed a shift in domestic politics sufficient to take advantage of and to respond positively to the *necessary* external environment. Thus, the linkage between internal and external in foreign policy making is that the internal politics evolve *partly but not entirely* in response to the external dynamic.

In explaining the rise and decline of the peace process particularly regarding Jordan and the Palestinians, this book will explore, analyse, and examine several themes. First, as this study attempts to demonstrate, foreign policy in Israel is highly influenced by internal political inputs. The absence of domestic national consensus over the issue of peace is a major topic in this study. This enduring problem, which was caused by the territorial conquest of the Six-Day War and has ever since dominated Israeli politics, became increasingly acute because of the fundamental differences among the main political parties over the political future of the Occupied Territories and the peace process. Therefore, the second theme examines the origins and evolution of the differences among Israeli parties and how they indeed hindered or facilitated the peace process. Israeli leaders sought to 'pass the buck' for the lack of peace to the Arab side. The traditional and official explanation provided by Israel for the absence of peace was that there was no Arab partner to talk to. Behind this excuse or justification, however, as this book seeks to demonstrate, a rather different story can be discerned. This is another premise to be examined in this research.

The unexpected outbreak of the Palestinian popular uprising (1987–93), widely known by its Arabic name Intifada, is an extremely important topic that indeed crystallized the differences between the two leading Israeli political parties, Labour and Likud. The importance of the Intifada – and this is the crucial point – stems from the fact that it had accelerated the evolution of a Palestinian orientation in Labour's foreign policy. This shift, as this book demonstrates, was an extremely crucial prerequisite for the signing of both the Oslo Accord and later the peace treaty with Jordan.

The lack of national consensus with regard to the disposition of the Occupied Territories was exacerbated by another factor, the intra-party rows. This was no more visible than within the Labour Party, and in fact

had great bearings on the party's positions on peace. The reasons for these differences, such as clashes of personalities, differences of perceptions, and severe rivalry among top leaders, constitute an important theme of this study. Essential to the analysis of the progress towards or the lack of peace is an appreciation of the role of personality, which also became increasingly visible within Israeli politics. The emphasis, however, is on Yitzhak Rabin who, after winning the 1992 general election, seemed to be the last historic leader who was able to sell the Oslo Accord to the wary Israeli public. Rabin's ascendance could only be understood as a result of internal democratic reforms within the Labour Party. Apparently, without those reforms it was highly unlikely that Rabin would have been able to wrest the party leadership from Shimon Peres.

Another theme in Israeli politics is characteristic competition among the elite. In a competitive, multi-party system as in Israel, competing elites can play a very important role in foreign policy. The elite in this state is very ambitious. For example, almost every chief of staff of the Israeli army thinks of himself as Israel's future Prime Minister or at least as taking on the defence portfolio. The rivalry among the elite profoundly affected their relations and led sometimes to the immobilization of foreign policy to the extent that a decision on the Occupied Territories was put off lest the government fall apart. For example, the perennial contest between Moshe Dayan and Yigal Allon over who would succeed Levi Eshkol and then Golda Meir as Prime Minister led to the non-adoption of the Allon Plan despite the fact that the majority within Labour favoured the plan (see chapter 1).

The psychological milieu is a concept borrowed from Michael Brecher. It consists of two closely related concepts; the first one is the 'attitudinal prism' and the second one is 'elite images'.[2] The attitudinal prism is the lens through which the external and internal environments are filtered. The content of what leaders perceive is the elite image. These two concepts comprise the psychological environment. The attitudinal prism is shaped by three factors. These are political culture, historical legacy, and personality traits of the elites.[3] The pre-eminent aspect of the Israeli political culture is the sense of Jewishness. This has been a very important element that has influenced, with varying degree, almost all Israelis. Jewishness is the dominant prism through which Israeli decision-makers view the Arab–Israeli conflict. Ideology is another factor that plays a notable role in decision-makers' stands. Ideology in this context means the set of principles and beliefs that guide the thinking of decision-makers. Zionism, as the mainstream ideology in Israel, is the movement that took upon itself the establishment of Israel in Palestine and the bringing in of Jews from the Diaspora. Although its role in foreign policy has declined over time, it is an essential element in recruitment to the political system in Israel and in determining who becomes a policy-maker. All Israeli parties, except for some religious, Arab, and communist parties, are Zionists.

However, Zionism is not a monolithic movement. While discussing Zionism is beyond the scope of this book, one point is sufficient. Although there are three strands of Zionism – the religious, Labour, and the Right (revisionist) movements – and many major differences among Zionists, they have all advocated the right of Jews to claim Palestine.

While the book focuses mainly on the internal dynamics of Israeli politics as the key to account for the shift in Israel's foreign policy, one cannot simply account for the breakthrough in the peace process without taking into consideration the influence of what might be termed external factors – the United States and Jordan, in particular. These two states were held in high esteem by Israelis and therefore their policies influenced the positions of certain key players in Israel. Yet the roles assigned to these two players with regard to Israeli peace strategies were, by and large, the function of the interaction of competing approaches within Israel. Therefore, another theme of this study is the difference in Israeli foreign policy towards those two important players. In addition, the demise of the Cold War and the resultant transformation of the international system into a unipolar one, coupled with regional changes, have positively altered the Israeli strategic environment. These factors are deemed to be so significant that they form the subject of their own chapter.

Methodology

The methodology adopted to conduct this research uses theoretical concepts derived from theories of foreign policy, and is then fundamentally informed by interviews and other primary and secondary sources. As was mentioned earlier, some aspects of Israeli foreign policy is, to a considerable extent, the function of the internal dynamics. However, the connection between internal political aspects and the foreign behaviour of a state is a contested issue in the study of international relations (IR). It is striking how different paradigms in IR vary on their assessments of the relative significance of domestic inputs in the making of a state's foreign policy.

Neo-realism, the dominant approach in IR, assumes that a state is a unitary and rational actor, which responds to the constraints and opportunities offered by the anarchic international system.[4] Thus, neo-realists make a clear-cut distinction between a country's domestic politics and its foreign policy. Decisions on key issues in IR such as peace and war are to be seen as a result of a state's relative position in the anarchic international system and not as a reflection of its internal dynamics. Put differently, a state's foreign policy is determined by the international system and not by its internal composition. Hans Morgenthau, for example, argues that to explicate a state's foreign policy, there is no need to unpack the state.[5] Internal variables such as ideology, personality, and domestic politics are considered to impact on the style rather than the content of a state's foreign

policy. To neo-realists, domestic factors within a state are irrelevant to its international behaviour. As Kenneth Waltz, the most renowned neo-realist, succinctly put it, 'the anarchic international system is the domain which conditions the behaviours of all states within it'.[6] Waltz labels those theories that attempt to utilize internal variables of the state to account for its international behaviour as reductionist.[7]

While acknowledging the explanatory power of this approach in strategic and security-related issues, particularly during the Cold War, the author contends that the main weakness of this approach is that it downplays the crucial impact of the dynamics of internal politics, ideology and personality on foreign policy decision-making. Hence, in accounting for the rise and decline of the Palestinian–Israeli peace process, this book challenges the dominant approach in IR not only by demonstrating an interplay between domestic factors and foreign policy, but also by regarding internal factors as essential to understanding the shift within Israel that led to the rise and collapse of the peace processes. For many analysts, remarks Clive Jones, it has become almost an axiom to equate Israeli foreign policy to national security.[8] They view Israel as a small state struggling for survival in a hostile regional environment with neighbours who are committed to its destruction (reasoning offered by a majority of Israelis which fits neatly within realism).

This book challenges this one-dimensional view on the ground that it neither depicts reality accurately nor does it succeed in grasping the process of the formulation of Israel's foreign policy. In addition to strategic considerations (neo-realist concerns), internal public debate within Israel over the future disposition of the territories seized in 1967, as well as how Israel should respond to the external political environment, has been fuelled by ideological preferences and by the changing dynamics of domestic politics. This, in turn, has prevented successive Israeli governments from forging a national consensus over the territorial issues raised by the conquest of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967. This inability to create policy was aggravated by the fragmentation of Israeli politics caused by the electoral system, reflecting a society marked by internal political, social, ethnic, and religious divisions. The implications of the combination of these factors on the peace process have been remarkable. Successive Israeli cabinets have failed to initiate and/or implement policies on peace regarding the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Unsurprisingly, the outcome has been a sort of paralysis in the making of Israeli foreign policy concerning the Occupied Territories. A powerful version of this approach argues that state foreign policy is determined solely by domestic factors. In other words, it assumes that a state's foreign behaviour is a direct reflection of the internal social, economic, and political dynamics. Former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, remarked, after his failure to mediate between Egypt and Israel in 1975, that Israel has no foreign policy, but only domestic

politics. Though Kissinger made this remark, he is, of course, widely regarded as a realist.

In his attempt to construct a model that connects domestic politics with foreign policy, Putnam argues that a leader of a democratic state, while negotiating a deal with another state, is fettered by the size of, what Putnam terms, the 'win-set' within his country.[9] In other words, a democratically elected government cannot arrive at an agreement with another country without taking into account the domestic political milieu that determines whether it will be accepted by the parliament or other congressional bodies. This study concurs with this argument and also maintains that it is relevant in explaining the incapability of the Israeli government to meet all Palestinian territorial demands and other issues such as the right of return. As will be elucidated later, even if former Prime Minister Ehud Barak had arrived at a peace agreement with the Palestinian delegation at Camp David and conceded to the Palestinian demand for the right of refugees to return, he would have certainly failed to get such a proposal ratified by the Knesset.

In addition to utilizing theoretical concepts, the book relies on both secondary and primary sources. In order to gather the primary material, I conducted a total of 19 interviews with senior Israeli politicians and prominent academics during a field trip to Israel from January to March 2000. One interview was conducted with a Palestinian during my participation in a workshop on 'Progress or Breakdown of the Peace Process', which was organized by the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan and held in Geneva in May 2000. Another interview, with an Israeli professor, was held in 1998. A few other interviews were conducted in November 2001. In addition, during my field trip, I had the opportunity to examine the minutes of the Knesset (*Divrei ha-Knesset*) as well as Israeli daily newspapers in both Hebrew and English.

I conducted all the interviews in a systematic way. By this I mean that I had a set of questions that I asked all the interviewees. But in every answer there were interesting discussions that enriched my understanding and enhanced my ability to acquire sharp analysis of the situation. I was aware that some of my interviewees, for different reasons, might not answer all of my questions frankly. This was a problem that I tried to overcome by checking their answers against published interviews and against those of other interviewees. I also checked their answers against their actual actions and behaviour while in office.

The limitations of my research are obvious in that the substance of this thesis is such that it inevitably deals with current affairs. In addition, this subject remains deeply controversial and emotional, and there were naturally several questions which my interviewees either refused to answer or to which they offered answers that I could not verify. These were omitted from my analysis.

The structure of the book

The book is made up of an introduction, six chapters, and a conclusions section. Chapter 1 presents an analytical historical background to the study. In many respects it sets the scene for the focus of the study. The formulation of Israel's foreign policy towards both Jordan and the Occupied Territories was, to a large extent, the function of the interaction of internal factors. It commences by presenting an overview of the origin of the Arab–Israeli conflict. It argues that the interaction of several bureaucratic positions within successive Israeli governments, following the Six-Day War, were responsible for the status quo that preceded the Madrid peace conference.

Chapter 2 examines the impact of the Intifada on Israeli decision-makers. It was of great significance because it led to changes in the minds of some Israeli leaders. As the chapter will show, Yitzhak Rabin was the most profoundly affected by this unprecedented event. The failure of the military to subdue the Intifada led Rabin to understand that a political solution was the only option for the Israelis should they wish to put an end to the Intifada.

Chapter 3 focuses on internal reforms within the Labour Party and the bearing of this on the progress of the peace process. It explores the positive impact of these reforms, which were designed to gain power, on the peace process. Without these reforms, it is argued, Rabin would not have been able to assume the leadership of the Labour Party and then the premiership. The chapter shows how at this historical juncture, Rabin seems to be the only leader who could offer the Palestinians a peace deal and at the same time to sell it to the disgruntled Israeli pubic.

The so-called politics of personality is the topic of chapter 4. The focus of this chapter is primarily centred on the personality of Rabin. His belief system, ideology, perception of the Middle East, and his personality are evaluated, as well as his perennial rivalry with Shimon Peres, which is considered to have had a negative impact on the peace process. Finally, this chapter makes a connection between changes that Rabin went through and the progress of the peace process.

In the fifth chapter, the bearings of external factors on Israel's peace strategies are examined. The impact of systemic factors (the end of the Cold War and the transformation of the international system from a bipolar to a unipolar one) and regional factors (the Second Gulf War and its impact on the regional balance of power) are assessed. The role of two countries, the United States and Jordan, are believed to be of some bearing on Israel's peace strategies, and they are, therefore, examined in this chapter too.

The sixth chapter analyses and chronicles the impasse in the peace process. The focus is on the internal variables that largely contributed to the stalemate of the peace process. In this chapter, the conduct of three governments, Netanyahu's, Barak's, and Sharon's national unity government, is assessed from the peace process standpoint.

Finally, in the conclusions section, a summary of the findings is presented.

1 The road to 1988

Internal dynamics and the making of a peace process

This chapter presents an analytical and historical background of how internal political dynamics in Israel influenced the making of its foreign policy regarding the peace process in the period from 1967 until 1988. This is, of course, the period which forms the historical backdrop to the beginning of the peace process. The reason for starting in 1967 is that this was the year which marked the collapse of the national consensus on matters relating to security issues. Furthermore, we need to look at the years before 1988 to understand that internal dynamics have always been very important to the conduct of Israel's foreign policy. The formulation of Israel's foreign policy *vis-à-vis* the peace process was driven by domestic political dynamics and came as a result of clashing perspectives, conflicting interests, and competition between personalities within successive governments. Hence several key features in Israel's politics and foreign policy which had a direct impact on the road to the peace process are identified.

Although all states have multiple security problems with which to contend, it is argued that the case of Israel is in many ways a unique one. The very survival of the State of Israel and the nature of its security problems derive from both its historical international and its historical domestic positions. These issues of survival and security are taken as key themes. So too is the role of ideology in the making of Israel's foreign policy over many years. Although the analysis adopts an historical approach, theoretical or conceptual insights from middle-range theories are utilized to inform this piece of contemporary history.

This chapter comprises five sections. The first section is vital for our understanding and explaining of Israel's positions regarding the peace process in the period after the 1967 War since it presents a brief historical background of the Arab–Israeli conflict from the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 until 1967. A second section deals with Israel's perspectives with regard to peace in the period 1967–77. It is worth noting that during this period Labour was the dominant party and therefore an examination of the actual politics of the Labour Party is a necessary precursor to any discussion. A third section explores the public debate in

Israel over the newly conquered territories in the first decade of occupation. A fourth section examines the policies of the Likud-led governments in the period 1977–84. As will be explained, Likud's electoral victory in 1977 was a watershed in Israeli politics with far-reaching implications for the prospects for peace. The final section looks at the period during the years 1984–8 when Israel was governed by a National Unity Government (NUG). It explores how the politics of coalition restricted the government from taking the initiative in the formulation of foreign policy thus leading the government into stagnation and castration.

A zero-sum struggle, 1948–67

It should be stressed at the outset that the issue of land has been at the core not just of Israeli conceptions of security but also of the Arab–Israeli conflict. From the end of the First World War until 1948 the sporadic violent struggle between the Jewish community (*Yishuv*) and the indigenous Palestinians – who were unwilling to make way for the Jews to take over what they deemed their land – had been mainly over the issue of land.[1] During this period, Palestine had been under the rule of a British mandate.[2] In 1947, Britain announced that it would not be able to solve the Palestine problem in a manner that would satisfy the Arabs and Jews and would therefore ask the United Nations to find a solution.[3]

Accordingly, the United Nations adopted the Partition Plan on 29 November 1947. This plan called for the partition of Palestine into two states: a Jewish state and an Arab one. But such a hopeful plan, logical as it may sound, did not materialize. The Arab countries and in particular the Palestinians refused to accept the plan. They believed that the plan – which gave the Jews 55 per cent of Palestine while their land ownership was only 7 per cent – was pro-Zionist and would not bring justice for the Palestinians.[4] As a corollary of this anti-Israeli posture, armed clashes between Jewish forces and the disorganized Palestinian fighters ensued. Despite the fact that the Palestinians enjoyed a demographic advantage of 1.3 million as opposed to 650,000 Jews, they were in an inferior position militarily.[5] Unlike the well-equipped Jewish forces, the Palestinians forces were poorly equipped and suffered from a lack of unity. As a consequence, the Palestinians lost the war and were driven from their homes (which were located throughout what had become known as Israel). The exodus of hundreds of thousands of refugees, the fall of hundreds of Palestinian villages, and the consequent tremendous public pressure in the Arab world created conditions that made war between Israel and the Arab states seem inevitable.[6] Due to the imbalance of military power between the two sides, Israel secured victory in the 1948 War.[7] Around 6,000 Jews were killed during the war and twice this number were injured.[8] These figures were significant because the total number of Israelis at that time was some

650,000 Jews. So those killed represented approximately 1 per cent of the population.

Unsurprisingly, Israel took advantage of the war and expanded beyond the parameters allocated to it in the Partition Plan. It actually occupied 2,500 square miles of what, according to the Partition Plan, should have been an Arab state.[9] Israel's foreign policy *vis-à-vis* its neighbours, during this period, was affected by a number of issues that were to prove enduring, primarily those of the refugee problem and the issue of borders. In the aftermath of the war, Israel neither agreed to give the territories back to the Arabs nor to allow refugees to return to their homes.[10] The Arabs continued to insist on these two demands as a *quid pro quo* for a peace settlement. Accordingly, the conflict became what might be termed a zero-sum struggle. These two issues were behind the colossal failure of both sides to come to any kind of settlement. Moreover, they remained as the main source of friction and provoked military clashes between Israel and its neighbours. It should be stressed at this point that although Jordan is not at the centre of this book, it was the only country the Israelis considered to be a potential partner for peace. Hence some focus on Jordan in this section helps illuminate Israeli foreign policy towards the peace process.

It is a perennial claim of the Israelis that peace has been a main goal of Zionism and that Israel did indeed seek peace with its neighbours after the 1948 War. Peace failed in this version of history because quite simply the Arabs remained intransigent. However, this rather stark claim, as recent debates have shown, cannot actually withstand historical scrutiny. In particular some of those who have been termed the New Historians[11] have contested the official Israeli narrative. Avi Shlaim, for instance, makes a case that Israeli leaders in the 1950s, especially Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, were not interested in peace because this would put an end to the conflict with the Arab states, and Israel could not then expand its borders in the future. So again, according to this version, Israel was seeking security through expansion. Shlaim substantiates his claim with hard evidence by presenting an example of Israel's rejection of peace with the Arabs. He points out that, in 1949, Husni Za'im of Syria proposed the settlement of 300,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria in return for a peace treaty with Israel, only to be turned down by Ben-Gurion.[12] Za'im even proposed a meeting with Ben-Gurion to talk about a solution but Ben-Gurion gave a negative answer. This response was, according to Avi Shlaim, 'characteristic of [his] general preference for force over diplomacy as a means of resolving disputes between Israel and the Arabs'.[13] Judging by Israel's actual policies in the 1950s, Shlaim is correct in his analysis.

Indeed, if Ben-Gurion was a central figure during the first two decades of Israel's establishment, internal politics as well as the politics of personality played a great role in deciding Israel's foreign policy towards neighbouring Arab states.[14] Israel's behaviour in this period was in many

ways a result of an internal debate and a dispute between two alternative approaches within the Mapai Party[15] (Mapai was the dominant party in Israel, which later became the Labour Party and was also the leading party in all Israeli governments until 1977). Two schools of thought were visible within Mapai. The first school of thought was the 'Activist' (*bithonistim*, the security minded one) and the second was the 'Moderate'.

The Activists assumed that the Arabs were predominantly interested in nothing but the destruction of Israel. As a corollary of this, it was believed that Israel was destined to live in an environment of permanent hostility and therefore there was little choice but to rely on raw military power for survival. Ben-Gurion wrapped up this position when he said shortly after the 1948 War:

> If I were an Arab leader I would never accept the existence of Israel. This is only natural. We took their land. True, God promised it to us, but what does it matter to them? There was anti-Semitism, the Nazis, Hitler, Auschwitz, but was it their fault? They only see one thing: we came and took their land. They may forget in a generation or two, but for the time being there is no choice.[16]

Explicit in their oft-repeated claim was the assertion that the Arabs understood nothing but the language of force (the physical use of force) and so for Israel to survive, it had to demonstrate the ability to deploy force effectively from time to time.[17] Proponents of this school held that peace could come only when the Arabs clearly understood that Israel could not be militarily defeated.[18]

In rather stark opposition to the Activist school of thought, the Moderate school believed that moderation was better than retaliation. Moshe Sharett[19] was the champion of this approach. According to this mode of thinking, Israel should restrain its responses because retaliation would not solve its security problems. It should be noted that security was not just an issue of territory – there was also, to the Israeli mind, a problem of infiltration. This consisted of Arab actions, such as returning to their villages to retrieve possessions left behind in the original expulsion (1947–8), but also acts of revenge.[20] These actions were indeed carried out by Palestinian refugees and although this was arguably a low-level threat to security made by non-state actors, it constituted yet another threat to the Israeli State.

Despite what appears to the contrary, the Moderates were not actually against using force, but instead favoured a more selective and controlled use of force and only after taking into account its political implications. Seen in this way, they were arguably more sensitive to both world opinion and to Arab sentiments. Creating an atmosphere conducive to reconciliation, they maintained, required Israel not to rely exclusively on the use of force lest this would inflame Arab hatred towards Israel and thus ruin any prospect of reconciliation.[21]

Interestingly, differences between the two approaches were rather tactical. The main bone of contention between these two groups was over how to solve the problem of infiltration. Indeed in the main it is probably worth noting that all Israelis made a distinction between two types of security. The first was what one might call *basic* security, threats which endangered the very existence of the state. The second was current or day-to-day security, which threatened what one might call the *personal* security of Israelis. Unlike basic security, personal security did not actually seem to pose a serious threat to the existence of the state, yet provocations and border incursions proved destabilizing to Israeli society. Undeniably, the Activist approach, beefed up by Ben-Gurion, gained the upper hand. In fact, Ben-Gurion's views were so strong that they formed the heart of the Israeli national security concept. His assumptions about security, which dominated the political scene even after he was forced to resign in 1963, produced what has been called 'the Ben-Gurion complex' – the attempts by other leaders to make decisions based on their guesses about what the 'old man' [Ben-Gurion] would say.[22]

However, the Six-Day War changed Israel's strategic environment and more importantly gave the domestic variables primacy. As we shall see below, Israel's victory in this war propelled the domestic factor into prominence. First, it produced internal challenges to the Ben-Gurionist conception of national security. Second, and more importantly, Ben-Gurion's notion of *mamlachtiut*[23] was challenged.[24] The occupation of the West Bank and Gaza led to the ascendance of an ethno-nationalism (forces that did not regard territories as a means to achieve security but as an end in itself) and therefore posed an ideological challenge to the traditional concept of security.[25] The Zionist right considered Israel's right to claim the West Bank to be based on historical and religious grounds rather than on the state-based concept of security, which considered land as a major component of security.

From zero-sum to mixed-motive relations, 1967–77

Decisively defeating all of its adversaries, Israel, in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, found itself in a profoundly changed strategic environment with new captured territories. These territories were to become the focus of the Arab–Israeli peace process ever since. A more confident Israel now held territories that could be traded off for peace, thus transforming the conflict from a zero-sum to a mixed-motive one.

It is in this period that we see clearly that the formulation of Israel's foreign policy *vis-à-vis* the peace process was driven by domestic political dynamics and came as a result of clashing perspectives and competition between personalities within successive governments. A few days before the outbreak of the Six-Day War, the Israeli Prime Minister, Levi Eshkol,

responded to intense public, as well as army, demands, which asked for the appointment of Moshe Dayan as Defence Minister, and formed a National Unity Government (NUG). Moshe Dayan of Rafi[26] assumed the defence portfolio and Menachem Begin, the leader of Gahal,[27] a man known for his hawkish and uncompromising stance concerning the West Bank, was appointed a minister without portfolio. The formation of the NUG, although completed under pressure, was meant to provide Israel with effective leadership at a time of crisis. Hence there was no bargaining or agreement among the coalition members over domestic or foreign policies.[28] After the war, the main concern for Eshkol and indeed Golda Meir, who succeeded him as Prime Minister in February 1969, was to maintain national unity. This goal made it impossible for the government (as we will see later in this section) to officially and publicly offer Jordan any type of plan for territorial compromise. This Israeli paralysis was a result of several factors, not the least of which was the ideological affinity that some factions of the government, the Gahal bloc in particular, had and still maintain towards the West Bank of Jordan.[29]

Given this cabinet makeup and its inherent instability, the Prime Minister's role was to hold the balance between the conflicting opinions and personalities within the government, which meant in practice that the government could not adopt a clear policy towards the newly captured territories. Successive Labour-led governments favoured the status quo rather than adopting a policy that might lead to the fall of the government and, worse, to the fragmentation of the Labour Party and the loss of its dominance in Israel's politics. Indeed, the territorial issue has proved to be the most divisive in Israeli politics since 1967.

The issue of the Occupied Territories changed the nature of the conflict to what might be described as a mixed-motive one. Israel's occupation of Arab territories put Israel in a strong bargaining position *vis-à-vis* the Arab states for it gave Israel the opportunity to offer land back to the Arab states in exchange for peace. Hence, on 19 June 1967, the Israel government took a dramatic decision that called for the return of Sinai to Egypt with a special arrangement for Sharm el-Sheikh, and the return of the Golan Heights to Syria, in return for peace.[30] This decision did not, however, mention Jordan, the West Bank, or even Gaza. Yet the decision was annulled when the Arab leaders, who met at Khartoum's summit in September 1967, took the so-called 'Three-No' decision: no to negotiations, no to recognition, and no to peace with Israel. The Khartoum resolution had a tremendous impact on 'the delicate balance of forces in the government and public opinion'.[31] Doves within the Israeli government, such as Foreign Minister Abba Eban, were disappointed because the Khartoum decision implied that the Arab leaders were not yet ready for direct negotiations with Israel and signalled that, given the dynamics of Israeli politics, the rejection might mean that the doves were losing ground.

The 'Three-No' decision did indeed enfeeble the dovish trend in the Israeli government and concurrently strengthened the hawkish one, which argued for the retention of the territories on security, historical, and religious considerations. The last of these considerations refers to the claim by Jews that Palestine was the promised land and that therefore they had an eternal right to establish their state on the whole of Palestine. Evidently, the ascendance of religious parties – which perceived Israel's victory in the 1967 War as the beginning of the redemption and the advent of the Messiah – was one of the factors that hampered the peace process. In the religious circles, the West Bank is the heart of biblical land and no government is authorized to concede it. In fact, religion should not be underestimated as a factor in these territorial disputes.

The eastern border with Jordan remained the main source of security concerns to Israeli governments. On the whole, Israeli leaders believed that the eastern front was by far the most dangerous to Israel's security. Israeli strategists maintained that the pre-1967 borders meant that Israel lacked the strategic or tactical depth needed to assure its security. The entire width between the coastal areas and the Green Line – Israel's pre-1967 borders with Jordan – varies between 10 to 15 miles.[32] Its size, according to Israeli governments, rendered it strategically vulnerable to a surprise attack from the east. For this reason, most Israelis were adamantly opposed to withdrawal to the pre-1967 borders, especially in the West Bank. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 of 22 November 1967, which was to become the basis for future peacemaking efforts in the Middle East, asked *inter alia* that Israel withdraw to 'secured and recognized borders'. Contrary to the Arab states, which interpreted Resolution 242 to mean a total Israeli withdrawal from *all* territories occupied in the June War, Israeli governments interpreted the resolution to mean withdrawal from some territories, *not all* territories.

Accordingly, successive Israeli cabinets understood that changes were to be introduced to the 1949 armistice lines so as to make Israel's borders defensible. A strategic consensus was developing in the wake of the Six-Day War that connected security and topography. For Israeli strategists, territory was the crucial component of the state's security. Yigal Allon (Deputy Prime Minister during the June War up to 1974 and Foreign Minister in Rabin's first government, which lasted from 1974 to 1977) argued that Israel should withdraw to defensible borders in order to rectify its strategic weakness. In his words: 'the purpose of defensible borders is thus to correct this [strategic] weakness, to provide Israel with the requisite minimal strategic depth, as well as lines which have topographical strategic significance.'[33] However, successive Labour-led cabinets were not monolithic in their views concerning the scope of the expected withdrawal.

For that reason, Labour cabinets before 1977 failed to adopt a clear policy with regard to the future of the territories occupied during the

Six-Day War. Apart from the Allon Plan, which was proposed in July 1967 by the then Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon, no other plan was suggested and accepted. The Allon Plan envisaged establishing settlements in the Jordan valley, retaining a strategically vital strip along the River Jordan for security considerations, and conceding densely populated areas of the West Bank to Jordan in return for a peace treaty.[34] It mentioned nothing about the occupied East Jerusalem. The rationale behind the Allon Plan was to control and annex territories without necessarily incorporating almost 600,000 Palestinians into Israel. Annexing all of the West Bank and incorporating its population would have affected the very Jewishness of the State of Israel, it was believed. Unquestionably, more Palestinians in Israel would have made it a bi-national state. While tacitly accepted by the majority of the Labour government, the Allon Plan was never adopted formally by the government for fear of breaking up the NUG.

The non-adoption of the plan should not be taken at face value. Indeed, the plan did act as a guideline settlement policy of Labour governments before 1977. The plan envisaged co-operation with Jordan to avert the possibility of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza through relinquishing parts of the West Bank, which would be incorporated into Jordan.[35] That was the core of the so-called 'the Jordanian option'. This option later became Labour's favoured policy on the Palestinian problem. Though on the whole the Labour Party preferred dealing with Jordan on the future of the West Bank, there were different views within Labour that actually frustrated the advance of this Jordanian option. The following section explores these different views in the context of the debate within Labour and indeed in Israel over the political future of the Occupied Territories.

The public debate in Israel

The conquest of the territories generated a divisive debate in Israel over their disposition. The public debate centred on the attainability of peace, the future borders of Israel in case of peace, and the political future of the West Bank and Gaza. This debate led to the emergence of doves and hawks that cut across party lines. The incompatible perspectives, which were accentuated by personal rivalry among top leaders within Israeli governments, caused a degree of what might be described as immobility in the making of Israeli foreign policy. For instance, rivalry between Moshe Dayan and Yigal Allon proved to be a disruptive battle and contributed to the territorial status quo (a term used here to refer to Israeli indecision about the future of the West Bank and Gaza). Understandably, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol was adamant in 1967 that Israel would not relinquish land until the Arabs accepted Israeli pre-conditions: direct negotiations to hammer out a peace treaty that recognized Israel's secure borders.[36] Eshkol

realized that there was no need to take a decision and run the risk of splitting the party when there was no partner who was ready to accept Israeli dictates. Avi Shlaim rightly argues that this 'formula, which served as the basis for Israeli diplomacy for the next six years [1967–73], simply stated Israel's maximal demands for perfect peace and perfect security. It did not [however] represent a realistic strategy for initiating dialogue with Israel's adversaries.'[37] To comprehend Israel's policy towards the peace process after the Six-Day War, one should examine the interplay of four main positions or schools of thought that came into play. These could be termed reconciliationist, functionalist, territorialist, and annexationist.[38] The first three positions were represented by Labour's three factions (Mapai, Rafi, and Achdut Havooda) respectively.

The reconciliationist position, which was the dovish one, was clustered around two prominent political figures from Mapai: Minister of Finance Pinhas Sapir and Minister of Foreign Affairs Abba Eban. This group made a strong case that the retention of the populated Arab lands would be a catastrophe for Israel.[39] Advocates of this approach were more concerned about the nature of the Jewish State. They employed both demographic and ethical arguments to beef up their position. They believed that the permanent retention of the Occupied Territories would lead to the flooding of the Israeli market with cheap Arab labour. This, in turn, would lead to the transformation of the Jewish State into a colonial state or worse, given the Arab superior birth rate, would eventually lead to an Arab majority.[40] Israel, according to this scenario, would become a *de facto* bi-national state. In either case Israel would cease to be a Jewish state. To ward off such a calamitous scenario, relinquishing the West Bank and Gaza would, therefore, be in Israel's best interest.[41]

The second position was the functionalist. This group was the most hawkish one within Labour. Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres of Rafi, along with some members of Achdut Havooda embraced this approach. Given Dayan's strong pessimism about the prospect of a peace with Jordan, he advocated a functionalist approach to the territories under occupation. This group downplayed the weight of the demographic argument by claiming that any such problem could be solved through increasing Jewish immigration or by the provision of Jordanian citizenship to the inhabitants of the West Bank.[42] This group promoted the idea of the integration of the West Bank into the Israeli economy. The point here was to raise living standards and to make the occupation more benign. In line with this judgment, Dayan, in his capacity as Defence Minister, initiated the 'open bridges' policy with Jordan. This policy, which was intended to serve as a 'pressure release valve',[43] allowed Palestinians in the West Bank to be in touch with their brethren in Jordan. The reconciliationists, in particular the Minister of Finance Sapir, took issue with this approach and even described Dayan's policies as 'creeping annexation'.

A middle-of-the-road approach was the 'territorialist' one. The prominent spokesman of this group was Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon of Achdut Havooda who was supported by the majority of his faction. He tried to balance security needs and the requirement to maintain the Jewish character of Israel.[44] Advocates of this school of thought contended that territory was a crucial component of security. They sketched out which land should be retained and which land should be handed over to Jordan in the context of a peace settlement. This position is plainly documented in the already discussed Allon Plan.

The fourth position was the annexationist one embraced by Gahal/Likud. This approach, as we shall see later in this chapter, was anti-Jordan. Menachem Begin rejected the idea of negotiating with Jordan simply because, according to him, there was nothing to negotiate about.[45] Likud backed the idea of annexing the West Bank to Israel. This approach stems from a revisionist Zionist ideology that deemed the West Bank of Jordan as an integral part of biblical land. Begin supported Dayan's policies in the West Bank and Gaza because they did not preclude the option of annexing the territories later. Needless to say Begin's participation in the NUG was designed to foreclose any potential concession to Jordan in the West Bank. A more extreme version of this school, championed by Ariel Sharon, maintained that establishing a Palestinian state in Jordan was the optimum solution to the Palestinian problem.

Dayan and the other hard-liners were at this point a minority within Labour. Paradoxically, they did hold disproportionate power *vis-à-vis* the majority moderates. Theoretically, Dayan and his supporters could have walked out of the government to join the opposition. This could have led to the fall of the government and might have provided a chance for Dayan to lead a Rafi-Gahal bloc. Had Dayan decided to leave Labour, he – with his brilliant military record coupled with his popularity among the Israeli public – could have greatly diminished the chances of Labour's electoral victory. What made matters worse was the fact that the moderates had no potential partner to their left and thus were scared of losing power if Dayan decided to defect.[46] What prevented Dayan from seceding from Labour, though, was his unyielding ambition to become the next leader of Labour.

The Labour-led government's vulnerability to Dayan's implicit threat to defect if his demands were not met was demonstrated on different occasions. Two examples are sufficient in this regard. Before the 1969 Knesset election the Labour Party caved in to Dayan's demand and adopted the Oral Law. The primary objectives of the Oral Law were to establish the Jordan River as Israel's security border and to control Gaza, the Golan Heights, and Sharm el-Sheikh.[47] Dayan won yet another landmark victory when during the 1973 election the Labour Party was forced to adopt the Galili Document in its electoral platform. It called for the development of

the economy and infrastructure of the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, the growth of economic ties between the Palestinians in the territories and Israel, the encouragement of Jewish settlements and the development of rural and urban settlement in Gaza, the Golan Heights and the Jordan Valley, and the continuation of the open bridge policy. The government's acquiescence to Dayan's demands only illustrate that the idea of majority and minority within Labour was, to some extent, irrelevant for decision-making. A hawkish minority was able to force a course of action against the wishes of the moderate majority within Labour.

Even so, the saga of intrigues and the often clashing perspectives within Labour could not alone account for Israel's inability to budge. To explicate fully Israel's policy preferences for the territorial status quo in the West Bank, we need to take into consideration yet another subtle issue: the transformation of the 'historical partnership' between the Labour Party and the National Religious Party (NRP). First of all, the NRP had taken part in all Labour-led governments since the establishment of the state up to 1977. Before the Six-Day War, the NRP had focused exclusively on religious issues and had followed Mapai in all national security and foreign policy matters. As a consequence, their partnership was cemented and maintained without serious nuisance. However, the occupation of the West Bank triggered a change within the NRP, which accordingly became more hawkish and increasingly sought to influence foreign policy-making.

These new changes jeopardized the sustainability of the historical partnership between the NRP and Labour. The shift in NRP's traditional position could be attributed to the alteration in the balance of forces within the party. The Youth[48] (younger generation with more hawkish inclinations) in the party, who were more concerned with the retention of the West Bank, became more influential. Obsessed with a fear that the Youth might take over should the party fail to act to thwart any Israeli future withdrawal from the West Bank, the veterans of the NRP became intransigent. Responding to pressures exerted by the Youth, the NRP linked its participation in the government to the retention of the West Bank and Gaza. This position coincided with the establishment of Gush Emunim[49] (the Block of Faithful) in February 1974 initially as a pressure group within the NRP.[50] It is sufficient here to indicate that Gush Emunim derived its ideology from the teachings of the late Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook who emphasized that the primary purpose of the Jewish people was to attain both spiritual and physical redemption by dwelling in and building up the land of Israel.[51] That is the reason why this extra-parliamentary movement, Gush Emunim, focused on the issue of settlements.

Granted these developments, the Labour leaders could no longer take the support of the NRP for granted, particularly in the case of a peace settlement with Jordan. This explains why, following the December 1973 election, the NRP placed their participation in the government conditional

on Prime Minister Golda Meir's undertaking that her government would not enter into negotiations over the West Bank. Meir, recognizing the indispensability of the NRP in coalition formation, caved in. Rabin had to provide the same pledge in 1974 as well.

Faced with a constraining domestic political environment, Rabin failed to bring an interim agreement with Jordan into being. Domestic opposition to territorial compromise in the West Bank, particularly from the NRP and the hawks within Labour, proved to be robust. Any concession to Jordan could have alienated the NRP. For that reason, Yitzhak Rabin ruled out any settlement with Jordan following the 1973 War despite Kissinger's request that Israel concede Jericho for a disengagement agreement with Jordan. Besides, negotiating efforts were marred by clashing perspectives among the Israeli team. Peres, who represented the functionalist approach, argued that there was no urgency to conclude an agreement because Jordan and Israel had come to a tacit understanding about managing West Bank affairs. He advocated the continuation of the status quo and argued that Jordan and Israel could arrive at a peace treaty 'if the status quo became untenable'.[52] At the other extreme was Yigal Allon who favoured an agreement with Jordan. To Yigal Allon, such an agreement would help prevent Arab forces from amassing troops on both sides of the River Jordan and thus would avert a war between Jordan and Israel.[53] Rabin, who espoused an agreement with Egypt, refused to withdraw from the West Bank and offered Jordan instead a civil administration in the West Bank. Haunted by his main arch-rival Peres, Rabin feared any concession to Jordan would only strengthen Peres' political standing. As a result of these conflicting views and the personal competition with Shimon Peres, the talks with Jordan ultimately, and somehow unsurprisingly, failed.

To sum up, one could argue that Israel's foreign policy was determined largely by internal political factors. Intra-party differences, personal rivalry within successive governments, and conflicting dispositions between the parties were all responsible for the immobility in making foreign policy concerning peace. A clear decision in this regard could have tipped the internal balance within Labour or, even worse, could have led to a split in the party. Hence, Israeli decision-makers, constrained by domestic impediments, preferred the territorial status quo in the West Bank. Eventually, due to factors to be explained in chapter 3, Labour lost power to the hawkish Likud in 1977. The impact of this 'turnabout' upon Israel's foreign policy is discussed below.

Likud's ascendance to power, 1977–84

The general election in Israel on 17 May 1977 brought about a dramatic change within Israeli politics. For the first time in the brief history of the State of Israel, the Likud won a national election, thereby ending

the 29 years of uninterrupted Labour rule. This change is referred to in Israel as the 'turnabout' (*mahapach*). Menachem Begin, the leader of the Likud, became the Prime Minister of Israel and formed a right-of centre government. For those familiar with the new premier's 'Revisionist' ideology, it was obvious that the prospects of peace were slim. Some even expected war.[54]

Begin was renowned for his revisionist Zionist ideology that saw Jordan as an integral part of *Eretz Yisrael*. Begin, a great believer in Jabotinsky's teachings, had a deep commitment to the idea of Jewish historical right in *Eretz Yisrael*. For him, the West Bank was 'Judea and Samaria', the heart of the biblical Land of Israel. It was therefore not unnatural for him to reject both the UN Partition Plan of 1947 and the armistice agreement with Jordan concluded in 1949. He believed that Israel should have taken the West Bank of Jordan during the course of the 1948 War. Commenting on the declaration of independence proclaimed by Ben-Gurion in 1948, Begin said furiously, 'we shall remember that the homeland has not yet been liberated'.[55] Begin was a member in the Knesset in 1949 when Israel concluded an armistice agreement with Jordan. He called for a no-confidence vote in order to topple Ben-Gurion over the armistice agreement with Jordan.[56]

To better understand Likud's position on peace, it is crucial to outline how Likud's perception of Jordan had evolved through the twentieth century. The Revisionist Movement (the intellectual source of Likud) refused to acknowledge the 1922 League of Nations decision that excluded Transjordan from the Balfour Declaration, published by the British government in 1917, promising the establishment of a national home for Jews in Palestine. This was obvious in the choice of emblem and anthem by Herut, the forerunner of Likud. The emblem pictured a hand holding a rifle imposed over a map showing both Jordan and Palestine, and the anthem included the words 'two banks has the Jordan; this one's ours, the other too'.[57] However, in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, Herut was somehow satisfied with the war's territorial gains in the West Bank. It advocated policies that eventually consolidated Israel's grip in the territories. Its participation in the NUG (1967–70) was meant first and foremost to forestall any settlement with Jordan. Some circles in the Likud Party, such as Ariel Sharon, Yitzhak Shamir, and Benjamin Netanyahu, endorsed the idea that 'Jordan is Palestine'. In 1970, during the Black September in Jordan, Sharon, then a general in the army, made the case for the overthrow of the Hashemite regime and the setting up of a Palestinian state in Jordan. This, he believed, would change the conflict from one over the legitimate existence of Israel to one over borders.[58]

Yehuda Lukacs argues that one of Sharon's veiled aims during his war against Lebanon in 1982 was to force a mass exodus of Palestinian refugees into Jordan in order to put an end to the Hashemite regime.[59] Sharon's

insistence that 'Jordan is Palestine' was meant to justify Israel's annexation of the West Bank. Shamir made a similar point when he wrote that:

> The state known today as the Kingdom of Jordan is an integral part of what once was known as Palestine (77 percent of the territory); its inhabitants therefore are Palestinian – not different in their language, culture, or religious and demographic composition from other Palestinians. . . . It is merely an accident of history that this state is called the Kingdom of Jordan and not the Kingdom of Palestine.[60]

Certainly, the Revisionist ideology moulded Likud's conception of security and peace, and, of course, this placed Likud in a position that was starkly different from Labour. Admittedly, Both Likud and Labour gave security and the survival of the state priority over peace. Yet they had different conceptions of security matters and herein lay the fundamental divergence between their foreign policy outlooks. Unlike Likud, which was committed to an ideology that bestowed a precedent of territory over any other value such as peace, Labour was a pragmatic party that conferred a primacy on security over other values such as territory.[61] Hence, for Labour, security, which does not automatically mean territory, was regarded as sanctified whereas for Likud it was land that was sacred.[62]

National security was not the only dominant theme – settlement sites were also a major theme in the public debate in Israel. This was conflated with yet another fundamental topic central within Zionism: what the state's boundaries should be and what sort of society Israel should become. Shlomo Avineri argues that there are two schools of thought with regard to this point. The first school of thought is 'sociological or societal'; it is identified with the Labour movement.[63] Advocates of this school argue that the most important thing is not the border of the state but the internal structure of Israeli society. To them, a Greater Israel will contain more Palestinians and thus will be less Zionist and definitely less Jewish.[64] Israel, according to this reasoning, would become a bi-national state, which was definitely not the Zionist dream. Israel, accordingly, would either cease to be democratic or become less Jewish. Some kind of territorial compromise within the context of peace would be the only way out of this predicament.

The second school of thought is the 'territorial school', and is identified with the Likud and its allies to the right.[65] This school is different from the territorialist one associated with Allon. Rooted in the Revisionist Movement, it focuses on the 'historical right' of Jews to *Eretz Yisrael*. Likud's commitment to this ideology made it very difficult to imagine relinquishing land from the West Bank to anyone, be they Jordanian or Palestinian. As we have seen, Begin had no ideological problem in dismantling Yamit, a Jewish settlement in Sinai, because he had no ideological attachment with Sinai. Yet his conception of the settlements in the West

Bank as an expression of a basic Jewish claim to the heart of the Land of Israel strengthened their value.[66]

Representing the territorial school, Likud was now in power. It was driven by an ideology that led to an aggressive settlement policy towards the West Bank. This policy meant *inter alia* establishing political facts (settlements) that would prevent future Labour-led governments from exchanging land for peace with Jordan or even with the Palestinians.[67] All in all, Israelis viewed those settlements as irreversible facts. This conviction was inherited from the pre-state period when the *Yishuv* leaders thought that the borders of their state would be demarcated by the settlements. Unlike Labour governments, which built settlements in areas deemed vital for the security of Israel with the intention of annexing them, the Likud governments built settlements in every possible part of the West Bank with the intention of perpetuating Israeli control. During Likud's first term in power in the period from 1977 to 1981, forty-four settlements were established, thus increasing the number of settlers in the West Bank from 5,000 to more than 16,000 settlers.[68] During its second term in power, from 1981 to 1984, Likud accelerated the pace of settlement. By 1984, the total number of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza was 114; the number of settlers was around 30,000 (this excluded East Jerusalem).[69] By 2002 there were more than 200,000 settlers in the West Bank and Gaza.

The year 1977 was a turning point in Israel's foreign policy. The triumph of the territorial school over the societal one in 1977, thanks to the internal shift in the Israeli society toward the right, made it impossible for any attempt to construct a successful peace. Ironically, Israel, under Likud, did conclude a peace treaty with Egypt in 1979. Peace with Egypt meant that Israel no longer faced the possibility of a two-front war, as had occurred during the October War. The security of Israel was thus enhanced to an unprecedented level. With his decision to evacuate Sinai for peace with Egypt, Prime Minister Begin accepted, for the first time, UN Security Council Resolution 242.[70] However, his interpretation of Resolution 242 was not unqualified. He argued that by evacuating Sinai, Israel fully implemented the resolution. He did not accept that Resolution 242 could squarely apply on all fronts (the Syrian and Jordanian fronts).[71]

Towards the end of the first Likud government in 1981, Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan and Defence Minister Ezer Weizmann resigned due to clashes with Begin over the autonomy talks. Dayan and Weizmann, the most moderate ministers within the cabinet, believed that Begin was not really serious about the autonomy plan. The Camp David agreements, which provided a framework for the solution of the Palestinian problem, gave the Palestinians autonomy. The autonomy plan for the West Bank and Gaza referred to a five-year transition period after which full autonomy would be given to the inhabitants of the territories. It left the issue of sovereignty over the West Bank open for future negotiations. Begin's

concealed intention was to prepare the international community for the gradual amalgamation of the West Bank into Israel.[72] Autonomy as such was a term that would apply only to population and not to land. To accomplish this goal, Begin was instrumental in appointing Yosef Burg, the hard-liner leader of the NRP, to head the autonomy talks. In doing so, however, Begin guaranteed the failure of the talks. After the resignation of Dayan and Weizmann, Begin appointed Ariel Sharon as Defence Minister and Yitzhak Shamir as Foreign Minister. The new team, along with Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan, were all known for their hawkish outlooks and dominated the foreign policy process.

The second Likud government, 1981–4, was the most hawkish in Israel's history to date. The government was made up of like-minded men who believed in Israel's exclusive right to determine the future of the West Bank and thus pursued an aggressive foreign policy. In addition to building new settlements at an unprecedented rate, the government ordered the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) to carry out an attack against Iraq's nuclear reactor in July 1981 and ordered the IDF to invade Lebanon in June 1982. Israel's invasion of Lebanon should be understood within the wider context of Begin's ideological and strategic positions towards the West Bank. At the core of his foreign policy was the goal of annexing the West Bank. Begin and Sharon – who blundered and squandered his political credit, albeit not for long – believed that by invading Lebanon and destroying the political and military infrastructures of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the inhabitants of the territories would come to terms with Begin's autonomy plan. The PLO at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s was gaining international recognition. Begin feared that if the PLO's ascendance went on unchecked, Israel would be forced to negotiate with the PLO. Hence destroying the PLO would, it was hoped, facilitate the annexation of the West Bank.

After the Lebanon War, Israel remained opposed to any peace attempt. Begin rejected the Reagan Plan out of hand. The Plan, as was announced by President Reagan in September 1982 following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, called for a solution to the Palestinian problem by relinquishing parts of the West Bank to Jordan. It also called on Israel to freeze settlements in the West Bank. In categorical defiance of the United States, Begin's answer was the announcement of the building of eight new settlements in the West Bank. In 1983 Begin resigned because of poor health, only to be succeeded by Yitzhak Shamir. With a new leadership, the Likud did not change. It remained loyal to its longstanding ideology that placed the colonization of the West Bank as its top priority. The Likud-led government refused to contemplate any territorial concession in the West Bank, and the rejection of the Reagan Plan should be seen within this context. The next major shift in Israel's foreign policy was the formation of the National Unity Government in 1984.

The National Unity Government, 1984–8

In 1984, for the first time ever, the Israeli general election ended inconclusively. The Labour-led block received 60 seats, as did the Likud-led block.[73] Neither Likud nor Labour, therefore, could form a government without the participation of the other. Faced with this new reality, both Likud and Labour figured out that setting up an NUG was the only viable option. They agreed to rotate the premiership and to divide the cabinet equally between their blocks. There were two pressing problems that faced the NUG; these were the Israeli military fiasco in Lebanon and the battered economy with an inflation rate of over 400 per cent.[74] Peres and Shamir saw eye to eye on solving these two pressing problems and, given their diametrically opposed foreign policy orientations, agreed to call on Jordan to start peace negotiations without pre-conditions. The government's success was confined to bringing inflation down to size and to redeploying the IDF into a 'security zone' in southern Lebanon.

By the time Shimon Peres assumed the premiership, the peace process had already come to a halt. Israel under Likud (1977–84) had made no serious efforts to solve the Palestinian problem. On the contrary, Likud had complicated the peace process by establishing more settlements, by refusing to proceed with the autonomy negotiations, and indeed by initiating the Lebanon War in June 1982. Unlike his predecessors, Begin and Shamir – who marred Israel's image by initiating the war in Lebanon and by displaying intransigence regarding peace with Jordan – Peres sought to rebuild Israel's reputation in the international arena.[75] He tried, but to no avail, to revive the peace process and to settle the Palestinian problem with Jordan.

Of course, Peres explored the prospects for a separate peace settlement with Jordan on the basis of the Jordanian option. On this issue, he was in complete agreement with Rabin, who became Defence Minister.[76] Their desire to make peace with Jordan was paralleled by some positive development on the Arab side. King Hussein of Jordan and the PLO Chairman, Yasser Arafat, signed the Amman agreement on 11 February 1985. According to this agreement a Jordanian–Palestinian delegation would participate in an international conference to negotiate a settlement to the conflict that would be based on a 'land for peace' formula.[77] Prime Minister Peres praised this agreement, but was still fettered by his coalition with Likud and therefore failed to endorse it.

The United States, whose involvement was desired by both Peres and King Hussein, refused to talk to the proposed joint Jordanian–Palestinian delegation unless the PLO lived up to American conditions.[78] These conditions were that the PLO accepted Resolution 242, recognized Israel's right to exist, and renounced terrorism. (The United States position with regard to the PLO went back to 1975, when Kissinger had committed his country

not to talk to the PLO until it met the conditions outlined above.) Arafat, due to intra-PLO differences, failed to meet these prerequisites and subsequently the Amman agreement became redundant. Another reason for the American lack of enthusiasm for the idea of an international conference had to do with the Cold War. The Americans feared that a conference would enable the Soviet Union (which had previously been successfully excluded from peacemaking in the Middle East) to regain a foothold in the region.

However, the underlying dilemma in Israel's strategy for peace was the fact that the government spoke with two different voices. Peres genuinely sought to explore the prospects for a peace settlement with Jordan on the basis of the UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 383. He believed that the obstacle in holding direct negotiations with Jordan was a procedural one. The Jordanians insisted on an international conference with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council. It was, however, understood that Hussein wanted an international conference in order to legitimize his participation in the negotiations with the Israelis. It was, then, a matter for the Israeli government to overcome this particular problem. Though Peres displayed an appreciation of Jordan's inter-Arab constraints, he would not have been able to proceed with this idea without the breakdown of the NUG. Shamir, who represented the second voice in the government, adamantly opposed the international conference, thus handicapping Peres. As a consequence there was no progress to speak of.

Shamir was able to stop Peres from agreeing to the idea of an international conference partly due to his own fear – which stemmed from his mindset that perceived the whole world as being against Jews – that Arabs would be able to manipulate an anti-Israeli posture and thus perhaps impose a solution on Israel. Another reason for Shamir's rejection of the idea of an international conference was (as will be discussed in next chapter) what might be termed his intra-party position. Shamir's leadership of Likud was not secure. Three prominent members, Ariel Sharon, David Levy, and Yitzhak Modai (all opposed to the idea of an international conference), challenged Shamir's leadership of Likud.

Shimon Peres, influenced by his aide Yossi Beilin (one of the most articulate and creative young doves of Labour), was the most enthusiastic member of the NUG in support of the international conference because he deemed the conference just to be a token event after which parties to the conflict would break up into bilateral tracks. He managed to sign a document with King Hussein in 11 April 1987, which is known as the 'London Agreement'.[79] This document constituted a procedural agreement on direct Israel–Jordan negotiations under the auspices of an international conference. The conference was to be held with the participation of all the parties to the conflict, including Palestinian representatives. In this document, it was agreed that the participation of the five permanent members of the

Security Council 'would not be able to impose any settlement on the parties or to veto any agreement reached between them in bilateral negotiations'.[80] Believing that the United States could play a constructive role in advancing the peace process, Peres sought to enlist American consent for the document. Yossi Beilin met the American Secretary of State, George Shultz, in Helsinki, informed him about the breakthrough, and asked him to adopt it as an American initiative.[81] Shultz telephoned the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, to find out whether he was ready to proceed with the London Agreement and to suggest that he (Shultz) might visit the Middle East. Unsurprisingly, Shamir's reply, came immediately and was made through his aide, Elyakim Rubinstein, informed Shultz that he was not interested in the idea and that he would not welcome a visit by Shultz.[82] On 24 April 1987, Shamir sent Moshe Arens – without the knowledge of his Foreign Minister, Peres – to tell Shultz that the idea of an international conference was not acceptable and that if Shultz presented the London Agreement this would be tantamount to meddling in Israeli domestic affairs.[83] Shamir's rejection of this framework showed that a two-headed government was a prescription for immobility in foreign policy.

Throughout the tenure of the NUG, ideological and political differences, clashes of interests, and conflicting perspectives among key ministers within the coalition government regarding peace were the main causes of the stalemate in the peace process. These factors were, indeed, aggravated by the outcome of the 1984 general election. Likud obtained veto power over the making and conduct of foreign policy, and, therefore, it was not possible for Prime Minister Shimon Peres to explore the possibility of implementing his preferred solution – that of the Jordanian option.

Conclusions

This chapter has identified the relative significance of historical domestic political factors in Israel and their impact upon the making of foreign policy with respect to the peace process. The evolution of certain configurations of domestic power contributed largely to the immobility in the peace process whereby Israel failed to respond positively to the changes in its strategic environment brought about by the Six-Day War of 1967.

The June War had transformed the Arab–Israeli conflict into a non-zero-sum game. This meant that, in theory, the territorial conquest provided Israel with a means by which it could exchange land for peace. More importantly, however, the war had led to the breakdown of the Israeli consensus on national security issues. The stunning victory in the war, accompanied by territorial gains, had led to the crystallization of dissonance inherent within Zionism over both the physical borders of the state and the very nature of the society. It has been demonstrated throughout this chapter that the lack of peace stemmed, by and large, from Israel's failure

to formulate a clear position or take decisions concerning peace with either Jordan or the Arab world.

At the heart of the problem with Jordan was the continuation of the occupation. Israel's policy towards the Occupied Territories was the function of the interaction of four factional positions: the reconciliationist, the territorialist, the functionalist, and the annexationist. The emergence of the four positions could be attributed to differences within Israel over how peace should be attained, the borders of Israel, and the future of the West Bank. The outcome of the different positions adopted by the key decision-makers was the status quo.

It is against this backdrop that the Palestinian Intifada erupted in December 1987. The Intifada demonstrated that the status quo in the West Bank and Gaza was no longer an option. The next chapter focuses on the impact of the Intifada on various players but with an emphasis on Labour.

2 The Intifada
A turning point

As we saw in the previous chapter, Israel's policies towards the West Bank and Gaza resulted primarily from the interaction of four factional positions. Ultimately, the outcome of these interactions was – perhaps not surprisingly – that of the status quo. This was, as Israelis claimed, inevitable due to the absence of any single Arab partner with which to negotiate. All in all, Israelis had not attached much importance historically to the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza and indeed they underestimated their ability to take the initiative in terms of a peace settlement.[1] In fact, the general perception in Israel was that Palestinians were either pro-PLO or pro-Jordan and they were, therefore, seen to have no political clout of their own. This is important to understand since the eruption and persistence of the Palestinian Intifada in December 1987 came as a surprise and shock not just to Israeli politicians but also to the Israeli population. Indeed, every other actor in the region engaged in the conflict was equally surprised, including – somewhat ironically given Israeli perceptions – Jordan and the PLO.

As this chapter demonstrates, the Intifada was a protest against the continued Israeli occupation of both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This meant that the status quo upon which the Israelis had pinned their hopes was no longer viable. Demands were being made too, by the international community and indeed by an increasing number of Israelis, that a political solution be found to the Arab–Israeli conflict in general and a resolution to the Palestinian dimension in particular.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section examines how the Israeli government reacted to both the outbreak and persistence of the Intifada as well as accounting for its outbreak. A second section explores the impact of the Intifada on Israeli politics in general, and a third section analyses the specific impact it had on the NUG, while a fourth looks at the consequences of the Intifada on the Knesset election of 1988. The final section examines the formation of the second NUG and the implications of this for peace initiatives.

Israeli reactions to the Intifada

The very first day of the Intifada was 8 December 1987. The incident that actually sparked off the conflict was a road accident in Gaza, which resulted in the death of four Palestinians and injuries to many more. What we may describe as ordinary Palestinians believed that the accident had been the result of a deliberate action taken by an IDF tank-transport; demonstrations by Palestinians followed.[2] Israelis were, in general, taken by surprise. Prior to its eruption, many Israelis had claimed that the Palestinians' standard of living was good and that even under the occupation, the Palestinians were by and large content, and that the territorial and political status quo was without real cost to Israel.[3] With the benefit of hindsight, one could argue the Israeli leaders failed to sense that anti-occupation sentiments had been bubbling under the surface. The Intifada proved them wrong.

There was a set of factors that had contributed to the creation of the conditions leading up to the Intifada. These were primarily Israeli counter-insurgency policies but also the events on the regional and international scenes that had deepened the Palestinians' sense of isolation and frustration. In her assessment of the Israeli counter-insurgency tactics on the Palestinians in the period between 1967 and 1987, Ruth Margolies argues that Israel's policies in the Occupied Territories, which aimed at pacifying the population, had been successful but only in the short term.[4] She contends that Israeli leaders failed to recognize the deeper impact of their measures and thus unwittingly created the conditions for the Intifada to explode.[5] Specifically, immediately after the Six-Day War, Moshe Dayan, in his capacity as a Defence Minister (1967–74), had adopted a 'carrot and stick' policy coupled with an economic policy that aimed at increasing the welfare of the population in order to make the occupation appear to be more benign. The Palestinians' economic conditions did indeed improve as a result of Dayan's economic integration policy. This somewhat placated the subjugated population, but it did not go far enough. Not surprisingly, the Palestinians still sought the end of occupation.

Palestinians were subject to daily humiliations such as restricted travel and police interrogation as well as searches by the Israeli army, which just added insult to injury. Frustration became more acute by the end of the 1970s and throughout the 1980s when Likud assumed power. This period witnessed unremitting settlement activities and land expropriation. Palestinians were losing their land to settlers, which led to an increased level of confrontation between the IDF and the local Palestinians in the mid 1980s.[6] Likud-led governments, driven by the ideology of Greater Israel, followed a more aggressive and militant policy than their predecessors. Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Defence Minister Ariel Sharon initiated the Lebanon War (1982–5), which aimed at the destruction of the Palestinian national movement and attempted to break the will to resist the occupation.

The Palestinians had been waiting for many years for a solution that would liberate them from the yoke of occupation. They had pinned their hopes on the Arab countries forcing Israel to withdraw from the Occupied Territories. With the passage of time they started to believe, however, that nobody would come to their assistance. This sense of abandonment had never before peaked as it did in 1987. At the Amman Summit Conference in 1987, the Palestinian problem, which was traditionally the main issue at all Arab summits, was relegated due the Arabs' preoccupation with yet another pressing quandary: the Iraq–Iran War.[7] Moreover, a summit meeting between the American President, Ronald Reagan, and his Soviet counterpart, Mikhail Gorbachev, also failed to address the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. At this juncture, the superpowers, in the process of rapprochement, were apathetic to the Palestinian problem.

This, coupled with the failure of the guerrilla tactics adopted by different factions of the PLO to end the occupation, led the local Palestinian populace unconsciously to think of a different track to follow in order to realize their avowed national objectives.[8] The general populace started to take the initiative on an unprecedented scale. There were many grass-roots organizations and some women's movements which provided services to the public but also tried to organize the public to call for independence, defiance and resistance against occupation.[9] These changes within Palestinian politics – especially in the aftermath of the expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon – created and developed an atmosphere conducive to the Intifada.

Once the Intifada erupted, the Israeli government had to respond to this new and unexpected situation. The immediate concern of the Israeli government was to end the Intifada and restore calm. Yet it appeared so robust that it alarmed the government and the public alike.[10] The Chief of Staff, Dan Shomron, argued that the Intifada was a genuine popular resistance movement, not a simple case of rioting. In January 1989, Shomron, in a series of interviews, compared it to the Algerian revolution,[11] in which the native Algerians had rebelled against French colonization.[12] As a consequence of these assessments, the Israeli government resorted to the use of the IDF to quell the Intifada rather than relying solely on the less powerful but less provocative police forces.

Despite the fact that the Intifada was not an inter-state war, confronting it, from the Israeli perspective, entailed the mobilization of thousands and thousands of troops. Shomron admitted that in Gaza alone the number of troops deployed to deal with the Intifada were more than Israel had used during the occupation of the entire territories in 1967.[13] In addition, there were corresponding problems. Israeli soldiers were needed on duty for prolonged periods, which was difficult given Israel's small population. In terms of strategic planning, Israel had always favoured a short war. There were several reasons for this. As well as the aforementioned demographic consideration, Israel could not economically afford to keep the

army mobilized indefinitely. Hence prolonged wars, such as the Lebanon War or the War of Attrition (1968–70) had proved problematic for Israeli public opinion.[14] For example, during the Lebanon War, the 'peace camp' – which referred to those Israelis who were against the war and consistently pressed the government to come to a peace agreement with the Palestinians – held many demonstrations with hundreds of thousands of participants.

Certainly dealing with and confronting Palestinians, who were determined to achieve independence, was not an easy task for the IDF. It had to confront unarmed civilians who were determined to achieve independence. This was unlike a conventional war between two states and, perhaps more critically, it was a type of mission for which the IDF was not designed. Minister of Defence Yitzhak Rabin later remarked, 'you cannot saddle the IDF with a mission that is outside its proper function'.[15] The main function of the IDF had traditionally been to ensure the survival of the state by protecting it from external threats, and occasionally to achieve Israel's foreign policy goals; the Lebanon War is a case in point. In fact, Rabin's inclination towards containing the Intifada rather than crushing it was primarily derived from his belief that relying on military force alone would not be sufficient to provide a solution to the Arab–Israeli conflict. Therefore by failing to put an end to the Intifada, Rabin became more convinced than ever of the necessity of a 'political' approach. In a lecture in Jerusalem in September 1988, he stressed that as a result of recent experiences, the IDF alone could not put down the Intifada.[16] He knew that his country was not capable of mustering enough military power to impose a peace treaty on its enemies. Hence Rabin designed a policy to 'contain' rather than to 'crush' the Intifada although, along with most Israelis, he believed that Israel's military superiority was a necessary condition to end the conflict with the Arabs on terms favourable to Israel.[17]

Whatever Rabin's views in the short to medium term, it was a critical priority for the Israeli government to restore calm. In an attempt to realize this objective the IDF moved through several phases, adopting a 'trial and error' approach that included several different methods (none of which proved effective as the Intifada persisted for five years). In Rabin's 'iron fist' policy, his first, the army used measures such as firing live ammunition at Palestinians taking part in the daily activities of the Intifada. This policy, however, was criticized universally and widely condemned even by the Israeli radical left.[18]

When the 'iron fist' policy failed to end the Intifada, Rabin ordered a second strategy: the policy of 'beating'. This policy was intended to minimize the number of Palestinians killed and to abate criticism from the international community. The philosophy behind this strategy was that beating would also physically incapacitate Palestinian demonstrators but would not kill. Furthermore, it was hoped that it would be more effective

than arresting participants in the demonstrations because, once released, those arrested could simply return to throwing stones. Rabin explained his three-principle strategy to the Knesset:

> First, in the short term, restoring calm while taking all the necessary steps within the framework of the law to prevent displays of violence by the population residing in the these areas. Second, the only way to obtain a permanent solution on the legal and political future of Judea, Samaria and Gaza and to determine the future of the inhabitants living there is and should be through political negotiations for peace along our eastern borders . . . the third principle is to clarify unequivocally to the residents of the territories, to the Arab countries, and to the international community that the path of war, threats of war, terrorism, and violent disturbances will achieve nothing.[19]

As this policy also did not succeed in bringing the tactic of mass demonstrations into a halt, Rabin devised a 'politico-military' strategy. This new strategy, initiated in March 1988, was designed as one of attrition directed against the Palestinians through military and administrative measures. It was emphasized that Palestinian activities would be met with robust Israeli countermeasures. Rabin believed that this approach should also be supplemented by political initiatives. Indeed, perhaps rather ironically, Rabin came to the conclusion that the Intifada had, for the first time, created conditions conducive to the emergence of local Palestinian leaders in the West Bank and Gaza.[20] He believed that, if encouraged and provided with incentives, local Palestinians could stand up to the PLO and defy its dictates, so he started meeting Palestinian residents from the West Bank as early as June 1988. His attempt to cultivate a local leadership stemmed from his firm refusal to talk with the PLO and his disillusionment with a purely Jordanian option.

Along with the use of physical force, the Israeli government applied economic pressure to compel the Palestinians themselves to undermine the Intifada. Accordingly, many were denied work permits, and some even found it very difficult to travel from one Palestinian city to another. The Israelis hoped that the Palestinians would soon realize that the Israelis would render ineffective the disruptive activities of the Intifada. Chief of Staff Dan Shomron explained that the Palestinians would not go to work, would not receive work permits, travel permits or business licences 'until they understood that peace and tranquillity were as good for them as for us'.[21]

Other measures were pursued as part of this strategy. These measures included deporting activists, imposing curfews, closing schools and universities, demolishing Palestinian houses, sealing off the territories and 'transplanting' Palestinian collaborators, using rubber and plastic bullets designed to injure participants in riots, and administratively detaining

leaders, such as Faisal Husseini and Professor Sari Nusseibeh (both from Jerusalem and considered prominent local Palestinian leaders). Perhaps the most dramatic incident was when an Israeli special unit flew to Tunisia in April 1988 and assassinated Abu-Jihad, second in command to the PLO Chairman and widely believed to be the main organizer and architect of the daily activities of the Intifada. Israelis, especially those in the army and Mossad (the Israeli intelligence service), came to the conclusion that killing Abu-Jihad would be a severe blow to the morale of the Intifada's participants, bringing it to a more rapid close.[22] Shimon Peres and Ezer Weizmann had opposed such an act on the grounds that it would jeopardize the prospects for peace, but they had been overruled in the Inner Cabinet.[23] Again, the decision reflected the differences within the NUG over the correct response. While all Likud members believed that the Intifada could be put down militarily, Labour was divided on the issue, with the hawkish camp, led by Rabin, approving of the assassination of Abu-Jihad.[24] Yet Israeli policies eventually proved counterproductive. Force had made the Palestinians even more resentful of Israeli rule. There was barely a Palestinian who did not want to see an end to the Israeli occupation.

Some of Rabin's policies of containment were subject to both international and domestic criticism. The international criticism came not only from Arab countries but also from Europe, and perhaps most importantly from the United States. A UN Security Council resolution condemned Israel for deporting Palestinians, contravening the Fourth Geneva Convention, whilst another condemned Israel's decision to deport 35 Palestinians in December 1988, and was unanimously passed by the Security Council.[25] As a result of the daily coverage by the international media of the Intifada, and the world's recognition of its legitimacy, Israel almost lost the American veto in the Security Council when several decisions were passed condemning Israeli's harsh measures against unarmed civilians.[26] The American veto had hitherto saved it from this ignominy; however, Israel's harsh measures against the Palestinians forced the United States to reconsider its unqualified diplomatic support for Israel in the United Nations.

Criticism also came on a regular basis from the non-governmental organization Amnesty International. It charged the IDF with the use of lethal force and the beating of Palestinians on an indiscriminate basis. An example was the statement made in February 1988 to the forty-fourth session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, which claimed that 'human rights violations on an extensive scale have become a feature of Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza in recent months'.[27]

Domestic criticism was also levelled against the Israeli government. Many on the left had the courage to see through such self-delusion and spelled out the fact that force would not solve the problem. Rabin was criticized by both the left and the right for different reasons. Avraham

Burg, a Labour 'dove', rebuked Rabin's measures publicly as 'too harsh'. He said that:

> I remember me [*sic*] in 1988 calling Yitzhak Rabin the 'minister of war'. In Israel we use a minister of defence, a slightly more humane expression. And I said to him: you are the first minister of war in the history of Israel because of the Intifada and because we have to break bones etc.[28]

Yossi Sarid, a leftist Knesset member from Ratz,[29] also expressed his opposition to Rabin's harsh repressive policies. He told the Committee of Foreign Affairs and Defence in the Knesset that the extreme use of force had become the norm rather than the exception and as such was unacceptable.[30] Many Israelis, leftists in particular, were also concerned about the democratic foundations of the state. Israel's pursuit of security interests clashed with the democratic principles to which they believed Israel should have been adhering.[31] To them, Israel's security aims could be achieved by negotiating a peace treaty with the Palestinians. The protracted occupation and harsh measures applied against the Intifada had affected the 'social norms, political cohesion and ultimately the very foundation of democracy in Israel itself'.[32] Key values such as liberty, justice, and equality were losing ground in Israel to other values of Jewish nationalism and devotion to the idea of a Greater Israel.

Yet despite these criticisms, right-wing politicians frequently expressed the idea that the continuation of the Intifada should be ascribed to Rabin's failure to deploy enough force. The Minister of Trade and Industry, Ariel Sharon, expressed his dissatisfaction with the policies employed by Yitzhak Rabin and called for his resignation. Sharon presented an alternative policy, which, according to him, could crush the Intifada in a short period of time.[33] His strategy was composed of three pillars: a government commitment to 'win' rather than to 'contain' the Intifada, the use of non-routine and unpredictable methods so as to deprive the leaders of the Intifada of the ability to determine the fighting conditions, and the undermining of both the PLO's infrastructures and the Intifada in the West Bank and Gaza.[34] Ironically, when Sharon was elected in February 2001 by the disgruntled Israeli public to crush the Al-Aqsa Intifada, he failed in his bid to subjugate the Palestinians.

Divisions within the elite in response to the Intifada

The intensity and the scope of the Intifada triggered an unprecedented debate among Israelis on how to respond to the aggravated situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In fact, the Israeli government was not able to take a decision or an initiative mainly because it was the National

Unity Government. Such a government could work only by consensus and with an understanding among a majority of its members. Since consensus – due to differences in opinions, clashes of personalities, and competition for power between Shamir and Peres in particular, as well as within Labour in general – was difficult to achieve, a decision seemed unlikely. Actually the relationship between Shamir and Peres was, as Shamir described it, 'unfriendly'.[35] The Intifada and how to react to it had deepened the mistrust and difference that had already existed between these two leaders. On different occasions, during the election campaign, Peres argued that had Shamir not blocked his agreement with King Hussein, the Intifada would not have erupted in the first place. This was a conspicuous attempt on Peres' part to hold Likud and its intransigent leader responsible for the outbreak of the Intifada.

The Israeli public was divided over the Intifada. In the immediate and short term, the Intifada had made the Israeli public even more hawkish than it usually was, thus giving Likud a slight edge over Labour in the 1988 election.[36] However, in the long run, it led a growing number of Israelis to adopt an increasingly more dovish position. Reuven Hazen, a political scientist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem argues that this change towards a dovish attitude was not automatic. In his words: 'It takes time for this [change] just like the 1973 War, it took 1977 to see the reaction [i.e. voting against Labour] and here we had to wait up to 1992 to get the reaction.'[37] A possible explanation for such a change was that the population was slowly coming to the conclusion that the Intifada could not be beaten.

The Intifada led to a distinct decrease in the number of Israelis who preferred the status quo (a right-wing hawkish preference). As Reuven Hazen argues:

> After 20 years of occupation, the Israeli society realised that this land had previous inhabitants, that these inhabitants are strategic liability, and that to deal with them was not an option to military force. As a consequence, the status quo died with the Intifada.[38]

An opinion poll conducted in 1986 prior to the outbreak of the Intifada showed that 47.1 per cent favoured the status quo, 30.2 per cent favoured giving up territories for peace, and 22.8 per cent favoured annexing the territories.[39] This is in stark contrast to another opinion poll conducted in May 1990, when the hawkish position received approval by only 2.4 per cent.[40] Israelis had discovered the link between the deterioration in their personal security and the maintenance of the status quo. Despite this, one should be careful not to interpret the result as indicating that an overwhelming majority of Israelis would automatically accept withdrawing to the pre-1967 borders.

As for the political elites, they were also divided over the issue. According to Nathan Yanai, the divisions among Israeli parties were over three issues: the legitimacy of the Intifada, the strategy in dealing with it, and the peace process.[41] He distinguishes several partisan positions. The first position was adopted by the radical anti-Zionist and the Zionist political left. This front had five Knesset seats in the 1988, from the Communist party, the Arab Democratic List, and the Progressive List for Peace. Ahmed Tibi, an Israeli Arab member of the Knesset, said: 'the Intifada was a legitimate means through which the Palestinians could press the Israeli government to negotiate with the PLO and assert Palestinians' right to self-determination'.[42] Needless to say, they criticized Rabin's harsh policies in suppressing the Intifada. Abdel Wahab Darawshe, an Arab Knesset member, even resigned from the Labour Party in protest against the 'beating' policy. He eventually established the Arab Democratic Party.[43] This meant that many Israeli Arabs who had traditionally voted for Zionist parties would no longer support Labour.

The second position was one adopted by the radical Zionist left. It was comprised of Shinui, Mapam, and Ratz with a total of ten seats in the 1988 election. They argued that the Intifada was a legitimate means of achieving self-determination. Although they felt that a limited use of force against the Intifada was actually legitimate, they advocated negotiations with Palestinians or with the PLO towards an independent Palestinian state.[44] The vigorousness of the Intifada gave some credibility to their critical view of traditional government policy on the matter. For example, the Deputy Speaker of the fifteenth Knesset, Naomi Chazen, argued that 'the Intifada did strengthen our [Meretz] argument that the status quo was impossible and that we should put an end to the occupation'.[45] This position was also close to the one adopted by the Labour party's 'doves' including Minister Ezer Weizmann, Yossi Beilin, Uzi Baram, Nawaf Massalha, and Haim Ramon.

A third position was that adopted by the radical right. This front was comprised of Tehiya (Revival), Moledet (Motherland), and Tzomet (Juncture). The three parties had seven seats in the Knesset. Moledet had campaigned on one issue, the idea of 'transfer', which simply stated that the solution to the Intifada was to expel Palestinians from the Occupied Territories. Some of Likud's leaders, such as Ariel Sharon, David Levy, and Yitzhak Modai, were very close to this group on matters relating to the Intifada. All believed that the Intifada was illegitimate and an attempt on the Palestinian side to put an end to the State of Israel; thus they advocated crushing the Intifada.[46]

The position of the religious parties, which had increased their representation to 18 seats in the Knesset in the 1988 election, was not monolithic. The NRP (5 seats) was close to Likud, but a minority within the NRP was closer to the radical right. Shas (6 seats), while closer to Labour concerning negotiations, advocated tougher military measures to put an end to the

Intifada. Agudat Yisrael (5 seats) and Degel Ha Torah (2 seats) were closer to Labour on the above-mentioned three issues of legitimacy, strategy, and the peace process.[47]

The Labour mainstream position was different from Likud's in the sense that it was less ideological and thus was far more flexible. It recognized the Palestinian aspiration to self-determination but simultaneously contended that Israel must be involved in determining its scope. The Intifada was thought illegitimate and a threat to Israel's current security, and therefore Labour encouraged containment.[48] Contrary to what right-wing parties professed, Labour leaders acknowledged that the Intifada and the Palestinian problem could not be solved by military means. The growing violence simply increased a sense of urgency to find a political solution. Shimon Peres stated early in the period of the Intifada that:

> We should strive for a political effort regardless of any end to the ferment in the territories. . . . If we wait until the riots die down and only then resume our political efforts, the riots will not stop. The situation in the field must be calmed by political peace activities as well.[49]

The doggedness of the Intifada even changed the view of many within Labour who were sceptical about the utility of peace. Ranan Cohen argued: 'the Intifada changed many people, like me, who thought that peace with the Palestinians was not helpful to Israel. It changed my mind.'[50] Seen in this way, the Intifada bolstered the dovish view within the party. Nawaf Massalha, one Labour dove, regarded it as the main driving force compelling Israel to start negotiations with the Palestinians; Israel would not have any choice but to broach talks with the PLO.[51] Furthermore, many within Labour, the doves in particular, were more concerned that the prolonged occupation would have a corrupting impact on Israeli society. The frequent use of force might, they believed, become a matter of routine. This normative concern had begun to be expressed after the war in Lebanon and increased during the Intifada. Ora Namir argued that the recurrent use of force would lead to intolerance and would create an Israeli generation that 'believes in the power of naked force as an alternative to dialogue, and as the only way to resolve disagreements'.[52] Hawks and *Yonetzim* (those caught between 'hawks' and 'doves') expressed their concerns over the impact of the use of force as well. Mordechai Gur (former Chief of Staff and Labour member) expressed his fears that the continued occupation might lay the ground for racism and Kahanism. This term refers to the racist, anti-Arab ideology that Rabbi Meir Kahane preached during the 1980s until his assassination in November 1990. Kahane believed that the expulsion of the Palestinians from their homes was the only solution.

The mainstream within Likud also regarded the Intifada as illegitimate and viewed it in the context of a Palestinian fight for the destruction of

the State of Israel. The Likud leader, Yitzhak Shamir, said in an appearance before the United Jewish Appeal during a visit to the United States that the Intifada was a 'war against Israel, against the existence of the State of Israel. I am astonished of some people's short memory. Did we have peace when we did not have those territories.'[53] During the 1988 election campaign, Shamir frequently declared that the conflict was not about borders but was a question of existence.[54] Yet despite Shamir's disagreement with Labour on the assumption that only a political solution could put an end to the Intifada, he acquiesced to Rabin's policy of containment.[55] Shamir was more interested in keeping the unity of his coalition with Labour and did not with to split the government over the matter. Still Likud's position over negotiating a peace settlement remained rigid. Shamir and the Likud maintained throughout the entire duration of the Intifada one basic propaganda line calling on the Arab states and the Palestinians to start direct negotiations to implement the plan for autonomy. Yet in spite of his rhetoric, there was actually little substance to Likud's support of the plan. A close look at its leaders' statements in the 1980s and prior to the outbreak of the Intifada show that the plan had already disappeared from Likud's discourse. The Intifada's only impact on this was to force Likud to present the semblance of a policy. But this was easier said than done. In reality, even Shamir was not serious about autonomy – it only served the purpose of propaganda.[56] He never endorsed a peace plan in his entire political career, having even opposed the Camp David Accords with Egypt, which had happened to include just such a plan for autonomy.[57]

Whilst it may be true that Likud remained unfazed by these developments and therefore did not introduce changes in its political platform, there had been a tremendous impact on the struggle for power and leadership within Likud as well as a clash between the mainstream stance and the more radical positions. This, to an extent, altered the structure of the factional politics within the party. It is worth stressing at this point that the Likud party was actually the result of the merger of two parties: the Herut and the Liberal parties. The Liberal's leader, Yitzhak Modai, was a contender for Likud's leadership, and within Herut there were three camps formed around three key personalities: Shamir, Levy, and Sharon. The three men had often contested the leadership and Shamir had won every time. Both Levy and Sharon together controlled around 50 per cent of the Likud's Central Committee. And yet Modai, Levy, and Sharon found themselves outside the new centre of power and gradually lost ground to people around Shamir and his close supporter, Moshe Arens.

In fact, the Intifada gave the 'constraint ministers' (Sharon, Levy, and Modai) the chance to pressurize Shamir but also the opportunity to outmanoeuvre him. Yet their alliance was a tactical one and had little to do with ideology. It was motivated by personal considerations, at least on the part of David Levy. In fact, he was a leading moderate in Begin's cabinet

and even criticized the cabinet for initiating the controversial Lebanon War in 1982. He also supported the Labour ministers against Shamir's stand by voting for withdrawal from Lebanon and, again, he gave a decisive vote in the inner cabinet to transfer the Taba issue to international arbitration.[58] His moves to outflank Shamir from the right were an attempt on his part to contest the leadership and gain more power within Likud.[59] Shamir acquiesced to their demands despite his strong standing in the party.[60] The divisions among the ruling elite with respect to the Intifada in fact paralysed the government.

The next section looks at how the Intifada influenced the conduct of government.

The National Unity Government and the Intifada

Evidently, the onset and continuation of the Intifada only deepened and crystallized the inherent disagreements within the NUG, thus further paralysing it. This reality revealed itself when Peres, in his capacity as Foreign Minister, reached the London Agreement with King Hussein in April 1987. Peres genuinely felt that there was a partner to talk to and that an opportunity had ultimately offered itself. It was the first time in the history of the clandestine meetings between King Hussein and Israeli leaders that the King had agreed to start negotiations without pre-conditions. Jordan had always insisted on an Israeli commitment to a complete withdrawal from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, before entering into open and public negotiations.

Nonetheless, Shamir blocked this initiative. The idea of an international conference was an anathema to Likud, and to Shamir in particular, because in such a conference, they believed Israel would be forced to make territorial concessions. This would, in turn, undermine Israel's long-term claims to sovereignty over the Occupied Territories. Faced with such stubbornness, Peres told his Labour colleagues that he was 'totally fed up with Shamir's complete rejection of political moves and that everything that had been achieved concerning the peace process had been totally destroyed'.[61] Implicit in Peres' oft-repeated statements was that Shamir's rejection of the London Agreement and his uncompromising position with regard to the Arab–Israeli conflict in general were responsible for the eruption of the Intifada. To a large extent, Peres was correct in his assessment. Yet, Shamir thought that the Intifada should not force the hand of the cabinet to take the initiative.[62] Indeed, Shamir has subsequently claimed that the Intifada did not change his mind, but only deepened his differences with Shimon Peres over finding a solution.[63]

The disagreement between the two parties climaxed with Shamir's rejection of the Shultz plan of March 1988. Shultz proposed a ceremonial international conference which would have the objective of providing peace

and security for all states in the region based on Resolution 242 and which would lead to direct negotiations between Israel and a Jordanian–Palestinian delegation, Israel and Lebanon, and Israel and Syria and to recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. The conference would neither have the power to impose an agreement nor the power to veto any agreement reached among the parties.[64] The Palestinian issue would, it was envisaged, be discussed in the negotiations between the Israeli and the Jordanian–Palestinian delegations, as one part of the package that was the whole initiative. Shultz suggested a period of six months for negotiating a transitional arrangement starting from 1 May 1988 that would lead to an implementation nine months later. Negotiations on the final status, according to this plan, could be concluded within a year. This plan did not mention the PLO and thus was compatible with both Labour and Likud stands.

Though the Shultz initiative was hardly biased toward the Palestinian cause – it even fell short of the minimum conditions that either Jordan or the Palestinians could accept – Shamir and the Likud ministers remained unmoved. Likud's rejection of the Shultz plan in April 1988 stemmed from its leaders' dislike of the idea of an international conference. First, Shamir believed that a conference with the participation of five member states in the Security Council would actually be harmful for Israel. Such a conference would, he envisioned, impose a solution against Israel's interests. He believed that it would force the country to give up parts of the 'land of Israel'.[65] Second, his opposition arose because of his unwillingness even to start negotiations. He must have been aware that without the convening of an international conference, the prospects for negotiations with Jordan were slim. Hence his rejection of the idea of an international conference was tantamount to the rejection of negotiating a peaceful settlement based on the 'land for peace' formula. King Hussein's options were either to engage in direct negotiations with Israel provided that there was a commitment on the Israeli side to withdraw from all the Occupied Territories including East Jerusalem (this was the only way Hussein could bypass the PLO or break with the Arab consensus) or to negotiate under the umbrella of an international conference and in this case territorial concession would be possible. Shamir, however, felt that direct negotiations with Jordan were the only way to achieve peace.[66] He was prepared to start negotiations with the Jordanians without pre-conditions but would not deviate from the Camp David Accords, which gave the Palestinians autonomy.[67] Paradoxically though, he and his close ally, Moshe Arens, did not vote in favour of the Camp David Accords. According to Shamir, there were two reasons for this: '[First I] was opposed in principle to the evacuation of Israeli towns and villages as stipulated in the agreement. Second, [I] objected to the precedent set by our withdrawal to the June 1967 armistice lines.'[68] As a consequence, a man like Shamir who opposed peace with

Egypt because it entailed a precedent of withdrawal from Sinai (which was never claimed by the Jews as biblical land) could not be expected to be forthcoming when it came to withdrawal from any part of the West Bank or Gaza. He stated that he could not relinquish any part from the territories because he had fought all of his life for the 'Land of Israel'.[69]

Labour, on the other hand, held that a political solution to the Palestinian problem might be attained with Jordan. In a meeting with the Labour party, in April 1988, Peres insisted that Jordan was still ready to embark on negotiations in accordance with the London Agreement.[70] He was in favour of the Shultz initiative and he argued, repeatedly, that if Israel could hold on to the status quo, then it would be possible for the PLO to step in, at the expense of Jordan. Peres' sense of urgency, like that of all doves, was accentuated.[71] He argued that if the peace process did not get started, it was highly possible that war would erupt between the Arabs and Israel. As a consequence, it would be in Israel's interest to avert war by embarking on negotiations with them both.[72] Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin stated, in one of his lectures in March 1988, that Israel must respond positively to the Shultz initiative.[73] He argued that Israel should strive to reach an agreement with Jordan whereby Israel would relinquish parts of the Occupied Territories, and agree to Jordanian sovereignty over the evacuated territories.[74] The Labour ministers, in particular Rabin, who were traditionally far more sensitive than Likud to the opinion of the United States, were also concerned about the implications of not seeming to respond positively to the peace initiative.[75] In an exchange between Shamir and Peres, the latter responded by saying to Shamir: 'If the deadlock persists and we don't take part in the peace process, if we don't adopt a diplomatic option with Jordan, we will be left with the PLO.'[76] Peres believed the way to undermine what he perceived as the high international standing of the PLO was to convince Jordan to co-operate with Israel. Appreciating Jordan's inter-Arab constraints, Peres was convinced that convening an international conference would help.

As was discussed in the previous chapter, a central feature of the Labour Party considerations for the future of the Occupied Territories had been, since the 1970s, the demographic issue. Labour used demographic arguments to convince the Israeli public of the necessity for territorial compromise not only to achieve peace and security, or because of their moral stance *vis-à-vis* occupation, but also to maintain a democratic Jewish state by disengagement. The Intifada strengthened this demographic argument as it proved that coexistence between Palestinians and Jews was impossible under occupation. Rabin, therefore, argued that Israel should give up the populated areas of the West Bank and Gaza in order to rid itself of around 1.5 million Palestinians.[77] Like all other Labour members, Rabin thought that the idea of Greater Israel (which encompassed the West Bank and Gaza) was incompatible with a democratic Jewish state. In his

opinion, should Israel annex the West Bank and Gaza, it would then have two options: either to have a racist state in which one people rule over the other, or to give the Palestinians (35 per cent of the total Israeli population) democratic rights, thus creating a bi-national state.[78]

To sum up, the Intifada had a huge impact on the political discourse in Israel over the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. While it further convinced Labour that the idea of territorial compromise was the solution, Likud remained immutable in its ideological position. Labour's efforts to win over Likud were fruitless. Likud remained adamant in opposing any peace initiative whether internal or external. Hence no concrete and agreed-upon answer came from the government because of differences among its members – especially with the election very close. The next section thus deals with the Israeli election, which took place under the shadow of the uprising.

The Intifada and the 1988 election

The outbreak of the Intifada marked the beginning of the election campaign in Israel. It was the main bone of contention among the different parties. According to pre-election polls, it drew attention to key concerns such as security, peace, and the territories. One poll revealed that 60 per cent of the Israeli public chose the issues of peace and security as the most important ones.[79] The importance of these polls lay in the fact that they indicated to the campaigners the mood of the public.

Unsurprisingly, the Labour campaign for the election focused primarily on foreign policy, particularly on peace and security. Its platform for the Knesset election read: 'The central goals of the Labour Party are security, peace and the preservation of a democratic-Jewish state with a large Jewish majority maintaining full equality for all its citizens.' And then it clarified these points by stating that: 'a principal goal of a government led by the Alignment [Labour] will be to break the political deadlock, which has persisted since the Likud undermined the peace initiatives of Shimon Peres. Renewal of a process of negotiation with Jordan and the Palestinians will occur only if a government headed by the Alignment can be formed.'[80]

In the run-up to the election, Labour maintained that the best path to defeat the Intifada and avert another inter-state war was to embark on peace negotiations with Jordan under the umbrella of the proposed international conference. Peres opted for a bold campaign strategy according to which he singled out peace as the most important issue facing Israel's future. This strategy was diametrically opposed to Labour's previous campaigns where such issues were normally blurred. Peres' focus on peace and foreign policy was a deliberate move in order to stress the differences between Labour and Likud on the issue of peace. Peres' main argument

was that Israel had in Jordan, for the first time, a partner who was willing and ready to negotiate and one which would allow the PLO to be bypassed. Accordingly, Peres was clear that in order to get negotiations started, Israel must be prepared to attend an international conference so as to secure Jordanian participation and to offer territorial compromise to conclude peace treaties. During the campaign, Peres focused on the inevitability of war should the conflict remain unresolved.[81]

To emphasize their point, Labour's television campaign publicized the newly formed Council for Peace and Security, which was formed by reserve generals, many of them Labour's supporters. Their argument at that time was that safeguarding security did not necessitate holding the entire West Bank. The generals advocated partial withdrawal coupled with strict security arrangements such as demilitarization of the evacuated areas.[82] Their argument was repeatedly presented in order to justify the idea of some form of territorial compromise. To counter this argument, Likud introduced former generals who argued that Israel's lack of strategic depth entailed holding the territories in their entirety. They regarded any concession of land in the West Bank as a security risk.

Throughout the election campaign, Labour leaders also emphasized the crucial demographic considerations. In an interview, Peres stressed:

> we can decide on anything but maintaining the status quo. Why? Because there is an Arab birth rate that is twice as [*sic*] ours. The demographic change is more significant than all the geographical change that has taken place in the past.[83]

Essential to this argument was the prognosis that Palestinians would be in the minority one day. Two weeks before the election, Peres declared that if his party were to be elected and he were to be a Prime Minister, his first task would be to revive the Shultz initiative and convene an international conference for direct peace negotiations.[84] Labour's doves such as Yossi Beilin – and the party leader, Shimon Peres – insinuated that the densely populated Gaza Strip should be handed over to Arab sovereignty.

Though Peres and his Labour associates were much more pragmatic and flexible than the Likud and Shamir, events were eventually to play into the hands of Shamir. According to many studies, the Intifada had led the Israeli public, at least in the short term, towards a hawkish stand.[85] Given the tie between the two big parties, this gave the Likud the extra votes necessary for Shamir and his party to win the Knesset election. This does not mean that the Intifada was the decisive factor in the outcome of the election, but it did focus attention on vital issues on which each party offered clear differences.

Yet another ramification of the Intifada, one which influenced Peres personally and the Labour Party in general, was King Hussein's

announcement a few months before the election that Jordan intended to sever administrative and legal ties with the West Bank. In a speech to the nation, the King declared that Jordan would never speak for the Palestinians and that the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians was the PLO.[86] It was a clear message to the Israelis that the Jordanian option was not feasible and that they should talk to the PLO if they were really interested in finding a solution. In fact, the King's decision was a turning point in the history of the peace process and in the Arab–Israeli conflict. Asher Susser, former director of the Moshe Dayan Centre at Tel Aviv University, argues that, for the first time in history, the King of Jordan was admitting that the Palestinians were not just a partner but an equal partner.[87]

Jordan's decision to disengage from the West Bank should be understood as a direct result of the Intifada. Daily events in the Occupied Territories produced a local Palestinian leadership and propelled them into prominence. Not only was this leadership determined to end the Israeli occupation, it was also determined to eliminate Jordan's influence in the West Bank. The tenth communiqué[88] issued by the unified leadership of the Intifada called *inter alia* on the Palestinian deputies in the Jordanian Parliament 'who were appointed by the King . . . to promptly resign their seats and align with their people. Otherwise, there will be no room for them on our land.'[89] The King regarded this statement as a 'horrible sign of ingratitude'[90] but, according to his then political advisor Adnan Abu Odeh, he soon realized that his strategy of substituting the partnership of Palestinians in the West Bank for that of the PLO had failed. In fact, the King's decision came when he had become disillusioned about the prospect for convening an international conference. His diplomatic initiative was failing. His agreement with Peres was defeated. Another reason for Hussein's decision was connected to the Arab summit of June 1988 (branded as the Intifada Summit) in Algeria. In the summit's final communiqué, the Arab leaders reassured the world that the PLO was the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians and that financial support to the Intifada was to be channelled through Jordan and the PLO, not through Jordan alone. The combination of these factors greatly influenced King Hussein. He realized that in order to ward off a potential spilling over of the Intifada into Jordan, disengagement was a rational choice.

Hussein's decision embarrassed the Labour leadership just a short time before the election. Labour's platform for the election mentioned Jordan as a partner for the envisioned international conference. Labour therefore went to the election without a realistic policy proposal. It was opposed to talks with the PLO, and Hussein made it clear that Jordan would not bypass the PLO. The only alternative avenue for the Israelis was to negotiate with the PLO, which both mainstream positions in Labour and Likud were adamantly opposed to at this juncture.

Another National Unity Government and another peace initiative

Likud emerged as the victorious party in the 1988 election with 40 seats as opposed to 39 seats for Labour and Shamir was asked to form a working coalition. Theoretically, he had two options.[91] The first was to form a narrow government with the radical right and the religious parties (the right, including the Likud, secular radical right, and religious parties had 65 seats).[92] A second option was to set up a national unity government with Labour. Initially, Shamir chose to negotiate with the right and with the religious parties. However, he was not keen on a narrow government for two reasons. First, for intra-party considerations, he was concerned about the implications of such a choice on the power struggle within Likud. A narrow government would mean that his rivals Sharon, Levy, and Modai would receive key ministries: the defence, foreign, and finance ministries respectively. This, in turn, would make them highly visible figures in Israeli politics. That would be a 'nightmare' for Shamir since in such a scenario the 'constraint ministers' would take advantage of their positions, would pose a more credible threat to his position as a leader of the Likud, and would help prepare the ground for his succession. A second reason was that Shamir's inclusion of the religious parties might mean that he had to accede to their increasingly high demands.[93] As a consequence, Shamir secured a narrow coalition with the right and then turned to Labour to negotiate a coalition government from a strong position.[94] In the coalition agreement with Labour, Shamir insisted that there would be no rotation of the premiership as had been the case in 1984.

Unlike Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres was opposed to the NUG with Likud. The doves in the party lobbied meticulously against joining Likud in the government and they defeated this move in the Party Leaders Bureau (the highest committee within the party). However, Peres was forced to respond to demands to join the government from the Histadrut and Kibbutzim in order to save them from financial bankruptcy.[95] Thus he joined Rabin who was interested in keeping the defence portfolio and the two men threw their weight behind this idea. Understandably, Peres, after his electoral defeat, was more concerned about his position as the leader of the party.[96] Accordingly, joining the government with Likud and delivering key positions to his rivals would save him from yet another contest against Rabin.[97] After bitter deliberations, the Central Committee of the Labour Party approved joining the government. However, to justify Labour's participation in the government with Likud, and to convince the doves (whose sense of urgency was greatly heightened by the Intifada) of the necessity of such an act, Rabin and Peres made their support for the NUG conditional on the advancement of the peace process. Rabin and Peres promised that if there was no progress in the peace process then Labour would bring down the government.

Since the outbreak of the Intifada, the doves within Labour had pressed for a political initiative to end the conflict with the Palestinians. A Member of the Knesset, Haim Ramon, a young rising star in Labour argued that:

> the Intifada erupted because the Likud destroyed the chance for negotiations with Jordan . . . the military solution is not possible . . . the only solution is to talk with anyone who is ready to recognise the existence of Israel and its right to live in security and peace.[98]

His use of the word 'anyone' is indicative because, as we will see in the next chapters, the PLO met these conditions and therefore came to qualify as a partner. As a consequence Rabin, who was gradually leaning toward a Palestinian option and some type of self-determination, declared his peace plan in January 1988. Although he had promised Peres that they would leave the NUG if necessary, he did believe in the necessity of maintaining it, if at all possible, and pressed Shamir to adopt a peace initiative.[99] He suggested a peace plan based on elections in the Occupied Territories so that the Palestinians could choose their representatives to negotiate an interim agreement with Israel. Rabin stipulated that the Palestinians must pledge to put a six-month moratorium on the Intifada in order to prepare for the election.[100] Responding to pressures from Labour, as well as subject to increasing American pressure, Shamir announced his plan and the government endorsed it on 14 May 1989.

Shamir proposed holding free and democratic elections in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in an atmosphere devoid of violence and terror. The aim of these elections was to choose Palestinian representatives from the Occupied Territories to negotiate an interim agreement with the Israeli government that would enable them to establish a self-governing authority. A five-year transitional period would be a test for coexistence and co-operation. During the interim period, matters pertaining to security, foreign affairs, and anything that was relevant to Israeli citizens in the West Bank and Gaza were to be in Israeli hands. Palestinians in the transitional period would be accorded self-rule. Shamir stipulated that the Intifada had to end before he would implement his election plan.[101] This plan ruled out any negotiations with the PLO and opposed a Palestinian state between Jordan and Israel in the immediate term. As Shamir said in his speech to the Knesset on 17 May 1989: 'our proposal is not directed at them [PLO]. We know that they do not have an interest in peace, our call is directed to our neighbours and the citizens of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza Strip.'[102] The longer-term negotiations over the permanent solution were to start as soon as possible but not later than the third year after the beginning of the transitional period. Participants in the final negotiations would be entitled to discuss any issue. The plan called on Jordan to participate in the negotiations over the permanent solution. The

objectives of the final negotiations would be to establish peace and to arrange borders with Jordan.

Despite the appeal of the word election neither the Palestinians nor the Arabs were attracted to Shamir's proposal. Undeniably, the idea of elections was desirable, but the context in which it was presented was discouraging. First of all, it did not mention any role for the PLO and as a consequence it could not expect to receive the blessing of Yasser Arafat. Besides, Palestinians were not ready to lend their support to any plan that did not give the PLO the central role.[103] An acceptance of this initiative could have driven a wedge between the PLO and local Palestinians. To the Palestinians, who were aware of the evasiveness of Shamir, the plan was a rather cynical ploy aimed at putting an end to the Intifada and at disguising Shamir's intransigence[104] in the face of moderation on the part of the PLO. Shamir, in effect, sought to cloak his intentions by pretending that he was opting for peace. In November 1988 the PLO had made revolutionary decisions. For the first time, it had accepted Resolution 242, recognized Israel's right to exist, and renounced terrorism in all its forms.

Interestingly, on the Israeli side, many politicians, including Labour ministers, were not convinced of the feasibility of their government's plan. The Science and Technology Minister, Ezer Weizmann (Labour), for example, did not back this plan. His rejection stemmed from his belief that only the PLO could deliver. He maintained that 'negotiations with the PLO and Arafat must be conducted soon'.[105] Shamir's plan was also subject to severe criticisms from within Likud. Shamir knew that he could not continue without it splitting his party. The 'constraint ministers' attacked the plan and claimed that such a plan would lead to a Palestinian state in parts of the 'land of Israel'.[106] The three ministers challenged Shamir to put his plan to the Likud Central Committee. Moshe Arens made a great effort to persuade those members of the committee who opposed the plan to accept it. Arens argued that he himself was not happy with the plan but that rejecting it would hand power to Labour.[107] He also told the Committee of Foreign Affairs and Security of the Knesset that without this plan Israel's international standing would deteriorate.[108] He argued that there was no alternative and so the plan must be approved.

Despite this perceptive argument, the 'constraint ministers' remained unfazed. They specified that four clauses be added. These were as follows: Palestinians from East Jerusalem will not take part in the election; negotiations will not start before the end of the Intifada; there will be no negotiations with the PLO and there will be no Palestinian state; and Jewish settlements will continue to be built in the territories.[109] In fact, the clauses were designed to destroy the plan. Shamir caved in lest they endangered his position as Prime Minister and party leader.[110] Indeed, Sharon and Levy had agreed to defeat Shamir in the vote for the plan in the Central

Committee; Shamir would have to resign. Their scenario was that Levy would be Prime Minster, Sharon Defence Minister, and the religious party would support their government, forcing Labour to withdraw.[111] Anyway, only after Shamir acceded to the constraint ministers was the plan endorsed by 796 in favour to 642 against in the July 1989 meeting of the Central Committee.[112]

However, external pressures mounted when the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak put forward his ten-point plan in September 1989. This plan was meant to redesign the Shamir plan in a way that was acceptable to both Israeli and Arab moderates. Mubarak suggested that Israeli and Palestinian delegations should meet in Cairo to discuss the idea of an election in detail. The plan stipulated that Israel would accept the result of the polls, there would be international observers for the election, the elected representatives would be given immunity, the IDF would withdraw from the balloting area, Israel would put a freeze on settlement, Palestinians from East Jerusalem would participate, and Israel would have to commit itself to the 'land for peace' formula.[113]

The plan was, of course, the subject of much disagreement on the Israeli political scene. The cabinet was divided evenly. Labour leaders had no problem in accepting the plan as it was in line with their views. However, the power struggle within the Likud prevented Shamir from being forthcoming. The 'constraint ministers', who ideologically had not really stuck to the idea of Greater Israel as an article of faith, were posturing by fomenting anti-Labour and anti-peace feelings. As stressed earlier, this should be viewed in light of an internal power struggle within Likud. Yet this game had its own dynamics and could have led to a split in the party. As a consequence, the Shamir–Arens camp had to manoeuvre in such a way as not to lose its position and influence within Likud, as well as to maintain governmental unity. Shamir knew that as long as he could manipulate his partners in the government and keep land, his position was unassailable. But this time was different. Labour was united. Taking Sharon's threat seriously, Shamir had to reject the Mubarak ten points, thus ruining the understanding with Rabin. Henceforth, the ground was laid for the disintegration of the NUG, which eventually took place in March 1990 following Shamir's rejection of US Secretary of State James Baker's initiative.

The new US administration, which took office in January 1989, was rather different from its predecessor. Whereas Ronald Reagan had pursued a Middle East foreign policy based on a strategic understanding with Israel, Bush and Baker sought to pursue a more even-handed policy. On different occasions, they spelled out their rejection of Shamir's settlement policies. They both understood that territorial compromise was the key to a solution. In a speech to the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) on 22 May 1989, James Baker unequivocally stated that, 'For Israel, now

is the time to lay aside once and for all the unrealistic vision of a Greater Israel.'[114] He maintained that pressure when he put forward his five-point plan in December 1989. Baker thought that 'there was a way to bridge the distance between Shamir's four points and Mubarak's ten points'.[115] The plan aimed at holding a dialogue between Palestinian and Israeli delegations in Cairo. It stated that the Israeli delegation would attend the meeting only after a satisfactory list of Palestinian representatives had been worked out. More importantly, the plan stated that Israel would attend on the basis of Shamir's plan.[116] Despite its clear pro-Israel position, and its granting of a veto power for Israel over who would represent the Palestinians, the PLO agreed, whereas Shamir rejected the idea.[117]

Baker tried, to no avail, to persuade Shamir that his five-point initiative was in fact good for Israel and had the potential to lead to peace. The main point of contention was over who would represent the Palestinians. Shamir refused to have any Palestinian from East Jerusalem and from outside the Occupied Territories – even deportees who were legally from the West Bank and Gaza – as players in these negotiations. Baker and Bush came to the conclusion that as long as Shamir was head of the government, there would be no chance for negotiations to get started. Baker blamed Shamir publicly and announced that he would not intervene unless he was sure that the other party was serious. Baker said, 'everybody over there should know the telephone number is 1–202–456–1414. When you are serious about peace, call us.'[118] From this moment, as we will see, Shamir embarked upon a head-on collision with the American administration.

The rejection of Baker's five points was the last nail in the coffin of the NUG. The Labour party, who had conditioned its participation in the NUG on progress in the peace process, came to the conclusion that Shamir would never budge and was only playing for time. Peres lived up to his pledge and in March 1990 he gave Shamir an ultimatum that if he did not accept Baker's five points, Labour would withdraw from the coalition. Shamir responded by sacking Peres and, as a result, Labour ministers resigned. In the subsequent motion of no-confidence, all Labour members voted against the government decisively contributing to its fall. As Shamir managed to form a right-wing government, it was self-evident that with such a government, the prospect for peace was nil. Despite this, the Shamir government (under American pressure) was forced to go the Madrid Peace Conference. Shamir's government remained intransigent, however; for a breakthrough to come it was imperative that Labour should be in power.

Conclusions

It has been argued in this chapter that the Intifada was a defining moment in the Arab–Israeli conflict with several far-reaching implications. It was the first time in the post-Six-Day War that Palestinians in the Occupied

Territories had taken the struggle against the Israeli occupation into their own hands. The eruption and continuation of the Intifada came to refute the assumptions held by many in Israel, in particular the right wing, that the occupation was benign and costless and that there was a lack of political or revolutionary sentiments on the part of the Palestinians.

The fact that the Intifada proved resilient as well as effective had a direct impact on intra-party and inter-party politics in Israel. It forced the government to look for a solution other than a military one. Its influence on intra-party politics was more salient in Labour, in which it accelerated the ascendance of the dovish trend that the party had come to adopt in a rather gradual way. The Intifada strengthened the doves' position in the party, as they pushed for changes to be introduced in the party's stance. It also had a sobering effect on the hawks in the party, Rabin, in particular, had thought of the conflict only in terms of an inter-state one. He was forced to change positions and acknowledge that the Intifada could not be dealt with by employing military force only. This change was of significant value as Rabin, who was widely respected in Israel for his credibility and his credentials as 'Mr Security', started to lean toward a Palestinian option.

However, the short-term impact of the Intifada was that of reinforcement of the hawkish trend to the extent that it helped Shamir to win the 1988 election. Labour's electoral defeat was a severe blow to Israeli progress towards peace. For peace to come, Israel had to be governed by the more pragmatic Labour Party. The Intifada forced King Hussein to sever administrative and legal ties with the West Bank and therefore indirectly led to Peres' embarrassment when he lost his favoured Jordanian option. It forced the Labour Party to look to the only possible alternative: the Palestinian option. As this book will demonstrate, this was why Rabin sought to cultivate partners from among the residents of the Occupied Territories and also why a peace deal was eventually concluded.

Although Likud, under Shamir, did not introduce changes to its policies for the election of 1988, the Intifada had a great impact on Shamir's position and conduct in the party. Shamir, who was constantly challenged by three strong colleagues within Likud (Levy, Sharon, and Modai) had to respond to Rabin as well and consequently adopted Rabin's views regarding negotiating with elected representatives of the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. However, Shamir was not genuine in this initiative. It was meant to alleviate pressure from within and from without. His primary objective was to keep the unity of Likud, which meant satisfying the 'constraint ministers'. Accordingly, he acquiesced to internal pressure and refused all initiatives including Mubarak's ten-point plan and James Baker's five point plan. Here again the factional politics and power struggle within Likud only contributed to domestic political immobility that meant the government was unable to respond to external developments.

Nevertheless, the Intifada alone could not explain why Israeli leaders changed their mind and became more 'prone to peace'. One needs to understand another factor that helped facilitate Israel's road to peace: the Labour Party's victory in the 1992 election. A critical factor that led to Labour ascendance was the process of internal reforms throughout 1991–2 and this forms the basis of the next chapter.

3 Democratic reform within the Labour Party

The motive to gain power

Without doubt, the Intifada convinced an increasing number of Israelis, in particular the hawks within the Labour Party, of the urgent necessity to negotiate a peaceful solution to the Arab–Israeli conflict. But the prospects for such an approach were impeded by the fact that Likud was in power. Therefore, it was obvious not only to the Israeli public but also to those external players engaged in the conflict, such as the United States, Jordan, and Egypt, that Israel's path to peace would be strengthened considerably once the Labour Party assumed power. Seen in this way, Labour's victory in the 1992 election had tremendous positive consequences for the peace process.

Yet as will be demonstrated, it was not simply a matter of Labour assuming power. Labour was also in need of a strong personality such as Yitzhak Rabin, first to secure an electoral victory over Likud, and second to lead the nation to an historic reconciliation with former foes. This chapter demonstrates that the process of democratic reform within Labour – which was characterized by the adoption of a process whereby both the candidate for premiership and the list of candidates for the general election were chosen by members of the party instead of simply being picked by the Central Committee – was of crucial significance in bringing about a change in the leadership of Labour and in producing a more representative, responsive, and attractive list. It should be clear from the outset that the process of democratic reforms within Labour was driven in the first place by the desire to regain power.[1] However, these reforms contributed to the ascendance of many young doves within Labour who sought to introduce ideological changes in the party platform of policies. These ideological changes were meant to facilitate a more conciliatory approach to the Palestinian problem. Arguably, Yitzhak Rabin could not have taken over the leadership of the party without the introduction of these 'American-style' primaries simply because Shimon Peres, due to his 15 years of leadership, enjoyed far greater influence within the party and also far greater control of party institutions.[2]

This chapter consists of five sections. The first examines the electoral system in Israel and how this affected government coalition building.

A second section reviews the process of internal democratic reforms within the Labour Party. A third deals with the selection of candidate lists to the Thirteenth Knesset and how this affected Labour's chances of defeating Likud. Another section is an attempt to analyse the 1992 election and the reasons behind Labour's eventual victory. The final section assesses the formation of the new government and its impact on the road to peace.

The Israeli electoral system and coalition formation

Like most Western democracies, Israel elects its parliament (Knesset), which is made up of 120 members and to which the government is accountable. General elections are held once every four years unless the Knesset calls for earlier elections.[3] The electoral system in Israel derives its roots from the pre-state Jewish community (*Yishuv*) in Palestine under the British Mandate. Immediately after the establishment of Israel in 1948, the first Israeli government decided that it would hold a general election by applying the same method used in the pre-state period for the elections to the Zionist Congress and to the elected assemblies of the *Yishuv*. It was supposed that the electoral system would be utilized only for the election of the Constituent Assembly (the first Knesset) and after that a new permanent electoral system would be enacted. However, those parties and factions that actually obtained representation under the old system were loath to alter the process lest any new system might work against what had quickly become vested interests.[4]

A central feature of this system that has prevailed is the proportional representation list system, whereby the whole country is treated as a single constituency. When a list passes the 1.5 per cent electoral threshold, it obtains representation in the Knesset.[5] Votes are counted and the allocation of seats in the Knesset is in direct proportion to the votes received by each list. The order of candidates on the list is of great importance because the higher the position on the list, the better the chance to actually obtain a seat. For example, if a party wins 20 seats, those seats are allocated to the first 20 candidates on the list.

The party that receives most votes is the pivotal one: and its leader is expected to form a working coalition.[6] This system remained until 1996. In that year the Prime Minister, for the first time in the history of Israel, was elected directly in a separate ballot. This new change, in fact, gave the elected Prime Minister more freedom and independence from his party in forming a government. After applying this law in three subsequent general elections, the system was abandoned, and the general election of January 2003 was conducted according to the old law.

Despite the fact that the Israeli electoral system ensures a 'fair' representation of parties, it still has shortcomings, some of which are addressed in this section. These drawbacks have been the subject of much debate

among Israelis. Debate occurred, especially, in the aftermath of the inconclusive results of the 1984 and 1988 elections.[7] In 1984, for instance, the indecisive outcome of the general election forced both Likud and Labour to enter into an NUG. Many politicians from Likud and Labour, as well as academics, felt the necessity to implement electoral reform in order to minimize the disproportionate power of religious parties. Never in the history of Israel has any party gained an outright majority in the Knesset sufficient to form a government. Big parties have opted for coalition with smaller ones, the religious parties in particular, thus increasing the latter's centrality in Israeli politics. The concern was that the political influence of the religious parties was increasing over time to such an extent that their spiritual leaders (rabbis who do not necessarily reside in Israel) could determine which of the major parties would be in power. This quandary was particularly evident in April 1990, when Shimon Peres failed to put together a working coalition with one of the religious parties, Agudat Yisrael, because its mentor (a rabbi who was residing abroad) intervened and ruled against joining a government under Shimon Peres.[8]

Another feature of the electoral system in Israel, according to Vernon Bogdanor, is 'the rigidity of its list system of proportional representation'.[9] Parties present lists for elections and the candidates are determined by the party institutions.[10] Accordingly, voters cast ballots for lists of their choice and not for individuals. Voters cannot delete, change the order of, or add other names from different lists. There is no mechanism such as that of a by-election and accordingly when a Knesset member resigns or dies, his or her seat will be taken by the next on the list at the time of election. This proportional representation system is responsible for the fragmentation in the Knesset and consequently in Israeli politics.[11] Because of this system, there have traditionally always been more than ten lists represented in the Knesset and this, of course, has made the forming of a government a difficult task.

A second characteristic of the electoral system in Israel is that the whole country is a single voting constituency and votes are counted on a national basis.[12] As a consequence, candidates do not represent geographical constituencies. The result is little contact with voters and thus Knesset members are not directly responsible to their voters. Because of the national list system, the voters play no role in either the composition of the list or the coalition formation.[13] One example of the independence of the elected lists from its voters was the Democratic Movement for Change (Dash). In 1977, this list won 15 seats in the Knesset. It took votes from Labour, contributing to Labour's first electoral defeat. Immediately after the election, Dash leaders decided to join the Likud-led government. It can be assumed that those who voted for this list would have preferred Labour to Likud and accordingly would not have been happy to see Dash joining a Likud-led government. However, once the votes were cast, the voters

had no influence whatsoever on the actions of the list. A Knesset member feels no responsibility towards a certain constituency, and hence his or her political performance is governed by his or her own political and/or personal calculations. Moshe Dayan, for instance, was elected to the 1977 Knesset on Labour's list. Yet immediately after his election, having no constraints of constituency, he joined the Likud-led government.

A third characteristic of the electoral system is that the electoral threshold is very low.[14] This fact makes it possible for very narrow interests to be represented in the Knesset. One example of this was that of the Kach party. Rabbi Meir Kahane, who was widely known for his extreme anti-Arab attitudes, set up this party in 1971 and thereafter it participated in all general elections. The party had never passed the electoral threshold before 1984 but it then succeeded in gaining one seat. In its policy platform, Kach advocated the expulsion of all Palestinian Arabs from Israel and the Occupied Territories. The party was disqualified by the Israeli Central Election Committee on the grounds that it advocated racist and anti-democratic principles. After its disqualification in 1988, the party subsequently disappeared from Israeli politics and its voters shifted their votes to the right-wing Moledet (which advocated similar policies of transfer).[15]

The electoral system is, thus, arguably responsible for the fragmentation of Israeli politics. This feature became acute following the first electoral defeat of Labour in 1977. The Israeli political system, according to Neill Lochery, had been one dominated by Labour. Initially, the electoral system had left no significant impact on the way governments were formed, basically because Labour was able to gain far more votes than any other party. It follows that the system's impact on the peace process was minimal. However, this was not the case after 1977. Henceforth, the political system was transformed from a multi-party system dominated by Labour into a competitive one with Likud and Labour competing almost neck-and-neck.[16] The need for small parties increased and so did their influence on major issues such as those which dominated the Israeli discourse – peace and security. This was certainly the case in 1998 when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu signed the Wye River agreement[17] with Yasser Arafat only to be opposed by his coalition members within the government and his block in the Knesset. The agreement led to public recrimination among coalition members. Unsurprisingly, given the disagreement and differences among the coalition members, the government fell and early elections were called.[18]

In addition to the demands for reforms in the electoral system, there were also requests, made by many Labourites, for internal reforms within the Labour Party. The calls for internal reforms – as this chapter argues – were aimed at gaining power. Though these democratic reforms within Labour were meant to gain power, they did in fact facilitate Labour's path to peace, as will be demonstrated.

Democratic reform within Labour

By and large, the Israeli Labour movement, in which the Labour Party played the key role, had been the main force behind the realization of the Zionist dream in establishing Israel in 1948. The Labour movement had led the Zionist movement and thus had established its agenda. As a consequence, the Labour Party was the dominant party in Israel prior to 1977 to the extent that without it no government could have been formed. In all Labour-led governments, Labour dominated issues relating to defence and foreign policy and its authority in these matters was never seriously challenged by any other contender.

However, as was demonstrated in chapter 1, Labour-led governments were not able to act decisively on the issue of peace with Jordan due mainly to intra-party differences rather than inter-party differences. Ironically, when Labour came to a broad consensus (territorial compromise with Jordan) in the late 1980s, it had already lost its dominance in Israeli politics. Hence for peace to be achieved, Labour had first to win the general election, and then form a peace coalition.[19] This section therefore provides an account of how the process by which Labour selected its list for Knesset elections led to Labour's loss of its electoral supremacy.

Until the late 1980s, a few leaders who were in unchallenged positions, such as Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin, had controlled the Labour Party. Thus, Labour was hierarchically structured and power was centralized in the hands of a few. These leaders had the greatest say in who would be a candidate for the Knesset election and who would not.[20] The process by which candidates were selected was simple: the leaders of the political bureau of the party chose the most loyal deputies in order to form a nomination committee. This committee prepared a list of candidates. The Central Committee of the party only rubber-stamped the list. This method, in fact, secured the selection of candidates who were clients of one of the top leaders. As Nawaf Massalha precisely put it: 'without being a client to one of the patrons, your chance to be a candidate in a realistic position would be significantly diminished'.[21] Myron Aronoff, a political scientist, argues that representation in the list to a large extent reflected the pattern of patron–client relationship.[22] In the late 1960s and until 1974, Pinhas Sapir and Golda Meir, Yigal Allon, and Moshe Dayan were the patrons of Mapai, Achdut Havooda, and Rafi (the three factions of the Labour Party) respectively.

With the collapse of the factional system after 1974, two camps (around two patrons, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin) emerged. The patrons fought to ensure that their major clients were placed in realistic positions in order to strengthen their own stature among the elite. As a result of this patron–client relationship, it was inconceivable for clients to voice ideological or political preferences different from those of their patrons without

running the risk of reducing their chances in future elections. However, the introduction of internal reforms in general liberated clients from their patrons and as a consequence clients were able to seek ideological change. On many occasions, those who were patrons had to adjust to the increasing demands by clients for change. Shimon Peres, for instance, became more attentive to the views of his protégé Yossi Beilin. This change indeed helped the party to adopt an increasing dovish line.

The demands for internal reforms were given impetus after consecutive failures by Labour to regain political power. But the key question here is why did Labour fail to regain power in the first place? A host of factors led to the defeat of Labour at the polls in 1977. Scholars, of course, emphasize different yet interrelated reasons. In his interesting analysis of the 1977 turnabout, Neill Lochery examined previous academic studies and then categorized the explanations into four areas.[23]

The first explanation is the political culture framework. Proponents of this approach, such as Asher Arian, Etzioni-Halevy, and Rina Shapira, stress the importance of demographic change in Israel. These demographic changes, in fact, transformed the political culture and moved it somewhat to the right. This gradual demographic shift was coupled with Labour's failure to adapt to the transformation. Proponents of this explanation point out that traditional Labour voters tend to be older, with an Ashkenazi background whereas typical Likud voters tend to be younger and of a Sephardi background. This difference was important, because during the 1970s, the demographic balance shifted towards Sephardim. More importantly, this shift went hand in hand with a change in the voting pattern of this growing constituency towards Likud. These Jews, who were dependent on Labour-led governments for jobs and housing, started gradually to support Likud instead of Labour from the mid-1960s onward. There were three reasons behind this gradual swing. First, they started to vote for Likud as a protest vote against the lack of opportunities and out of frustration. Second, Labour was seen as a middle-class party whereas Sephardim were mainly low class. Accordingly, they supported Likud, which expressed their concerns. Finally, Sephardim tended to be more hawkish with respect to the Arab–Israeli conflict. Upon their arrival in Israel, in the first decade after its establishment, the majority of them were allocated houses in areas bordering the Arabs. Because of clashes between Israel and its neighbours, coupled with infiltration,[24] they were the most affected among the Israelis by the conflict. As a consequence, they advocated harsher security policies against the Arabs. Likud, in its rhetorical attacks against the Arabs, reflected this orientation.

Equally important, Labour's support among the young had dwindled to around half that of Likud.[25] Following the establishment of the state, Labour was interested in preserving the position of earlier immigrants and gave little attention to increasingly important constituencies such as the

group that might be termed the 'Youth'. Given the conservative nature of Labour and its reluctance to introduce a more radical approach to both security and socio-economic issues, the Youth felt politically alienated. Against this background, Likud became attractive to these constituencies. However, in the early 1990s, the Sephardim and Youth constituencies became less identified with Likud due to the emergence of more nationalist parties to the right of Likud and because of the establishment of parties along ethnic lines, in particular Shas.[26]

A second explanation is rooted in political economy. Proponents of this approach, such as Michael Shalev, underlines the point that the dominant party 'must be able to perform the basic economic functions of satisfying the material interests of business'.[27] This entails the availability of three requirements: first, to develop a formula of economic growth that meets the interests of the party and the state as well; second, to solve the problems of distributional conflicts; and finally to establish a link with the supportive international economic community.[28] These three requirements were missing by the middle of the 1970s. The decline in the usefulness of the Histadrut (The National Workers Federation), problems linked to the distribution of capital gifts (aid and loans) to the security sector, and the difficulty in marrying the interests of the state to those of business all indicated the failure to meet these requirements. The absence of these three conditions contributed to Labour's electoral defeat. However, with the passage of time, differences between Labour and Likud in matters relating to the economy have been narrowing to the point of disappearing.[29]

A third possible explanation is the influence of the Arab–Israeli conflict on domestic politics. Among the advocates of this line of thinking, Baruch Kimmerling is the most outspoken. They contend that the capture of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967 triggered a public debate over the future of the Occupied Territories. As was demonstrated in chapter 1, Labour's policy towards the West Bank and Gaza should be understood within the framework of intra-party politics of succession battles and personality problems. Labour's position *vis-à-vis* the future of the West Bank was responsible for its electoral decline. Paradoxically, Labour's policies did not only alienate the hawkish nationalists but also failed to gain the trust of the liberals who believed in trading land for peace. However, events such as the Lebanon War and the Intifada left a moderating impact on the Israeli electorate, which benefited Labour in later elections.

The political dynamics framework, in the view of the author, provides the most rigorous explanation of Labour's decline. Successive Labour elites failed to respond to the changing dynamics of Israeli society.[30] As mentioned above, the highly centralized and oligarchic party structure was not attentive to the increasingly changing Israeli society and thus failed to adapt or to reform itself. The party kept functioning in such a way that reflected the interests of those at the top of the party, and changes were

therefore slow in coming. This became more visible following the 1973 war. In the words of Myron Aronoff:

> Control of the nominations process perpetuated the domination of the party by the elite and their client. The issue agenda and decision-making were effectively controlled by the elite, and controversial issues were suppressed. The ritualization of important aspects of politics contributed significantly to the further erosion of the responsiveness and effectiveness of the party.[31]

This oligarchic control of the nomination process by top leaders negatively affected the responsiveness of Labour and led to a lack of real representation of significant developing constituencies in the party's Knesset faction, which, in turn, greatly contributed to the first electoral defeat in 1977.[32] For example, the Kibbutz movement (mainly Ashkenazi Jews) was over-represented, whereas other groups of Sephardi background were under-represented. Besides, many representatives were not the choice of their constituency but were chosen because they were clients of the top leaders.

The result, arguably, led to a detachment of the elite from the electorate. Following the first electoral defeat, little democratic reform was carried out. For example, in the 1981 election, half of the names for the Knesset list were chosen by the nominating committee, making the list more representative. However, as the other half were chosen by the party branches and the ordering of the names on the list was done by a special committee, the process of selecting as a whole remained oligarchic. The problem was so enduring that even top leaders failed to understand the long-term and deep-rooted causes for the electoral defeat. As a consequence, no fundamental structural reforms were undertaken to make the party more responsive to its members, as well as to the wider public. Aronoff argues that the Labour leadership failure to give enough attention to the oligarchic procedures by which the Knesset list was chosen and its colossal failure to modernize this method led directly to its electoral defeat.[33]

Taken together, these four frameworks indeed account for the Labour loss in 1977. Nevertheless, Likud's ascendance to power marked the transformation of Israel's political system from a multi-party system dominated by Labour to a competitive one. In the post-1977 era, the weakness of Labour's electoral position was exacerbated by two additional factors. First, Labour gradually lost control of many state institutions, which deprived its leaders of the power of patronage (this previously helped Labour, especially in the Arab sector). The second factor was the transformation of Israeli politics from party politics to block politics. In this system, it is not enough for a party to receive more seats than others in order to form a government. The most important factor is to have a blocking majority. For

example, Labour gained 44 seats compared with 39 for Likud in 1984. However, neither was able to form a government because both the Labour and the Likud blocks received 60 seats. The only way out of this impasse was to form an NUG.

Many Labourites felt that internal democratic reforms within the party were necessary if the party wanted to widen its public appeal and regain power.[34] By the late 1980s the Labour Party had undergone major, albeit gradual, democratic reforms which had culminated in the adoption of American-style primaries for the selection the candidates to both the Knesset and the premiership, for the 1992 election. It should be stressed that the reforms came as a response to demands from within and were aimed mainly at winning the general election.[35] The main figure behind the idea of such democratic reforms was Uzi Baram (a dovish Labourite). Baram was elected in 1984 as secretary-general of the party on the platform of democratic reform within the party. His narrow victory was evidence of the degree of the split within Labour over the issue of internal reforms. Baram argued that it was necessary to initiate a process of reforms in order to strengthen the Central Committee, and to change Labour's image of being 'a closed, unbreathing, elderly, Ashkenazi, oligarchic body'[36] in the mind of the public. Not surprisingly, the opposition to such reforms came from the Kibbutz and Moshav Movements, which were over-represented. However, Baram's effort paid off when the Labour Party selected its list for the 1988 election.

The candidate list for the Twelfth Knesset was selected in May 1988. Due to the introduction of a more liberal method of selecting the Knesset list, a marked change in the make-up of the list was noticeable. This new list was the most representative and responsive to date.[37] For the first time in the history of the party, the representation of various constituencies (urban, rural areas, and Kibbutzim) as well as ethnicity and age was, to some extent, in proportion to their distribution within the party. Many new groups, especially the young, were among those who were in realistic slots. The list contained 1 Arab candidate, 4 women, 13 new faces, and 15 of Sephardic background.[38] Despite this attractive list, Labour did not fare well but also did not fare too badly. This experience gave the party confidence to widen the primary system to include all Labour members.[39] Another consequence of this new method was that many young dovish candidates felt less dependent on their patrons and as a result they were able to provoke an ideological debate within the party concerning the path of the peace process. Unlike the young guard of Rafi who was more interested in power, the new young guard was more interested in introducing an ideological change to distinguish the party from Likud. Eventually, their efforts paid off. The policy platforms of the 1992 election became more dovish. Their dovishness was evident in a paragraph that acknowledged the national right of the Palestinians. It reads:

> Israel will promote negotiations towards a peace agreement based on compromise with Jordan and the Palestinians. The agreement must be based . . . on the recognition of the rights of Palestinians including their national rights, and on the basis of their participation in determining their future.[40]

The opening up of the selection of the Knesset list in 1988 was only a step towards addressing the problem of representation and responsiveness. As will be discussed below, Labour did this successfully in 1992.

Selecting candidates through primaries

The adoption of the American-style primaries by Labour in 1992 was revolutionary in Israeli politics. Labour decided that the selection of both the candidate to the premiership and the list to the Knesset should be through primaries, in which all paid-up members of Labour would participate. Those Labourites who supported the opening up sought to realize two objectives. The first was to bring about a change within the leadership of the party. In Shlomo Avineri's words: 'it was clear to almost everybody that Labour's chances of winning power would be with Yitzhak Rabin as the head of the party and not with Shimon Peres. In fact, Peres suffered from an image problem of inelectability.'[41]

Peres had already suffered four electoral losses. It was common knowledge that Peres was much stronger than Rabin within the party, but Rabin at the time was the most popular Israeli politician in Israel. Of those who supported adopting primaries, Rabin was the most keen because he saw the contest as the most effective way of replacing Peres. But the most important objective of primaries was that they would result in a more responsive, representative, and attractive list. In addition, the demands for such a system were given impetus by the fact that Likud had selected its candidates' list to the 1989 election of the Histadrut through a primaries system.[42]

On 19 February 1992, the Labour party selected its candidate for the premiership. Out of 152,000 paid-up members of the party, 108,347 members cast their vote.[43] Four candidates ran for the contest. These were Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Rabin, Ora Namir, and Yisrael Kessar (secretary-general of the Histadrut). However, only Peres or Rabin stood a realistic chance of winning. Rabin's strategy relied on one theme: Labour would have a better chance under his leadership. His supporters argued that Labour had never lost an election except under Peres' leadership and thus a change was imperative should Labour seek to win the next general election. Peres' supporters countered the argument by maintaining that Rabin's popularity was actually to be found within Likud supporters and that when the time came they would vote for Likud.

The results of the contest were in Rabin's favour. He gained 40.59 per cent, whereas Peres received 34.8 per cent, Kessar 18.77 per cent, and Namir 5.44 per cent. As the required threshold was 40 per cent, the result meant that Rabin avoided a second round in which Peres might very well have fared better. In fact, the presence of other candidates worked in Rabin's favour. Obviously, Kessar, who used his position as secretary-general of the Histadrut, was able to cultivate good relations with the Arab sector. He received more votes from this sector than anyone else.[44] Accordingly, it is safe to postulate that in a second round, those who had voted for Kessar from the Arab sector would have most likely voted for Peres, thus tipping the balance in Peres' favour. In other words, the fragmentation of Peres' camp contributed to his ultimate defeat.

Peres' effort to avert a defeat was dealt a severe blow when the Lass report was published in May 1990 confirming that Peres was unelectable. The report was the first in-depth investigation carried out by Labour to find out the reasons behind its electoral failure in 1988. Professor Yoram Lass chaired a committee which interviewed 250 party members.[45] The report contained two major findings of great consequence for the internal development of the party. First, the report blamed Peres personally for the defeat in the 1988 general election. Second, since regular members of the party could not participate in the selection of candidates, they could not identify with the party. Hence, the report concluded, Peres was unelectable and rejuvenating the party would entail adopting primaries.[46] Given the report's logic, coupled with Peres' weakened intra-party position, resulting from his failure to put up a working coalition in April 1990, Peres had little choice but to accede to the primaries proposal. Interestingly, even some of Peres' supporters reached the conclusion that Labour's chances were higher under Rabin's leadership and voted for Rabin.[47]

Notwithstanding that Peres lost the contest to Rabin, his camp fared well overall in the primaries for selecting the candidate list for the Knesset. Hence Peres emerged as a winner in the primaries. This outcome showed that those who shifted their votes from Peres to Rabin for the selection of the candidate of the premiership were driven only by their belief that Labour under Rabin would win the general election. Almost all of Peres' close supporters were elected to high and realistic slots in the list. All the 'Gang of Eight'[48] fared very well, especially Avraham Burg who was elected number three on the list behind Rabin and Peres. On the contrary, the Rabin camp, a hawkish one, did not fare well. Many of Rabin's close supporters, including ex-ministers and members of the Knesset (such as Avraham Katz-Oz, Michael Bar-Zohar, and Shoshana Arebli-Almoslino) failed to be elected.[49] The result of the primaries was, therefore, a very attractive and markedly more dovish list than the previous one.[50] The list contained 17 new faces, half of whom were of non-Ashkenazi background, as well as 4 women. Half of the selected candidates were young (i.e. under the age of 40).

The selection of candidates through primaries was hailed as a success. It made the party look fresh and more appealing.[51] For the first time, this system gave a degree of power to members of the party. The new system deprived the top leaders of the power of selecting or ordering the list of candidates. This change led to the election of candidates in realistic positions who were more independent of their patrons and who felt that their re-election depended on the members of the party, and not on their patrons. Previously, clients had been in no position to oppose their patrons, as was clear with Ben-Gurion and his supporters. One noticeable example of the radical change was the 'Gang of Eight', clients of Shimon Peres but who were able to voice their minds publicly and challenge the party position with regard to peace. They continuously asked for ideological change especially concerning the Palestinians and even the PLO.[52] This debate would later have far-reaching implications for the party in recognizing the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinians. The implicit threat that the 'Gang of Eight' would quit the party and join Meretz if their demands were not met played a constructive role in the peace process.[53] With Rabin as head of Labour and this very attractive list, Labour entered the 1992 election.

The 1992 election

The importance of the 1992 election lay in the fact that for the first time since its electoral defeat in 1977, Labour was able to emerge as a clear winner on a definitive peace platform. Not only did Labour win more seats than Likud, but perhaps more importantly Labour in conjunction with parties to the left had a blocking majority. Labour and parties to its left obtained 61 seats, with Labour alone obtaining 44 seats. As a consequence, Likud had no chance whatsoever to form a government with the support of the right wing and religious parties. Many observers regarded the outcome of the election as another turnabout (*mahapach*).[54]

Interestingly, the election came only six months after the Likud-led government, under intensive American pressure, agreed to attend the Madrid Peace Conference, which eventually commenced in October 1991. Shamir's approval of the international conference was a marked departure from his previous position. Despite this, he was adamantly committed to a 'no-inch' policy.[55] As a consequence of Shamir's uncompromising position during the conference, the Israeli public was more aware of the issues of peace, territories, and security than ever before. For many voters, the territories were a considerable factor defining their voting preferences. A survey conducted by Professor Asher Arian showed that 52 per cent of the electorate felt the issue of territories would influence their vote (less than a third said so in the previous election).[56] Hence voters' evaluations of the performance of both Likud and Labour in respect to the prospect for peace, the Intifada, security, and foreign policy could account for the outcome of the election.

Labour adopted a clever campaign strategy. The Labour campaign centred around one personality, Yitzhak Rabin. Though direct election of the Prime Minister was to be applied from the 1996 election onward, Rabin campaigned as if the 1992 election was a direct one for the premiership.[57] Labour deliberately attempted to personalize the campaign, as Rabin's personality had a wider appeal than Shamir's. For example, the primary slogan for Labour's campaign was 'Israel is waiting for Rabin'. Thus the emphasis was on Rabin rather than on the party. The aforementioned slogan evoked the once popular Israeli song at the time of 1967 war 'Nasser is waiting for Rabin'.[58] Most of the credits for the stunning victory over the combined Arab armies went to Rabin as chief of staff and, of course, Moshe Dayan, then Minister of Defence. The slogan helped to remind the electorate that Rabin could be trusted with matters concerning security. In fact, Rabin surrounded himself with ex-generals such as Avigdor Kahalani and Ephraim Sneh to reinforce his image as 'Mr Security'.[59] This measure placed him, rather than Peres, in an advantageous position to deal successfully with Likud's rhetorical attacks on questions relating to peace and security. For the sake of the election, the name of the party became 'The Labour Party Headed by Rabin'. The focus on Rabin actually helped Labour considerably to gain centrist voters, who were not keen on having another right-wing government. Around 100,000 'soft' Likud supporters, who could be attracted to Rabin rather than Peres, were a target for Labour's campaign centrist strategy.[60]

Aware of Rabin's popularity among the electorate, Likud tried, without success, to ruin his image. Rabin was referred to as the worst Prime Minister Israel ever had, a person who was not qualified for high office (referring to his failure to deal with the Intifada), a man who collapsed under pressure,[61] and a man who favoured a dovish government.[62] Despite these accusations, Rabin remained very popular and his image as Mr Security remained intact. Indeed, it was recognized that much of his domestic weakness as Prime Minister (1974–7) had a lot to do with infighting and personal intrigue within Labour. Now that the party was united behind him, the image was different. Likud's accusation against him as a man inadequate for high office was, therefore, perceived to be groundless. Though it is true that the Intifada erupted and continued while Rabin was Minister of Defence, his replacement by Moshe Arens (Likud) of the defence portfolio following the break-up of the NUG in 1990 did not improve the security situation. As a consequence, the emphasis on personality helped Rabin rather than Shamir. Rabin was much more popular within Israel and, furthermore, more respected internationally. A poll revealed that some 80 per cent of those who abandoned Likud in the 1992 election to vote for Labour were influenced by the fact that Rabin was the candidate for premiership.[63] This indeed shows that internal reforms within Labour eventually paid off. The adoption of primaries for the selection of

the candidate for the premiership and the list to the Knesset stood in a stark contrast to Likud's way of selecting its candidates with its implication of infighting within Likud.

In fact, Likud suffered to a considerable extent from intra-party differences and competition. On 20 February 1992, Yitzhak Shamir defeated both David Levy and Ariel Sharon in the Likud Central Committee in the contest over who would be the candidate for the premiership. Though Levy was placed number four on the list (after Shamir, Arens, and Sharon), his supporters within Likud were relegated to the bottom of the list.[64] This evoked an internal issue within Likud. Levy asserted that his supporters, who were predominantly from a Sephardi background, were victims of a plot by both Shamir and Sharon, driven by anti-Sephardi feelings. This created a public image of Likud as torn by internal disputes and recriminations among the top leaders and had a negative impact on the party. Certainly, the internal acrimonious relations within Likud were not lost on the Labour Party, which made political and electoral capital of it.

Labour was also helped by the lack of a centrist party.[65] In Israeli politics, there had been few centrist parties, that is to say a party between Labour and Likud in the political spectrum. In this connection, it is important to clarify what the Israeli centre means. In fact, it is difficult to define a centre simply because it has to do with three cross-cutting axes: the territorial one, the economic one, and the religious one. For example, it could be argued that Likud is a centrist party with matters relating to religion, but not with matters pertaining to the Occupied Territories. Following the 1967 War and until 1992, three Israeli parties had attempted to occupy the centre. The first was Dash that was headed by Yigal Yadin.[66] Dash was, in fact, the outgrowth of the protest movements in Israel that came into being following the 1973 War with many defectors from Labour.[67] It contested the 1977 election, winning 15 seats, thus contributing to Labour's electoral defeat. This party joined Begin's government but it later disintegrated and consequently disappeared from Israeli politics. Another centrist party was established by Moshe Dayan in 1981 with the name Telem. Dayan and his associates hoped to play a centrist role in Israeli politics. However, it won only three seats in the 1981 election, thus failing to realize its objectives, and as a consequence it, too, disappeared. The other party was Ezer Weizmann's Yahad Party (Together), which won three seats in the 1984 election, but shortly afterwards joined Labour. The non-existence of a centrist party in 1992 compelled both Likud and Labour to vie for portraying an image of being centrist. This clearly worked in Labour's favour in the 1992 election not least due to Rabin's candidacy. This centrist image would have been damaged had Peres, known for his dovish positions, been Labour's leader.

Another factor that considerably affected the outcome of the election was the prospect for peace with the Arab countries. During the negotiations

following the Madrid conference, no progress was actually achieved. It was clear to everyone that as long as Shamir was the head of the government, the prospects for progress in the Middle East peace process were grim. Shamir was determined to keep the process going, while simultaneously inundating the Occupied Territories with more settlers and settlements with the tactical aim of complicating the peace process.[68] This policy, as will be seen below, complicated Israel's relations with the United States and, eventually, led to a confrontation between Shamir and President George Bush.

Likud's emphasis on the West Bank and Gaza Strip was to play into the hands of Labour. Their narrow ideological stand with regard to the political future of the Occupied Territories was leading Israel nowhere. Peace would not be achieved and thus security, which Likud defined as the retention of the territories, would be increasingly threatened. The Israeli public was leaning more and more towards a dovish stand. Likud's argument that Labour would partition the 'Land of Israel' was indeed not a feasible card to play. Roni Milo, then a rising star from Likud, argued that 'Behind Rabin is Peres, behind Peres is Beilin, behind Beilin is Sarid (Meretz), behind Sarid is Miari (of the PLP), and behind Miari is Arafat.'[69] Likud's attempt to persuade the public that Rabin would concede territories to the Palestinians did not save them from a crushing defeat.

Labour, on the other hand, attacked and criticized Likud for the lack of progress in the negotiations that followed the Madrid conference. To portray himself as more capable than Shamir, Rabin pledged that he would be able to conclude an agreement with the Palestinians within six months after taking office.[70] Rabin was, of course, aware of the critical importance of security to the Israelis. Hence, he understood that peace with security was the only solution to the long-standing Arab–Israeli conflict.[71] The continuation of the Intifada associated with deterioration in security played into the hands of Labour.[72] A number of violent incidents during the campaign, resulting in the death of Israelis, helped Labour to accuse Likud of not being tough enough to deter such violence. In his campaign, Rabin's strategy was to give visibility to ex-generals to give the impression that Labour was more capable of dealing with security than Likud. To achieve this aim, Rabin opted for a deliberate policy of sidelining Peres and the dovish candidates by denying them a prominent role in the campaign and instead sent them to talk to the peripheral constituencies and in places where the support for Labour was taken for granted.

Intentionally, Rabin made a distinction between 'political' settlements and 'security' settlements. It was natural that Rabin supported the latter due to their perceived importance in defending the borders of the country, while rejecting the former as an obstacle to peace.[73] Rabin attacked Likud for investing considerable energy on 'political' settlements. Rabin, who had always sought not to antagonize the American administration over the

issue of settlements, made it clear that his government would only invest energy within Israel proper. Labour, as will be seen, was able to corner Likud on this matter.

Certainly other factors, in addition to the ones mentioned above, helped to launch political change. One of these factors was the socio-economic factor, which, again, worked in Labour's favour. The feelings were that Likud mismanaged the economy in a way that led to disappointment. In this regard Likud was on the defensive. State Comptroller, Judge Miriam Ben-Porat was very critical of the Likud government's handling of housing issues. In July 1991, she clashed with the Minister of Housing, Ariel Sharon, at a meeting of the Knesset State Control Committee.[74] In that meeting, she let it be known that one firm (which had not even submitted a bid) was paid NIS8,000 more than originally agreed per prefabricated house. She also criticized the Ministry of Housing over the fact that an engineering firm that had been disqualified by an expert committee was awarded a contract.[75] Such accusations were substantiated by a report issued by the State Comptroller a month before the election. In the report, the government was harshly criticized for 'mismanagement and political opportunism in its effort to absorb the wave of immigrants over the past two years'.[76] In fact, the release of the report was a real 'kick in the teeth' for Likud – it was perceived as not paying attention to the questions of employment and housing. In a sense, Likud was also perceived as less accountable to the electorate.[77] The constituency that was hit hard by Likud's insistence on spending on settlements was that of the development towns. Inhabitants of these towns were usually Likud supporters. Hence Labour, which promised to invest within Israel, made inroads into one of Likud's traditional strongholds.

The Russian factor played a crucial role in Labour's victory.[78] In previous elections, 1984 and 1988, the near parity between the two big parties actually led to a political deadlock. The formation of a government was difficult and the result was two national unity governments. However, in the 1992 election, things changed dramatically. Some 260,000 immigrants from the former Soviet Union were to cast their votes for the first time.[79] Their huge numbers made them a factor that, in theory, would tilt the balance in the favour of either of the two big parties. No wonder that this constituency was a main target of Labour's campaigners.

As Israel geared itself up for the election, Rabin and his team devised a strategy to defeat Likud in this constituency. Throughout the election campaign, Rabin kept focusing on the issue of national priorities. In fact, he coined the phrase 're-ordering the national priorities'. The meaning of this phrase was that while Likud was wasting Israel's resources on settlements in the Occupied Territories to realize an ideological dream, a Labour-led government would reverse this policy. In order to drive a wedge between Likud and its supporters, Labour campaigners made it clear that

should the Israeli electorate entrust Labour to form the next government, the money invested on 'political' security would be re-channelled to infrastructure, to creating jobs, and to housing within the Green Line.[80] This message struck a responsive chord among two important constituencies: the Russian immigrants and the dwellers of development towns, especially when Likud was sharply criticized for mismanagement by the State Comptroller, a non-partisan position.

As a consequence, a majority of Russian immigrants chose to vote for Labour. Their voting for Labour should be understood in the context of their suffering from a lack of housing and jobs. However, on the question of conceding territories to the Palestinians, the majority expressed their preference for the retention of land. For instance, in January 1992, around 54 per cent of the new immigrants favoured not returning territories to the Palestinians.[81] But, when compared with the 75 per cent who supported the position in April 1991,[82] it showed an increasing number of immigrants were leaning towards the notion of a territorial compromise. In fact, these immigrants cast a protest vote against Likud's policies on the above-mentioned issues. Rabin's package of peace with security and prosperity convinced a majority to vote for Labour despite their knowledge that Rabin had always favoured 'peace for land'. As Clive Jones argues:

> By linking the investment of financial and political capital in settlement construction to the degradation of the strategic and socio-economic security of the Jewish State, the Labour alignment produced a platform more attuned to the needs of Israelis in general and the Soviet *olim* [immigrants] in particular.[83]

Coincidentally, a majority of Russian immigrants was, indirectly, influenced by the Bush–Baker position regarding a $10 billion loan guarantee that the Israeli government had requested to help absorb the waves of immigrants.

As was discussed earlier, the Bush–Baker administration was determined to seek an even-handed policy in order to help the parties to the conflict find a satisfactory settlement. President Bush frequently stressed that any settlement of the Arab–Israeli conflict should be based on trading territory for peace and respecting 'legitimate Palestinian rights'.[84] Bush and Baker regarded the settlements as a considerable obstacle to peace. Therefore, the issue of settlement became a bone of contention between Shamir and Bush. Differences between them came to the fore when Shamir's government requested a $10 billion loan guarantee in order to build housing for Russian immigrants. When Bush asked for a freeze on settlement activities as a *quid pro quo* for approving the guarantee, Shamir discarded the American proposal. Shamir went even further when he decided to exert pressure on the American President in the United States in order

to obtain the loan. He urged 'Israel friends' in the Congress to push President Bush to agree. Determined to win the battle, President Bush threatened to use the veto and thus the Congress gave in. President Bush officially rejected the Israeli request in March 1992, only three months before the Israeli election. James Baker believed that Israel should not be given the loan. In his words: 'We were not going to furnish US tax dollars to pursue a course that ran counter to American policy.'[85] The outcome was that Shamir lost the battle and as a result, his relations with the Bush administration deteriorated. Not only did Shamir lose the face-off but American–Israeli relations became strained, albeit for a short time.

Indirectly, the American position helped Rabin to portray Shamir's pig-headedness as the reason for marring Israeli–American relations. On different occasions, Rabin argued that the face-off could have been avoided and Rabin held Shamir responsible for the crisis with the Bush administration. This episode markedly bolstered Rabin's slogan of re-ordering national priorities. Shamir's claims that the United States was trying to coerce Israel to withdraw to the 1967 border and that the US had ceased to be an 'honest broker' did not help him mobilize the masses behind him.[86] Surveys showed that the majority believed that Shamir should have acquiesced to the American request. In a survey conducted in January 1992, 56 per cent of immigrants thought that the Israeli government should agree to the American demands in order to receive the loan. Among those who supported territorial compromise, 84 per cent were, in fact, in favour of accepting the American conditions whereas among those who opposed territorial compromise, only 42 per cent were willing to respond positively to the American terms.[87] The position of the Russian immigrants was a very complicated one, but many among those opposed to territorial compromise changed their preferences, thanks to the American linkage.

It remains debatable though whether or not the American rejection of Shamir's request could be interpreted as interference in the Israeli election. The whole issue of difficulties in absorbing immigrants and the Israeli request for the loan coincided with the 1992 general election. Despite Baker's preference for Rabin over Shamir, he himself denied any design to interfere in the Israeli election. He wrote in his memoirs that:

> Most of my Middle East specialists believed that the peace process would always be in some peril so long as the Shamir government remained in power . . . but it was not a conscious policy on our part to exploit the issue of guarantee/settlement in order to influence Israeli elections.[88]

However, Baker's denial should not be taken at face value. The Bush administration was unquestionably concerned about the peace process. Giving Israel the loan guarantee without any progress in the peace process

could have hurt the image held by the Arab world of the United States as an 'honest broker' and might have put an end to the peace process.[89] Capitulating to Shamir's demands would have antagonized the Arabs and would have destroyed the peace process.

Successfully exploiting the crisis that Shamir initiated with the Bush administration, Labour clarified to the public that investing in settlements and achieving peace, security, prosperity, and good relations with the United States were incompatible. This problem led many, particularly floating, voters, to grapple with the question of whether Labour under the pragmatic leadership of Rabin or Likud under the ideological leadership of Shamir could deliver.

Another factor that strengthened the hand of Labour was the constitutional change that stipulated 1.5 per cent as the electoral threshold. This change raised the number of votes a list needed from around 24,000 votes in the 1988 election to around 40,000 votes in the 1992 election. Though the Labour block gained fewer votes than the Likud block, the Labour block had the blocking majority of 61 seats. Efraim Inbar argued that Labour's victory was a technical one and was due to the fragmentation of the Likud block rather than to the unity of the Labour block.[90] As mentioned earlier, three leftist parties, Mapam, Shinui, and Ratz, merged into Meretz in order to pass the threshold and this strategy paid off. But as a result of the fragmentation of the right, many lists that contested the election just failed to pass the electoral threshold (Tehiya was an example). Hence the votes they received were wasted. Thus Labour was able to gain a clear victory with 44 seats. In second place was Likud with 32 seats. Most importantly though, Rabin felt that he, rather than the party, had won the election. He constructed a working coalition speedily and with few problems.

The formation of the government

The result of the election underlined only one fact: no party but Labour could form a government. The reasons for this, as mentioned earlier, were that Labour and parties to its left held a blocking majority. Labour gained 44 seats, Meretz gained 12 seats, and the Arab parties gained 5 seats. Together they had 61 seats, just enough to prevent the other block from forming a government. Hypothetically, if the Likud block had gained two more seats in the 1992 election, it could have formed a government despite the fact that it had received 12 seats less than Labour.

However, due to a cultural taboo (since the establishment of the state, no government ever has appointed an Arab–Israeli as a minister or has included the Arab parties in the governmental coalition),[91] Rabin could not form his government with the participation of the Arab parties. On this point, both Likud and Labour agreed. Rabin needed the Arab parties only to block any possibility for Likud to put together a government.[92] Indeed,

three major contradicting principles have been behind Israel's formal policy *vis-à-vis* its Palestinian Arab citizens. These are the democratic principle, the Jewish-Zionist principle, and the security concerns.[93] The first feature entails equality and integration. However, the second and third factors in many ways contradict the first. In fact, the security concerns have always had the upper hand in deciding Israel's policy towards its Palestinian Arab minority. In addition to security concerns, what prompted Rabin to exclude the Arab parties from his government was to ensure that any strategic decision, such as a peace that entailed conceding territories, should enjoy the support of a Jewish majority and not just any majority.[94] The Israeli right was furious that the Arabs helped Rabin in establishing a blocking majority. Sharon expressed this sentiment in an article published by *Yediot Aharonot* on 3 July 1992, in which he argued that:

> The genuine political upheaval in the State of Israel did not occur in 1977 but in 1992, since the rise of the Likud just replaced one Jewish political block by another. In 1992 elections a completely different thing took place and it was worrisome and scary: for the first time in the history of the state [Israel], the Arab minority – in particular the anti-Zionist part amongst it – has determined who will be in power in the state of Israel and who will shape its future.[95]

As a consequence, the Arab parties understood that Rabin expected their support in the Knesset in return for meeting some of their demands.[96] Because of the cultural taboo, Rabin was left without any option but to woo some of the right and religious parties to participate and thus 'legitimize' his regime. Besides, Rabin sought coalition partners to the right of Labour in order to balance the dovish majority in his government, which would have been composed of the Peres' camp and Meretz. Consequently he invited Shas (6 seats), the NRP (6 seats), Yahadut Ha Torah (4 seats) and Tzomet (8 seats) for negotiations. Though all of them expressed their desire to take part in the government, there were disagreements among the parties, especially Tzomet and the NRP on the one hand and Meretz on the other hand, over three issues: settlements, religion, and distribution of portfolios.[97] Rafael Eitan of Tzomet sought the education portfolio, which had been already given to Shulamit Aloni of Meretz (known for her anti-religious stance). The allocation of the education portfolio to Aloni further angered the NRP and Yahadut Ha Torah who were completely provoked by this appointment. As a consequence, negotiations became very difficult and were aggravated by the fact that Rabin appointed Haim Ramon – known for his anti-clerical ideas – to run coalition negotiations. Unsurprisingly the coalition talks collapsed.

Among the parties invited to negotiate a coalition, Shas was the most acceptable to Labour due to its relatively moderate views on the peace

process in comparison to other parties, and due to the fact that Haim Ramon enjoyed good relations with its leader Aryeh Deri. Shas was more interested in the portfolio of the Interior Ministry and the deputy post of Minister of Education in order to channel funds for its school system and to meet the demands of its Sephardi community. The party's position with regard to the future of the Occupied Territories was closer to that of Labour's than that of Likud's. Its mentor, Rabbi Yosef Ovadia, advocated the apocalyptic biblical concept of *pikuh nefsh,* which gives priority to saving Jewish lives. He repeatedly ruled that giving up territories in order to avert a war (in which Jewish lives would be lost) was permissible.[98] His support of territorial concessions, however, derived not from lack of desire or belief in the integrity of *Eretz Yisrael*, but from his fears over the possible loss of Jewish lives. Eventually, Shas joined Rabin's government. Yet, as we will see in chapter 6, Shas has undergone another transformation that has lodged the party firmly in the hard-nosed right political spectrum when it comes to dealing with the Palestinians.

Rabin had to appoint Shimon Peres as a Minister of Foreign Affairs due to the latter's intra-party strength. The majority of Labour members in the Knesset belonged to the Peres camp. Although Rabin sought to balance hawks and doves, three ministers from Meretz joined the government and made Rabin's government the most dovish in the history of Israel. This factor is very important in explaining Israel's movement to a peace with both the PLO and subsequently with Jordan.

Conclusions

This chapter has demonstrated the crucial importance of intra-party developments within the Labour Party and their bearing on the making of Israel's foreign policy. The main argument advanced in this chapter is that the electoral victory of Labour in the 1992 general elections and the subsequent formation of the most pragmatic government in Israel's short history in part provided the conditions for Israel to respond positively to the developments in regional and international environments.

During the Labour Movement's dominance in Israeli politics up to its first electoral defeat in 1977, the selection of the candidates' list to the Knesset was conducted through an oligarchic process. A committee appointed by the top leaders would choose the list in a manner compatible with the interests of top leaders thus creating a patron–client relationship. Two outcomes were the result: first Labour gradually stopped being representative or responsive to the electorate. The second was that the clients did not have a marked say on policy formulation. The eventual outcome of this oligarchic process contributed, *inter alia*, to the downfall of the party in 1977. In fact, prior to the party's electoral failure, no serious

attempts to introduce reforms were made because Labour had won every time through what Israelis called the *mahapach*.

However, with the consecutive defeats of Labour in the post-1977 election, pressures for introducing democratic reforms mounted from within the party. Many came to the conclusion that Labour would simply never win elections without adopting reforms. The impetus for reform, in fact, was led by the young generation, who happened to be dovish, such as Uzi Baram, who ran for, and actually won, the election for the General-Secretary of the Party in 1984 on the platform of democratic reform within the party.

A number of reforms were introduced before the 1988 election, but nevertheless Labour was defeated. Following the 'dirty exercise'[99] of April 1990, Shimon Peres was discredited as chairman of the party. Hence an increasing number of Labourites called for adopting primaries in order to choose the candidate for the premiership and the list of candidates for the Knesset. The idea of introducing primaries was given momentum when many were convinced that this step would help rehabilitate the party and would produce a much more attractive, representative, and responsive list. The general feeling was that in order for Labour to regain power, radical reforms had to be taken.

A key to understanding why Labour won in 1992 was the replacement of Peres by the more popular Rabin. Interestingly, Likud wished that Peres had won over Rabin because Shamir would have then defeated him.[100] However, as has been demonstrated in this chapter, even supporters of Peres switched their votes to Rabin on this occasion. This argument is substantiated by the fact that those who voted for Rabin, to help the party regain power, voted for Peres' camp in selecting the list.[101] Peres did emerge victorious in the list, which was why Rabin had little choice but to appoint him Foreign Minister.

Internal reforms led to two developments within Labour that had a far-reaching implication on the peace process. The first development was that without primaries, Rabin's chance to unseat Peres would have been slim. Rabin had failed in 15 years to change the balance of power within the party in his favour and he remained almost an outsider to the apparatuses of the party. Rabin's assumption of the party leadership helped make the inroads necessary in Likud's constituencies. The second development was that the younger generation, which gained pre-eminence, had a clear dovish ideology and adopted a position of compromise towards the Palestinians and the PLO. For example, Avraham Burg, who advocated negotiations with the PLO, was elected number three on the list only after Rabin and Peres. Their prominence, in fact, reflected the fact that the wider public was becoming more dovish, thanks to the Intifada. Without primaries, the ascendance of a dovish Youth would have been unlikely to materialize. This change is crucial in understanding the later transformation of the party *vis-à-vis* the PLO. These influential dovish people, who later occupied

some important portfolios or governmental positions, were helped by Meretz to give Rabin's government a dovish posture.

As was demonstrated in the chapter, a combination of interrelated factors contributed to Labour's victory. Factors such as the peace process, security, the socio-economic situation in Israel, and the American proposal to make a loan guarantee conditional on a freeze on settlement were important. Those who helped Labour to victory knew that Labour would be more forthcoming than Likud in negotiations with the Arabs. However, other factors were important in making the Labour government capable of deciding on peace. Labour, according to Yossi Beilin, had missed many opportunities for achieving peace prior to 1977 by being torn by internal differences that made a decision on peace a prescription for the disintegration of the party. Therefore unity of purpose and consensus over the desire to achieve peace were essential for Labour to win its way back to government and to rule efficiently. The next chapter will show how important personalities were to be in achieving this since the rapprochement between the life-long rivals, Peres and Rabin, was a key to this process.

4 The politics of personality

So far, it has been established that Rabin's electoral victory in 1992 was of crucial significance in facilitating Israel's road to peace. After successfully concluding the Oslo Accord on 13 September 1993, it was Rabin – with his reputation as 'Mr Security' – who was able to sell the Oslo Accord to the Israeli public. Rabin's stance and his thinking were key to understanding Israel's historic decision to sign the Oslo Accord and consequently to secure a peace treaty with Jordan.

Rabin's approach to peacemaking was shaped by two key factors: the Jewish prism, through which he perceived the world, and what might be termed his personal traits such as his lack of trust of others and his suspicious nature. It may seem unusual or perhaps even unwarranted to attribute so much influence to one man's personality, but where there are a few people directly and constantly involved in a process, it is surely inevitable that their own personal traits will come to bear on the outcome. There are some scholars who have argued, to the author's mind convincingly, that such traits play a vital role in the making of any foreign policy decision. Michael J. Shapiro and G. Mathew Bonham stress that 'beliefs of foreign policy decision-makers are central to the study of decision outputs and probably account for more of the variance than any other single factor'.[1] Other scholars contest the argument about the significance of these psychological factors. For example, Herbert Kelman argues that though the characteristics and beliefs of decision-makers do matter they are probably of minor importance.[2] In Israel's case, however, the role of personality in the making of Israel's foreign policy does matter. Its importance stems from the fact that foreign policy decision-making in Israel is what we may describe as highly personalized. The impact of Rabin's personal traits on his attitude towards the Arab–Israeli conflict, which were accentuated by the Jewish prism, was considerable.

Michael Brecher believes that the idea of 'Jewishness' is the dominant attitudinal prism in the foreign policy decision-making process in Israel. **'**Jewishness' is simply a concept that refers to the impact of factors such as historic experience, national character, and cultural heritage on Israeli

leaders' perceptions of the world. This 'Jewishness' pervades 'thought, feeling, belief, and behaviour in the political realm'.[3] In other words, decision-makers see reality through their perception of Jewish history. This predisposes them to act in a particular way. Decision-makers' choices are therefore directly guided by their views, and influenced by the resulting psychological environment. These views will, of course, include their beliefs about the other actors involved in the decision-making process as well as their opinions and perceptions of the outside world. Brecher contends that decision-makers in foreign policy in fact operate:

> [w]ithin a context of psychological predispositions. These comprise (a) societal factors, such as ideology and tradition, which derive from the cumulative historical legacy; and (b) personality factors – the idiosyncratic qualities of decision-makers – that is, those aspects of elite attitudes which are not generated by their role occupancy.[4]

Therefore, given that Israel was born out of war and its survival as an independent state was perceived by its leaders to be under constant threat, the Jewish prism is of great help in understanding many of Rabin's opinions and policies.

This chapter is made up of four sections. The first part focuses on what we may describe as Rabin's belief system. Rabin's understanding of modern Jewish history enhanced a sense of insecurity and as a consequence he placed national security as the highest priority and duty for Israel. A second section explores how he perceived the immediate regional environment, that being the Middle East within which he perceived the Arab–Israeli conflict to be taking place. A third section analyses how the perennial rivalry and lack of mutual trust between Rabin and Peres actually hindered Israel's road to peace during Rabin's first tenure (1974–7) but also during the years of the NUG (1984–90). As the chapter demonstrates the rapprochement between them was a necessary pre-condition for the move towards peace. A final section examines the causes of changes that Rabin had experienced, particularly the impact of the Intifada on his mindset. Indeed, as we shall see, this was an especially formative period.

Rabin's belief system

The need to examine Rabin's belief system when explaining Israel's road to peace with Jordan and the Palestinians derives from the argument that decision-makers in general act in response to their subjective *perception* of reality and not to reality itself.[5] The emphasis on Rabin rather than other decision-makers within the Labour-led government (1992–6) is justified by the fact that Rabin rather than Peres won the 1992 general election. Rabin was convinced that Labour would not have won had he not been

the candidate for the premiership and as a result he felt that he was strong enough to assert his authority over his colleagues within the party. There was a shift in the way Rabin dealt with his colleagues after his electoral victory in 1992 when he insisted on his exclusive right to appoint ministers. He was determined to be the undisputed leader. This was in sharp contrast to his first term as Prime Minister, when he did not have much say in the appointment of his ministers. In his victory speech in 1992, he declared: 'I will lead the coalition negotiations. . . . And I will appoint the cabinet ministers.'[6] Another reason for the emphasis on Rabin is that many Israelis consider him as the only one who would have been able to take such a bold step and survive politically. As Dan Schueftan argues: 'to understand this historic decision [signing the Oslo Accord and the peace treaty with Jordan] one should only focus on one person; that is Rabin. Were it not for Yitzhak Rabin, I doubt if this change would have happened.'[7]

It is argued in this chapter that Jewishness, a military career, and the Arab–Israeli conflict were the main contributing factors to Rabin's psychological makeup and his attitudinal prism. These elements in fact enhanced a sense of insecurity and reinforced Rabin's perception of power, especially military power, as a crucial determinant in the political equation. This, as we shall see, becomes important for his perception of the conflict with the Arab world. Rabin was an ardent Zionist, a believer in the 'Jews' right' to have a state of their own in Palestine. Rabin placed himself in this tradition, and his actions must be understood as inspired by his Jewish and Zionist background. A state for Jews, the Zionists thought, would provide them with something that they had sought for so many centuries, that being security. Somewhat ironically, the establishment of this state, which was meant to provide a peaceful, safe haven for Jews, of course, actually resulted in a continuous state of war with the Arab world. The Jewish sense of insecurity was thereby reinforced following the establishment of the Jewish state rather than being assuaged.[8]

This feeling of insecurity was to haunt Yitzhak Rabin throughout his career and was amplified by his sense of Jewish history.[9] This sense of insecurity had its origins in a general Jewish inclination to see themselves as a people living in isolation. The root of this idea lies in the experiences of displacement and enslavement which the Jews suffered periodically throughout biblical times, and perhaps even more importantly, in the religious interpretation these afflictions were given by the rabbis. A biblical verse depicts Israel as 'a people that shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations'.[10] Ezer Weizmann regarded this sense of insecurity and isolation as part of Jewish heritage and connected it to the absence of peace. In an interview with *Spectrum*, a Labour Party monthly published in English, he refers to the fears as part of a 'ghetto mentality'.[11] This mentality Weizmann described as 'a mentality that perceives everyone

on the outside as an enemy'.[12] Yitzhak Rabin also saw the world through this prism, and through it had interpreted the events taking place in the international arena. In 1975, for example, Rabin reacted to the United Nations resolution equating Zionism with racism by saying: 'the whole world is against us – when was this not so?'[13]

Rabin also had the characteristic suspicion of the non-Jewish world (*goyim*)[14] which stemmed from a deep-rooted belief (among Israeli Jews) that the world is in fact divided between Jew and Gentile. Michael Brecher has depicted this attitude as a 'two-camp' thesis.[15] This thesis assumes that the Gentile world is endurably hostile to the Jews. For example, in 1988, when an international tribunal ruled in favour of Egypt on the issue of Taba, the Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, commented that this was yet more evidence that the world was against the Jews. Rabin himself displayed a similar attitude when he commented on the international criticism of Israel's harsh measures against the Intifada in February 1988 by saying: 'beating Jews is unimportant; but when a Jew is beating – this is news'.[16] As we shall see below, this chronic insecurity had an impact on his analysis of, and approach to, the immediate issues at hand.

Rabin's perception of the Middle East

Efraim Inbar argues that the key to understanding Rabin's approach to the Arab–Israeli conflict is the concept of 'national security' in the Jewish State.[17] Early in his life, Rabin realized that the security of Jews and consequently that of Israel was indeed what was at stake. He had lived through the violent disputes with the Palestinians in the pre-state era which had been especially belligerent in the 1940s.[18] This experience had reinforced his Jewish prism and his prejudice of the Jews' inherent vulnerability, and had led him to place national security as the top political priority to which Israeli governments must subordinate everything else. Efraim Inbar's argument corroborates the idea outlined earlier on, namely that Rabin's military background,[19] and his view of both Jewish history and the conflict with the Arabs made him see relations with them through 'realpolitik lenses'.[20] He believed in the indispensability of power and the utility of force in Jews' relations with the Arabs.

Rabin's obsession with security and power appears to be wholly consistent with a particular version of the realist school of thought in international relations. Certain parts of realism assume that a state pursues its own national interests through power politics. Hans Morgenthau even argues that power is an end in itself.[21] Rabin was therefore a realist in at least two senses. First, he had no doubt that Israel's physical survival, as a viable nation-state, was what was at stake. Second, he believed that military power was the key to the survival of Israel. Yet, as we have established, ideology in the form of Jewishness was also a powerful influence.

Rabin's assumptions on security and power were given expression in the 'Activist' school within Mapai, a party associated with Ben-Gurion (see chapter 1). This school of thought assumed that a demonstration of strength was a necessary condition to deter the Arabs from toying with the idea of destroying Israel and to convince the Arabs that nothing could be achieved except through negotiations. It is ironic, however, that the advocates of this school turned down many proposals for a peaceful settlement to the Arab–Israeli conflict, as New Historians such as Avi Shlaim have demonstrated.[22]

Though Rabin had never been an official member of Ben-Gurion's 'Activist' group, he firmly believed in the rationale behind their formulations. Nonetheless, unlike the Activists who sought to gain more territories by following an Activist approach, he hoped, rather, that peace and security would be its dividend. He insisted that the best way to promote security was to make peace with the Arab states.[23] Therefore, it was not surprising that he concluded his memoirs with the following statement:

> I must say that as a man who led his country's struggle both on the battlefield and in political negotiations, who has been privileged to amass a unique combination of experience as a soldier, a diplomat and a head of government, there is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that the risks of peace are preferable by far to the grim certainties that await every nation in war.[24]

Despite the espousal of a peaceful way as the only good way forward – as expressed above – Rabin was in fact perceived as a hawk by the Israeli public. In his treatment of Labour's position on national security, Efraim Inbar made a distinction between Labour's elites by placing them along a dovish–hawkish continuum. He used several variables to make such a classification. These were the level of perception of threat, attitude towards the use of force, and position on the Palestinian problem.[25] According to these criteria, a Labourite can be hawk, dove, or *yonetz*. A hawk would have perceived a great threat, would be sceptical about the possibility of achieving peace with its adversaries, and as a consequence would prefer a long-term interim agreement in order to arrive at a comprehensive settlement. In contrast, a dove would perceive little threat, would believe that peace was possible, and would have a greater sense of urgency. However, all Labourites agreed on one issue, that is that territorial compromise was possible in order to achieve peace. The normative concern for this position, as discussed in chapter 1, was demographics, while the qualitative concern was the desire to preserve Israel as a Jewish and a democratic state.

Despite the fact that Rabin had never identified himself formally with the hawkish camp within Labour, he was, nevertheless, by all yardsticks, a hawk. He saw the threat as remaining high even after the conclusion of

a peace treaty with Egypt, the most powerful front-line Arab state. The Israeli–Egyptian peace treaty of 1979 relieved Israel from serious and genuine security threats. Rabin himself acknowledged the advantages of the peace with Egypt when he argued that cuts in defence budget were only possible after the peace treaty with Egypt.[26] Besides, unlike Peres, Rabin felt no need to rush towards a settlement for peace. He believed that Israel should wait until the Arabs reconciled themselves to conditions favourable to Israel. He never shared the doves' argument that if progress were not made, a war would be imminent or inevitable.[27]

Like many Israeli leaders, Rabin perceived the Palestinian problem within the context of the Arab–Israeli conflict, that is to say as inter-state conflict. To Rabin, the question of war or peace was one to be settled with the Arab states and not with the Palestinians.[28] Because of his state-centric view of the Arab–Israeli conflict, he had never attached much importance to the Palestinians or the PLO, hence his rejection of the PLO as a potential partner for peace. On many occasions, he expressed his refusal to deal or negotiate with them. To him, the PLO was not qualified to be a partner because he viewed it as a 'terrorist' organization, aimed at destroying Israel.[29] During his first visit to the United States during the presidency of Jimmy Carter in March 1977, at a working dinner at the White House, Rabin dismissed any opportunity to embark on negotiations with the PLO. In his words: '[W]hat basis is there for negotiations with the PLO, whose avowed *raison d'être* is to destroy Israel and replace her with a Palestinian state?'[30] Like all of his Labour colleagues, his opposition to dealing with the PLO was a fundamental strategy rather than a tactical manoeuvre. In fact, Labour regarded Jordan as the legitimate partner and so there was no need to deal with the PLO.[31] In March 1988, Rabin affirmed this point when he declared:

> I am opposed to a Palestinian PLO state between Israel and Jordan. Since I am totally opposed to this, I am also totally opposed to negotiations with the PLO. . . . At the same time, [I support] a readiness to return – within the framework of peace – the densely populated Palestinian areas to a foreign sovereignty, to Jordan.[32]

Another reason for Rabin's and indeed Labour's rejection of negotiations with the PLO was the fear that such a move would eventually lead to the creation of a Palestinian state between Jordan and Israel. To Rabin and a majority within Labour, this would be the worst scenario imaginable. Such a possibility, they believed, was tantamount to political suicide on the part of Israel: a third state between Israel and Jordan would not be a solution to the conflict but rather the focus of hostility and hatred towards Israel. In 1988, Rabin described such a state as a cancer in the heart of the Middle East.[33] Given the fact that around 20 per cent of Israelis were Arab

Palestinians there were fears that the people of such a state would be irredentist. Even his arch-rival, Shimon Peres, who was regarded as a dove, rejected the PLO as a partner lest this should lead to a Palestinian state. Peres, in his memoirs, gave several reasons for rejecting the idea of a Palestinian state led by the PLO. He contended that such a state 'would split western Palestine down the middle, leaving Israel with an untenable and indefensible narrow waist'.[34] Peres also maintained that:

> A Palestinian state, though demilitarised at first, would over time invariably strive to build up a military strength of its own, and the international community, depending upon massive Second and Third world support at the UN, would do nothing to stop it . . . it would pose a constant threat to our security and to the peace and stability of the region.[35]

He also believed that a Palestinian state under the PLO would be ideologically committed to the destruction of Israel.[36] It is easy to see how Rabin, like most of Labour's members, actually preferred Jordan as a partner. This remained his position right up until 1993 when he endorsed Peres and Beilin's plan for peace with the PLO (the reasons for the later defection from the Jordanian option are discussed further on in this chapter). Yet as was shown in chapter 1, the Jordanian option constituted the cornerstone of Labour's proposed settlement of the conflict, which consisted of a territorial compromise in which the West Bank would be partitioned between Jordan and Israel. This policy also stemmed from the fact that Labour's elite on the whole preferred to deal with King Hussein of Jordan as the Palestinian representative rather than Yasser Arafat of the PLO. Unlike Arafat, Hussein was perceived as a moderate leader who could be trusted. There were good reasons for this: Arafat was perceived as pro-Soviet whereas Hussein was perceived as pro-Western.[37]

The realization of the Jordanian option would have relieved Israel of the demographic threat that Palestinians in the Occupied Territories potentially posed. This was in fact Labour's argument and rationale for adopting the Jordanian option. Rabin declared in 1988 that it was only because of the demographic problem that he opposed the idea of a Greater Israel. Besides, as we saw in chapter 1, the implementation of the Jordanian option would keep Israel as both Jewish and democratic.

Upon his assumption of the premiership in 1974, Rabin had envisioned a territorial compromise with Jordan along the lines of the Allon Plan of 1967. In brief, this plan suggested giving up densely populated areas to Jordan and retaining strategic areas vital for the security of Israel. However, the Jordanian option was a non-starter.[38] King Hussein, in his clandestine meetings with the Israeli leaders, rejected the Allon Plan and insisted on the return of all the Occupied Territories including East Jerusalem as a *quid pro quo* for a peace agreement.

As mentioned, Rabin's sense of urgency was at this point what may be termed low. He believed that the political status quo was not threatening Israel's security. He perceived the regional environment in the 1980s as a benign one.[39] There were no serious threats to the security of Israel. The Israeli–Egyptian peace treaty had neutralized Egypt and relieved Israel of another possible war front. In addition, Iraq – a distant, but ever present threat – was bogged down in a bloody war with Iran. The First Gulf War (1980–8) diverted the attention and resources of the Arab states, weakened their military options, and more importantly, diminished the prospect for any revival of the eastern front, at least for the foreseeable future.

As a consequence, Rabin believed that time was in Israel's favour. Joseph Alpher argues that playing for time was a key component of Rabin's strategy *vis-à-vis* the Arab–Israeli conflict.[40] The belief that time was on their side, and that delaying tactics promised the best outcome for the least risk or cost, had been an intrinsic part of the mainstream Zionist approach to the Arab–Israeli conflict since the establishment of the state. This tactic was best exemplified by Ben-Gurion's policies in the 1950s. For Rabin as well, playing for time was a constant characteristic of his approach in dealing with the Arab world. Avi Shlaim makes a similar point when he argues that Rabin, in his first tenure as Prime Minister (1974–7), had sought to gain time.[41] His strategy, in Shlaim's words, was 'to rebuild the iron wall of Jewish military strength to such a point that concessions could not be conceivably interpreted as a sign of weakness'.[42] Much more troubling for Rabin was how to rebuild Israeli morale and the economy in the post-1973 War era without alienating the United States and without meeting the demands of the Arabs. Immediately after the 1973 War, the Arabs felt their power to have been augmented, perceiving that they had delivered a bloody nose to Israel in the war, and that the world had now become dependent on their source of oil. Indeed, the energy crisis that had been caused by the war had increased the international political importance of the Arabs. Rabin understood these two new developments and decided that Israel should not concede while it was perceived to be weak.[43] On many occasions he had attached great importance to the necessity for Israel to be perceived as a strong player. In February 1976, he declared:

> Our future power will determine the chances for peace in our region. Weakness is not a recipe for negotiation. If our neighbours come to realize that Israel is not weak, they will eventually see the rationale for mutual compromise, reconciliation and peace.[44]

Furthermore Rabin, and other hawks within Labour, thought that Israel should delay any deal with the Arabs until the Arabs reconciled themselves to the right of Israel to actually exist. To him, time was needed to allow the Arabs to change their positions with regard to Israel. Besides,

time was considered a significant factor to test the authenticity of the Arabs' moderation.

As demonstrated in the previous section, Rabin's Jewish prism enforced his realpolitik approach to the Arab–Israeli conflict. Equally important to mention is that this approach was reinforced by personal traits of Rabin, such as his suspicions nature and his tendency not to trust others. The following section outlines these personal traits in greater depth and looks at how such traits marred his relationship with Shimon Peres and eventually hindered the peace process.

The rivalry with Peres

As previously pointed out, scholars, such as Michael Brecher in his study of Israel's foreign policy system, stress the significance of personality traits of the decision-makers on issues relating to foreign policy.[45] Brecher analyses the personality traits of the main decision-makers in Israel in the first two decades of its establishment and claims that the most striking dichotomy was between decisiveness and hesitancy. He concluded that David Ben-Gurion was decisive and Moshe Sharett was hesitant.[46] In this section, it is posited that Rabin's suspicious nature and his mistrust of Shimon Peres at first hindered the peace process. It is argued as well that after the 1992 elections, co-operation and a working partnership developed between Rabin and Peres, which in fact helped the Labour-led government conclude the Oslo Accord with the Palestinians and the subsequent peace treaty with Jordan.[47]

One of the most striking traits of Rabin personality, according to Yehudit Auerbach, was what the latter terms the 'Affiliation Motive', which is 'manifest on the one hand in seeking support and loyalty, and on the other hand in mistrust and hostility towards the immediate environment'.[48] This was evident in Rabin's approach to his social environment. Indeed three personal traits of Rabin could explain his attitude towards those around him. These may be described as suspicion, fear of intrigue and the need to protect himself from an environment he felt to be continuously hostile.[49] These three traits were exacerbated by the constant rivalry with Shimon Peres over the leadership of the Labour Party and the premiership. It is argued that their complex relationship, which was characterized by mutual mistrust and competition for power, contributed to the immobility in Israel's foreign policy with regard to peace in Rabin's first term (1974–7).

It is important to understand that the seeds of Rabin's doubts and lack of faith in Shimon Peres may have been sown as far back as the 1950s. When Rabin was appointed Deputy Chief of Staff, his relationship with Zur, the then Chief of Staff, was not an easy one. He blamed Peres for this, because, as he stated in his memoirs, he felt that the latter had tried to undermine his position as Deputy Chief of Staff by spoiling Rabin's relationship with Zur. In Rabin's words:

> I was sure that Zur's discontent was being nourished by some external factor. I believed that the man who pressed for my replacement was none other than Deputy Defence Minister Shimon Peres. I was a thorn in his side and he wanted me out of the key post I held.[50]

Being not only of the same generation but also of a similar age, they saw in each other a serious competitor for the premiership – as if they were two fellow students vying for top influence in student government throughout a long academic career. Their first political rivalry came in 1974 following the resignation of Prime Minister Golda Meir several months after the fiasco of the 1973 War. It was this war which had discredited the government in the estimation of the public.[51] As a consequence, the Labour Party was in need of fresh politicians who had not been involved in the debacle of the war. Rabin and Peres were ideal candidates and so declared themselves prepared and willing to run. According to Rabin, both agreed to regard the contest as a fair game and whoever won the other would be loyal. Rabin wrote later that, although he had not believed Peres, he had no objection to this gentleman's agreement – taking it as he did, with a pinch of salt. In Rabin's words: 'I was wary and my inclination was not to believe a word he said. Moreover, I was determined that if he became the next prime minister I would not set foot in the Cabinet.'[52]

Though Rabin won with a narrow margin of 298 against 254, he believed that the contest had not been fought fairly by Peres. Some of Rabin's evidence for this view was that Ezer Weizmann, then a Likud member, disclosed a story about Rabin on the eve of the Six-Day War in which Weizmann claimed that Rabin had suffered a nervous breakdown.[53] Rabin had made a link between the timing of this revelation and the election contest. He cited Weizmann as saying: 'I am not a member of Mapai [Labour], but a friend of Peres.'[54] However, Rabin failed to substantiate his accusation that Weizmann's timing had been orchestrated with Peres with hard evidence. In fact, in his capacity as Chief of Staff from 1964–8, Rabin had preferred Bar-Lev as a deputy Chief of Staff over Weizmann.[55] Accordingly, one can speculate that Weizmann was looking for a chance to settle an account with Rabin, rather than Peres conspiring against him. Rabin's suspicious nature had led him to assume the worst.

This suspicion of, and personal rivalry with, Peres led Rabin to be reluctant to appoint his rival to a senior position in his cabinet. Peres, however, expected to be appointed as Minister of Defence. He regarded himself as fit for such a job given his long career dealing with defence matters.[56] Peres had been Deputy Director-General of the Ministry of Defence in 1952 and Director-General the following year. He had been appointed Deputy Minister of Defence in 1959 and remained so until his resignation in 1965. Rabin considered Yigal Allon to be the most suitable for this post and definitely not Peres. He wrote:

> I did not consider Peres suitable, since he had never fought in the IDF and his experience in arms purchasing did not make up for that lack of field experience. But the choice was not up to me. If Peres failed to receive the defence portfolio, the Rafi faction of the Labour Party would withhold its support from the new Cabinet, thereby ripping the party asunder. So, after consultations with Pinhas Sapir and other colleagues, I accepted Peres as defence minister – albeit with a heavy heart. It was an error I would regret and whose price I would pay in full.[57]

The new Prime Minister could not contain his dissatisfaction with Peres assuming the defence portfolio. Taking a dramatic step, he appointed Ariel Sharon as his advisor on defence matters. It was understood that this move was meant to undermine the authority of the Defence Minister and the then Chief of Staff, Mordechai Gur (who enjoyed a good relationship with Peres). Their personal relations were to such an extent that Rabin indicated in his memoirs that he 'was dogged by the feeling that he [Peres] had been "running" for Prime Minister ever since April 1974, when the Central Committee vote chose me as Labour candidate to form a government'.[58] He was convinced that his downfall in 1977 had been due to personal intrigue.[59] There was a singular lack of co-operation because they were constantly at war with each other. In fact, they hardly co-operated at all in pursuing peace with the Arabs. Rabin was convinced that Peres was constantly plotting against him in order to wrest the reins of the premiership from his hands.[60]

Their mutual antagonism and mistrust was therefore tremendous and had arguably a substantial and negative impact on the conduct of government. This at least in part hindered the proposed disengagement agreement with Jordan in 1974. As was mentioned in chapter 1, the Israeli cabinet was divided over the issue. Rabin gave priority to an agreement with Egypt and argued that any concession in the West Bank would cost Labour dearly. This, however, was refuted by polls which showed that a majority among the public would have supported a disengagement agreement with Jordan.[61] Yigal Allon favoured an agreement with Jordan. Peres, at the time opposed to any territorial concession to King Hussein, advocated the notion of functional co-operation with Jordan. His opposition dissuaded Rabin from thinking of such an agreement with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Despite Rabin's support of Yigal Allon's territorialist view, his fear of Peres contributed to his rejection of Allon's ideas.[62]

The Labour Party was at this point divided around the two personalities. Those who allied themselves to Rabin were known as Rabin's camp and those who preferred Peres were called Peres' camp. The two men had clashed over almost every national matter. Suffice it here to mention the Kaddum case of 1975. This case indeed crystallized the schism between the two men. It started when Gush Emunim (the Block of the Faithful)

attempted to set up a new settlement in the West Bank in an area which, according to Rabin, was insignificant to the security of Israel.[63] Members of Gush Emunim succeeded in settling on a site they called Elon Moreh in Sebastia near Nablus. Rabin sought to evict the settlers by force, only to be opposed by his Minister of Defence Peres. The result of the struggle between the key decision-makers coupled with the support of the NRP for the settlers compelled Rabin to cave in. Rabin, out of fear of Peres, allowed the settlers to move to a nearby military camp. The fact that the Kaddum arrangement was imposed on Rabin by Peres left a deep impact on the former. As we shall see later, that was why in 1992 Rabin insisted on keeping the defence portfolio for himself. Without the support of Peres the settlers would have had little chance of succeeding because the moderates in the NRP like Yosef Burg supported the settlers only after they saw that the Labour Party was divided over the issue. This Gush Emunim settlement would not be the last, and the persistent rift between the two statesmen enabled other anti-peace movements to establish yet more illegal settlements. The greater their number, the more difficult a complete turnover of the West Bank to Jordan or the PLO would become – a result not undesirable to those Israelis with no intention of making peace with the Arabs.

Although there were no marked ideological differences between Rabin and Peres, as they both represented the mainstream Zionist approach that Israel must be both Jewish and democratic regardless of the size of Israel, it probably useful at this point to recall the key differences between them in their strategic approach to achieve this goal. As was discussed in chapter 1, Peres was associated with Dayan's conception of a functional approach to the West Bank and Gaza. Peres was convinced that economic integration had the potential to bring the Palestinians into the Israeli economy and that this would in turn bring about coexistence and peace. He never concealed his opinion that despite the cultural differences between the Palestinians and Israelis, he felt they could function in one single economy. Dayan also followed this approach when he was a defence minister in the aftermath of the 1967 War. Peres was unfazed by the argument that such an action would lead to the dilution of the Jewish nature or that the Palestinians would probably outnumber the Israelis. He contended that this problem could be solved by the provision of Jordanian citizenship to the Palestinians. Peres held that Israel would be better off if it could negotiate with Jordan to establish a condominium in the West Bank.

For that reason, Peres supported Dayan's 'open bridge' policy that aimed at linking the Palestinians in the West Bank with the Jordanians, thus defusing the tension in the West Bank.[64] Notwithstanding the Jordanian disengagement from the West Bank in 1988, Peres was still influenced by his ideas on the importance of economic factors in facilitating peaceful coexistence. In his book, *The New Middle East*, Peres stressed the importance of these economic factors.[65] Whereas both Rabin and Peres gave

precedence to security, Peres gave less importance to the role of territories in achieving security due to the advancement of both technology and warfare. Peres came to believe that the key to constructing a secured regional order lay in economic and political factors and not merely the possession of military power. The necessity to secure a suitable standard of living for the inhabitants of the region, he argued in his book, entailed competitive trade relations and open borders.

Rabin, who was very much influenced by his mentor Yigal Allon, did not subscribe to the functional approach. He instead believed in a territorial solution that was based on disengagement from the Palestinians. He adopted the Allon Plan and favoured a territorial compromise based on this plan. Although he agreed that the Palestinian and Israeli economies could be integrated, he believed in military power as the ultimate guarantee to Israeli security.

Yet their key differences were accentuated by their personalities. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Rabin was pessimistic about the future and of a suspicious nature, and for these reasons, Rabin sought to realize a complete disengagement from the Palestinians. On the other hand, Peres was optimistic by nature, and his optimistic nature led him to believe in a pragmatic approach regarding the peace process. The differences between Rabin and Peres were also reflected in the drafting of the Oslo Accord of 1993 since they led to some contradictions in the Accord which later contributed to its breakdown.

Labour's defeat in the 1977 election had pushed the party into opposition. For the first time since the 1930s, the party was to play no role in foreign policy decision-making. In the party's time either in opposition or sharing power with Likud, Peres was able to consolidate his power within the party at the expense of Rabin. In fact, Rabin would have to wait for 15 years to wrest the leadership from Peres. As illustrated in the previous chapter, Rabin had benefited from the 'dirty exercise' and then contested Peres for the party leadership, rekindling the old rivalry between the two men. However, immediately after Labour regained power, the relationship between the two leaders underwent a profound transformation. This conversion, it is argued, played a significant and positive role in the peace process and in fact made the Labour-led government capable of taking a decision with regard to the Oslo Accord with the Palestinians and subsequently a fully fledged peace treaty with Jordan.

Though Rabin thought that he had personally brought victory to Labour in the 1992 elections, he was in no position to ignore Peres for two reasons. First, Peres was elected second after Rabin in the 1992 Labour primaries. In an interview on 26 June 1992 by *Hadashot*, an Israeli newspaper, Peres stressed that Rabin must respect the internal election in which Peres came second only to Rabin.[66] Second, Peres still enjoyed control over the various official bodies and committees within the party. As demonstrated in an

earlier chapter, unlike Rabin's supporters, all of Peres' supporters within the party were placed in positions on the lists from which they could realistically expect to win seats in the 1992 election and indeed they were elected to the Knesset. Nonetheless, this time, learning from the experience of his first term, he decided to be firm with Peres. He kept the ministry of defence (the second most important portfolio after the premiership) for himself, and offered Peres the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Furthermore Rabin showed his mistrust by stipulating that Peres would only deal with the multilateral negotiations and would have nothing to do with the more important bilateral ones. Following the Madrid Conference in October 1991, it had been decided that the negotiations would be broken down into two separate tracks: the bilateral and the multilateral ones. The former dealt with border disputes and the latter with wider issues such as regional security and arms control, water, refugees, the environment, and the economic prosperity of the region. It was obvious that the prospects for the success of the multilateral negotiations would depend on the success of the bilateral ones. As a consequence, the bilateral negotiations were far more important, so in this Rabin had secured a sort of marginalization of Peres, albeit only for a short time.

Despite this firm attitude towards Peres, and due to the change in the context of their relationship, both understood that they should put their personal differences aside and work together in order to bring peace. The reason for this was, ironically, most likely the age factor: by now, both were in their early seventies and knew that this might be their last chance to be in power.[67] Admittedly, Peres maintained: 'both of us felt that we were at the last stage of our lives and that our task should be to make all the hard decisions in order to save the younger generation from living with the dilemma'.[68] Almost all of those close to Peres and Rabin noted the importance of this factor. Nawaf Massalha concurs with this point. He maintains:

> Peres and Rabin decided to co-operate because of the age factor. They understood that this was the last chance for them to lead the party. Do not forget that Rabin and Peres were regarded as the 1948 generation. Older generation never lost elections. The last time in 1973, Golda Meir won the election and handed over the government to Rabin and Peres' generation. This generation had lost all elections before 1992. Their differences contributed first of all in [*sic*] Labour's successive defeats and then in [*sic*] the paralysis of the party. As a consequence, they had little choice but to co-operate.[69]

In addition both now recognized that there were realistic chances for peace and that if they were to co-operate, they could go down in history as the 'great peacemakers'.[70] Both, argued Ahmed Tibi, were obsessed with grandiose notions of making the final and lasting peace. The personality

clash that had torn them apart was almost invisible at this time,[71] a fact that should not be interpreted as being the end to their animosity, but more simply as its subjugation to a much greater, common goal: peace for their country and a glorious legacy for themselves. As Yossi Beilin has argued: 'private meetings . . . were conducted in a cordial and constructive spirit, in spite of the intense animosity between the two men, animosity which had not abated even when their working relationship was institutionalised and became more formal'.[72]

Peres' acceptance of this relegated role in the peace process can be ascribed to two factors. First, as a result of his defeat to Rabin in the primaries and the latter's crucial victory over Shamir, Peres had reconciled himself to having to play the role of the number two man. Second, Peres' highly optimistic outlook for the prospects for peace made this hard pill a much easier one to swallow.[73] Peres wrote in his memoirs that his loyalty to Rabin was connected to the progress of the peace process. He stated:

> I pledged that my behaviour would be determined entirely by one criterion: the progress of the peace process. If that progress were satisfactory, I would be the most loyal and disciplined of Rabin's ministers. If, however, the peace process were allowed to grind to a halt, I would not hesitate to raise the banner of rebellion.[74]

It was not easy for Rabin to put his trust in a man he once described as 'the indefatigable underminer'.[75] However, Rabin was sure that this time Peres was serious about peace. Peres wrote:

> In time, Rabin grew convinced that this was indeed my sincere and unswerving resolve. On this basis, a close and fruitful working relationship between us evolved. It enabled us – especially during the months of secret negotiations with the PLO – to meet alone, in an atmosphere of confidence and discretion, to discuss and to argue, without the argument becoming personal, and without it leaking out in the next day's press.[76]

Their working relations at this time were in a stark contrast to those during the period of Rabin's first government. This became increasingly important especially when Rabin's faith in the ability of the Palestinian delegation to be amenable at the Washington talks was shaken. He believed that Palestinian negotiators should be free from any pressures imposed by the fundamentalists within the Occupied Territories, but also from the PLO's influence. In December 1992, in reaction to the kidnapping of a border policeman by Hamas,[77] Rabin took the unprecedented decision of ordering the deportation of more than 400 Palestinians to Lebanon.[78] Though deporting Palestinians was not a novelty, this was the biggest number of deportees

ever expelled during the Intifada. To Rabin's surprise, the Lebanese government refused to accept the deportees and as a result the deportees remained in the no-man's land between Israel and Lebanon. In fact, they suffered a cold winter and there was daily coverage by the international media of their plight. Suffice it here to cite a headline of the British daily newspaper *The Times* which reads: 'The deportees may die tomorrow.'[79]

Although this step had been meant to undercut Hamas' support in the Occupied Territories and to give the Palestinian peace negotiators a freer hand, it backfired. There was international condemnation of the deportation policy. The United Nations Security Council strongly condemned the Israeli government, describing it as an occupying power, and demanded a 'safe and immediate return to the occupied territories of all those deported'.[80] Rabin found himself in the middle of a crisis. There was an international request that Israel retreat from its decision and some members of the Security Council even suggested the imposition of sanctions against Israel.[81] Interestingly, there was unequivocal American opposition to the deportation incident. Rabin's ill-judged decision caused some delay in the resumption of the next round of talks scheduled for February in Washington. To solve this dilemma, Rabin arrived at a 'package' agreement with the American administration. There were three elements to this agreement. First, the Israel Cabinet was to compromise over the issue of the deportees by allowing them to return though not at once; second, the United States was to take measures to ensure that sanctions would not be imposed on Israel; and finally the United States asked for the resumption of the now-suspended peace talks.[82]

Negotiations were resumed in April. Moreover, Rabin agreed to the inclusion of Faisal Husseini from East Jerusalem to the Palestinian delegations. He hoped that Husseini's inclusion would help the Palestinian negotiators to accept a limited self-rule. In keeping with the previous idea of their remaining distinct from the PLO, the assumption was that Husseini's inclusion would encourage them to take up an independent stand from the PLO. Husseini, however, had no such effect whatsoever: the fact remained that he and the rest of the Palestinian delegation were instructed by the PLO.

With the passage of time and the lack of progress, Rabin became frustrated.[83] He realized that he would not be able to keep his electoral promise of reaching an agreement with the Palestinians within six to nine months from his assuming office. His attempts to strike a deal with Syria and the Palestinian negotiators in Washington ended in deadlock. He was in an awkward situation and at this time Peres came to his help.[84] Peres offered Rabin the draft of an agreement with the PLO. Indeed Yossi Beilin, the Deputy Foreign Minister and Peres' right-hand man, had initiated the Oslo talks secretly without Rabin's knowledge.[85] Initially he did not even inform Peres because he was dedicated to the success of this attempt. In his words:

> I decided not to share information on the existence of the track with anyone. I knew that if I passed this on to Peres he would be obliged to brief Rabin, and I feared that Rabin would demand an end to the process before it had even begun.[86]

Nevertheless, when this back channel became promising, Peres was eventually informed. Rabin, who had begun to lose faith in the success of the Washington negotiations and also realized that an agreement with Syria was unlikely and probably unpopular with the Israeli public, finally approved Peres' approach with the PLO. According to Aharon Klieman, a political scientist at Tel Aviv University: 'it was only the visionary Peres who could come up with such a package, and only the security-minded pragmatist Rabin could sell it to the public'.[87] As a result, one could assume that without the evolution of this kind of rapport and partnership between the two rivals, the prospects for the Oslo Accord and consequently the final peace treaty with Jordan would have been very dark. Indeed, Peres and Rabin complemented one another. Peres had the vision and will but lacked the public credibility, whereas Rabin had the credibility and will but lacked the vision. It was a revolution in Rabin's strategic thinking. Accepting the PLO as a partner and leaving behind the Jordanian option were the two hallmarks of Rabin's new approach to the Arab–Israeli conflict.

Explaining the evolution of Rabin's thinking

As argued above, Rabin's Jewish prism in conjunction with his military past had shaped his approach *vis-à-vis* the Arab–Israeli conflict. It was argued as well that security remained the key to Rabin's positions on issues with a bearing on national security. He was convinced that arriving at a peace agreement with the Arabs could tremendously enhance the national security of Israel. Rabin's eschewing of his state-centric approach to the Arab–Israeli conflict was a revolutionary change in his strategic thinking. This section provides an account for this change.

One crucial factor is that Rabin's move towards a Palestinian option was in reality a gradual one. Until the eruption of the Intifada, his approach to the Palestinian problem had been, as we have seen, consistent: the Jordanian option seemed to him the only option. For this reason he had adopted the Allon Plan, which was designed to partition the West Bank between Jordan and Israel. Rabin's insistence on dealing with Jordan was reinforced by his generally state-centric approach to the Palestinian problem: Jordan is a state and therefore entitled to and worthy of being a negotiating partner. The Lebanon War triggered the first change in Rabin's strategic way of approaching the problem. He observed that the Arab–Israeli/Jewish conflict was transforming itself into a Palestinian–Israeli

conflict.[88] This was an important change, but he still could not bring himself to abandon his belief in a state – in this case Jordan – as being the sole legitimate partner to sit down with at the bargaining table. A nation without a state was to him still, in the end, a nation which does not truly exist. However, the Lebanon War made him see that the Palestinians were a national entity even if devoid of a state in or through which to express and display this. They were henceforth to be included in future negotiations – but still as an adjunct to the Jordanian delegation.[89]

As previously demonstrated, before the start of the Intifada Rabin attached little importance to the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza: with no internal administration, no army, and no officially recognized government, they did not seem to pose a serious threat to the survival of the states around them and so there seemed to be no urgency to find a solution to their problem.[90] This perception certainly prevented Rabin from fully understanding, let alone predicting, the Intifada.

As was demonstrated in chapter 2, the Intifada triggered another significant change in Rabin's basic way of conceiving the issue. It suddenly made what had hitherto been regarded as a foreign affairs concern into a critical internal crisis. Going on with the same old policies and approach now became impossible. These people were obviously not being controlled by a remote state (Jordan or the PLO) but internally by an indigenous leadership. The Palestinians were their own people; it even showed Rabin that they (the Palestinians) could bring the Jordanians to the negotiating table but not the other way around. As a consequence, but still wanting to avoid direct contact with the PLO, Rabin pressed Shamir to adopt his ideas about elections in the Occupied Territories in order to be able to initiate a new peace process with locally elected local Palestinians. He sought to start negotiating an interim agreement with them, hoping nevertheless that Jordan would join in the negotiations for a final agreement. The reasons that he wanted Jordanian involvement in negotiations were to bypass the PLO and as a consequence to obstruct the possibility of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

Rabin's party had not been in power when the Madrid conference was inaugurated. Under Shamir, Israel had refused to deal with the Palestinians separately, only agreeing to their participation in a joint Jordanian–Palestinian delegation. Shamir, committed to the 'no-inch' policy, instructed his delegation not to concede to the Palestinians. However, Rabin's assumption of power marked a fresh approach. First, spurred on by the stalemate in the talks, and realizing that the Jordanians could not speak for the Palestinians, he agreed to deal with them as a separate delegation. In an interview with the Israeli daily *Yediot Aharonot* Rabin said:

> We have to talk to the Palestinians ... after the Intifada, the Palestinians are beyond the stage where others speak for them.

> Therefore those who still delude themselves that King Hussein could speak for the Palestinians have not correctly understood what has happened here.[91]

A year later, Rabin became convinced that the Palestinian delegation had no power to move. He realized that only the PLO had the decisive power to conclude an interim agreement. This shift in perception marked an important pre-condition for the progress of the peace process and the Oslo breakthrough. The problem remained that Rabin had never before even toyed with the idea of acknowledging the PLO as a partner. Now he had to decide whether he both wanted to and could – as a policy move to sell to his people – acknowledge the PLO as a legitimate partner or not, thus jeopardizing the whole peace process.[92]

There were several factors that led Rabin to agree to deal with the PLO and conclude an agreement with its leader, Yasser Arafat. First, Rabin came to the conclusion that the realization of the Jordanian option was impossible.[93] Equally important was his assessment that the non-PLO Palestinian delegation to the Washington talks would never deliver and that only the PLO could reach a binding agreement with Israel. Second, Rabin's view of what we might call 'time' had changed. In the 1980s, Rabin had subscribed to the school that contended that time was in Israel's favour. This meant that he could wait until the Arabs changed and agreed to Israel's terms for a peace settlement. This school of thought had paid little attention to the impact of this approach on Israeli society. The need to be constantly alert, and ready to pay for defence measures and budget for any confrontation, had been a very emotional, stressful, and financially costly experience for Israeli society. In conjunction with regional and global changes as well as the convening of the Madrid conference (see the next chapter) and subsequent peace negotiations, Rabin began to view the time factor differently. According to Efraim Inbar, Rabin 'realized that Israeli society increasingly displayed signs of fatigue and was becoming clearly more reluctant to pay the price of a protracted conflict with the Arabs'.[94] Eitan Haber, Rabin's close advisor, considered Rabin's view of the weakness within Israeli society as a key aspect of Rabin's strategic perspective.[95] Despite Rabin's hawkish image, this new, typical dovish assessment of the pressing nature of the problem brought him closer to Peres and the dovish wing of the Labour Party. Rabin also came to believe that Israel had to move quickly because there would be little time at its disposal: Joseph Alpher argued that Rabin believed that due to regional and international changes Israel had a short-term 'window of opportunity', which was not going to stay a long time and so Israel should not miss this opportunity.[96] If peace were not to be reached, then war would be inevitable. This was another typically dovish argument that Rabin now was embracing. In a speech delivered in December at the International Centre

for Peace in the Middle East in Tel Aviv, Rabin argued that 'Israel has a seven-year "window of opportunity" to find a solution to the core conflict and make peace with its neighbours'.[97]

A third factor was the shift in Rabin's mindset. The structural changes in the international system, coupled with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the defeat of Iraq by the American-led coalition had created a new strategic environment. Rabin was quick to recognize the impact of these changes. Many countries established diplomatic ties with Israel in the early 1990s. This had an impact on the way Rabin viewed the standing of Israel among other nations. These changes indeed minimized – or simply lessened – the influence of the Jewish prism. In his inaugural speech to the Knesset, Rabin noted:

> It is our duty, to ourselves and to our children, to see the new world as it is now . . . to do everything possible so that the State of Israel fits into this world whose face is changing. No longer are we necessarily a 'people that dwells alone', and no longer is it true that the whole world is against us. We must overcome the sense of isolation that has held us in thrall for almost half a century. We have to stop thinking that the whole world is against us.[98]

This speech marked a fundamental ideological shift in Rabin's perception. This new outlook resulted from the fact that Rabin had a relatively open belief system. Oli Holsti makes a distinction between a 'closed belief' system and an 'open belief' system.[99] In a closed belief system, new information is interpreted in a way to fit it within the existing belief system. Information that does not fit is simply excluded. In an open belief system, new information can indeed change the existing set of beliefs.

Assuming that Rabin had developed an open belief system towards the world around him, we may surmise that the sweeping changes on the international scene had led him to view the external environment in a positive light. In December 1991, the United Nations General Assembly repealed its 1975 resolution that equated Zionism with racism. Many countries which had voted in favour of equating Zionism with racism reversed their position in 1991. For Rabin this new environment ended Israel's perceived isolation in international politics. Joseph Alpher argues: 'Jewish history and our perception that we exist in a hostile environment enhanced the level of threat perception in particular among the right. This factor was weakened in the early 1990s due to the regional and global developments.'[100]

Rabin's openness helped him draw a clear conceptual distinction among his adversaries between moderate 'good boys' who were ready to peacefully coexist with Israel and fundamentalist rejectionist 'bad boys' who were responsible for the deterioration of 'current security' in Israel. In fact, his decision to deport some Hamas activists from the Occupied Territories

to Lebanon helped him see the differences between those Palestinians who were opposed to the peace process, those who were opposed to the very existence of Israel, and those who were moderate and ready to live in peace with Israel. Hamas and Islamic Jihad were fundamentalists and therefore had to be weakened. For this reason he took the unprecedented decision to deport as many as 415 of them. Once the differences crystallized firmly in Rabin's mind, he began to view the PLO as a possible partner.

A final factor that pushed Rabin to deal with the PLO is to be found in Israeli domestic politics and, as has already been elaborated, in particular following the 1992 elections. The formation of the most dovish government in the history of Israel constituted a sufficient condition to move Israel towards peace with its neighbours. Without such a combination of Israeli parties, the historic decision on peace could not have been reached. The dovish majority of Labour ministers in Rabin's government allied with the Meretz ministers were of a number unprecedented in Israel's history. Meretz, with 12 seats in the Knesset, was the senior partner that Rabin could not ignore. In their coalition agreement with Rabin, Meretz ministers stipulated that the ban on talking with the PLO must be lifted within six months. Naomi Chazen, a Meretz member and deputy speaker of the previous Knesset (the fifteenth), said: 'we played a very important role in lifting the ban on talks with the PLO. We urged Rabin to proceed with the peace process with the Palestinians and sometimes threatened to withdraw from the coalition.'[101] As a result, the government sponsored a bill that called for allowing direct contact with the PLO. Meretz kept the pressure on Rabin to live up to his electoral promise. In June 1993, for example, Meretz leader, Shulamit Aloni, sent Rabin an urgent letter warning him that her party was going to leave the government should there be no advance in their dialogue with the Palestinians.[102]

Labour was also allied to Shas (six seats in the Knesset). Shas leader, Aryeh Deri, a Minister of Interior, was involved in a political scandal. He was accused of personal and administrative misuse of office and accordingly placed under investigation. He was also accused of transferring funds from his ministry to schools run by his party. In July 1993 the Attorney General, Yosef Harish, called on Deri to resign from the government due to a pending indictment. Both Rabin and Peres felt that the stability of their coalition was threatened by this development. It was feared that Deri would withdraw his entire party from the government in retribution.[103] This development possibly created further pressure on Rabin's government to proceed quickly with the PLO. Peres said, 'we must hurry or we may end up with a peace treaty but no government to sign it'.[104]

To sum up, the combination of the above mentioned factors proved to be decisive in pushing Rabin to deal with the PLO. Reluctant by nature, Rabin was in an awkward dilemma: he had either to proceed with the PLO, conclude an accord, and go down in history as the first Israeli Prime

Minister to accept dealing formally with the PLO, or to continue to refuse all relations with them, thus slowing down the peace process – perhaps to a halt. With this option he might also have lost his government and, even worse, the leadership of the Labour Party. Rabin finally chose to sign an interim agreement with the PLO.

Conclusions

This chapter has demonstrated the relative importance of personality in the making of foreign policy in Israel. The significance of such an internal factor in Israel's peacemaking stems from the fact that Israel's decision-making process is highly personalized because a few, highly placed individuals take most of the crucial decisions. In fact, personality became an increasingly important factor in Israeli politics throughout the 1990s, the election of 1992 crystallizing its pivotal role. It has been argued that Rabin's own personality is of a singular interest in accounting for Israel's decision to conclude a peace.

The key to understanding Rabin's change in approach was his particularly adaptable, open belief system and personality which enabled him to absorb new ideas, and to be affected by new developments. As a consequence, his view of the world and indeed of the Arab–Israeli conflict altered considerably during his time in office. We saw how at first his firm belief that Israel was isolated in world politics was deeply steeped in a Jewish tradition which like a prism filtered through it a perception of outsiders' behaviour. This cultural prism is, of course, not exclusive to Rabin, but is one which affects the vision of most of Israel's elite. This and Rabin's personal experience as a military man led him initially and for many years to view the Arab–Israeli conflict through a realpolitik lens. He was convinced that for Israel to survive in its hostile environment, it should develop a strong army. National security long remained the key to understanding Rabin's approach to the Palestinian problem.

Until the outbreak of the Intifada, Rabin had maintained a state-centric view of the Palestinian problem. According to this view, Israel should seek territorial compromise with Jordan in order to solve once and for all the Palestinian problem. Rabin learnt from the Intifada that no one could speak on behalf of the Palestinians except themselves. His state-centric world view was replaced by a multi-dimensional view in which the Palestinian problem as such became the core of the conflict. Hence he gradually started to replace the Jordanian option with a Palestinian one, culminating in his recognition of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinians.

Not only was Rabin known for his mistrust of the outside world, but also for his mistrust of his colleagues in the Labour Party. He didn't trust Shimon Peres in particular. His perception of Peres as a constant plotter in fact partially hindered the peace process. This was conspicuous in his

first term as Prime Minister (1974–7). Their competition paralysed Rabin's first government. However, with the passage of time and many years in opposition, both rivals agreed to co-operate in Rabin's second government. The moment Rabin was sure that Peres' paramount objective was to achieve peace, he began to trust him. It is argued that without a working coalition between them, the Oslo Accord and the peace treaty with Jordan would most likely never have been achieved.

However, matters were much more complicated than the effects of their personal rivalry: Rabin and Peres were not playing in a vacuum. The Israeli domestic scene was important for the dovish members of the government urged Rabin to shift his political alignment accordingly. Rabin was transformed from a hawk to a dove in all but name. His image among the public remained that of the hawk – enhanced by his decision to expel the Hamas activists – and his reputation as 'Mr Security' enabled him to sell the Oslo Accord to the Israeli public. What was unique about Rabin was the fact that the Israeli public trusted him and his judgement.

This chapter has demonstrated the importance of personality on domestic politics and on the decision-making process in Israel with particular regard to the peace process. Yet to fully understand Israel's historic decision to make peace with its adversaries, one also needs to evaluate the impact of external players and the changes at regional and global levels and to see what effect they had on the stance of key Israeli politicians. This will be the focus of the next chapter.

5 External dynamics and domestic imperatives

Due attention has been paid to domestic political factors within Israel in previous chapters; this chapter, however, focuses on a different but interrelated dimension of the peace process, that of how external factors impacted on Israeli approaches to peace. The demise of the Cold War and the subsequent hegemonic status of the United States in the Middle East, coupled with the defeat of Iraq (potentially the most formidable foe of Israel) in 1991, changed Israel's regional and global environments. Crucially, as we saw in the last chapter, these developments provided both the backdrop and the context in which the Israelis operated.

Without doubt, changes in the external environment and particularly the termination of the Cold War engendered a positive environment for the conduct of a peace process.[1] However, it is useful to make a distinction between what was *necessary* and what was *sufficient* for achieving peace. The external factors provided the necessary pre-conditions for what may be termed the initiation of conflict resolution in the Middle East. These factors, as this chapter demonstrates, played a visible role in Israel's foreign policy. Nevertheless, these factors were perceived and reacted to differently by successive Israeli governments, and the differences that resulted from their reactions to external factors deepened the political distinction between Labour and Likud. This chapter demonstrates that external factors, including the role of both the United States and Jordan, impacted upon the politics of Israeli peacemaking.

This chapter is made up of three sections. In the first section, the influence of the United States on Israel's peacemaking is assessed. It is demonstrated that to comprehend how the Israeli leaders viewed the role of the United States in the resolution of the Arab–Israeli conflict, one has to look at the policy preferences of different groups within the Israeli governments. Section two analyses how the Labour Party perceived Jordan and how the behaviour of Jordan influenced the stances of key players within the Labour Party. Indeed, Jordan's polices accelerated an orientation towards the Palestinian option in Labour's peace strategy. The final section addresses the bearing of regional and global changes on the perceptions of Israeli decision-makers.

The United States in Israeli foreign policy

As has been demonstrated throughout the previous chapters, Labour and Likud were divided over the peace process. Equally importantly, they were divided over the role of the United States in the peace process and in particular over the role of the so-called 'special relationship' in Israel's peace strategy.[2] Though much has been written on the relationship between Israel and the United States, little attention has been given to the relative value of the United States in Israeli approaches to peacemaking in the Middle East. This section demonstrates that the American role in Israel's positions on the peace process was, to a large extent, a function of the divergences between Likud and Labour regarding the idea of territorial compromise. Disagreement between Likud and Labour over the interpretation of what constituted Israeli core strategic interests were important factors that accounted for Israel's competing approaches *vis-à-vis* the United States. Indeed domestic differences within Israel actually provide the key to understanding Israeli policy towards the United States.

Co-ordination between Israel and the United States with respect to peace in the Middle East depends largely on the scope of Israeli governments' readiness to accept the American 'land for peace' formula.[3] The principle, as we have seen, characterized the positions of successive American administrations since 1967.[4] This position was recently confirmed when, as we shall see in next chapter, President George W. Bush offered his vision of a two-state solution to the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. It follows that Labour's declared policy of territorial compromise put it in a better position than Likud (with its infamous 'no-inch' policy) to co-ordinate with the American administrations.

By the same token, the relative importance of the United States – as seen by Israeli leaders – to Israel's security determined the level of readiness of Israeli leaders to accept territorial concessions. Undeniably, the United States has become, since the 1967 War, the major component of Israeli defence and security policies. The United States has provided Israel with the weapons and technology necessary for Israel to maintain a qualitative edge over the Arab world.[5] Since the eruption of the 1973 War, the United States has, in fact, been accorded greater strategic importance. It supplied Israel with weapons of high efficiency during the war and indeed prevented Israel's defeat. Israel became more dependent on American military and economic aid after the war. Furthermore, the close Israeli–American relationship served as a deterrent against a perceived Soviet attack.[6] This dependency relationship was further enhanced as Israel became more diplomatically isolated, due to the use of oil as a weapon by Arab counties, and Israel had to rely increasingly on American diplomatic aid. Interestingly and given Israel's qualitative military superiority in the Middle East, it was unable to deter an Iraqi attack in 1991 and as a result American troops had to defend Israel.

This asymmetric relationship is arguably similar to a 'client–patron' relationship in which Israeli acquiesced to what may be termed American strategic interests in the region. However, reality was always somewhat different. Israeli leaders quite often defied the American will and indeed sometimes pursued policies without taking into account the wider implications of their decisions and without consideration of American interests in the region. In successive Israeli governments, one could discern four positions regarding the role of the United States in the Middle East peace process. These can be labelled ultra-nationalism, conservatism, realism, and progressivism.[7]

The ultra-nationalist approach has been represented by parties on the right of Likud but also by the right wing within Likud. Their core ideology – the integrity of the 'land of Israel' – clashed with the American 'land for peace' principle. Furthermore, this group feared the implications of an increasingly dependent relationship with the United States. This, according to ultra-nationalists, would weaken Israel's deterrence.[8] They expected that American administrations would not interfere in the peace process. Former Prime Minister Menachem Begin, for example, did not regard co-ordination with the United States over the peace process as necessary.[9] Yet, to stave off a potential head-on collision with the American administrations over the peace issue, the ultra-nationalists relied on the 'special relationship'. They believed that Israel could consolidate its grip over the West Bank and Gaza without necessarily damaging its relations with the American administrations. For that reason, Yitzhak Shamir confronted the Bush administration over the loan guarantee issue in 1992. He hoped that the pro-Israeli forces within the American political system would help him dissuade President Bush from linking the loan guarantee to the freezing of settlements in the Occupied Territories.

The second position was a conservative one, which was represented by what we might term the pragmatic wing of Likud. This approach assumed that Israel should keep the Occupied Territories. However, the underlying attitude was governed by a pure realpolitik approach.[10] This approach is best represented by the former Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, who accepted the idea of minimal territorial compromise when he assumed power in 1996. Though conservatives recognized the pivotal role that could be played by the United States, they voiced doubts about the commitment of the United States, particularly in the face of its isolationist tendencies.[11] They viewed the United States' role in the peace process as one of a facilitator. Indeed, Benjamin Netanyahu, who sought to minimize the role of the American administration in the peace process, changed his approach after the armed clash with the Palestinians in September 1996. He began to recognize that the role of the United States was indispensable in preventing the collapse of the peace process.

The progressive approach is represented by the leftist circles within Labour and also Meretz. Advocates of this approach believed that security

could not be achieved without peace. In addition, they believed that security could not be attained by military power alone, but by meeting the Palestinians' demand for the right to self-determination, and through the creation of a regional framework for economic co-operation.[12] Without economic development in the region, the area would be governed by extremist forces, which would be strengthened by poverty and lack of economic development. These radical forces, armed perhaps with unconventional weapons, would, it was assumed, be very threatening to the stability of the region. Aware of the centrality of economic development to the stability of the region, Shimon Peres wrote in 1993: 'Our ultimate goal is the creation of a regional community of nations, within a common market and elected centralized bodies, modeled on the European Community.'[13]

However, the progressives viewed the American role primarily as a supplier of funds necessary for the regional project to materialize. The United States could, according to this approach, use its economic strength to reward those who were willing to proceed with peace. To the progressives, the role of the United States in the peace process was of less significance. Yossi Beilin, for example, initiated the back-channel negotiations with the Palestinians in Oslo despite the fact the United States was sponsoring the Washington talks. Indeed, the Oslo negotiations were initiated and reached by both sides without the knowledge of the Clinton administration.[14]

Though both progressives and realists (see below) within Labour emphasized the importance of security, they viewed the American role in achieving Israel's security differently. Unlike the realists, the progressives downplayed the importance of the American role in Israel's national security. They maintained that only by resolving the Palestinian problem in a way that satisfied the Palestinians could Israel achieve complete security.[15] However, the progressives sought American involvement in order to overcome some procedural problems and to help facilitate any agreement with the Israeli public. Shimon Peres, for instance, concluded the London Agreement with King Hussein in April 1987 and tried, but to no avail, to convince the American Secretary of State to present the agreement as an American proposal. Even after reaching an understanding with the Palestinians in 1993, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres sought to convince Warren Christopher, then Secretary of State, to present the agreement as an American document, but Christopher declined.[16]

However, the most important position was the one adopted by Yitzhak Rabin; this may be termed realism.[17] As a result, it warrants more attention in this section. Realism was derived from the pre-state era and was greatly encouraged by David Ben-Gurion. Its emphasis has been on security. The realists' position was enhanced by their strong power base in the army and by their importance for Labour, with its dovish platform, to help win elections.[18] This traditionally provided the group with a form of asymmetric power within Labour.

Rabin was, as we have already seen, the most important realist. He recognized the need to reorient Israeli foreign policy from a European to an American direction in the late 1950s. The humiliation of the European powers in the Suez crisis of 1956 convinced Rabin that essentially only the United States was important in the strategic game.[19] That was one of the reasons why he lobbied so hard to gain the ambassadorship to Washington upon his retirement from the army in 1968.[20] He dedicated much of his time to consolidating or creating a strategic relationship with the United States. In 1969, for example, Rabin encouraged the Israeli government to adopt tougher military steps against Egyptian targets during the War of Attrition. Rabin believed this would cement a better relationship with the United States and would also project an image of Israel as strong and ready to use force in order to defend itself so as to obtain more weapons.[21]

Indeed, what had governed the realists' stand on the Occupied Territories was its importance in enhancing Israel's security. Realists within Labour had minimal ideological affinity with the West Bank and Gaza. As a consequence, they viewed the areas only in terms of defending the country and of providing strategic depth. Allon's plan (discussed in chapter 1) should be understood within this context.

To realists, there was no better security guarantee than tying the United States to Israel's security. Rabin was convinced of the imperative nature of a close strategic co-operation with the United States. He never concealed this rationale and in 1976 he stated: 'Israel's mere existence will be in jeopardy, in case of total desertion by the United States.'[22] To Rabin and indeed all realists, the utility of the United States lay in five areas. Those were: financial aid; weapons; diplomatic aid (such as preventing the United Nations from adopting anti-Israel resolutions); facilitating Israel's contact with Jews in countries that had no diplomatic relations with Israel; and deterring the Soviet Union from directly attacking Israel.[23] Joseph Sisco, a former Under-secretary of State – who worked closely with Rabin – maintained that Rabin believed that Israel's security 'was inextricably linked to the United States'.[24]

Rabin, therefore, believed that the role of the United States in the peace process was indispensable.[25] Even after reaching an agreement with the Palestinians, Rabin waited for the blessing of the United States before proceeding.[26] Hence, co-ordination with the United States was central to the realists' foreign policy. Rabin sought a real American involvement in the peace process with the Arab countries and the Palestinians in order to trim down the security risks associated with withdrawal. As Ranan Cohen argues:

> Rabin was for a peace that could enhance our sense of security. But he also understood that any peace treaty that entails Israeli territorial

> concessions would involve some security risks. Therefore, Rabin, and indeed many Labourites, believed that it was not possible for Israel to concede lands without a real American involvement in and commitment to the peace process. Rabin thought that an American involvement would be central for Israel's security.[27]

Rabin, for example, strongly believed that Israel should appear serious in the peace process to secure American support.[28] Nevertheless, Rabin thought that a deal with the Arabs should be accompanied by some material benefits for Israel from the United States.[29] For example, in 1975, Rabin only agreed to sign Sinai II after signing a memorandum of understanding with the United States. Israeli realists valued the American link and so they tried their best to be seen as co-ordinating with the American administrations. This led them as well as others within Labour, to accept American initiatives such as the Shultz Plan and Baker's five points. Fed up with Shamir's procrastination tactics over the American initiatives and his rejection to Baker's five points, Labour brought down the government in March 1990.

As a consequence, Labour's support for the 'land for peace' principle has been compatible with the long-standing American position. The American position has been constant since 1967. It regards exchanging land for peace as the only viable solution to the Palestinian problem. Every single American administration has reiterated this commitment. This became even more important when the Arabs came to the conclusion that only with active American involvement was Israel expected to concede. This trend received momentum in the 1970s when Egypt realized that the United States, not the Soviet Union, held the key to a solution. Indeed, the Soviet Union had broken off its diplomatic relations with Israel as a protest to Israel's attack in 1967. This contention was further enhanced by the collapse of the eastern bloc and the end of the Cold War, when the United States emerged as the undisputed hegemonic power in the Middle East.

The result of the interaction of these four positions within the NUG (1984–90) was what might be described as a kind of immobility in Israel's foreign policy. Israel, in effect, was unable to present a unified position regarding peace and therefore pursued two different foreign policies.

In addition to these internal differences over the relative role assigned to the United States in peacemaking in the Middle East, there was another major difference between Likud and Labour regarding the role that could be played by pro-Israeli forces in the United States. As was discussed above, Likud's ideological positions and its actual policies in the Occupied Territories were incompatible with the American administrations' long-held stance. It follows that Likud-led governments would not be able to follow their aggressive policies in the West Bank and Gaza and

concurrently to maintain close co-operation with the American administrations. In order to solve this dilemma, Likud resorted to the pro-Israeli forces within the United States to explain and indeed to lobby American public opinion and the Congress against territorial compromise.[30] The role assigned to the pro-Israeli forces was called the *hasbarah* (explaining). The pro-Israeli forces had to explain to the American public and to Congress why it was not possible for Israel to withdraw from the Occupied Territories. The *hasbarah* was intended to 'counteract the Arab spin on events, maintain a political atmosphere in Washington conducive to understanding Likud policies and thus prevent American pressure for a peace settlement along the lines consistently favoured by the State Department since 1967'.[31]

In addition, the *hasbarah* was employed to maintain American aid to Israel regardless of the incompatibility of Likud's policies in the Occupied Territories and Likud's position on the peace process with that of the American administrations. Though this strategy succeeded many times, especially during the Cold War when Israel and the United States had common strategic interests (containing the Soviet influence in the Middle East), it actually failed to dissuade the Bush Administration in 1992 from linking the $10 billion loan guarantee to Israel's agreement to freeze settlement activity in the West Bank.

On the contrary, due to Labour's declared policy for 'territorial compromise' and its compatibility with that of the American administrations' position, Labour saw no need to rely on the pro-Israeli forces. Labour preferred not to rely on the *hasbarah*. Shimon Peres, in his capacity as Foreign Minister, abolished the *hasbarah* department in 1993.[32] He was quoted as saying: 'if you have a good policy, you do not need *hasbarah*. And if you have a bad policy, *hasbarah* will not help.'[33] Rabin insisted that the Israeli Embassy should handle Israel's policies in the United States.[34] Israel should, according to Labour's approach, co-ordinate directly with the administration and not through the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

Rabin was very critical of AIPAC as it became increasingly aggressive in its lobbying in the United States on issues relating to the Middle East. Rabin often thought that their efforts only led to unnecessary confrontation with the American administrations.[35] Therefore he supported limiting AIPAC's role in Labour's peace strategy. He believed that their aggressive lobbying would only lead to undermining one of the most important pillars in the relationship with the United States; that was 'the intergovernmental strategic basis of the relationship'.[36] This was clear during the unsuccessful efforts exerted by the Jewish lobbyists to dissuade Ronald Reagan from selling AWACS planes to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1981. Many circles within Labour regarded the pro-Israeli forces as working against realizing peace in the Middle East. After hosting a meeting with the AIPAC

Vice President in June 1993, deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin expressed his shock at the spoiling role played by AIPAC. Beilin was surprised to hear AIPAC Vice President Harvey Friedman advocating the idea of expelling the Palestinians from the territories.[37] Beilin was quoted as saying: 'we want US involvement in the peace process; their agenda was to keep the Americans out. We want peace based on compromise, and their agenda was to explain why compromise was impossible.'[38]

To sum up, successive Israeli governments viewed the role of the United States differently. In the post-Cold War era, when the strategic importance of Israel to the United States came under question, it seemed that only a Labour-led government with a compromising approach could improve relations with the American administration. Unlike Shamir, Rabin's readiness to adopt a 'land for peace' formula facilitated Israel's request for the loan guarantee. The Bush administration was convinced that although Shamir agreed to attend the Madrid Peace Conference, nothing would come out of it so long as Israel was governed by Likud.[39] If the United States was the most important external player in Israel's security and defence policies, Jordan was the player that for three decades the Israeli governments considered as the only potential partner to solve the Palestinian problem. Jordan's position on peace with Israel had, undoubtedly, influenced Israel's peace policies.

Jordan as a partner

Jordan's widely acknowledged geo-strategic centrality in the Arab–Israeli conflict has accorded the kingdom a strategic significance that has until now remained intact. Therefore Jordan has been courted by the parties to the conflict. Jordan's importance in the Middle East peace process was strengthened by the failure of the Israeli government to get local Palestinians to negotiate with Israel over the political future of the West Bank and Gaza in the immediate aftermath of the 1967 War. Since then Jordan has occupied a pivotal role in Middle East peacemaking, and in every peace proposal, Jordan was assigned an important role. In fact, the leaders of both Israel and Jordan have always wanted to arrive at peace. However, their endeavours were bound to fail due to factors that will be evaluated in this section, which also provides an analytical understanding of Israel's perception of the role to be played by Jordan in the peace process.

As was discussed in chapter 1, Jordan found itself involved in the Palestinian problem due to its geo-strategic location. On the eve of the 1948 War and in the face of a Palestinian–Jewish armed clashes in which the Palestinians were the underdogs, Jordan was not allowed the luxury of doing nothing. The Jordanian army had to intervene in Palestine and indeed it fought the Israeli forces and managed to secure a big chunk of Palestine.

Until the war in 1948, the issue of Palestine to the Jordanian monarch was an issue of foreign policy, but with the incorporation of the West Bank into Jordan, the issue of Palestine became a domestic one as well. Jordan became the host country of approximately 40 per cent of the total number of Palestinian refugees. The fact that Jordan had ruled over the West Bank for 19 years before losing the territories in the 1967 War meant that Jordan had a great stake in the region, and it therefore deepened Jordan's involvement in the Middle East peace process.

Israelis believed that King Hussein's desire to achieve peace with Israel was genuine,[40] and they were in fact happy to have someone who might accept their terms for a peace settlement. Israelis' interest in having the King as a partner for peace is often referred to as the Jordanian option: Having failed to find an acceptable local Palestinian partner to make peace with, Israel turned to Jordan to partition the West Bank.[41] The working assumption on the Israeli side was that Israel and Jordan had a common enemy, i.e. the Palestinian national movement, and that this would entice Jordan to co-operate with Israel.[42] Ironically, however, it was Israel that sought peace with Hussein, but did not offer him sufficient inducements to do so.[43] Israel never offered him what he asked for. Since 1967 Jordan's position concerning peace with Israel has remained constant, but the King's insistence on 'land for peace' was totally rejected by the Likud-led governments.[44] Neither was Jordan's request for a full withdrawal for peace received well by Labour. Israeli policies, indeed, never helped the King conclude a peace treaty with Israel. Rabin once asked the King if he was ready for peace with Israel without the approval of the Arab countries and the King answered positively but only if Israel agreed to give him back the whole of the West Bank including East Jerusalem.[45] This was what the content of the Jordanian option should be, from a Jordanian standpoint. Asher Susser confirms that it should include:

> A complete Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, the restoration of Jerusalem to Arab sovereignty, with minor but mutual border modification. . . . The only give and take in the territorial issue, from the King's point of view was what he called minor, mutual border rectification.[46]

It is ironic that strategically and in principle, Jordan and Israel would have preferred an agreement between themselves rather than the establishment of a PLO-led state in the West Bank, but more troubling still was the fact that they could not agree on the territorial aspect of such an agreement. As a result, Jordan was not in a position to accept the Jordanian option as proposed by Labour leaders without the blessing of the Arab world, let alone the Palestinians' consent. It is not a secret that the history of relations between the PLO and Jordan is one of mutual suspicion. Attempts

to overcome the chronic mistrust and to find a co-operative formula went nowhere. King Hussein's attempts to subordinate the PLO to his peace strategy in the 1980s failed.[47]

The question then concerns Israel's view of Jordan's role in the peace process. Leaders of the Labour Party were certain that the King would not accept as a *quid pro quo* for peace anything short of recovering the whole territories occupied in the 1967 War including East Jerusalem.[48] On this issue in particular, the Jordanian monarch did not beat around the bush. He had made this point clear during all his secret meetings with Israeli leaders. So why had Labour insisted on the Jordanian option once they understood that this was a non-starter from a Jordanian standpoint? The answer, in fact, had to do with Israeli domestic politics. As Asher Susser puts it: 'the Jordanian option became, I think, more of a vehicle for domestic Israeli politics, for the Labour Party to say that they had a solution for the territory as opposed to the Likud idea of annexation'.[49]

Unwittingly, the Arabs helped Labour leaders in their strategy towards Jordan. The Arab summit in Rabat designated the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians. By taking this resolution, the Arabs, in fact, gave Labour leaders the best possible excuse for delaying a decision on peace with Jordan. Certainly, had the Arabs declined from delegitimizing Jordan as a representative to the Palestinians, the situation would have been completely different, given that Hussein was an acceptable player to both the United States and Israel.[50]

However, the fact remains that Israel was, due to domestic political considerations, not ready for territorial compromise. The election of the Likud Party in 1977 had changed the situation. Its advocating of an aggressive settlement policy in the West Bank further discouraged Jordan from coming to terms with Israel. To the disappointment of the Jordanians, some influential circles within Likud adopted the notion that 'Jordan was Palestine'.[51] Among them were the controversial Ariel Sharon and Yitzhak Shamir. In the face of what appeared to be an Israeli intransigence coupled with a Palestinian determination to ditch Jordan as a potential representative, King Hussein concluded that the best strategy to protect his kingdom was to sever Jordan's links with the West Bank, thus declaring the death of the Jordanian option. Hussein's decision came at a time when Labour was undergoing profound changes *vis-à-vis* the Palestinians. As demonstrated in chapter 3, Labour's democratic reform allowed the new guard to introduce substantial changes regarding the Palestinians. The dovish young guard made a case that for peace to be achieved, the Palestinians should not be sidelined. Seen in this way, Jordan's decision to disengage only accelerated a Palestinian orientation in the Labour Party's foreign policy. Labour's realization that the Jordanian option, as proposed by the Labour Party, was a non-starter forced them to find a Palestinian partner for peace negotiations.[52]

Israel's decision to acknowledge the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians and the subsequent conclusion of the Oslo Accord came as a deviation from the Jordanian option. However, the Oslo agreement was also the prerequisite for a separate peace between Jordan and Israel. It is true that Jordan was surprised by the Oslo agreement, but it set a precedent on which Jordan could proceed to make peace with Israel because it exposed the bankruptcy of the notion of Arab unity that had prevented King Hussein from arriving at a peace with Israel. This time nobody could accuse King Hussein of betraying the Arab cause.[53] If the Palestinians had proceeded alone, why should not Jordan do the same? The peace treaty signed on 26 October 1994 was ratified by the elected Jordanian parliament.

So far, only the United States and Jordan have been listed as external players that affected successive Israeli governments' peace strategies. However, there were other external factors that influenced Israeli leaders. For example, the Madrid Peace Conference and Israeli reactions to its objectives came in the post-Cold War era and immediately after the Gulf War. These two events had a profound impact on Labour.

The impact of global and regional changes

This section examines the effect of systemic factors (the transformation of the international system from bipolarity to unipolarity, the end of the Cold War, and the subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union), and regional changes (the defeat of Iraq by the American-led coalition and its impact on the regional balance of power) on Israeli decision-makers' policy preferences concerning peace.

It should be stressed at this point that the oft-repeated contention that the Cold War and the superpowers' rivalry in the Middle East had, in effect, hampered peacemaking in the Middle East cannot stand up to historical scrutiny. Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty in 1979 in the height of the Cold War. Furthermore, the origins of the Arab–Israeli conflict had little to do with the Cold War. It started with the advent of Zionist settlers migrating from Europe to Palestine and reached its peak when the Zionist movement succeeded in establishing a Jewish state in Palestine at the expense of the indigenous Palestinians, many of whom were later uprooted from their homes. Prior to the Madrid Peace Conference (1991), Israel's refusal or acceptance of peace initiatives should be understood within the context of its expansionist ideology and with its complicated domestic politics but not necessarily as directly connected to the Cold War. As a consequence, one should not be tempted to account for the lack of peace by simply referring to the global rivalry between the superpowers.

Having said that, however, the Cold War and global rivalry was used on many occasions by Likud-led governments to disguise its rejection of

peace proposals. Indeed, the relationship between the superpowers and their clients in the Middle East was a complicated one. On many occasions, regional clients were able to manipulate superpower rivalry in order to further their own national interests as perceived by decision-makers. As Avi Shlaim argues, 'it would be inaccurate, therefore, to think of the local powers as mere pawns in the game played by great powers'.[54] The door was opened for peace when local players came to believe that peace would serve their interests, regardless of the Cold War. For example, the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel signed in March 1979 came from a regional initiative, although its successful conclusion was facilitated by a third party (the American administration). President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and the Israeli Prime Minster, Menachem Begin, did not pay attention to global rivalries when they decided to explore the chances of peace, despite Carter's agenda of freezing out the Soviets.

Hence it would be rather simplistic to argue that the removal of the global rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union would automatically lead to peace in the Middle East. However, as argued above, the demise of the Cold War provided the necessary, although not the sufficient, conditions for the initiation of what could be termed conflict resolution. Shlomo Avineri maintains that the end of the Cold War, coupled with the defeat of Israel's most powerful enemy, Iraq, were the events that made the Madrid Peace Conference possible.[55] Although this is correct with regard to the initiation of the process, it should not be conflated with the conditions that guaranteed a successful conclusion.

The Second Gulf War was the regional factor that further changed the balance of power in the region. Put differently, it further changed the military balance of power in Israel's favour. The resultant collapse of the Arab order, coupled with military defeat of the most powerful Arab army (the Iraqi army), diminished the prospects for creating an 'eastern front' which would combine the armies of Jordan, Syria, and most importantly, Iraq. The war also had an impact on the idea of a united Arab political front. The war left a profound imprint on inter-Arab politics and led to the fragmentation of the already fragile Arab order. The outcome must have been a relief for the Israeli government.

As a consequence, the combined impact of both the end of the Cold War and the defeat of Iraq in the Second Gulf War placed Israel in a much better strategic environment. As Professor Anoushiravan Ehteshami succinctly puts it:

> As the radical Arab states were losing important foreign backers, Israel was improving its position in absolute terms: it was increasing the flow of European Jews to Israel, and it was doing so without disturbing its strategic alliance with the United States. On the other hand, in the absence of an all-powerful Soviet bloc, Israel's Arab adversaries were

> unable to find alternative influential foreign friends without compromising their pan-Arab policies and reforming their foreign policy to make them more palatable to western appetites. For the first time in many years Israel had both the strategic as well as the political edge on its Arab competitors.[56]

Israel, as a result of the collapse of the eastern bloc, established diplomatic relations with many countries that during the Cold War were allied with the Soviet Union. The latter had broken off its diplomatic ties with Israel following the June War in 1967. Following the end of the Cold War in 1989, the Soviet Union opened the door for Jewish immigration (*Aliyah*) to Israel. The immigrants (*olim*) have strengthened Israel, at least demographically.[57]

However, the Gulf War had left a deep imprint on many politicians' view regarding the envisioned security function of the Occupied Territories. Clive Jones argues that the Iraqi missile attacks against Israel during the Gulf War 'created fresh divisions [within Israel] regarding the strategic worth of the territories'.[58] The argument that retaining the Occupied Territories would provide Israel with the strategic depth it needed and would protect the densely populated coastal areas was shattered by Iraq's attack. Iraq had a delivery system that could launch missiles and hit any point in Israel. The fact is that, as Anoushiravan Ehteshami correctly points out, the missiles fired 'from the territories of a non-front line Arab state challenged Israel's strategic depth doctrine and the continued occupation of the West Bank as an important buffer zone'.[59] Possessing ballistic missiles is hardly an Iraqi monopoly. Syria is widely believed to have such military capabilities as well. Therefore, should a war arise between Syria and Israel, it would be inconceivable that the Occupied Territories could provide the strategic buffer that Israel hoped it would.

Moreover, the strategic importance of the territories in the context of modern warfare is a contested issue in Israel. Labour doves, Peres in particular, argued that territory is not important in the age of the modern missile. Influenced by the experience of the Gulf War, Peres states: 'Anybody speaking on security in terms of kilometers only . . . does not understand that geography is secondary to technology.'[60] The opposite argument is presented by Likud and right-wing parties. Efraim Inbar maintains that partial withdrawal from the West Bank would curtail Israel's ability to defend its population, around 70 per cent of which is concentrated in the Jerusalem–Tel Aviv–Haifa triangle.[61] However, the debate over the importance of territory for security masked the real undefined issue within Zionism: the final borders of the state. As Clive Jones so eloquently argues:

> The inherent cleavages within the whole concept of Zionism, and most notably, the exact dimensions of the Jewish State, created a situation

> in which Israel's security was measured against a sliding scale of ideological priorities dictated by successive governments. This in return masked the fundamental source of tension throughout the region: the Palestinian quest for national self-determination. Thus arguments over demographics and security were subservient to a basic fault within Zionist Ideology: its failure to define its territorial borders and, by extension, the limits of any Palestinian entity.[62]

Indeed, that was the unresolved debate which precluded the consolidation of a unified position in Israel. Labour's leaders were able to discern the strategic consequences of these changes and therefore they used these new changes as munitions to advance their long-held argument regarding the preference for peace over territories. Yitzhak Rabin was quick to realize the importance of this global change. In an article in *The Jerusalem Post* in June 1992, he wrote:

> One must be a fool not to perceive and understand what has happened. The Soviet Union, the former major patron of our enemies, fell apart and ceased to exist as a superpower. As a result both Syria and Iraq no longer have a shoulder to lean on. . . . After what happened in the Soviet Union, the US remains the only effective superpower, and it is calling the cues for a new world order. A peaceful Middle East is one of the cornerstones of this New World Order.[63]

Certainly, the replacement of a bipolar system by a unipolar one in which the United States has enjoyed a hegemonic position within the Middle East further moderated Rabin's stand regarding territorial compromise. This development, indeed, led Rabin to conclude that, from a military standpoint, the regional strategic environment was improving for Israel.[64] As was demonstrated in the previous chapter, Rabin's position regarding the political future of the Occupied Territories stemmed from his perceptions of the security risks Israel's withdrawal would pose. Shlomo Avineri argues that Rabin never seriously considered the notion of conceding the Golan Heights to Syria in return for peace before the end of the Cold War.[65] In the negotiations between Syria and Israel, it was reported that Rabin had agreed to give back the Golan Heights to Syria in return for full peace in 1993.[66] The failure of the Israeli–Syrian peace talks is beyond the scope of this book.

Despite Avineri's assertion that the end of the Cold War had a decisive impact on Rabin's strategic thinking with respect to Syria, this factor was not as decisive as Avineri maintains when it comes to Rabin's, and indeed Labour's, position *vis-à-vis* the West Bank. The reason for this argument is that no Israeli government had ever had a free hand to grant a territorial concession to the Palestinians or even to Jordan without taking into

account the implications of this on Israeli domestic politics. As was demonstrated in chapter 1, the Labour-led government (1974–7) was able to sign two disengagement agreements with Egypt and one with Syria with minimal domestic opposition. However, the Rabin-led government failed to do the same with Jordan due to extremely strong internal opposition to withdrawal from the West Bank. It is, therefore, valid to argue that in democracies, which include Israel (though for Jews only), external pressure, in most cases, is not sufficient to produce a certain outcome.

From the above discussion, we can conclude that the end of the Cold War and the outcome of the Gulf War had influenced the position of key players in Israel. Hawks within Labour, like Rabin, who systematically sought to involve the United States in the peace process, were convinced of the imperatives of taking a degree of security risk to achieve peace. Doves, like Peres, were given additional ammunition for their argument that the territories were insignificant for the security of Israel in modern warfare.

The two events also had an impact on the policies of the Bush administration in the Middle East. In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the Bush administration found it difficult to ignore the Arab–Israeli conflict. In fact, the American intervention in the Gulf was facilitated by the political, logistic, and military co-operation of the main Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. The American administration had promised the Arabs that after the conclusion of the Gulf Crisis, there would be a serious attempt to solve the long-standing Arab–Israeli conflict. In her study of the impact of the New World Order on the Arab–Israeli conflict, Emma Murphy notes that:

> The hypocrisy of the Western position (taking a moral stand against Iraqi occupation of Kuwait but unwilling to take action against similar Israeli action against the Palestinians) rekindled Arab grievances against historic and arbitrary Western imperialism in the region. It was only possible for the United States to draw in Arab participation in the multinational military force by committing itself to convening an international peace conference after the war which would bring Israel to a table at which the 'land for peace' proposal was the central agenda.[67]

The Bush administration made good its pledge to deal with the Arab–Israeli conflict. Secretary of State James Baker exerted an immense pressure on the Likud government to attend the peace conference. As Joseph Alpher rightly argues, without this American pressure, it would have been inconceivable that Shamir would have approved attending the peace conference in Madrid.[68]

To sum up, this section argues that the Second Gulf War and the transformation of the international system into a unipolar one have resulted in a different strategic environment that brought about an increase in

American involvement in the Arab–Israeli dispute. For the first time since 1967, it was possible to start the process of conflict resolution.

Conclusions

This chapter examined how the interaction of the external factors provided the necessary preconditions for peacemaking. They created benign regional and international environments to which domestic politics responded in a positive way. This chapter has highlighted the relative significance of external factors and their bearings on Israeli foreign policy. By far the most important external player that has had an impact upon Israel's peace strategy is the United States. Since the Six-Day War, the United States has become involved in every peace initiative and, more importantly, the United States has been perceived as the only external player with the ability and necessary influence to play a constructive role in any peace agreement.

However, the key to understanding the place the United States had in Israel's peace strategies lies within the sphere of Israeli domestic politics. Labour and Likud had different views of the American role in the Middle East peace process. Labour's advocacy of the 'land for peace' formula facilitated a better relationship with the American administrations. Rabin, for example, sought to involve the United States in the peace process for security reasons. He believed that there was a crucial role for the United States to play. As a consequence, the Labour-led governments tried to avoid confrontation with successive American administrations. Likud, however, sought to realize the dream of a Greater Israel without taking into account the American position. This crystallized into the loan guarantee crisis. Shamir believed that the pro-Israel forces in the United States would be a constraint on the Bush administration. As a consequence, he did not subordinate his policies regarding the peace process to American positions and interests. Rabin's assumption of power in 1992 was extremely important for a more fruitful co-ordination between the two countries *vis-à-vis* the peace process.

Jordan was the second most important player in Israel's peace strategies. Jordan's delicate geo-strategic location had forced the country to be interested in the peace process. However, Jordan never had a free hand in dealing with Israel over the Palestinian problem. Jordan's reliance on the Arab countries for vital economic aid had narrowed the King's room for manoeuvre. The Jordanian option, which had been advocated by the Labour Party for more than two decades, remained meaningless simply because the King could not accept it and Israel was not willing to accept Hussein's insistence on recovering all territories lost in the 1967 War. Jordan's decision to disengage from the West Bank therefore forced Labour to look for a Palestinian option. Once the Israelis began to lean towards a Palestinian option, the solution did not take long. In 1993, the PLO and Labour-led

government signed the Oslo Accord. This was enough for Jordan to sign a peace treaty with Israel without fearing any punishment from the Arab world.

The impact of the end of the Cold War and the outbreak of the Second Gulf War had a significant impact on key players especially within Labour. The Second Gulf War and the fact that the Iraqi army was able to attack Israel with missiles proved the importance of technology in future warfare and, indeed, opened up a new debate over the importance of the territories for the security of Israel. As a consequence, Labour doves used this argument, about the insignificance of territories for security, in order to strengthen their conciliatory positions towards the Palestinians.

To conclude, this chapter has demonstrated that the external factors only created the necessary conditions for the initiation of conflict resolution. Their interactions had created a positive environment in which the sufficient conditions within the dynamics of Israeli domestic politics could grow. However, these sufficient conditions had still to evolve in the ways outlined in previous chapters of this book. Unfortunately, even after the successful conclusion of the Oslo Accords and the Jordanian peace treaty, events that have unfolded since then have led to an impasse in the peace process. This is the focus of next chapter.

6 Internal dynamics and the breakdown of the peace process

Notwithstanding that the focus of the previous chapters was on what I term the rise of the peace process, events that have unfolded since the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995 have taken the peace process to a standstill. Unsurprisingly, the peace process is on the shelf and violence has replaced dialogue between Israelis and the Palestinians. Therefore, in this chapter, the breakdown of the peace process since the mid-1990s is identified and will be analysed against the backdrop of the internal changes within Israel. The chapter also analyses and chronicle the developments in Palestinian–Israeli relations since Netanyahu's rise to power in 1996 up until 2002. Again, there are external factors that have helped to slow down the peace process, but the key to appreciating the total breakdown of the peace process are factors such as domestic politics, ideology, and the personalities of key decision-makers in Israel.

Ever since the onset of the Arab–Israeli conflict, there had never been a time when the regional political milieu had been more conducive to peacemaking in the Middle East than in the mid-1990s. Israel and the Palestinians had successfully concluded the Oslo Accord, Jordan and Israel had signed a fully fledged peace treaty, significant progress in Israeli–Syrian relations had been reported, the Americans were still positively involved in the peace process, and above all, Israel was still governed by the most pragmatic government it had ever had. Yet, since 1996, there has been a serious deterioration in the peace process culminating in a complete impasse. The natural question to ask, therefore, is why has the peace process come to this end? This chapter attempts to offer the answer to this question.

The chapter is made up of three sections. The first part analyses how internal factors developed in such a way that they marked the beginning of a process that led to the collapse of the peace process between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Netanyahu's electoral victory in 1996 came as a fundamental departure from the policies of the Labour-led government of 1992–6. A second section addresses how Barak, who was fettered by the Knesset composition and by his own personal approach, paved the way for the breakdown of the talks with the Palestinians and, equally important,

the ascendance of Sharon to the premiership of Israel. The last section analyses how the NUG led by Sharon was – due to its composition – unable to deliver peace and security. It is demonstrated that Sharon's domestic interests have prevented him from taking the initiative or responding positively to the many initiatives and proposals to put an end to the Intifada and resume the peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

The Netanyahu era: laying the ground for the impasse

Certainly, the most convulsive event in the contemporary history of Israel was the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995, reminding Israelis that peacemaking that entails territorial compromise cannot go unchecked. Rabin's assassination left Israel without an historic leader brave enough to save the peace process from the internal negative development that followed. Undeniably, Israeli leaders, in the aftermath of this tragic event, began to internalize the necessity of taking into account the anti-peace forces within Israeli society.

Evidently, the victory of the right-wing Likud leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, in the general election of 1996 came as a defining moment in the history of the peace process.[1] His unexpected electoral victory marked the beginning of a process that eventually led to the collapse of the peace process. To fully appreciate why Netanyahu's taking over of power had led to the fall of the peace process, one needs to look closely at the effect of the new electoral law on the outcome of the 1996 general election, the subsequent composition of his government and finally at Netanyahu's personality and style of leadership. The interaction of these three factors, in effect, complicated the peace process.

Interestingly, the implementation of the new electoral law, in which the Prime Minister was elected directly by the public, was meant to empower the Prime Minister and to reduce the disproportionate power held by small parties, particularly the religious ones. The fact that Israeli voters had the choice to cast two votes, one for a candidate of the premiership and another for the party that represented their narrow ideological and ethnical interests, diminished the representation of both Likud and Labour in the Knesset. Both parties lost many seats to smaller parties and the numbers of parties represented in the Knesset rose from 11 to 15. This meant that Netanyahu had to include many parties in order to build a winning coalition.

With remarkable speed, Benjamin Netanyahu managed to form a government with eight parties.[2] The common denominator among the majority of the cabinet members was that they never concealed their wish to bring the peace process to an end. They blatantly opposed the Oslo Accord and, on different occasions, made it clear that, once in power, they would reverse the Oslo process. The guiding principles presented by Netanyahu to the

Knesset on 16 June 1996 indicated a striking departure from the guidelines of the previous government.[3] It was tantamount to declaring a war against the framework of Oslo. For example, the section of Netanyahu's policy statement on peace, security, and foreign relations shows the government's opposition to an independent Palestinian state, its willingness to consolidate settlements and its commitment to a unified Jerusalem under the sole sovereignty of Israel.[4] Although the platform reflected Netanyahu's ideological stand *vis-à-vis* the peace process, it was written in harsher form to make the coalition with his hard-line partners possible.

Netanyahu's room to manoeuvre in the peace process was constrained by his hard-line coalitional partners. The premise held by many Israelis was that once Netanyahu gained power, he would have to be transformed from an ideological hard-liner to a pragmatic leader and that his right-wing credentials would put him in a position strong enough to take the peace process forward.[5] Advocates of this opinion may have thought that Labour could not do anything but support any upcoming agreement with the Palestinians. Thus Netanyahu would neither be challenged by the opposition nor, given his hawkish outlook, be seriously outflanked from the right. However, Netanyahu's coalition partners proved to be strong enough to impede such tendencies towards peacemaking if they ever existed. This fact explains the reluctance of Netanyahu to live up to the Israeli commitments made in the Oslo Accord. Netanyahu understood that maintaining his position as Prime Minister and his coalition with the hard-liners while concurrently implementing the Oslo Accord were incompatible objectives. Therefore Netanyahu had to work out a formula that would enable him to maintain his government and also give the peace process a push forward, albeit slowly. As we will see below, Netanyahu employed tactics that failed to maintain support from his coalition partners. His fall from power was, to a large extent, due to his acquiescence to American pressure in signing the Wye agreement (this will be discussed further later) without carefully taking into account the size of his domestic, to use Robert Putnam's terminology, 'win-set'.[6]

A timetable for a complete implementation of the interim agreement was established in the Oslo Accord of 1993. Netanyahu's three-year term should have chalked up the implementation of the interim agreement, yet Netanyahu destroyed this prospect.[7] Nonetheless, during his three-year tenure, Netanyahu signed two agreements with the Palestinian Authority (PA): the Hebron Protocol on 17 January 1997, and the Wye River Memorandum on 23 October 1998. The question remains as to how, if Netanyahu had succeeded in reaching these two agreements, we can attribute the failure of the peace process to his government. To answer this question, one needs to make a distinction between making a decision on foreign policy and implementing that decision. It is worth noting that Netanyahu approved these two agreements largely in response to heavy American

pressures. Nevertheless, he failed to implement the Wye agreement and many of the provisions stipulated in the Hebron Protocol due to coalition constraints and his own right-wing ideology.

Netanyahu's failure to deliver peace and security was not surprising. Upon assuming power, Netanyahu understood that he ought to be firm with the Palestinians if he wished to keep his coalition with the hard-liners intact. Fully aware of this reality, he tried to take advantage of his intra-party and intra-coalition weaknesses to extract every possible concession from the Palestinian side. That explains why he attempted to renegotiate what had already been established between the PA and the previous Labour-led government. This was obvious in the negotiations that preceded the conclusion of the Hebron Protocol. After months of bitter negotiations (an attempt on the part of Netanyahu to rewrite the rules of the game) and a successful third party intervention by Jordan and the United States, Netanyahu agreed to sign the Hebron agreement. This agreement was both historic and revolutionary in the sense that it was the first time that an Israeli government led by a Likud leader had agreed on territorial compromise in the West Bank, thus dealing a major blow to the ideology of a Greater Israel.

In addition to Israeli redeployment from around 80 per cent of Hebron, the agreement committed Israel to implement another three redeployments over the next 18 months.[8] The government was split over the further redeployments, but after an acrimonious debate much internal bickering, the agreement was endorsed by a majority of 11 to 6, clearly showing the division over the issue. In the Knesset, the agreement was passed by a vote of 87 to 17 with 15 abstentions. The irony is that the backing to the agreement came mainly from the opposition and not from Netanyahu's coalitional partners. A Likud minister, Benny Begin, even resigned in protest over the Hebron agreement.

The composition of Netanyahu's government, which was, by and large, dictated by the outcome of the general election, proved to be an enduring problem that constrained Netanyahu's room to manoeuvre. He was in a grave situation where unlike Rabin, who presided over a government of three parties, Netanyahu led a government consisting of eight parties. The difficulties lay in the fact that a majority within his cabinet opposed the Oslo Accord and they voiced their unequivocal opposition to any future agreement with the Palestinians. Therefore, Netanyahu presented the agreement to his cabinet from a position of disadvantage. Ironically, Netanyahu had to overcome his coalitional opposition to peace by espousing the tactics of what Neill Lochery has termed 'pay back',[9] which in turn further complicated the peace process. His efforts to get his right-wing partners and his wider coalition to approve the agreement compelled him to initiate policies to assure or bribe them. The announcement of a plan to construct 6,500 housing units for 30,000 Israelis at Jabal Abu Ghunaym/Har Homa, and

the 'Bar-On for Hebron' affair must be understood against this background (see below).

The announcement to build a new settlement at Jabal Abu Ghunaym/Har Homa was meant to placate his partners, particularly the religious parties. Netanyahu owed his razor-thin victory over Peres in the 1996 election to the religious constituency, which he could not afford to antagonize if he was to seek re-election. He arrived at a package deal with some religious ministers whereby a new settlement in Jerusalem was to be built as a *quid pro quo* for their backing of the agreement. This clearly demonstrates the Prime Minister's relative weakness within his own party and within his wider coalition. It would have been far more difficult for Netanyahu to get his cabinet to endorse the Hebron Protocol without committing himself to this policy.

To secure the support of Shas, Netanyahu allegedly concluded another deal with the then leader of Shas, Aryeh Deri. The deal was an agreement between, on the one hand, Aryeh Deri and, on the other hand, Netanyahu and his close aides, including his office director-general Avigdor Liberman and Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi. The substance of the agreement was that Shas would endorse the agreement on Hebron and in return Netanyahu would appoint Ron Bar-On as the Attorney General for the government. The working assumption of Deri was that Bar-On would be soft with him concerning a court case against him.[10] This would be a plea bargain that would enable Deri to carry on his political career; indeed Deri conditioned his support for the agreement on this issue. The revelation of this deal shocked the Israeli public, thus resulting in considerable criticism being levelled against Netanyahu.[11] As a consequence of this scandal, a committee was set up to investigate the issue. Although the committee indicted Deri, it only directed stern criticism against Netanyahu and Liberman. There were different internal reactions to this affair, which are beyond the scope of this study. Of particular relevance is the fact that this affair demonstrates how one party was able to constrain the Prime Minister and the readiness of the latter to appease or even bribe the former to get an agreement endorsed. One can conclude from this episode that the approval of the second redeployment was a function of internal deals and trade offs that have to do with pure domestic issues and personal interests irrespective of security or the perceived sacredness of land.

Having delineated the difficulties stemming from Netanyahu's intra-party and inter-bloc weaknesses, it is essential to evaluate how his personality, ideology and style of governing aggravated the situation regarding the peace process. These variables exacerbated and indeed complicated the domestic as well as the regional scene within which the government was operating. Netanyahu's ideology, personality and approach managed to antagonize almost everybody. His basic ideological beliefs are clearly articulated in his writings. His book, *A Place Among the Nations*, published

in 1993, reflects his traditional revisionist ideas that deem land, which was intended to be traded off for peace, as the historical heart of biblical Israel. Netanyahu forcefully builds a case against conceding land on both historical and security considerations. For this reason, his convictions should be taken as one factor that made him harden his position *vis-à-vis* the Palestinians.[12] Consequently, Netanyahu's emphasis on reciprocity and security in handling the peace process should not obscure his deep-seated ideological commitment to the idea of a Greater Israel. Unsurprisingly, Netanyahu relentlessly used the security argument in a systematic way as a mechanism to undermine the Oslo Accord and to cover up his domestic political weakness.

Paradoxically, this was why Netanyahu found himself in a clash with the security apparatuses that were involved in the implementation of the Oslo Accord.[13] The three apparatuses were the Directorate of Military Intelligence (AMAN), the General Security Services (SHABAK) and the Mossad. The heads of these three intelligence organizations as well as the deputy of the chief of staff, Amnon Lipkin Shahak, were all appointed by the Rabin–Peres government. As a consequence, Netanyahu considered them as advocating and serving the wrong policy (Oslo) followed by the Labour-led government.[14] Netanyahu's behaviour reflected his lack of respect for these three intelligence organizations and instead of consulting with them over issues of paramount importance to national security, he relied on a group of younger, inexperienced, like-minded aides, including Avigdor Liberman, Dore Gold, and Dan Naveh, who owed him for their promotion and also happened to have similar world views.[15] Netanyahu's attempts to compel the heads of these security apparatuses to provide him with evaluations to serve his political interests to justify his controversial political moves are well known in Israel. Their assessments illustrating that in order to get Arafat to co-operate with Israel in fighting against Islamic violence Israel should show good faith by complying with the Oslo Accord Netanyahu did not accept the assessment and accused the security apparatus of serving the policies of the outgoing government.[16]

Netanyahu's endeavour to lower the expectations of the Palestinians, designed to put them in a vulnerable position in which he could extract more concessions, was another flaw in his approach towards the peace process. He refused to implement the further redeployments stipulated in the Oslo Accord by using the security provisions included in the Accord to put off the implementation of the agreement. Coupled with this, Netanyahu pushed forward ill-advised policies such as the opening of the Hasmonean tunnel in September 1996 and the announcement of the building of a settlement in Har Homa in 1997. These events led to a lack of trust concerning his intentions and resistance towards moving on with the peace process. Not only did his behaviour infuriate the Palestinians, but it also enraged other moderate leaders in the region, chief among them the

late King Hussein of Jordan whose yearning for a lasting peace was unparalleled. Netanyahu sent his political advisor, Dore Gold, to visit Jordan just before the opening of the tunnel, thus giving the false impression that King Hussein knew in advance about the unilateral Israeli decision in Jerusalem. A bloody battle ensued between Palestinians and Israeli security forces in September 1996 in the aftermath of the opening of the tunnel and many people were killed from both sides. Furthermore, Netanyahu sent Israeli agents to assassinate Khalid Mashaal, the Chief of the Hamas Political Bureau in Amman in September 1997. This move indicated that certain segments of the Israeli government had not yet internalized the meaning of peace. Being at peace with a country means that you respect the sovereignty of that country. The Mashaal affair represented a clear violation of the Israel–Jordanian peace treaty and a stark breach of Jordan's sovereignty. Netanyahu's policies enraged the King of Jordan, leading to a further loss of trust and faith in him. What surprised King Hussein was that the attack came only a few days after he personally reported to Israel a ceasefire offer proposed by Hamas. The operation against Khalid Mashaal was intended to provoke a violent reaction by Hamas, allowing Israel to blame Arafat for the new cycle of violence, which would have placed the whole peace process on hold.[17] This was exactly what would have satisfied Netanyahu's competing political interests at the time.

Netanyahu's domestic constraints were evident when he concluded an agreement with Yasser Arafat in October 1998 known as the Wye River agreement. After eight days of constant bargaining with the Palestinians and after a successful third party intervention by President Bill Clinton and King Hussein, the two parties agreed to sign the agreement. The main points in the agreement were an Israeli commitment to withdraw in three stages from 13.1 per cent of the West Bank, while Arafat committed himself to eradicating the clauses in the PLO's national charter that called for Israel's destruction.[18] The agreement was ratified by the cabinet by 8 to 4 with 5 abstentions, clearly showing the extent of the division among the members of the government.[19] In a subsequent vote in the Knesset, the agreement was ratified by 75 to 19 with 9 absentees. Seven of the absentees were cabinet ministers from Likud.[20] The government made it clear that the implementation of further redeployment would only come after the Palestinians fulfilled their part with particular regard to security issues.[21] It should be emphasized again that the focus on what Netanyahu had termed reciprocity was meant to give Netanyahu the chance to escape implementing his part of the agreement. Obviously, the agreement created a situation where the ability of the Prime Minister to fulfil his commitments depended mainly on the opposition. The Labour Party provided Netanyahu with the safety net he needed to get this agreement ratified.

Even though Arafat lived up to his commitment when he summoned the necessary Palestinian body and deleted those clauses in the PLO's charter

that called for the destruction of Israel, many Israelis argued that he should have done this a long time ago. When Netanyahu ordered the army to carry out the first pull-back stipulated in the Wye agreement, his hard-line partners were infuriated and threatened to bring the government down.[22] Driven by his desire to avert a coalition crisis, he rushed to freeze the agreement, an uncalculated move that enraged the Left and obliged the Labour Party to withdraw the parliamentary safety net. Netanyahu lost control as a result of this new dynamic and was forced to call for a snap election. This is a classic case that illustrates a situation in which an elected Prime Minister cannot implement an agreement that was previously ratified by both the cabinet and the Knesset.

To sum up, although Netanyahu won the general election by playing on the fears of the Israeli public over security, he – unlike his predecessors, Rabin and Peres – lacked the necessary experience and authority on issues relating to national security. Furthermore, the outcome of the 1996 election and the subsequent formation of his government constrained his room to manoeuvre. His failure to create peace and security is an uncontested fact. To mask his disappointment, he sought systematically and meticulously to delegitimize the Palestinians as partners. Essential to his strategy was the magic word 'reciprocity'. Netanyahu reasoned that by introducing the reciprocity principle, he would succeed in dodging the peace process while upholding the stability of his government. Nonetheless, it fooled nobody that his insistence on 'reciprocity' was actually meant to avoid implementing the Israeli side of the agreement. As Ron Pundak argues, 'The main weapon in his campaign against the Palestinians was the mantra that the Palestinians side was not fulfilling its part of the agreement; and therefore Israel should not implement its part.'[23] His failure to put his slogan 'peace with security' into practice worked to the benefit of his more popular rival Ehud Barak.

The Barak era: betting on the wrong horse

Ehud Barak, the leader of the Labour Party, beat Netanyahu in the May 1999 general election with a clear mandate to proceed with and revive the stalled peace process, which had effectively been crippled during Netanyahu's three-year reign. Given the widespread confidence that Barak and Labour would be more sincere in implementing the Oslo Accord and more forthcoming in the peace process, observers and analysts were relieved by Barak's victory. Unfortunately, from the standpoint of the peace process, Barak's tenure was a total disappointment. His failure could be ascribed to a combination of factors including the lack of a domestic peace coalition and his methods of handling the peace process. This section presents an analysis of the reasons behind Barak's failure in brokering a lasting peace Accord with the Palestinians.

Interestingly, the outcome of the 1999 general election further complicated the Israeli domestic scene and contributed to the breakdown of the peace process. Despite Barak's landslide electoral victory, he suffered enormously from the increasing fragmentation of Israeli politics caused by the application of the new electoral system. The impact of the electoral law manifested itself when the One Israel list (made up of Labour, Gesher, and Meimad) won only 26 seats, Likud only 19 seats, while Shas increased its representation to 17 seats.[24] The outcome of the election showed that the total number of the Knesset seats held by left-of-centre parties was 60 (including 10 Arab Knesset members). For two reasons, this meant that Barak was in no position to form a government with his natural coalition allies on the left. First, because of a cultural taboo, Barak could not afford to rely on the Arab Knesset members as he was looking for a Jewish majority, rather than just any majority. The second reason was that even with Arab Knesset members, the opposition still held the blocking majority, since Barak could not receive a vote of confidence without including some right-wing and religious factions in his coalition. This, of course, held many implications for Barak's ability to advance the peace process.

Ultimately his government was announced and it consisted of One Israel, Meretz, Shas, United Torah Judaism, the National Religious Party (NRP), the Centre Party, and Yisrael Ba'aliya. In order to prevail over potential obstacles facing the peace process with the Palestinians, Barak found it necessary to widen his 'win-set' to encompass at least one of the right-wing parties. The only other option besides Shas was to set up a National Unity Government (NUG) with Likud. However, the choice between Likud and Shas was based largely on Barak's national priorities. Bringing Likud into his coalition would entail complicating decision-making on the peace process, as Likud would ask for more ministers and, of course, more influence on issues relevant to foreign policy and particularly the peace process. Likud, on the other hand, would be less problematic on religious, economic, and social issues. To avert a potential crisis over the relationship with the Palestinians, Barak opted for a coalition with Shas, which was thought to be more flexible than Likud on matters pertaining to the peace process. Even with this pragmatically smart move, it was evident that the stability and sustainability of his government was held in the hands of right-wing coalition parties such as Shas, Yisrael Ba'aliya, and the NRP. As a consequence, Barak, at the very beginning, suffered from a paradoxical situation in which he was elected on a clear peace platform, but simultaneously lacked a peace coalition.[25]

Judging by the composition of the Knesset and the fundamentally divergent ideological and political predispositions represented, it is unsurprising that Barak faced great difficulties in persuading his right-wing partners to agree on territorial concessions to the Palestinians. The three right-wing components in his government were problematic in this regard. Although

the inclusion of Shas would pose problems in the social and religious spheres, it was hoped that it would provide Barak with a broad national coalition for peace and grant him a free hand in the peace talks with the PA. It should be noted that Shas was also one of Rabin's partners as well as an endorser of the Oslo Accord presented to the Cabinet in 1993. Although the Shas constituency was committed to the idea of Greater Israel, the party's religious mentor, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, ruled, 'Israel makes territorial concessions in order to avert a war in which Jewish lives will be lost.'[26] He invoked the biblical concept known in the bible as *pikuh nefsh* to validate his religious edict. However, Shas had undergone changes regarding the Palestinian problem, moving further to the right. Rabbi Ovadia Yosef publicly described the Palestinians and the Arabs as untrustworthy snakes, and went so far as to say that Palestinians 'are all accursed, wicked people. They are all haters of Israel.' He commented on Barak's attempt to reach an agreement with the Palestinians by asking: 'How can you make peace with snakes?'[27] The additional quandary with Shas is that even if it had supported Barak's peace plan, they would have asked for so many demands, especially more funds for their *yeshivot* (religious schools). This would have unquestionably made it impossible for Barak to meet these demands without enraging his leftist-secular partners, particularly Meretz.

These three right-wing parties (Shas, NRP, and Yisrael Ba'aliya) held a total of 28 seats. This basic statistical fact alone highlights the inherent difficulty within Barak's coalition of delivering a promise largely incumbent upon the whim and interests of the three parties. Hence the structure of the Knesset made it difficult for Barak to deliver on his assurances. However, one cannot blame only the outcome of the Israeli election for the failure of the peace process. To fully account for the contribution of the domestic factors in the breakdown of the peace process, one needs to explore Barak's strategy in dealing with the Palestinians.

To begin with, Barak made a grave political mistake when he barred prominent figures such as Shimon Peres and Yossi Beilin from effective decision-making. He excluded them and indeed the top brass of the leadership of the Labour Party from the process of forming the coalition government and thus alienated them.[28] Driven by his need to be in total control, Barak made sure that these two figures were given a far less visible role in foreign policy and especially in the peace process. He reluctantly created the almost unnoticeable Ministry for Regional Development for Shimon Peres and he assigned the Ministry of Justice to Yossi Beilin. By sidelining these two prominent figures, the message was conveyed that although Barak was elected on a clear mandate for peace, he would be very assertive with the Palestinians. As a result of this choice, the people Barak relied on to handle the peace process were far less experienced and less competent than those who skilfully negotiated the Oslo Accord.

Barak's flawed approach and negotiating style with the Palestinians constituted another stumbling block in the path of the peace process. He did not gain the trust of the Palestinians, who exhausted three years waiting for his premiership to end, and thus failed to take the whole process into a higher gear. He copied Netanyahu in lowering the Palestinians' expectations and took no notice of the extent to which the Palestinians' trust in the Israeli government was shattered during Netanyahu's tenure. Palestinians viewed the implementation of the Wye agreement as a test of Barak's intentions, which Barak failed to recognize. He even preferred to defer the Palestinian track and focused instead on the Syrian one. In an interview with the Israeli historian, Benny Morris, Barak admitted this preference of a Syrian deal over the one with the Palestinians. In Barak's words:

> I always supported Syria first. Because they have a [large] conventional army and nonconventional weaponry, chemical and biological, and missiles to deliver them. This represents, under certain conditions, and existential threat. And after Syria comes Lebanon [meaning that peace with Syria would immediately engender a peace treaty with Lebanon] moreover, the Syrian problem, with all its difficulties, is simpler to solve than the Palestinians problem. And reaching peace with Syria would greatly limit the Palestinians' ability to widen the conflict. On the other hand, solving the Palestinian problem will not diminish Syria's ability to existentially threaten Israel.[29]

Gilead Sher, a leading Israeli negotiator at the Camp David talks, states in his book, *Just Beyond Reach: The Israeli–Palestinian Peace Negotiations 1999–2001*, that Barak said that if there was a breakthrough on the Syrian track he would postpone the Palestinian track for several months.[30] Barak spent the first eight months of his term focusing on the Syrian track in order to reach a feasible deal and only turned to the Palestinian track when he realized that he could not produce an agreement with Syria. Barak's preference for the Syrian track is an extension of the traditional stance of Labour's hawks who have always given a priority to exploring the Syrian track.

Immediately after assuming power, Barak failed to meet Arafat for more than a couple months and additionally refused to implement the most significant (from a Palestinian point of view) element in the Interim Agreement of September 1995: a third redeployment. Moreover, he sought to introduce new modifications to the Wye agreement by forcing the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement of September 1999 on the Palestinian leadership. In this agreement, it was stipulated that the third redeployment be put off until it could be included as part of a framework agreement to be arrived at no later than February 2000.[31] Barak's insistence on a framework agreement for a

permanent status agreement dashed all the hopes the Palestinians had pinned on him. In addition, Barak's statements that United Nations resolution 242 did not apply to the borders between the West Bank and Gaza and Israel further aggravated the state of mistrust.[32] Furthermore, due to Barak's coalition with the NRP, he refused to reassure the Palestinians by responding to their constant demand to put a freeze on settlement activities during negotiations. In fact, settlement activity under Barak increased to an unprecedented level. From a Palestinian point of view, Barak's failure to implement the third redeployment and freeze settlement activities was disastrous.

Barak's third major fault came when he insisted on convening a summit at Camp David in August 2000. It is no longer a secret that Arafat was coerced into attending the summit, despite his plea for a delay, on the grounds that he needed a few weeks to prepare. His position was presented by the late Faisal Husseini when he said, 'please don't do this now. Give us another two or three weeks to prepare for such a meeting. If this fails, it will be a disaster.'[33] The outcome of the summit was indeed catastrophic. Even though the mainstream position in Israel makes a case that Arafat had refused a very 'generous' offer at Camp David, Barak's approach was not, in fact, acceptable to the Palestinians. For example, he refused to hold a single one-to-one meeting with Arafat in Camp David to overcome the problems in the proposal or to bridge the gap.[34] His insistence on a 'take it or leave it' approach was interpreted as a blatant order. The Palestinians rejected the proposal for two reasons. First, Barak's way of presenting the offer was seen as patronizing and condescending. He sought to impose his terms as a final deal for the PA. This led Avi Shlaim to describe Barak as being 'arrogant and authoritarian and he approaches diplomacy as the extension of war by other means'.[35] And second, the offer itself did not meet the minimum demands of the Palestinians. It is true that Barak offered far-reaching concessions (from an Israeli point of view); nevertheless the offer deliberately failed to sincerely address issues of paramount significance such as the refugee problem and Jerusalem. The package he presented, in effect, touched on all issues of final status; however, its limited concessions and the insistence that Arafat declare an end to the conflict compelled the latter to reject the offer. Clinton's attempt to bridge the gap between the two sides failed in light of the fact that the Palestinians considered his proposal insufficient.[36] It should be stressed here that the Palestinian leadership made serious mistakes in handling the whole peace process but these are beyond the scope of this book.

Understandably, Israelis and Palestinians differ on their interpretations of what was really offered. The Israeli public relations (PR) campaign, which portrays Barak as generous and Arafat as intransigent or even against peace, is defensive[37] and, in part, designed to save Barak and his team from the responsibility of the collapse of the summit. However, the PR

campaign launched by the Israelis was designed to achieve different purposes. For Labour, it was designed to convince others that Arafat had turned down a 'fair' proposal and that therefore he was the one who should be held responsible for the breakdown of the peace process. Likud and the hard-liners found a golden opportunity in the situation and sought to fully exploit it to impress the point that the Oslo framework was a major strategic mistake on the part of Israel, that Arafat was not interested in peace, and that his ultimate objective was the destruction of the Jewish state. These attempts succeeded in creating an atmosphere that eventually rendered Arafat irrelevant.[38]

Barak's last-ditch diplomacy to reach an understanding with the Palestinians at Taba (which both sides described as constructive talks) can hardly be seen now as having had a realistic chance of success. Israel was on the verge of holding an election in which Barak was expected to suffer a crushing electoral defeat, a new US President was about to be inaugurated and the whole negotiations were held at a time when Israeli and Palestinian forces were already engaged in a bloody conflict. As a consequence, one could argue that Barak hoped that by engaging in a dialogue with the PA, he would be able to reduce the scale of his expected humiliating loss to Ariel Sharon in the February 2001 elections.

The ascendance of 'Mr Security': Sharon as Prime Minister

Unquestionably, the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000 came as a breaking point in the Palestinian–Israeli peace process. Ever since the signing of the Oslo Accord, the intensity of the conflict between Israel and the PA had never reached the current (2002) level. The commencement of another Intifada can only be appreciated against the conjunction of several factors. Chief amongst them was the political frustration and the realization that the Israeli side was neither willing nor capable of delivering a just peace. Palestinians' hopes and yearning for getting rid of the yoke of occupation were dashed. It also came as a result of the non-implementation of the third redeployment stipulated in the 1995 Oslo II agreement, the unfettered continuation of settlement activities, the confiscation of land, closures, economic stagnation, daily humiliation of Palestinians and the highly symbolic and provocative infamous visit of the then opposition leader Ariel Sharon in September 2000 to Haram al Sharif/the Temple Mount. It is widely thought in Israel that Sharon's visit was motivated by his rivalry with Netanyahu over the leadership of the Likud Party as well as his well-known intentions to destroy the peace process.

The failure of the Camp David Summit and the subsequent eruption of the Palestinians' Intifada dealt a severe blow to Barak's political standing in Israel. These two events unfolded within a couple of months of each

other and were the last nail in the coffin of Barak's political career. Barak had brought neither peace nor security and therefore he was discredited. Amazingly, Sharon's election had been unthinkable before the flare-up of the Intifada, so one can safely argue that he won by default. He assumed the leadership of the Likud Party only after Netanyahu, who had felt humiliated by the landslide defeat in the 1999 elections, resigned and left politics. Sharon became the head of Likud and it was only Barak's failure that made Sharon the only choice for disgruntled Israelis.

Ironically, Sharon's election as Prime Minister was not associated with a concomitant change in the factional composition of the Knesset. Labour remained the largest party followed by Likud then by Shas. This fact must have had an impact upon the coalitional calculations of Sharon who correctly figured out that the only way to escape the constraints of the factional make-up of the Knesset and to have a stable government was to form an NUG with Labour. Moreover, a government with Labour would help him mask his uncompromising position *vis-à-vis* the Palestinians. As discussed in chapter 1, the formation of an NUG is not a novelty in Israeli politics. Judging from the record of the performance of previous NUGs, it is obvious that the mere formation of such a government was a recipe for immobility in Israeli foreign policy with respect to the peace process.

As argued earlier, Sharon was elected mainly due to the deterioration of the security situation. To those who shifted their vote from Barak to Sharon, the latter was thought to be better able than the former to bring the Palestinian violence to a halt. However, at the time of writing (2002) Sharon has been in power for two years and still violence and counter-violence seem to be the only game in town. Sharon's reliance on force alone to achieve total victory has brought him little benefit, and as a consequence, he has failed to bring both peace and security to ordinary Israelis who feel threatened. As the author, elsewhere, analyses the Israeli government's position regarding the use of force:

> Sharon is not the only one who thinks in terms of complete victory; the right-wing ministers, a majority in his government, think the same. They all advocate that this option be thoroughly pursued to dissuade the Palestinians from 'messing' with Israel again. The thinking is deep-rooted in the activist school of thought championed by David Ben-Gurion in the 1950s, which gives high priority to employing force in implementing foreign policy objectives. The rationale behind this reasoning, and here is the crux of the quandary, is that beating the adversary resolutely will boost Israel's deterrent image and this will oblige its enemies to lay down their arms.[39]

Therefore the question that should be raised is the following: Is it true that the Palestinian leadership is not interested in peace, as a majority of Israelis

still believes? Or was it the case that the NUG had no vision other than continuing the status quo?

Answering these questions entails alluding to the impact of the Palestinian action upon Israel. Despite many differences within the Palestinian camp, two points are in order. First, the mainstream Palestinian position is that they have already conceded around 78 per cent of Mandatory Palestine, and therefore they are willing only to embark on negotiations in order to implement Resolution 242 and to end the Israeli occupation of the entire territories occupied in 1967.[40] Regardless of Yasser Arafat's credibility or the scope of his interest in peace, the bottom line, as Deputy Speaker of the Knesset Naomi Chazen argues, is that it would not be possible for Arafat or any other alternative Palestinian leader to reject a peace deal that would allow the declaration of a viable state within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as the capital and with a just solution to the refugee problem.[41] These terms were in fact never offered at Camp David in July 2000.

The second point is that Sharon-led governments had no capacity to present or accept an offer that met these demands. From an Israeli standpoint, the return of millions of refugees into Israel proper would end the Jewish majority, which is the *raison d'être* of the State of Israel. Such an offer needs a Zionist consensus or at least a Jewish majority and so far no such consensus has crystallized. The limits of what to offer the Palestinians (previously Jordan) is not only a matter to be negotiated between the Palestinians and the Israelis, but more importantly a matter to be decided first within the Zionist camp, thus sidelining the issue of the historical injustice being done to the Palestinians.[42]

Of course, there have been a few initiatives to bring the peace process back on track in the aftermath of the eruption of the Intifada. To begin with, the Jordanian–Egyptian initiative came as a framework for mutual steps to be taken by the PA and the Israeli government with the objective of reaching a ceasefire, building confidence and eventually resuming negotiations.[43] The initiative called *inter alia* on Israel to withdraw its army to their positions held prior to the outbreak of the Intifada as well as to place a freeze on the building and extension of settlements. It also stated that the PA should start security co-operation with Israel aimed at stopping the violence and incitement. It was envisioned that negotiations for a final agreement might be reached within one year. While the agreement was accepted by Arafat, the Israeli government was divided. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres was ready to consider the plan while Sharon voiced strong reservations on many points included in the initiative. Sharon's government decided not to endorse it and called for many modifications. Sharon refused to accept a freeze on settlement activities and he expressed his opinion of reaching a long-term interim agreement rather than a final settlement with the Palestinians.

The second initiative was what became known as the Mitchell Report of 30 April 2001. In November 2000, President Clinton appointed Senator George Mitchell to the post of the chairman of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee with the task of investigating the causes of the eruption of the Intifada. After a series of meetings with both sides and listening to their conflicting versions of the events, the committee wrote a report recommending an immediate ceasefire followed by a cooling off period in order to rebuild confidence between the two sides of the conflict. It also called for a total freeze on settlement activities. Its recommendations were akin to but not identical with those listed in the Jordanian–Egyptian initiative but the strength of the report was derived from the fact that it came from the United States, a more influential player in the wider strategic game. However, the report failed to suggest a mechanism on how to implement the otherwise thorough document. In recognition of this shortcoming, the Tenet Report of June 2001 came to fill a void in the Mitchell report and asked both the Palestinians and the Israelis to commit to a mutual and comprehensive ceasefire.[44]

It was not unnatural for the Sharon-led government to find a pretext not to implement the abovementioned initiatives. Who within the NUG would have backed the implementation of a freeze on settlement activities? Right-wing ministers, and, of course, the majority from Likud, never concealed their blatant opposition to the implementation of this particular clause. The fact remains that there was no majority within the NUG that was in favour of the most significant part of this report: a freeze on settlement activity.[45] Although Labour ministers were, at least verbally, in favour of implementing the Mitchell recommendations, they remained a minority within the government and their fetishism with power weakened their influence over Israel's foreign policy.

Labour's attempts to initiate negotiations with the Palestinians were dealt a severe blow by the situation that emerged in the aftermath of the tragic events of 11 September 2001. Its position was further weakened in relation to the hard-liners within the government who found a golden opportunity in these terrible events to bury the peace process once and for all. Sharon and his hard-liners waged a PR campaign known in Hebrew as *hasbarah* in order to draw a parallel between what the Americans were doing in Afghanistan and what Israel was doing against the PA.[46] Many Israelis believed that this approach would make the world more understanding of Israeli policies in dealing with the Palestinian Intifada. However, while it is true that the United States and the West in general adopted a zero-tolerance approach to terrorism after 11 September, they refused to entirely accept the Israeli position regarding the comparison of Arafat with Bin Laden or the PA with the Taliban. On the contrary, the Americans who were involved in constructing an anti-terrorism coalition initially realized the necessity to solve the Palestinian problem in order to

stave off the ability of these fundamentalists to recruit terrorists and to enable the United States to build an anti-terrorism coalition that included Arab states. The British and the Americans presented a vision of the future solution of the Palestinian problem by supporting the idea of establishing a viable Palestinian state alongside Israel that would enable both sides to coexist peacefully.

Despite this encouraging vision, the Bush administration gradually moved closer to Sharon's position. In June 2002, Bush delivered his long-awaited speech in which he articulated his vision of a two-state solution. But more important to Sharon was Bush's embracement of the idea that Arafat was no longer relevant. Bush called on the Palestinians to elect an alternative leadership. Making the situation worse was the fact that the Bush administration was doing nothing noticeable to stop the violence. Its policies, and indeed Bush's statement that 'Sharon is a man of peace', were seen by the Palestinians and by a wider international community as slanting American foreign policy in favour of Israel. Having managed to topple Saddam's regime in Iraq in 2003, it remains to be seen how the United States is going to reconcile its rather contradicting objectives. The Bush administration needs to reassure the Arabs by exercising pressure on Sharon regarding a two-state solution while concurrently granting Sharon a free hand in unleashing his army against militant Palestinian factions.

Within the NUG, one can discern two competing approaches to the solution of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. The first school of thought is spearheaded by Sharon's party and other right-wing parties. It emphasizes the need to solve the problem by employing military force until total victory is achieved. Moshe Arens wrote that Sharon must not repeat the mistake of President Bush senior when he stopped short of toppling Saddam's regime in 1991. Arens believed Sharon should draw the right lesson and unseat Arafat. He suggested that the government should order the army to achieve total victory by inflicting a military defeat on the Palestinian forces as well as entering the Palestinian cities with the task of dismantling the PA infrastructure.[47] To strengthen their argument, they try to convince the Israelis that Arafat is not interested in peace, that the Palestinians are terrorists, and that Arafat refused the 'generous' offer of Barak.[48] Proponents of this line of thinking waste no opportunity to stress the need to de-legitimize Arafat and his authority. Unsurprisingly, they have never supported the Oslo Accord and they have systematically opposed any peace agreement with the Palestinians. They still have an affinity for the idea a Greater Israel including the West Bank and Gaza.

Moreover, it is unlikely that this group and, more specifically, Sharon can afford to go ahead with the peace process for several reasons. First, there is the potential that his competitors within the Likud Party would outflank him from the right thus posing a real challenge to his leadership. Netanyahu has meticulously advocated the overthrowing of Arafat and the PA. In June

2002 after a showdown between Sharon and Netanyahu in which Netanyahu emerged victorious, the Likud central committee adopted a binding resolution against the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. Second, Netanyahu's supporters occupy higher ranks in the list for the sixteenth Knesset. This simply means that Sharon's hands are tied by intra-party calculations. Third, his popularity was until recently still unprecedented in the modern history of Israel; therefore, there is no sense of urgency on the part of Sharon to act. His manoeuvres are all designed to maintain a loose consensus behind the mantra, 'Arafat is irrelevant'. Fourth, Palestinian actions are seen in Israel as terrorism and indeed, most of the time, have helped Sharon win Israeli public support. In addition to this consideration, Sharon himself has not fully dropped the idea of a Greater Israel. For all of these reasons, he has systematically throttled all initiatives aimed at making peace with the Palestinians.

The second Israeli school of thought called for negotiation with the Palestinians in order to reach an agreement on a ceasefire and then to get the peace negotiations back on track. This approach was spearheaded by the foreign minister, Shimon Peres, and to a lesser extent by the Defence Minister, Benjamin Eliezer, and Labour Party ministers, who were in a minority position within the government, adopted this approach. Initially, their argument was that although Arafat made a grave mistake in first refusing the Israeli offer and second by initiating the Intifada, he was still the only possible partner in the peace process. They could see an alternative leader on the Palestinian side that could deliver a lasting peace agreement. On many occasions, Labour leaders warned that if Israel brings about the collapse of the PA or the assassination of Arafat, the alternative rulers of Palestine would be the militant fundamentalist organizations of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. However, with the passage of time, leaders of the Labour Party have gradually come to see eye to eye with Sharon's policy that Arafat is irrelevant and have asked for reforms within the PA designed to unseat Arafat.

The predicament of Labour was that it had not yet recovered fully from the electoral defeat of Barak and from the bitter succession contest over the leadership of the party. Consequently, Labour suffered through being leaderless for almost a year. The primaries that took place on 4 September 2001 left a profound imprint on the unity of the party. Knesset Speaker Avraham Burg was denied victory on the grounds that there was fraud within the Druze sector. In the re-vote, he lost to Ben Eliezer. However, Ben Eliezer was not able to maintain his position and lost the leadership contest in November 2002 to the Mayor of Haifa, Amram Mitzna'.

Within the Labour Party there was no clear position regarding the peace process. Some prominent figures such as Haim Ramon and Shlomo Ben Ami suggested a unilateral separation from the Palestinians. Peres and others preferred an agreement with the Palestinians. But the Labour Party

was no longer as influential on the formulation of the foreign policy of this NUG as it used to be. By joining the NUG, the party failed to pose an electoral threat to Sharon's premiership. Instead of leading the opposition, challenging Sharon's failures in both security and economic spheres while presenting the Israeli electorate with an alternative approach, the divided Labour party was serving Sharon. Despite their efforts to project an image of being the party that was moderating Sharon's policies, they were full partners with Likud's policies. More perceptive members of the Labour Party, albeit the minority, were opposed to being joined with the government. Chief amongst them were people such as Yossi Beilin, Avraham Burg, Haim Ramon, and Shlomo Ben Ami, who were all outspoken in their objection to the NUG. Those people had the moral daring to see through the self-delusion of Likud and take pride in expressing their unequivocal opposition to occupation and to Sharon's policies. Ben Ami argued that that the NUG had no political prospects on the horizon and that his party should lead the opposition in order to avert a war.[49] Similarly, Yossi Beilin argued that the idea of joining the Sharon government was completely flawed.[50]

Labour's uneasy position within the government had occasionally triggered a rift between Sharon and Peres over the proper approach to be followed. Sharon has not changed his mind that Israel should not negotiate under fire. Until March 2002, he insisted on a seven-day cooling off period before negotiations could start. This pre-condition was meant to ward off the prospect of negotiations starting at all. Sharon feared the resumption of the peace process, as this would damage his coalition with his natural allies, particularly the extreme right-wing parties. Meanwhile, Sharon's immediate objective, since assuming power, has been to survive as Prime Minister and thus he was playing for time.

Even though the focus of this chapter is on the domestic scene within Israel, it is crucial to remark that the Palestinians' behaviour has helped trigger a marked change in the internal balance of political forces within Israel.[51] Therefore a few words on this factor are warranted. By and large, Sharon's ability to keep postponing the resumption of the peace process hinged on the actions of the Palestinian militant movements, mainly Hamas and Islamic Jihad. By stipulating a complete seven-day cooling off period, Sharon unwittingly gave these movements a veto power over the whole peace process. The Hamas and Islamic Jihad organizations' declared objective is to liberate the whole of Palestine. To them the conflict is a zero-sum struggle. Ironically, one can make the case that Sharon is not far from this position in the sense that he has no interest in the peace process. Indeed he never endorsed a peace settlement even when it enjoyed a Zionist consensus. The peace treaties with Jordan and Egypt are a case in point.[52] As a consequence, every time Sharon was under pressure to move on with the peace process, these Palestinian organizations presented him with an

excuse, essentially letting him off the hook. Therefore, it could be argued that there was a sort of inadvertent alliance between the extremists on both sides. Their actions just reinforced each other. The Palestinian militant actions were skilfully used by Sharon domestically to maintain a sort of Jewish consensus that Arafat and the Palestinians were not interested in peace. Sharon was winning domestically in a large part thanks to the suicide bombings and violent resistance.

It is equally important to note that the Palestinian leadership failed to gain Israeli public support. Instead of promoting the message that occupation is evil, corrupt and immoral, many of their violent tactics were directed at civilians within Israel proper, and were not confined within the Occupied Territories. Although these actions were caused by the Israeli occupation, they were widely perceived in Israel and indeed in the West simply as 'terrorism'. The impact of these actions on the Israeli public has been grave. The numbers of Israelis who suspect that Arafat has not chosen peace as a strategic option has been on the increase since the outbreak of the Intifada. An opinion poll, conducted by the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research at Tel Aviv University in May 2001, reveals that 70 per cent of the Jewish public thinks that Arafat 'lacks the desire, or the capability, to sign an agreement to end the conflict with Israel, even if Israel agrees to all his demands'.[53]

Therefore, by attacking civilians within Israel proper, the Palestinians failed to crystallize a difference in the Israeli mind between Israeli citizens living in Israel proper and those settlers who illegally reside in the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinian suicide bombs within the Green Line have blurred such a distinction for a majority of Israelis. In an opinion poll conducted in June 2001 by the Tami Steinmetz Center, 72 per cent of Israeli Jews said that their emotions were the same with respect to attacks entailing casualties in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as with those attacks resulting in casualties inside the Green Line. Surprisingly, 61 per cent of the leftist Meretz voters stated that their sentiments were identical regardless of where the attacks took place.[54] Palestinians' actions have had a profound negative impact on the strength of the peace and pragmatic camp within Israel and by extension on the reconfiguration of political forces that not only hardened the Israeli position but also brought to power one of the most hawkish figures in the contemporary history of Israel.

Regardless of the American attempts to bring peace in the region, the fact remains that an NUG in Israel headed by a hard-liner such as Sharon is not going to budge. Therefore even if the Americans were to succeed in brokering a ceasefire, and subsequently bring the two sides to the negotiating table, it would be extremely difficult to imagine that Sharon would be able to move Israel to reach an historic reconciliation with the Palestinians and the achievement of peace. Barring a third party intervention strong enough to have an impact on domestic balances within Israel,

the prospects for the Sharon-led government brokering a settlement with the Palestinians are grim.

Conclusions

In this final chapter, the linkage between domestic factors and foreign policy is firmly established. This chapter has offered an explanation that regards internal factors as the key to understanding the shift within Israel that led to a drastic change in its foreign policy on the peace process. By and large, the combination of domestic factors, ideology and personality of the three Prime Ministers, Netanyahu, Barak, and Sharon, contributed to the deterioration of the peace process.

This chapter also demonstrates how the insincere and incomplete implementation of the Oslo Accord during Netanyahu's tenure and the failure of Barak to win over Palestinian confidence rubbed salt into a long-festering wound. The Palestinians resorted to the Intifada in order to convey the message of dissatisfaction with the progress in the peace process. However, as the Intifada persisted, matters escalated out of control and the cycle of violence and counter violence helped bring about Barak's downfall. Watching the performance of the NUG and the lack of effective checks and balances, one can confidently argue that in spite of having Labour as the main partner, the government is a right-wing one camouflaged with the name of NUG. With a government run by Sharon and his radical right-wing partners, there is no single reason to assume that peace is within reach. Even the prospect of peace negotiations resuming will remain slim. In order for a lasting peace to be achieved another left-of-centre government under the leadership of the Labour Party and with a different Knesset factional make-up must be formed.

It remains to be seen how Sharon is going to handle the roadmap initiative proposed by the US, UN, Russia, and the European Union in 2003. Sharon might surprise all of us and emerge as an Israeli Charles de Gaulle. Yet, by all yardsticks, this man, who is fettered by domestic political calculation, his own right-wing ideology, and whose wit never went beyond the immediate need to survive as a politician, is not likely to lead Israel on the road of peace. But to prevent the situation from more deterioration, an active and forceful third-party intervention is necessary to stabilize the current situation.

Conclusions

The primary purpose of this book is to demonstrate the link between foreign policy and the internal political scene in Israel. The foreign policy of Israel regarding peace in the Middle East and particularly towards the Palestinians can only be adequately comprehended by appreciating the enormous impact of what have been termed domestic political factors. The relative significance of these features on the process of peacemaking in the period between 1988 and 2002 has been justified throughout the book. Internal inputs, such as the intra- and inter-party politics, the politics of coalition, ideology, and the politics of personality, proved to be enduring. Interestingly, the same variables, as demonstrated in the final chapters, are responsible for the current stalemate (1996 to 2003) of the peace process.

This book challenges the state-centric paradigm, which focuses on the state as a unitary and rational actor behaving in an anarchic international environment.[1] In this self-help system, the state's actions are designed to achieve security and survival and thus it acts rationally. The concept of rationality is a key one in the realist world. That is why this approach is so popular. By assuming that the state is a rational actor, the task for understanding why a state behaves as it does becomes easier. In foreign policy analysis, the Rational Actor Model, which is derived from realism, is the most dominant one. Explanations, according to this approach, are offered without detailed attention to the internal mechanisms of the government. Accordingly, the national government is a single actor that has one set of goals, one set of options, and one estimate of the consequences for each alternative.[2] According to this approach, state behaviour could be understood from the basic assumption of rationality (the trademark of this approach).[3] Hans Morgenthau, for instance, explained the outbreak of the First World War by saying that it 'had its origins exclusively in the fear of a disturbance of the European balance of power'.[4] It was this fear according to Morgenthau that had led Germany, for instance, to support Austria and led France to support Russia. Morgenthau was able to reach this conclusion by using the rationality assumption.[5]

Neo-realism assumes that a state's foreign behaviour is a response to the constraints and opportunities provided by the self-help system. It follows that to understand a state's external conduct, there is no need to look within the state for the source of the action. However, the author argues that international systems approaches that only deal with external developments are insufficient to explain variation in foreign policy making. This is true particularly in the case of complex states such as Israel where it is impossible to account for the shift from war to peace without unpacking the state. In the Israeli case, the nature of the intra-party politics, the block politics, ideology, and the politics of personality are critical to understanding why the domestic scene responded to the international milieu in such a way that it led to the rise and later to the decline of the peace process.

The logic of this is that in order to account for variations in the foreign policy behaviour of states, the 'black box' must be opened and examined. In particular, the jostling for position within the bureaucracy and institutions of a state must be understood. As was demonstrated throughout the book, 'bargaining' among the government coalition might dictate a course of action that a systemic approach could neither explain nor predict. Steve Smith, for example, argues that President Carter's decision to use military means to rescue the American hostages in Iran in 1980 could be understood as a result of the deliberations within the American administration.[6] Smith demonstrates the strength of domestic input in that decision. In his words: 'the linkage between the policy preferences of those individuals who made the decision and their bureaucratic position is a more powerful explanation of that decision than any of the alternatives'.[7]

A strong version of this approach maintains that state foreign policy is determined solely by domestic factors. The Cold War Revisionists, writing predominantly in the 1960s and early 1970s, accounted for the origin of the Cold War by emphasizing American domestic politics and economic needs rather than the demands of the international system.[8] Theories or ideas engaged at this level of analysis acknowledge that the international system may indeed constrain a state's foreign behaviour, but that the goal, content, and style of foreign policy are determined and shaped largely by domestic factors.[9] This approach, in my view, correctly rejects conceptualizing the state as a 'black box'.

The jostling for position within political parties and within successive governments was discussed in chapter 1. The interaction of the three factional positions within Labour had completely paralysed the ability of the party to take a clear decision *vis-à-vis* the political future of the Occupied Territories. A decision – over whether to offer territories or not and if so, for how much and for what – was not possible given the leaders' personal political stake in staying in power. This was exacerbated by the fact that the NRP became more hawkish particularly after the 1973 War.

Thus given the importance and bearing of the politics of coalition, the Labour Party had to respond to the demands of their indispensable coalition partners in such a way that made deciding on peace and maintaining a Labour-led government incompatible. Indeed, a major part of understanding contemporary Israel is an appreciation that Tel Aviv for many years avoided initiating a definitive peace strategy lest this inspired internal political upheaval. Specifically, as the chapter demonstrated, the Labour Party suffered from internal divisions over the conquered territories.

This problem limited the options of successive premiers who found themselves balancing conflicting opinions. To justify the inability to offer a clear policy on the future of the Occupied Territories, Labour leaders 'passed the buck' to the Arabs by insisting that there was no Arab partner who was willing to negotiate. This explanation for their immobility was employed in order to disguise the inability of successive Israeli governments to resolve the inherent debate within Zionism over the exact physical borders of the Jewish State. Hence, as was demonstrated in chapter 1, Labour's adoption of a form of what might be termed the Jordanian option should not be perceived seriously.

Besides, Likud's ascendance to power in 1977 was a watershed in Israel's politics and history. The ideological input into the making of Israeli foreign policy became more salient. This party, under the leadership of Menachem Begin and later Yitzhak Shamir, was driven by a Revisionist Zionist ideology that views the West Bank as an integral part of biblical Israel. The practical translation of their ideology was the construction of many settlements in the heart of the West Bank. It is worth mentioning at this point that the role of ideology in the formulation of foreign policy, although important in the Israeli case, is a contested issue in international relations. Ideology, according to realists, cannot provide a framework to understand a state's foreign policy. Morgenthau makes the case that the true nature of foreign policy is 'concealed by ideological justifications and rationalizations'.[10] To acquire a sharp analysis of international relations, one needs to go beyond the competing ideologies. These ideologies 'are like the froth on the top of the sea, revealing little of the powerful currents that lie below the surface'.[11]

Yet the ultimate goal was to prevent future Labour-led governments from conceding territories to Jordan even in exchange for peace. The underlying difference between Labour and Likud was on the issue of land. Labour considered that any territorial concession to Jordan in exchange for peace would keep Israel both Jewish and democratic. Labour's insistence on territorial compromise stemmed from a demographic nightmare, which is, as illustrated in the first and second chapters, why Labour adopted the Jordanian option. By contrast, Likud seemed unfazed by the demographic threat and insisted that Israel had an historical right to claim sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza. They placed the value of territories over any

other value including peace. As a consequence, the formation of an NUG in 1984 and another one in 1988 only paralysed the decision-making process. Here again, the imperatives of coalition government were salient. Given the different ideological and strategic outlooks between the two main coalition partners, i.e. Likud and Labour, it only precluded and indeed delayed the evolution of a domestic environment that could respond positively to the developments in the regional environment. The result of this immobility and the aggressive settlement policy was the Palestinian Intifada, which formed the substance of the second chapter.

The Intifada (1987–93) left a profound imprint on Israeli politics and was an important input in the reformulation of the Israeli leaders' stands regarding peace. During the Intifada, many Israeli decision-makers came to the conclusion that there was no military solution to the Arab–Israeli conflict and that a peaceful avenue should be explored should the parties to the conflict seek to coexist. The party most affected by the Intifada was Labour. It has been illustrated that the Intifada had an impact on intra-party developments and led the party to adopt what has been described as increasingly dovish positions. It also inspired members of the younger generation, such as Yossi Beilin, Avraham Burg, and Haim Ramon, to advance some of their long-held ideological demands, such as the necessity to acknowledge the Palestinian national rights and the PLO.

More interesting though is the fact that the Intifada displayed to the world the differences between Labour and Likud. The former was regarded as pragmatic and willing to explore any peaceful avenue whereas the latter was viewed as intransigent. Shamir's rejection of the Shultz plan, the Mubarak plan, and the Baker plan provides evidence of the stubbornness of Likud. Indeed, as chapter 2 demonstrated, even Shamir's plan, which came as a result of Rabin's constant pressure, was a smokescreen and was not a serious attempt to find a solution to the Palestinian problem. Shamir resorted to delaying tactics in order to keep Labour in his government and equally importantly to avoid a showdown with the 'constraint ministers' within his party. His ideological inclinations, his personal political interests, and the factional imperatives within Likud were the reason for the lack of seriousness on his part.

Of course, as the book has demonstrated, it was not simply a matter of elite infighting. The impact of the Intifada was profound in terms of the public discourse. The percentage of those who advocated the political status quo dropped from 47.1 per cent in 1986 to 2.4 per cent in May 1990. The drop, as shown in chapter 2, is accounted for by the outbreak and persistence of the Intifada. This proved crucial in the 1992 election when Rabin and his colleagues in the party were able to level criticism against Likud for the continuation of the Intifada and the resultant deterioration of security within Israel itself. Though the Palestinian uprising was not in itself able to defeat Israel militarily, it had a critical impact on the thinking of

those in power. Most notable here was the influence upon Yitzhak Rabin, who realized that the only legitimate partners for peace negotiations were the Palestinians. Therefore, by adopting a Palestinian option, Rabin and indeed Labour took the first step in the right direction.

By the early 1990s, it appeared that Labour was determined to assume power. Though the importance of regaining power was a crucial feature of the period, as chapter 3 demonstrated, Labour's decision to adopt internal reforms was driven primarily by the desire to unseat Likud and regain power. Labour's defeat in the ballot in 1977 had haunted the party. It took Labour leaders about a decade to grasp the underlying reasons behind the electoral decline. The reason for Labour's successive electoral defeats was found in the fact that Labour's leader failed to see the underlying causes of the party's electoral defeats. Labour had simply ceased to be either representative or responsive to the developing and evolving constituencies, thus alienating, for example, the increasing large Sephardi constituency.

Therefore, the intra-party developments such as the adoption of the democratic reforms (the American-style primaries) led to two important conclusions with a much wider implication for the peace process. First, the list was the most representative in the history of the party. Many young candidates, who happened to have what have been termed dovish inclinations, were elected and indeed they were able to introduce some ideological changes to the party's policy platform. These changes took the party further to the left regarding the Palestinians. A second and an unquestionably significant consequence was that Rabin was able finally to lead the party. It was widely believed among the party members that Rabin's chances of gaining power were much higher than those of Peres, who suffered from the problem of inelectability. Despite his unparalleled success as a statesman, he never won a single general election. The problem remained, however, that Peres, due to his 15-year leadership of the party, was in a formidable position. He enjoyed undisputed control of the party's organs. Therefore it was only possible for Rabin to lead the party after the introduction of American-style primaries where the party's entire membership had the right to cast their vote.

The traditional approach to the study of foreign policy came under criticism because it assumes that foreign policy is the product of rational behaviour. The recognition of 'irrationality' in foreign policy has led to a growing interest in the role of psychological factors.[12] In fact, the value of belief systems was not commonly acknowledged due to the fact that traditional realists remained highly sceptical of the role of psychology in foreign policy making and particularly the role of belief systems. In his attempt to construct a framework for studying Israeli foreign policy, Michael Brecher explores the psycho-cultural environment and links that to Israeli foreign behaviour.[13] Though the framework seems comprehensive, it needs a vast quantity of data to operate the research design and

'it is not at all clear that the insight into foreign policy behaviour that have been generated are such as to justify the expenditure in research time and effort'.[14] Nonetheless, were it not for Rabin, as chapter 4 demonstrates, the Oslo agreement would probably not have come into being.

Rabin's eventual victory over Shamir changed Israel's position concerning peace. He was able first of all to sign the Oslo agreement with the PLO, and more significantly to sell it to the Israeli public. Rabin's belief system – an open one – was central to these changes. That is to say, his existing beliefs were not so rigid that they excluded new information and thus they were subject to change. Although it is not possible to account for all foreign policy behaviour on the ground of belief systems, it allows for a better understanding of much of Rabin's thinking and behaviour.

The demise of the Cold War and its consequences for Israel's international standing led Rabin to conclude that Israel was a normal state that no longer dwelled alone. This was contrary to his long-held perception, influenced by his Jewish prism that perceived Israel as 'a people that shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations'. This change was an important one given that his Jewish prism was dominant in perceiving matters. It was also demonstrated that the Zionist/Jewish prism was strong enough to dissuade Israeli leaders from contemplating peace. Rabin's pessimistic perception was, by and large, caused by the Jewish prism but also accentuated by his military experience. In the army, Rabin was socialized to regard military power as an important factor in international relations.

Rabin's pessimistic outlook was exacerbated by some of his personal traits (i.e. suspicion and lack of trust in others, as well as the outside world). His suspicion and lack of trust was no more evident than in this relationship with his rival Peres. Their perennial personal competition over the leadership of the party hindered the peace process in Rabin's first term as Prime Minister. However, the transformation of this relationship to a working one after Labour's victory in 1992 was of great importance in the success of the Labour-led government in proceeding with the PLO. Both leaders – knowing that this time might be the last for both to be in power due to the age factor – agreed to put aside their chronic personal differences and work genuinely for peace. Without this new *modus vivendi*, the Oslo agreement and the subsequent peace treaty with Jordan would most probably not have been concluded.

The bulk of this book concentrates on the notion that nothing short of understanding the impact of domestic factors will enable us to come to a full appreciation of the rise and decline of the peace process. However, this does not mean that in any way the external dimension of the peace process has been or could be ignored, not least because domestic politics in Israel also proved to be susceptible to external pressures, especially those provided by the end of the Cold War and the renewed interest of

the United States in peace in the Middle East. The book, therefore, does not discard the explanatory power of other paradigms that emphasize the role of external factors. In fact, realism and neo-realism could explain much of why Israel behaves as it does.

Indeed, as the study demonstrated in chapter 5, the end of the Cold War and the demise of Iraq's military power created a more benign strategic environment for Israel. This certainly had an impact on the perception of decision-makers to the nature and level of threat. Before the end of the Cold War Rabin had never contemplated withdrawal from the Golan Heights even in exchange for peace. The role of the United States in Israel's peace strategy was, of course, a considerable one. Israel's need for American support has increased with time thus creating a dependency relationship. However, Israel under Shamir refused to give in to American demands regarding peace and a freeze on settlement expansion. Here the fundamental differences between Rabin and Shamir are clear, for Rabin was ready to consider some territorial concession and to co-ordinate with the American administration to realize peace with favourable terms.

The role of Jordan in Israel's peace strategy proved to be crucial for Labour. However, there was a dilemma. King Hussein was motivated to prevent a Palestinian orientation in Israel's foreign policy (for security reasons) but at the same time constrained by his inter-Arab position. He was denied the right to represent the Palestinians. Paradoxically, Labour was not ready to talk with the legitimate Palestinian representative (the PLO), but was not offering Jordan enough to induce a defection from the Arab consensus either. Jordan's decision to sever its ties with the West Bank came as a result of political disillusionment. Unwittingly, this decision had two far-reaching implications. First, it forced Labour to drop the Jordanian option by adopting a Palestinian one. Second, it lay the ground for an Israeli–Palestinian agreement which indeed was a prerequisite for the Israel–Jordan peace treaty.

While a great deal of the book focuses on the relative significance of domestic factors on the rise of the peace process, the final chapter proves that internal inputs accounted for the decline of the peace process. It again demonstrates that a government is by no means a single, unitary actor. It consists of different players with different interests, perceptions, and opinions. Netanyahu's victory in the 1996 election marked the beginning of a process that culminated in the impasse of the peace process. The final chapter clarifies how the internal political environment evolved and indeed responded to external factors, such as the Al-Aqsa Intifada. The persistence of the Intifada had radicalized Israeli public opinion in such a way that it led to the rise of Sharon. The formulation of Sharon governments and the politics of coalition proved to be the final nail in the coffin of the peace process. The chapter concluded by maintaining that, due to domestic factors, the Sharon government failed to address the issue of

peace. It remains to be seen, however, how the peace process will be dealt with in light of Sharon's victory in the election in 2003 and the unseating of Saddam Hussein by the United States.

To sum up, the contribution of this book to scholarly literature lies in presenting a new way of interpreting Israel's foreign policy: one that regards the internal dynamics of Israel's domestic politics as the key to understanding the breakthrough in the peace process. By operating concepts from middle-range theories, it was possible to trace the factors contributing to the positions of key players and to see exactly when and how they evolved and what caused changes. The methodology adopted allowed us to establish the input of factors derived from domestic politics and their impact on the formulation of foreign policy making in Israel. The book demonstrated that the Intifada, coalition formation, personality, ideology, intra-party developments, internal reforms within Labour, inter-party politics, and, to a lesser degree, the impact of external factors on Israeli peace strategies constituted necessary and sufficient conditions for the rise of the peace process but also for the regretable decline of the process.

Glossary

Achdut Havooda A socialist Zionist party that split from the Mapai Party in 1944 and joined the Labour Party in 1968.

Agudat Yisrael An ultra-orthodox religious party that opposed Zionism on theological grounds but active in government and legislation.

Aliyah The immigration of Jews to Israel seeking permanent residence.

Ashkenazi A Jew of European and western origin.

Degel Ha Torah An Ashkenazi *haredi* party established on the eve of the 1988 general election.

Democratic Movement for Change (DMC) A centrist political party, known in Hebrew as Dash, established in 1976 as a continuation of the protest movements which emerged in Israel in the aftermath of the 1973 War. It called for electoral reform and disappeared from Israeli politics by 1981.

Eretz Yisrael The Land of Israel.

Gahal A political alliance formed between Herut and the Liberal Party before the general election of 1965.

goyim The non-Jewish world.

Gush Emunim The Block of the Faithful, the messianic movement of the settlers in the West Bank and Gaza.

Halacha Jewish law.

Hamas The Palestinian Movement of Islamic Resistance. It was formed during the first Intifada (1987–93).

Haredi Ultra-orthodox non-Zionist or anti-Zionist Jews.

***hasbarah* (explaining)** It refers to the effort made by the Likud to explain to the American public why it was not possible to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza. It meant to create a conducive atmosphere in the United States to understand Likud's aggressive settlement policies.

Herut (freedom) A right-wing political party established by Menachem Begin in 1948. It was the key party in Gahal and is now the main component of Likud.

Histadrut The General Federation of Labour in Israel, established in 1920 and a key economic and political force in Israel.

Intifada The Arabic word for the uprising of 1987.

Judea and Samaria The biblical words for the West Bank

Kach (Thus or this is the way) An Israeli fascist political party which was established by the extremist Rabbi Meir Kahane. It advocated the idea of expelling the Palestinians from their land as a solution to the Arab–Israeli conflict.

Kaddum This refers to the settlement arrangement imposed on Rabin during his first tenure as Prime Minister by the settlers movement.

Kahanism A fascist and racist ideology advocated by Rabbi Meir Kahane that calls for the expulsion of the Palestinians not only from the West Bank and Gaza but also from Israel.

Kibbutz A socialist collective commune.

Knesset The Israeli parliament.

Labour The Israeli Labour Party.

Likud (unity) A right-wing political bloc established in 1973, comprising Gahal and other smaller groups, and dominated by Herut.

mahapach A Hebrew term to refer to the victory of Likud in the general election of 1977.

mamlachtiut A Hebrew term meaning statism. It means the supremacy of the state over all other sectarian bases of identity. For example, the dissolution of IZL and the *palmach* in 1948, and the decision to give up the Labour stream in education in 1953 were viewed as decisions in favour of the principle of *mamlachtiut*.

Mapai A socialist Zionist party established in 1930 which dominated Israeli politics for almost five decades. It became the Labour Party after merging with Achdut Havooda and Rafi in 1968.

Mapam (United Workers' Party) A left-wing socialist Zionist party, Mapam was part of the Alignment between 1969 and 1984.

Meretz Common list formed by Ratz, Mapam, and Shinui before the 1992 general election. It is now a left Zionist political party.

Merkaz Harav (The Rabbi's Centre) A Jerusalem Zionist Yeshiva founded by Rabbi Avraham Itzhak Hacohen Kook, subsequently led by his son, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook. This school is the source of inspiration of all the founders of Gush Emunim.

Moledet (Motherland) A radical right-wing party established in 1987 by General Rehavam Zeevi (nicknamed Gandi). It adopted the idea of transfer.

Moshav A co-operative agricultural settlement.

National Religious Party (NRP) Known in Hebrew as Mafdal and previously as Mizrachi. This party has been coalition members of almost all the governments. It supports the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.

olim The Jewish immigrants seeking permanent residence in Israel.

pikuh nefsh A biblical term meaning the primacy of Jewish life over territories.

Progressive List for Peace (PLP) A non-Zionist party set up in 1984. The goals of the party are: full equality for Jewish and Arab citizens within Israel as defined by its borders on 4 June 1967; and mutual recognition of each other by Israel and a Palestinian state to be established in the territories to be evacuated by Israel.

Rafi A splinter party of Mapai, established in 1965 by Ben-Gurion and reunited with Mapai in 1968.

Ratz Civil Rights Movement. A radical social-liberal political party established by Shulamit Aloni in 1973.

Sephardi A Jew of Oriental origin, particularly from North Africa and the Middle East.

Shas An ultra-orthodox party of Sephardi Jews established in 1984 by former Chief Rabbi, Ovadia Yosef.

Shinui A liberal party which developed out of the movements which protested against the refusal of the political establishment to take responsibility for the blunders in the conduct of the 1973 War.

Tehiya (revival) A radical right political party established in 1979 in protest against the Camp David Accords.

Telem A centrist party established by Moshe Dayan in 1981, which disappeared from Israeli politics shortly after Dayan's death in October 1981.

Tzomet (juncture) A radical right political party established in 1984 by former Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan.

Yahad (together) A centrist party established by Ezer Weizmann but merged with Labour after the 1984 general election.

Yahadut Ha Torah An Ashkenazi *haredi* list formed on the eve of the 1992 elections.

Yamit The main Jewish city in Sinai which was established in 1975 only to be evacuated and dismantled in 1982 in compliance with the Israeli–Egyptian peace treaty.

yeshivot Jewish religious seminary or talmudic colleges for men.

Yishuv The Jewish community in Palestine before the establishment of the State of Israel.

yonetz (pl. *yonetzim*) A term which refers to those who are between the hawks and the doves within the Labour Party.

Zionism The official ideology of the State of Israel that called for the establishment of a state for Jews in Palestine and for the immigration of Jews into Israel.

Notes

Introduction

1 Jones, 'The Foreign Policy of Israel', p. 116.
2 Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel*, p. 11.
3 Ibid., p. 229.
4 See for example, Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, and Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.
5 For more details on this point, see Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*.
6 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, chapter four.
7 Ibid., p. 60.
8 Jones, 'The Foreign Policy of Israel', p. 115.
9 Putnam, 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics', pp. 427–60.

1 The road to 1988: internal dynamics and the making of a peace process

1 There is a vast literature on the origin of the Arab–Israeli conflict and the 1948 war. The following are just examples: Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan* Bar-Joseph, *The Best of Enemies*, and Pappe, *The Making of the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, Khalidi, *Palestine Reborn*, Flapan, *The Birth of Israel, Myths and Realities*, Tessler, *A History of the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict*, and Morris, *Righteous Victims*.
2 For the role of Britain in the Arab–Israeli conflict see Pappe, *Britain and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*.
3 For a thorough analysis of Britain's decision to refer the Palestinian problem to the United Nations see Ovendale, *Britain, the United States, and the End of the Palestine Mandate*, pp. 181–216.
4 For more details see Khalidi, *Palestine Reborn*, pp. 16–81.
5 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 192.
6 Khalidi, *Palestine Reborn*, p. 77.
7 The Israeli side enjoyed numerical superiority at each stage of the war. For example, in mid-May 1948, the total number of the Israeli forces was over 35,000 troops whereas the total number of Arab troops, both regular and irregular, was under 25,000. For more details about the military balance between the two sides see Shlaim, 'Israel and the Arab Coalition in 1948', pp. 79–103.

8 Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, pp. 2–3.
9 Bar-On, *In Pursuit of Peace*, p. 4.
10 Ibid., pp. 5–6.
11 'New Historian' is a term that refers to Israeli scholars who challenged the Israeli official account of the 1948 war. Benny Morris, Ilan Pappe, Avi Shlaim, and Simha Flapan are representatives of this term. These scholars, drawing on Israeli archives, challenged the standard Zionist narrative of the 1948 war and the flight of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees.
12 Shlaim, 'Husni Za'im and the Plan to Resettle the Palestinian Refugees in Syria', p. 71.
13 Ibid., p. 73.
14 For more details see Kuperman, 'The Impact of Internal Politics on Israel's Reprisal Policy During the 1950s', pp. 1–28.
15 Ibid., p. 1.
16 Quoted in Heller, *Continuity and Change in Israeli Security Policy*, p. 10.
17 Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, p. 228.
18 For a thorough analysis of this position, see Morris, ibid.
19 Moshe Sharett was Foreign Minister from 1948 to 1956 and also Prime Minister from 1954 to 1955. His resignation from the government in 1956 came as a result of the incompatibility of his moderate views and policies with these of the Activists.
20 Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, p. 228.
21 Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, p. 87.
22 Heller, *Continuity and Change in Israeli Security Policy*, p. 17.
23 *Mamlachtiut* is a term that refers to Ben-Gurion's emphasis on the primacy of the state over other possible bases of identities.
24 For more details about *mamlachtiut* during the statehood, see Cohen, *Zion and State*, part three.
25 Heller, *Continuity and Change in Israeli Security Policy*, p. 37.
26 Rafi is a party that was formed in 1965 by Ben-Gurion, Dayan, and Peres after their defection from Mapai.
27 Gahal is a bloc that was formed in 1965. It consisted of the Herut and Liberal parties, which became Likud in 1973.
28 Kieval, *Party Politics in Israel and the Occupied Territories*, p. 4.
29 Schueftan, *A Jordanian Option*, p. 299 (in Hebrew).
30 Shlaim and Yaniv, 'Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy in Israel', p. 243.
31 Sella and Yishai, *Israel the Peaceful Belligerent*, p. 11.
32 Allon, 'Israel: The Case for Defensible Borders', p. 42.
33 Ibid., p. 42.
34 Cohen, *The Allon Plan*, pp. 19–22 (in Hebrew).
35 Bill and Springborg, *Politics in the Middle East*, p. 326.
36 Shlaim and Yaniv, 1980, op. cit., p. 242.
37 Ibid., p. 243.
38 Lukacs, *Israel, Jordan, and the Peace Process*, p. 6.
39 Roberts, *Party and Policy in Israel*, p. 45.
40 Ibid., p. 46.
41 Lukacs, *Israel, Jordan, and the Peace Process*, p. 14.
42 Roberts, *Party and Policy in Israel*, p. 46.

43 Lukacs, *Israel, Jordan, and the Peace Process*, p. 6.
44 Kieval, *Party Politics in Israel and the Occupied Territories*, p. 10.
45 Yehuda Lukas, *Israel, Jordan, and the Peace Process*, p. 10.
46 Kieval, *Party Politics in Israel and the Occupied Territories*, p. 77.
47 Ibid., p. 32.
48 Many of the Youth studied at Merkaz Harav in Jerusalem, and were taught by Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, a son of Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Kook. Rabbi Zvi Kook succeeded his father and took over the leadership of the adherents of messianic ideology.
49 Gush Emunim was established in March 1974 at a meeting at Kfar Etzion near Hebron. It was set up in reaction to the territorial concessions Rabin made to the Egyptians within the framework of the first disengagement agreement signed in January 1974. This group enjoyed the support of the NRP who threatened at the time that any territorial concessions in the West Bank would force them to leave the government. Rabin, who had not yet consolidated his authority, conceded.
50 Gush Emunim severed its links with the NRP several months after its establishment.
51 For more details see Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*.
52 Lukacs, *Israel, Jordan, and the Peace Process*, p. 130.
53 Ibid., p. 130.
54 Bar-Siman-Tov*, Israel and the Peace Process*, p. 19.
55 Peleg, *Begin's Foreign Policy*, p. 27.
56 Ibid., p. 31.
57 Bookmiller, 'Likud's Jordan Policy', p. 91.
58 Sharon with Chanoff, *Warrior, the Autobiography of Ariel Sharon*, p. 247.
59 Lukacs, *Israel, Jordan, and the Peace Process*, p. 158.
60 Shamir, 'Israel's Role in a Changing Middle East', p. 791.
61 Shlaim, 'Israeli Politics and Middle East Peacemaking', p. 21.
62 Ibid., p. 21.
63 Avineri, 'Ideology and Israel's Foreign Policy', p. 6.
64 Ibid., p. 6.
65 Ibid., p. 5.
66 Ibid. p. 5.
67 Yorke, *Domestic Politics and Regional Security*, p. 189.
68 Ibid., p. 191.
69 Ibid., p. 191.
70 Resolution 242 talks mainly about Israeli withdrawl from the territories in the 1967 war and confirms the right of every state in the region to leave in peace with recognized boundaries. It also calls for a just solution for the Palestian refugees.
71 Quandt, 'U.S. Policy toward the Arab–Israeli Conflict', p. 384.
72 Peleg, *Begin's Foreign Policy*, p. 101.
73 Korn and Shapira, *Coalition Politics in Israel*, p. 308 (in Hebrew).
74 Ibid., pp. 310–12.
75 Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, p. 428.
76 Ibid., p. 430.

77 For more details, see Madfai, *Jordan, The United States and the Middle East Peace Process*.
78 Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, p. 456.
79 Flamhaft, *Israel on the Road to Peace*, p. 50.
80 Beilin, *Israel*, p. 125.
81 Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, p. 446.
82 Ibid., p. 446.
83 Ibid., p. 447.

2 The Intifada: a turning point

1 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
2 Interview with Ghassan Khateeb, Geneva, 28 May 2000.
3 Tessler, 'The Intifada and Political Discourse in Israel', p. 47.
4 Beitler, 'The Intifada: Palestinian Adaptation to Israeli Counterinsurgency Tactics', p. 51.
5 Ibid., p. 51.
6 Schif and Ya'ari, *Intifada*, chapter two (in Hebrew).
7 Tessler, *A History of the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict*, p. 682.
8 Interview with Ghassan Khateeb, Geneva, 28 May 2000.
9 Ibid.
10 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
11 The Algerian revolution of 1954–62 against French colonization ended in the victory of the Algerians over the French and the independence of Algeria. However, the Algerians in their determined struggle against the French, lost several hundred thousand victims.
12 Tessler, *A History of the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict*, p. 700.
13 Peretz, *Intifada, the Palestinian Uprising*, p. 45.
14 As a result of the war in Lebanon, the inflation in the Israeli economy reached an unprecedented level. It was around 400 per cent. Furthermore, the Israeli public was sharply divided over the war and there was no consensus on issues relating to national security.
15 *The Jerusalem Post*, 29 February 1988.
16 *Davar*, 15 September 1988.
17 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
18 Tessler *A History of the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict*, p. 696.
19 *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, WB ME/OO43, A/1, 8 January 1988.
20 Interview with Yitzhak Rabin on Israeli TV, 13 January 1988.
21 *Yediot Aharonot*, 15 January 1988.
22 Schif and Ya'ari, *Intifada*, p. 160.
23 Peretz, *Intifada, the Palestinian Uprising*, p. 61.
24 Ibid., p. 62.
25 Tessler, *A History of the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict*, p. 698.
26 Ibid., p. 699.
27 Quoted in Peretz, *Intifada, the Palestinian Uprising*, p. 46.
28 Interview with Avraham Burg, Jerusalem, 16 February 2000.
29 Ratz is the Civil Rights Movement, a radical social-liberal party established in 1973 by Shulamit Aloni. It calls for electoral reform, the introduction of a

Basic Law protecting human rights, the recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination, the separation between religion and state, and equal rights for women. It joined Mapam and Shinui in 1992 to form the Meretz party after the electoral law increased the electoral threshold to 1.5 per cent.

30 *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, ME/0167, I, 2 June 1988.
31 Interview with Naomi Chazen, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
32 Sheffer, 'Has Israel Really Been a Garrison Democracy?', p. 31.
33 Yanai, 'The Impact of the Intifada on the Likud Party in the Framework of Israeli Politics, 1987–1990', p. 303.
34 Ibid., p. 303–4.
35 Interview with Yitzhak Shamir, Tel Aviv, 9 February 2000.
36 It is widely believed in Israel that when the personal security in Israel is threatened (as was the case during the Intifada), the Israeli public becomes more hawkish and as a consequence Likud would benefit from this situation. Even Shimon Peres admitted this when, in an attempt to justify his electoral defeat in 1988, he claimed that the terrorist attack against some Israelis in Jericho two days before the election caused Labour to lose at least two seats. According to Peres, had the incident not happened, Labour would have won.
37 Interview with Dr Reuven Hazen, Jerusalem, 15 February 2000.
38 Ibid.
39 Quoted in Goldberg *et al*., *The Impact of Intercommunal Conflict*, p. 12.
40 Ibid., p. 13.
41 Yanai, 'The Impact of the Intifada on the Likud Party in the Framework of Israeli Politics, 1987–1990', p. 298.
42 Interview with Ahmed Tibi, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
43 Aronoff, *Power and Ritual in the Israeli Labor Party*, p. 207.
44 Yanai, 'The Impact of the Intifada on the Likud Party in the Framework of Israeli Politics, 1987–1990', p. 299.
45 Interview with Naomi Chazen, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
46 Yanai, 'The Impact of the Intifada on the Likud Party in the Framework of Israeli Politics, 1987–1990', p. 303.
47 Ibid., p. 305.
48 Ibid., p. 299.
49 *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, ME/0049 A/2, 15 January 1988.
50 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
51 Interview with Nawaf Massalha, Jerusalem, 8 February 2000.
52 Quoted in Inbar, *War and Peace in Israeli Politics*, p. 140.
53 Neff, 'Can Shamir Be Lured into a Feather Bed?', p. 3.
54 *Ha'aretz*, 4 July 1988.
55 Yanai, 'The Impact of the Intifada on the Likud Party in the Framework of Israeli Politics, 1987–1990', p. 301.
56 Interview with Shlomo Avineri, Jerusalem, 30 January 2000.
57 According to the Camp David Accords, Israel withdrew from the whole of Sinai and handed it over to the Egyptian sovereignty. Israel as well committed itself to give the Palestinian autonomy. Israel did withdraw from Sinai, but blocked the autonomy talks with the Egyptians. It is worth mentioning that the then Defence Minister, Ezer Weizmann, resigned from his post in protest at the Israeli government's lack of seriousness on the autonomy talks.

58 The ten-member inner cabinet was evenly divided between Labour and Likud. Levy voted twice against the wish of Shamir with the Labour ministers, the first time over the issue of withdrawal from Lebanon and the second time on the Taba issue. Taba was a small portion of Sinai that Israel, under Likud, refused to withdraw from. Egypt suggested international arbitration and Shamir refused. A decision to transfer it to arbitration was only possible with Levy's vote. Finally Egypt won the case and regained Taba.
59 Interview with Michael Eitan, Jerusalem, 15 February 2000.
60 Interview with Yitzhak Shamir, Tel Aviv, 9 February 2000.
61 *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, ME/0060, I, 28 January 1988.
62 Interview with Yitzhak Shamir, Tel Aviv, 9 February 2000.
63 Ibid.
64 *Jordan Times*, 15 March 1988.
65 Interview with Yitzhak Shamir, Tel Aviv, 9 February 2000.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Shamir, 'Israel at 40: Looking Back, Looking Ahead', p. 579.
69 *Jerusalem Post*, 15 November 1987.
70 *Ha'aretz*, 29 April 1988.
71 What characterized doves within Labour was that they believed that Israel should want to avoid another costly war and look for a political solution to the Palestinian problem. The Intifada enhanced this sense of urgency – one which the hawks within Labour, on the contrary, did not feel.
72 *Ha'aretz*, 22 March 1988.
73 *Davar*, 27 March 1988.
74 Ibid.
75 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 February, 2000.
76 Kidron, 'Divided They Stand', p. 7.
77 *Ha'aretz*, 9 September 1988.
78 Ibid.
79 Peretz and Samooha, 'Israel's Twelfth Knesset Election: An All-Loser Game', p. 389.
80 Quoted in Inbar, *War and Peace in Israeli Politics*, p. 161.
81 Interview with Efraim Inbar, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
82 Ibid.
83 *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, ME/0038/A/6, 1 January 1988.
84 *Davar*, 17 October 1988.
85 A summary of the main findings of different studies on the impact of the Intifada is found in the Goldberg *et al*. study *The Impact of Intercommunal Conflict*.
86 *Al Rai*, 1 August 1988.
87 Interview with Asher Susser, Tel Aviv, 16 February 2000.
88 The Intifada leadership in the West Bank and Gaza Strip issued successive communiqués in which it outlined for the participants in the Intifada what should be done for a week or two. They also reflected the positions of this leadership for all initiatives and policies taken by the parties concerned.
89 Quoted in Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom in the Middle East Peace Process*, p. 225.
90 Ibid., p. 225.

91 Korn and Shapira, *Coalition Politics in Israel*, p.326 (in Hebrew).
92 Ibid., p. 325
93 With the exception of the NRP who has been advocating an aggressive settlement policy in the occupied territories, the other religious parties showed less interest in foreign policy and security issues. Instead, they would always ask for a list of demands as the price for joining and supporting a government. Their demands were financial in order to finance the *Yishevot* (religious schools). They also asked Shamir to change the law on who is a Jew, but this would clash with the American Jewry and Shamir did not want that.
94 Interview with Michael Eitan, Jerusalem, 15 February 2000.
95 Historically, these institutions were dominated by Labour. They are affiliated with the Labour movement. In 1988, they suffered from heavy debts and a precarious financial situation. It was believed that should Labour join the government and a Labour minister assume the Ministry of Finance, he would be able to channel enough funds to these institutions to save them.
96 Lochery, *The Israeli Labour Party*, p. 147.
97 Rabin had always preferred the portfolio of defence. As a consequence, as long as he was a defence minister, he would not challenge the leadership of Peres. However, should Labour be in opposition, Rabin would always challenge Peres over the leadership of the party.
98 *Proceedings of the Knesset*, 6 December 1989 (in Hebrew).
99 Beilin, *Touching Peace*, p. 23.
100 Rabin, *Rabin, Our Life, His Legacy*, p. 213 (in Hebrew).
101 *Proceedings of the Knesset*, 17 May 1989 (in Hebrew).
102 Ibid.
103 Interview with Ghassan Khateeb, Geneva, 28 May 2000.
104 Ibid.
105 *Ha'aretz*, 12 May 1989.
106 Korn and Shapira, *Coalition Politics in Israel*, p. 328.
107 *Ma'ariv*, 6 June 1989.
108 Ibid.
109 Korn and Shapira, *Coalition Politics in Israel*, p. 328.
110 Interview with Ahmed Tibi, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
111 *Yediot Ahranot,* 31 May 1989.
112 *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, ME/034, I, 22 December 1989.
113 Rodenbeck, 'Mubarak Calls Shamir's Bluff', p. 3.
114 Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 121.
115 Ibid., p. 124.
116 Ibid., pp. 115–32.
117 Interview with Ahmed Tibi, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
118 Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 131.

3 Democratic reform within the Labour Party: the motive to gain power

1 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
2 Interview with Nawaf Massalha, Jerusalem, 8 February 2000. In addition, most of the politicians and academics the author interviewed in Israel concurred with this point.

3 Elections, unless the outgoing Knesset decides otherwise, shall be held on the third Tuesday of the Hebrew month of *Heshvan* (around November) of the year in which the Knesset tenure ends. But if the previous year is a leap year according to the Hebrew calendar, elections shall be held on the first Tuesday of *Heshvan*.
4 Bogdanor, 'The Electoral System, Government, and Democracy', p. 84.
5 The electoral threshold had been 1 per cent prior to the general election in 1992.
6 The only exception was in the period from 1984 to 1988, when Israel was governed by a National Unity Government, where Labour and Likud agreed that Peres and Shamir should rotate the premiership.
7 Arian, *Politics in Israel*, p. 137.
8 Korn and Shapira, *Coalition Politics In Israel*, p. 337 (in Hebrew).
9 Bogdanor, 'The Electoral System Government and Democracy', p. 84.
10 This method was the case in Labour until 1992 when Labour chose the list through the primaries system. Other parties such as Likud introduced primaries after the 1992 elections.
11 Interview with Mark Heller, Tel Aviv, 16 February 2000.
12 Arian, *Politics in Israel*, p. 135.
13 Bogdanor, 'The Electoral System, Government and Democracy', p. 87.
14 Ibid., p. 85.
15 Aronoff, *Power and Ritual in the Israeli Labor Party*, p. 209.
16 Lochery, *The Israeli Labour Party*.
17 The Wye River agreement was signed in November 1998 in the United States between Israel, under Netanyahu, and the Palestinian Authority under Yasser Arafat. The agreement states that Israel will withdraw from 13.1 per cent of the Occupied Territories.
18 *The Jerusalem Post*, 22 December 1998.
19 Interview with Ahmed Tibi, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
20 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
21 Interview with Nawaf Massalha, Jerusalem, 8 February 2000.
22 Aronoff, *Power and Ritual in the Israeli Labor Party*.
23 Lochery, *The Israeli Labour Party*, chapter three.
24 For the problem of infiltrations see Morris, *Israel's Borders War, 1949–1956*.
25 Lochery, *The Israeli Labour Party*, p. 52.
26 Shas is an ultra-religious Sephardi party established before the 1984 general election in a protest over the inappropriate representation of the Sephardi sector in the list of Agudat Yisrael. Shas is considered as a non-Zionist party with a fundamentalist approach to religion and has sought to turn Israel into a *Halacha* state (governed by Jewish Law).
27 Lochery, *The Israeli Labour Party*, p. 57.
28 Ibid., p. 57.
29 Interview with Avraham Burg, Jerusalem, 16 February 2000.
30 Aronoff, *Power and Ritual in the Israeli Labor Party*.
31 Ibid., p. 167.
32 Ibid., p. 190.
33 Ibid., p. 176.
34 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.

35 Interview with Reuven Hazan, Jerusalem, 15 February 2000.
36 Aronoff, *Power and Ritual in the Israeli Labor Party*, p. 191.
37 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
38 Neil Lochery, *The Israeli Labour Party*, p. 131.
39 Interview with Nawaf Massalha, Jerusalem, 8 February 2000.
40 Quoted in Lochery, *The Israeli Labour Party*, p. 198.
41 Interview with Shlomo Avineri, 31 January 2000.
42 Lochery, *The Israeli Labour Party*, p. 176.
43 Ibid., p. 201.
44 Interview with Nawaf Massalha, Jerusalem, 8 February 2000.
45 Lochery, *The Israeli Labour Party*, p. 162.
46 Ibid., pp. 162–3.
47 Interview with Shlomo Avineri, Jerusalem, 30 January 2000.
48 'Gang of Eight' was a name given to generational young dovish Labourites in the late 1980s, who sought to introduce ideological change in the party platform. Yossi Beilin, Haim Ramon, and Avraham Burg were among the group.
49 *The Jerusalem Post International Edition*, 11 April 1992.
50 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
51 Ibid.
52 Interview with Avraham Burg, Jerusalem, 16 February 2000.
53 Ibid.
54 The first *mahapach* was in 1977 when Labour was defeated for the first time.
55 Interview with Joseph Alpher, Jerusalem, 13 February 2000.
56 Arian and Shamir, 'Two Reversals: Why 1992 was not 1977', p. 24.
57 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
58 Interview with Efraim Inbar, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
59 Interview with Mark Heller, Tel Aviv, 16 February 2000.
60 Lochery, *The Israeli Labour Party*, p. 209.
61 This story goes back to eve of the Six-Day War, when Rabin was chief of staff. Ezer Weizmann claimed in his memoirs that Rabin had a nervous breakdown because he was not able to stand the pressure. However, Rabin refuted this story in his memoirs, in which he argued he only took a day off to take rest. The truth is that Rabin led the army in the war.
62 Nissan, 'The Likud: The Delusion of Power', p. 49.
63 Arian and Shamir, 'Two Reversals: Why 1992 was not 1997', p. 45.
64 Elazar and Sandler, 'The 1992 Israeli Knesset Elections'.
65 Ibid., p. 13.
66 Asher and Arian, 'Two Reversals: Why 1992 was not 1977', p. 101.
67 Isaac, *Party and Politics in Israel*, p. 123.
68 Interview with Ahmed Tibi, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
69 Quoted in Lochery, *The Israeli Labour Party*, p. 213.
70 *Ma'ariv*, 2 April 1992.
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74 *The Jerusalem Post International Edition*, 13 July 1991.
75 Ibid., 13 July 1991.
76 Ibid., 9 May 1992.

77 Interview with Michael Eitan, Jerusalem, 15 February 2000.
78 For an excellent discussion of the role of the Russian immigrants in the 1992 elections, see Jones, *Soviet Jewish Aliyah 1989–1992*, chapter seven.
79 Ibid., p. 180.
80 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
81 Fein, 'Voting Trends of Recent Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union', p. 169.
82 Ibid., p. 169.
83 Jones, *Soviet Jewish Aliyah 1989–1992*, p. 196.
84 *The Jerusalem Post*, 18 February 1991.
85 Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, p. 556.
86 Rubin, 'US-Israel Relations and Israel's 1992 Elections', p. 200.
87 Fein, 'Voting Trends of Recent Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union', p. 170.
88 Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, pp. 555–6.
89 Interestingly, the Madrid conference came several months after an American-led coalition harshly destroyed Iraqi civilian and military infrastructures. Many people in the Arab world were convinced that the United States sought not only to liberate Kuwait from Saddam's occupation but also to destroy the Iraqi army to save Israel from an inevitable confrontation with Iraq, in which an Israeli defeat was a real possibility.
90 Interview with Efraim Inbar, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
91 For the first time in Israel's history, one Israeli Arab, Salih Tarif, was appointed (as a minister without portfolio) in Ariel Sharon's government in February 2001.
92 Interview with Aharon Klieman, Tel Aviv, 2 February 2000.
93 Al-Haj, 'The Political Behaviour of the Arabs in Israel in the 1992 Elections', p. 145.
94 It is interesting to note that when Netanyahu defeated Peres in the 1996 election by a margin of less than 1 per cent, Netanyahu and his supporters widely publicized the fact that Netanyahu enjoyed a Jewish majority of 11 per cent.
95 Quoted in Al-Haj, 'The Political Behaviour of the Arabs in Israel in the 1992 Elections', p. 155.
96 Interview with Nawaf Massalha, Jerusalem, 8 February 2000.
97 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
98 Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, p. 16.
99 'Dirty exercise' was a term coined by Yitzhak Rabin, in which he criticized Peres for his attempt in March and April 1990 to bring the NUG down and form a government under his leadership.
100 Interview with Yitzhak Shamir, Tel Aviv, 9 February 2000.
101 Interview with Ranan Cohen, 31 Jerusalem 2000.

4 The politics of personality

1 Quoted in Jensen, *Explaining Foreign Policy*, p. 13.
2 Kelman, 'The Role of the Individual in International Relations', p. 7.
3 Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel*, p. 229.
4 Ibid., p. 11.

5 Brecher *et al*., 'A Framework for Research on Foreign Policy Behavior', p. 86.
6 Quoted in Horovitz (ed.), *Yitzhak Rabin, Soldier of Peace*, p. 111.
7 Interview with Dan Schueftan, Tel Aviv, 2 February 2000.
8 Ibid.
9 Interview with Efraim Inbar, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
10 Quoted in Inbar, 'Jews, Jewishness and Israel's Foreign Policy', p. 174.
11 *Spectrum*, June 1988, p. 10.
12 Ibid., p. 10.
13 Quoted in Inbar, *Rabin and Israel's National Security*, p. 9.
14 Ibid., p. 9.
15 Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel*, p. 276.
16 Quoted in Inbar, '*Jews, Jewishness and Israel's Foreign Policy*, p. 9.
17 Interview with Efraim Inbar, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
18 Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs*, chapter one.
19 Rabin had started his military career in the Palmah (striking force) which was established in 1941. He served as the commander of the Harel Brigade on the Jerusalem front during the 1948 War, as Head of the Northern Command in 1956–9, Head of Operations Branch of General Headquarter in 1959–63, Deputy Chief of Staff in 1963, and Chief of Staff in 1964–8.
20 Interview with Efraim Inbar, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
21 Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*.
22 For more details see Shlaim, 'Husni Za'im and the Plan to Resettle the Palestinian Refugees in Syria', pp. 67–80.
23 Interview with Dan Schueftan, Tel Aviv, 2 February 2000.
24 Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs*, p. 264.
25 Inbar, *War and Peace in Israeli Politics*.
26 Inbar, *Rabin and Israel's National Security*, p. 43.
27 Interview with Joseph Alpher, Jerusalem, 13 February 2000.
28 Inbar, *Rabin and Israel's National Security*, p. 23.
29 Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs*, p. 231.
30 Ibid., p. 231.
31 Interview with Nawaf Massalha, Jerusalem, 8 February 2000.
32 Quoted in Slater, *Rabin of Israel*, p. 342.
33 *Ma'raiv*, 10 October 1988.
34 Peres, *Battling for Peace, Memoirs*.
35 Ibid., pp. 301–2.
36 Ibid., p. 302.
37 Interview with Joseph Alpher, Jerusalem, 13 February 2000.
38 Interview with Asher Susser, Tel Aviv, 16 February 2000.
39 *Ha'aretz*, 8 March 1990.
40 Interview with Joseph Alpher, Jerusalem, 13 February 2000.
41 Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, p. 327.
42 Ibid., p. 351.
43 Ibid., pp. 327–8.
44 Quoted in Inbar, *Rabin and Israel's National Security*, p. 15.
45 Michael Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel*, p. 11.
46 Ibid., p. 247.
47 Interview with Ahmed Tibi, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.

48 Auerbach, 'Yitzhak Rabin: Portrait of A Leader', p. 294.
49 Ibid., p. 295.
50 Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs*, p. 45.
51 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, chapter nine.
52 Rabin, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel*, p. 188.
53 For brief details of this incident see chapter 3 of this book, note number 62.
54 Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs*, p. 188.
55 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
56 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
57 Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs*, p. 189.
58 Ibid., pp. 241–2.
59 Ibid., pp. 241–2.
60 Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, p. 326.
61 Lukacs, *Israel, Jordan, and the Peace Process*, p. 136.
62 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
63 Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs*, p. 241.
64 Lukacs, *Israel, Jordan, and the Peace Process*, p. 23.
65 For more details see Peres with Naor, *The New Middle East*.
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67 Interview with Shlomo Avineri, Jerusalem, 30 January 2000.
68 Peres and Littell, *For the Future of Israel*, pp. 139–40.
69 Interview with Nawaf Massalha, Jerusalem 8 February 2000.
70 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
71 Interview with Ahmed Tibi, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
72 Beilin, *Touching Peace*, p. 73.
73 Interview with Nechman Tall, Tel Aviv, 14 February 2000.
74 Peres, *Battling for Peace, Memoirs*, p. 314.
75 Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, p. 326.
76 Peres, *Battling for Peace, Memoirs*, p. 314.
77 Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, was founded during the Intifada by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin from Gaza. It carried out many violent activities in order to end the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.
78 *The Jerusalem Post*, 18 December 1992.
79 *The Times*, 24 December 1992.
80 *The Jerusalem Post*, 20 December 1992.
81 Slater, *Rabin of Israel*, p. 453.
82 Ibid., p. 457.
83 Interview with Dan Schueftan, Tel Aviv, 2 February 2000.
84 Ibid.
85 For full details of the secret channel, see Beilin, *Touching Peace*.
86 Ibid., p. 62.
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88 *Davar*, 27 March 1988.
89 Interview with Aharon Klieman, Tel Aviv, 2 February 2000.
90 Interview with Mark Heller, Tel Aviv, 16 February 2000.
91 *Yediot Aharonot*, 7 March 1991.
92 Interview with Dan Schueftan, Tel Aviv, 2 February 2000.
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100 Interview with Joseph Alpher, Jerusalem, 13 February 2000.
101 Interview with Naomi Chazen, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
102 *Davar*, 7 July 1993.
103 Makovsky, *Making Peace with the PLO*, p. 68.
104 Quoted in ibid., p. 69.

5 External dynamics and domestic imperatives

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2 Rynhold, 'Labour, Likud, the "Special Relationship" and the Peace Process', pp. 239–40.
3 Rynhold, 'Israeli-American Relations and the Peace Process', p. 2. www.biu.ac.il
4 Jonathan Rynhold, 'Labour, Likud, the "Special Relationship" and the Peace Process', p. 243.
5 For more details on American military aid to Israel, see Organski, *The $36 Billion Bargain*, and Reich, *The United States and Israel*.
6 Interview with Mark Heller, Tel Aviv, 16 February 2000.
7 Rynhold, 'Israeli–American Relations and the Peace Process', p. 2.
8 Ibid., p. 2.
9 Ibid., p. 2.
10 Ibid., p. 4.
11 Ibid., p. 4.
12 For more details of the economic interdependence in the Middle East, see Peres with Naor, *The New Middle East*, pp. 61–74.
13 Ibid., p. 62.
14 Beilin, *Touching Peace*.
15 Rynhold, 'Israeli–American Relations and the Peace Process', p. 8.
16 Beilin, *Touching Peace*, p. 120.
17 The use of realism here should not be confused with realism as an approach to study international relations.
18 Rynhold, 'Israeli–American Relations and the Peace Process', p. 6.
19 Inbar, *Rabin and Israel's National Security*, p. 35.
20 Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs*, p. 95.
21 Inbar, 'Yitzhak Rabin and Israel's National Security', pp. 26–7.
22 Quoted in ibid., p. 27.
23 Ibid., p. 27.
24 Horovitz (ed.), *Yitzhak Rabin: Soldier of Peace*, p. 47.
25 Interview with Efraim Inbar, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
26 Rabinovitch, *The Brink of Peace*, p. 44 (in Hebrew).
27 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.

28 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
29 Makovsky, *Making Peace with the PLO*, p. 120.
30 Rynhold, 'Labour, Likud, the "Special Relationship" and the Peace Process', p. 243.
31 Ibid., p. 243.
32 *The Jerusalem Post*, 3 May 1993.
33 Ibid., 6 May 1993.
34 Horovitz, *Yitzhak Rabin: Soldier of Peace*, p. 157.
35 Ibid., p. 57.
36 Rynhold, 'Labour, Likud, the "Special Relationship" and the Peace Process', p. 249.
37 Horovitz, *Yitzhak Rabin: Soldier of Peace*, p. 159.
38 Quoted in ibid., p. 159.
39 Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*.
40 Interview with Asher Susser, Tel Aviv, 16 February 2000.
41 For more details about Israel's attempt to find a Palestinian partner from the West Bank, see Pedatzur, 'Coming Back Full Circle: The Palestinian Option in 1967'.
42 Schueftan, 'Jordan's "Israeli Option"', p. 254.
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46 Interview with Asher Susser, Tel Aviv, 16 February 2000.
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48 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
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50 Dallas, *King Hussein*, p. 22.
51 For a brief overview of Likud's policy towards Jordan see Bookmiller, 'Likud's Jordan Policy', pp. 90–103.
52 Interview with Ranan Cohen, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
53 Dallas, *King Hussein*, p. 228.
54 Shlaim, *War and Peace in the Middle East*, p. 4.
55 Interview with Shlomo Avineri, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
56 Ehteshami, 'The Arab States and the Middle East Balance of Power', p. 61.
57 For the implication of the *Aliyah* on Israel, see Jones, *Soviet Jewish Aliyah*.
58 Ibid., p. 71.
59 Ehteshami, 'The Arab States and the Middle East Balance of Power', p. 66.
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61 Inbar, 'Israel's Predicament in a New Strategic Environment', p. 166.
62 Jones, *Soviet Jewish Aliyah*, p. 72.
63 Rabin, 'Pragmatism and Compromise', *The Jerusalem Post*, 1 June 1992.
64 Interview with Efraim Inbar, Jerusalem, 7 February 2000.
65 Interview with Shlomo Avineri, Jerusalem, 31 January 2000.
66 Interview with Moshe Maoz, 21 March 1998. In the interview, Maoz argued that it was Syria who rejected the offer twice on the assumption that President Hafez Assad could extract better terms. He argued that Assad did not understand the differences between Likud and Labour and so he missed a golden

opportunity to recover his land. For a counter argument see Seale, 'The Syria-Israel Negotiations', pp. 65–77.
67 Murphy, 'The Arab–Israeli Conflict in the New World Order', p. 112.
68 Interview with Joseph Alpher, Jerusalem, 13 February 2000.

6 Internal dynamics and the breakdown of the peace process

1 For the reason behind the victory of Netanyahu see Elazar and Sandler (eds), *Israel at the Polls 1996*.
2 In addition to Likud, the following parties took part in the government: Shas, NRP, Yisrael Baaliya, Tzomet, Gesher, the Third Way, and United Torah Judaism.
3 The Basic Guideline of Netanyahu's Government, The Israeli Embassy at Amman.
4 Ibid.
5 Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, p. 570.
6 For more details of the win-set, see Putnam, 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics', pp. 427–60.
7 Pondak, 'From Oslo to Taba', p. 33.
8 The Hebron Protocol, The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 17 January 1997.
9 Lochery, *The Difficult Road to Peace*, p. 111.
10 The leader of Shas Party, Aryeh Deri, was accused of being involved in misuse of office and corruption (misallocation of funds concerning Shas institutions such as schools run by his party) during his tenure as Minister of Interior in the late 1980s and early 1990s.
11 *The Jerusalem Post*, 24 January 1997.
12 Interview with Shlomo Avineri, Jerusalem, 30 January 2000.
13 For an interesting discussion on this issue see Bar-Joseph, 'A Bull in a China Shop', pp. 154–74.
14 Ibid., p. 159.
15 Ibid., p. 159.
16 Zeev Schief, *Ha'aretz*, 26 September 1997.
17 Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, p. 586.
18 The Wye River Memorandum, 23 November 1998, Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
19 *The Jerusalem Post*, 12 November 1998.
20 Ibid., 18 November 1998.
21 Ibid., 12 November 1998.
22 *Ha'aretz*, 23 November 1999.
23 Pundak, 'From Oslo to Taba', p. 33.
24 *Ha'aretz*, 20 May 1999.
25 Interview with Joseph Alpher, Jerusalem, 29 November 2001.
26 Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, p. 16.
27 *Ha'aretz*, 19 August 2000.
28 Pundak, 'From Oslo to Taba', p. 38.
29 Benny Morris' interview with Ehud Barak.
30 Sher, *Just Beyond Reach*, p. 64 (in Hebrew).
31 Pundak, 'From Oslo to Taba', p. 36.

32 Beilin, *A Manual for a Wounded Dove*, p. 249 (in Hebrew).
33 Interview with Faisal Husseini in *the Middle East Insight*.
34 Beilin, *A Manual for a Wounded Dove*, p. 129.
35 Shlaim, 'The Comatose Peace Process'.
36 The main points in Clinton's proposal were that the Palestinians would get about 94 to 96 per cent of the West Bank and another 1 to 3 per cent inside the Green Line; the Jewish neighbourhood in Jerusalem would be under Israeli sovereignty and the Arab ones would be under Palestinian sovereignty; the Palestinians would have sovereignty over the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount and Israel over the Western Wall; the Palestinians would have the right of return to the national home but this would not be realized freely within Israel; the signing of the final status agreement would mark the end of the conflict.
37 Interview with Noami Chazen, Deputy Speaker of the Israeli Knesset, Jerusalem, 26 November 2001.
38 There are frequent statements issued by politicians from the right in the Israeli press.
39 Barari, 'Is Total Victory a Wise Option?'.
40 There are a plethora of statements made by Palestinians leaders regarding this argument.
41 Interview with Noami Chazen, Deputy Speaker of the Israeli Knesset, Jerusalem, 26 November 2001.
42 Barari, 'The Swinging Pendulum of Israeli Politics: A Jordanian Perspective', pp. 47–55.
43 *Ha'aretz*, 23 April 2001.
44 Ibid., 24 June 2001.
45 Ibid., 10 January 2002.
46 For Israeli reactions to the events of 11 September see Barari, 'The Swinging Pendulum of Israeli Politics: A Jordanian Perspective'.
47 *Ha'aretz*, 8 January 2002.
48 The Israeli press is loaded with a plethora of statements by prominent figures from Likud and parties to the right of Likud.
49 *Yediot Ahronot*, 23 October 2001.
50 *The Jerusalem Post*, 17 January 2002.
51 Barari, 'The Impact of the Intifada on political forces within Israel', pp. 131–61 (in Arabic).
52 For Sharon's stance regarding the peace process, see his article published in *Yediot Ahranot* on 28 October 1994.
53 Yaar and Herman, 'Peace Index', May 2001.
54 Ibid., June 2001.

Conclusions

1 The assumption of anarchy is central in realism and neo-realism, see for example, Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, and Art and Jervis, *International Politics*.
2 Allison, *Essence of Decision*, p. 32.
3 Smith, 'Policy Preferences and Bureaucratic Position', p. 9.
4 Quoted in Allison, *Essence of Decision*, p. 11.

5 Ibid., p. 11.
6 For more details see Smith, 'Policy Preferences and Bureaucratic Position'.
7 Ibid., p. 25.
8 For an overview of the debate over the origin of the Cold War see Nye, *Understanding International Conflict*.
9 Rosenau, *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy*, p. 399.
10 Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, p. 88.
11 Little and Smith, 'Introduction', p. 3.
12 Levinson, 'Authoritarian personality and foreign policy', p. 36.
13 Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel*.
14 White, 'Analysing Foreign Policy', p. 23.

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Avineri, Shlomo, Jerusalem, 30 January 2000. Professor of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Former General Director of Israel's Foreign Ministry.

Burg, Avraham, Jerusalem, 16 February 2000. Knesset Speaker and Labour Member of the Knesset. He has been a member of the Knesset since 1988.

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Hazen, Reuven, Jerusalem 15 February 2000. A political scientist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

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