

## A Strategy for Israel in the Nineteen Eighties

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At the outset of the nineteen eighties the State of Israel is in need of a new perspective as to its place, its aims and national targets, at home and abroad. This need has become even more vital due to a number of central processes which the country, the region and the world are undergoing. We are living today in the early stages of a new epoch in human history which is not at all similar to its predecessor, and its characteristics are totally different from what we have hitherto known. That is why we need an understanding of the central processes which typify this historical epoch on the one hand, and on the other hand we need a world outlook and an operational strategy in accordance with the new conditions. The existence, prosperity and steadfastness of the Jewish state will depend upon its ability to adopt a new framework for its domestic and foreign affairs.

2

This epoch is characterized by several traits which we can already diagnose, and which symbolize a genuine revolution in our present lifestyle. The dominant process is the breakdown of the rationalist, humanist outlook as the major cornerstone supporting the life and achievements of Western civilization since the Renaissance. The political, social and economic views which have emanated from this foundation have been based on several “truths” which are presently disappearing—for example, the view that man as an individual is the center of the universe and everything exists in order to fulfill his basic material needs. This position is being invalidated in the present when it has become clear that the amount of resources in the cosmos does not meet Man’s requirements, his economic needs or his demographic constraints. In a world in which there are four billion human beings and economic and energy resources which do not grow proportionally to meet the needs of mankind, it is unrealistic to expect to fulfill the main requirement of Western Society, 1 i.e., the wish and aspiration for boundless consumption. The view that ethics plays no part in determining the direction Man takes, but rather his material needs do—that view is becoming prevalent today as we see a world in which nearly all values are disappearing. We are losing

the ability to assess the simplest things, especially when they concern the simple question of what is Good and what is Evil.

3

The vision of man's limitless aspirations and abilities shrinks in the face of the sad facts of life, when we witness the break-up of world order around us. The view which promises liberty and freedom to mankind seems absurd in light of the sad fact that three fourths of the human race lives under totalitarian regimes. The views concerning equality and social justice have been transformed by socialism and especially by Communism into a laughing stock. There is no argument as to the truth of these two ideas, but it is clear that they have not been put into practice properly and the majority of mankind has lost the liberty, the freedom and the opportunity for equality and justice. In this nuclear world in which we are (still) living in relative peace for thirty years, the concept of peace and coexistence among nations has no meaning when a superpower like the USSR holds a military and political doctrine of the sort it has: that not only is a nuclear war possible and necessary in order to achieve the ends of Marxism, but that it is possible to survive after it, not to speak of the fact that one can be victorious in it.<sup>2</sup>

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The essential concepts of human society, especially those of the West, are undergoing a change due to political, military and economic transformations. Thus, the nuclear and conventional might of the USSR has transformed the epoch that has just ended into the last respite before the great saga that will demolish a large part of our world in a multi-dimensional global war, in comparison with which the past world wars will have been mere child's play. The power of nuclear as well as of conventional weapons, their quantity, their precision and quality will turn most of our world upside down within a few years, and we must align ourselves so as to face that in Israel. That is, then, the main threat to our existence and that of the Western world.<sup>3</sup> The war over resources in the world, the Arab monopoly on oil, and the need of the West to import most of its raw materials from the Third World, are transforming the world we know, given that one of the major aims of the USSR is to defeat the West by gaining control over the gigantic resources in the Persian Gulf and in the southern part of Africa, in which the majority of world minerals are located. We can imagine the dimensions of the global confrontation which will face us in the future.

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The Gorshkov doctrine calls for Soviet control of the oceans and mineral rich areas of the Third World. That together with the present Soviet nuclear doctrine which holds that it is possible to manage, win and survive a nuclear war, in the course of which the West's military might well be destroyed and its inhabitants made slaves in the service of Marxism-Leninism, is the main danger to world peace and to our own existence. Since 1967, the Soviets have transformed Clausewitz' dictum into "War is the continuation

of policy in nuclear means,” and made it the motto which guides all their policies. Already today they are busy carrying out their aims in our region and throughout the world, and the need to face them becomes the major element in our country’s security policy and of course that of the rest of the Free World. That is our major foreign challenge.<sup>4</sup>

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The Arab Moslem world, therefore, is not the major strategic problem which we shall face in the Eighties, despite the fact that it carries the main threat against Israel, due to its growing military might. This world, with its ethnic minorities, its factions and internal crises, which is astonishingly self-destructive, as we can see in Lebanon, in non-Arab Iran and now also in Syria, is unable to deal successfully with its fundamental problems and does not therefore constitute a real threat against the State of Israel in the long run, but only in the short run where its immediate military power has great import. In the long run, this world will be unable to exist within its present framework in the areas around us without having to go through genuine revolutionary changes. The Moslem Arab World is built like a temporary house of cards put together by foreigners (France and Britain in the Nineteen Twenties), without the wishes and desires of the inhabitants having been taken into account. It was arbitrarily divided into 19 states, all made of combinations of minorities and ethnic groups which are hostile to one another, so that every Arab Moslem state nowadays faces ethnic social destruction from within, and in some a civil war is already raging.<sup>5</sup> Most of the Arabs, 118 million out of 170 million, live in Africa, mostly in Egypt (45 million today).

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Apart from Egypt, all the Maghreb states are made up of a mixture of Arabs and non-Arab Berbers. In Algeria there is already a civil war raging in the Kabile mountains between the two nations in the country. Morocco and Algeria are at war with each other over Spanish Sahara, in addition to the internal struggle in each of them. Militant Islam endangers the integrity of Tunisia and Qaddafi organizes wars which are destructive from the Arab point of view, from a country which is sparsely populated and which cannot become a powerful nation. That is why he has been attempting unifications in the past with states that are more genuine, like Egypt and Syria. Sudan, the most torn apart state in the Arab Moslem world today is built upon four groups hostile to each other, an Arab Moslem Sunni minority which rules over a majority of non-Arab Africans, Pagans, and Christians. In Egypt there is a Sunni Moslem majority facing a large minority of Christians which is dominant in upper Egypt: some 7 million of them, so that even Sadat, in his speech on May 8, expressed the fear that they will want a state of their own, something like a “second” Christian Lebanon in Egypt.

8

All the Arab States east of Israel are torn apart, broken up and riddled with inner conflict even more than those of the Maghreb. Syria is fundamentally no different from Lebanon except in the strong military regime which rules it. But the real civil war taking place nowadays between the Sunni majority and the Shi'ite Alawi ruling minority (a mere 12% of the population) testifies to the severity of the domestic trouble.

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Iraq is, once again, no different in essence from its neighbors, although its majority is Shi'ite and the ruling minority Sunni. Sixty-five percent of the population has no say in politics, in which an elite of 20 percent holds the power. In addition there is a large Kurdish minority in the north, and if it weren't for the strength of the ruling regime, the army and the oil revenues, Iraq's future state would be no different than that of Lebanon in the past or of Syria today. The seeds of inner conflict and civil war are apparent today already, especially after the rise of Khomeini to power in Iran, a leader whom the Shi'ites in Iraq view as their natural leader.

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All the Gulf principalities and Saudi Arabia are built upon a delicate house of sand in which there is only oil. In Kuwait, the Kuwaitis constitute only a quarter of the population. In Bahrain, the Shi'ites are the majority but are deprived of power. In the UAE, Shi'ites are once again the majority but the Sunnis are in power. The same is true of Oman and North Yemen. Even in the Marxist South Yemen there is a sizable Shi'ite minority. In Saudi Arabia half the population is foreign, Egyptian and Yemenite, but a Saudi minority holds power.

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Jordan is in reality Palestinian, ruled by a Trans-Jordanian Bedouin minority, but most of the army and certainly the bureaucracy is now Palestinian. As a matter of fact Amman is as Palestinian as Nablus. All of these countries have powerful armies, relatively speaking. But there is a problem there too. The Syrian army today is mostly Sunni with an Alawi officer corps, the Iraqi army Shi'ite with Sunni commanders. This has great significance in the long run, and that is why it will not be possible to retain the loyalty of the army for a long time except where it comes to the only common denominator: The hostility towards Israel, and today even that is insufficient.

12

Alongside the Arabs, split as they are, the other Moslem states share a similar predicament. Half of Iran's population is comprised of a Persian speaking group and the other half of an ethnically Turkish group.

Turkey's population comprises a Turkish Sunni Moslem majority, some 50%, and two large minorities, 12 million Shi'ite Alawis and 6 million Sunni Kurds. In Afghanistan there are 5 million

Shi'ites who constitute one third of the population. In Sunni Pakistan there are 15 million Shi'ites who endanger the existence of that state.

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This national ethnic minority picture extending from Morocco to India and from Somalia to Turkey points to the absence of stability and a rapid degeneration in the entire region. When this picture is added to the economic one, we see how the entire region is built like a house of cards, unable to withstand its severe problems.

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In this giant and fractured world there are a few wealthy groups and a huge mass of poor people. Most of the Arabs have an average yearly income of 300 dollars. That is the situation in Egypt, in most of the Maghreb countries except for Libya, and in Iraq. Lebanon is torn apart and its economy is falling to pieces. It is a state in which there is no centralized power, but only 5 de facto sovereign authorities (Christian in the north, supported by the Syrians and under the rule of the Franjeh clan, in the East an area of direct Syrian conquest, in the center a Phalangist controlled Christian enclave, in the south and up to the Litani river a mostly Palestinian region controlled by the PLO and Major Haddad's state of Christians and half a million Shi'ites). Syria is in an even graver situation and even the assistance she will obtain in the future after the unification with Libya will not be sufficient for dealing with the basic problems of existence and the maintenance of a large army. Egypt is in the worst situation: Millions are on the verge of hunger, half the labor force is unemployed, and housing is scarce in this most densely populated area of the world. Except for the army, there is not a single department operating efficiently and the state is in a permanent state of bankruptcy and depends entirely on American foreign assistance granted since the peace.<sup>6</sup>

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In the Gulf states, Saudi Arabia, Libya and Egypt there is the largest accumulation of money and oil in the world, but those enjoying it are tiny elites who lack a wide base of support and self-confidence, something that no army can guarantee.<sup>7</sup> The Saudi army with all its equipment cannot defend the regime from real dangers at home or abroad, and what took place in Mecca in 1980 is only an example. A sad and very stormy situation surrounds Israel and creates challenges for it, problems, risks but also far-reaching opportunities for the first time since 1967. Chances are that opportunities missed at that time will become achievable in the Eighties to an extent and along dimensions which we cannot even imagine today.

The "peace" policy and the return of territories, through a dependence upon the US, precludes the realization of the new option created for us. Since 1967, all the governments of Israel have tied our national aims down to narrow political needs, on the one hand, and on the other to destructive opinions at home which neutralized our capacities both at home and abroad. Failing to take steps towards the Arab population in the new territories, acquired in the course of a war forced upon us, is the major strategic error committed by Israel on the morning after the Six Day War. We could have saved ourselves all the bitter and dangerous conflict since then if we had given Jordan to the Palestinians who live west of the Jordan river. By doing that we would have neutralized the Palestinian problem which we nowadays face, and to which we have found solutions that are really no solutions at all, such as territorial compromise or autonomy which amount, in fact, to the same thing.<sup>8</sup> Today, we suddenly face immense opportunities for transforming the situation thoroughly and this we must do in the coming decade, otherwise we shall not survive as a state.

In the course of the Nineteen Eighties, the State of Israel will have to go through far-reaching changes in its political and economic regime domestically, along with radical changes in its foreign policy, in order to stand up to the global and regional challenges of this new epoch. The loss of the Suez Canal oil fields, of the immense potential of the oil, gas and other natural resources in the Sinai peninsula which is geomorphologically identical to the rich oil-producing countries in the region, will result in an energy drain in the near future and will destroy our domestic economy: one quarter of our present GNP as well as one third of the budget is used for the purchase of oil.<sup>9</sup> The search for raw materials in the Negev and on the coast will not, in the near future, serve to alter that state of affairs.

(Regaining) the Sinai peninsula with its present and potential resources is therefore a political priority which is obstructed by the Camp David and the peace agreements. The fault for that lies of course with the present Israeli government and the governments which paved the road to the policy of territorial compromise, the Alignment governments since 1967. The Egyptians will not need to keep the peace treaty after the return of the Sinai, and they will do all they can to return to the fold of the Arab world and to the USSR in order to gain support and military assistance. American aid is guaranteed only for a short while, for the terms of the peace and the weakening of the U.S. both at home and abroad will bring about a reduction in aid. Without oil and the income from it, with the present enormous expenditure, we will not be able to get through 1982 under the present conditions and we will have to act in order to return the situation to the status quo which existed in Sinai prior to Sadat's visit and the mistaken peace agreement signed with him in March 1979.<sup>10</sup>

Israel has two major routes through which to realize this purpose, one direct and the other indirect. The direct option is the less realistic one because of the nature of the regime and government in Israel as well as the wisdom of Sadat who obtained our withdrawal from Sinai, which was, next to the war of 1973, his major achievement since he took power. Israel will not unilaterally break the treaty, neither today, nor in 1982, unless it is very hard pressed economically and politically and Egypt provides Israel with the excuse to take the Sinai back into our hands for the fourth time in our short history. What is left therefore, is the indirect option. The economic situation in Egypt, the nature of the regime and its pan-

Arab policy, will bring about a situation after April 1982 in which Israel will be forced to act directly or indirectly in order to regain control over Sinai as a strategic, economic and energy reserve for the long run. Egypt does not constitute a military strategic problem due to its internal conflicts and it could be driven back to the post 1967 war situation in no more than one day.[11](#)

The myth of Egypt as the strong leader of the Arab World was demolished back in 1956 and definitely did not survive 1967, but our policy, as in the return of the Sinai, served to turn the myth into "fact." In reality, however, Egypt's power in proportion both to Israel alone and to the rest of the Arab World has gone down about 50 percent since 1967. Egypt is no longer the leading political power in the Arab World and is economically on the verge of a crisis. Without foreign assistance the crisis will come tomorrow.[12](#) In the short run, due to the return of the Sinai, Egypt will gain several advantages at our expense, but only in the short run until 1982, and that will not change the balance of power to its benefit, and will possibly bring about its downfall. Egypt, in its present domestic political picture, is already a corpse, all the more so if we take into account the growing Moslem-Christian rift. Breaking Egypt down territorially into distinct geographical regions is the political aim of Israel in the Nineteen Eighties on its Western front.

Egypt is divided and torn apart into many foci of authority. If Egypt falls apart, countries like Libya, Sudan or even the more distant states will not continue to exist in their present form and will join the downfall and dissolution of Egypt. The vision of a Christian Coptic State in Upper Egypt alongside a number of weak states with very localized power and without a centralized government as to date, is the key to a historical development which was only set back by the peace agreement but which seems inevitable in the long run.[13](#)

The Western front, which on the surface appears more problematic, is in fact less complicated than the Eastern front, in which most of the events that make the headlines have been taking place recently. Lebanon's total dissolution into five provinces serves as a precedent for the entire Arab world including Egypt, Syria, Iraq and the Arabian peninsula and is already following that track. The dissolution of Syria and Iraq later on into ethnically or religiously unique areas such as in Lebanon, is Israel's primary target on the Eastern front in the long run, while the dissolution of the military power of those states serves as the primary short term target. Syria will fall apart, in accordance with its ethnic and religious structure, into several states such as in present day Lebanon, so that there will be a Shi'ite Alawi state along its coast, a Sunni state in the Aleppo area, another Sunni state in Damascus hostile to its northern neighbor, and the Druzes who will set up a state, maybe even in our Golan, and certainly in the Hauran and in northern Jordan. This state of affairs will be the guarantee for peace and security in the area in the long run, and that aim is already within our reach today. [14](#)

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Iraq, rich in oil on the one hand and internally torn on the other, is guaranteed as a candidate for Israel's targets. Its dissolution is even more important for us than that of Syria. Iraq is stronger than Syria. In the short run it is Iraqi power which constitutes the greatest threat to Israel. An Iraqi-Iranian war will tear Iraq apart and cause its downfall at home even before it is able to organize a struggle on a wide front against us. Every kind of inter-Arab confrontation will assist us in the short run and will shorten the way to the more important aim of breaking up Iraq into denominations as in Syria and in Lebanon. In Iraq, a division into provinces along ethnic/religious lines as in Syria during Ottoman times is possible. So, three (or more) states will exist around the three major cities: Basra, Baghdad and Mosul, and Shi'ite areas in the south will separate from the Sunni and Kurdish north. It is possible that the present Iranian-Iraqi confrontation will deepen this polarization. [15](#)

24

The entire Arabian peninsula is a natural candidate for dissolution due to internal and external pressures, and the matter is inevitable especially in Saudi Arabia. Regardless of whether its economic might based on oil remains intact or whether it is diminished in the long run, the internal rifts and breakdowns are a clear and natural development in light of the present political structure. [16](#)

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Jordan constitutes an immediate strategic target in the short run but not in the long run, for it does not constitute a real threat in the long run after its dissolution, the termination of the lengthy rule of King Hussein and the transfer of power to the Palestinians in the short run.



There is no chance that Jordan will continue to exist in its present structure for a long time, and Israel's policy, both in war and in peace, ought to be directed at the liquidation of Jordan under the present regime and the transfer of power to the Palestinian majority. Changing the regime east of the river will also cause the termination of the problem of the territories densely populated with Arabs west of the Jordan. Whether in war or under conditions of peace, emigration from the territories and economic demographic freeze in them, are the guarantees for the coming change on both banks of the river, and we ought to be active in order to accelerate this process in the nearest future. The autonomy plan ought also to be rejected, as well as any compromise or division of the territories for, given the plans of the PLO and those of the Israeli Arabs themselves, the Shefa'amr plan of September 1980, it is not possible to go on living in this country in the present situation without separating the two nations, the Arabs to Jordan and the Jews to the areas west of the river. Genuine coexistence and peace will reign over the land only when the Arabs understand that without Jewish rule between the Jordan and the sea they will have neither existence nor security. A nation of their own and security will be theirs only in Jordan. [17](#)

Within Israel the distinction between the areas of '67 and the territories beyond them, those of '48, has always been meaningless for Arabs and nowadays no longer has any significance for us. The problem should be seen in its entirety without any divisions as of '67. It should be clear, under any future political situation or military constellation, that the solution of the problem of the indigenous Arabs will come only when they recognize the existence of Israel in secure borders up to the Jordan river and beyond it, as our existential need in this difficult epoch, the nuclear epoch which we shall soon enter. It is no longer possible to live with three fourths of the Jewish population on the dense shoreline which is so dangerous in a nuclear epoch.

Dispersal of the population is therefore a domestic strategic aim of the highest order; otherwise, we shall cease to exist within any borders. Judea, Samaria and the Galilee are our sole guarantee for national existence, and if we do not become the majority in the mountain areas, we shall not rule in the country and we shall be like the Crusaders, who lost this country which was not theirs anyhow, and in which they were foreigners to begin with. Rebalancing the country demographically, strategically and economically is the highest and most central aim today. Taking hold of the mountain watershed from Beersheba to the Upper Galilee is the national aim generated by the major strategic consideration which is settling the mountainous part of the country that is empty of Jews today. [18](#)

Realizing our aims on the Eastern front depends first on the realization of this internal strategic objective. The transformation of the political and economic structure, so as to enable the realization of these strategic aims, is the key to achieving the entire change. We need to change from a centralized economy in which the government is extensively involved, to an open and free market as well as to switch from depending upon the U.S. taxpayer to developing, with our own hands, of a genuine productive economic infrastructure. If we are not able to make this change freely and voluntarily, we shall be forced into it by world developments, especially in the areas of economics, energy, and politics, and by our own growing isolation.[19](#)

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From a military and strategic point of view, the West led by the U.S. is unable to withstand the global pressures of the USSR throughout the world, and Israel must therefore stand alone in the Eighties, without any foreign assistance, military or economic, and this is within our capacities today, with no compromises.[20](#) Rapid changes in the world will also bring about a change in the condition of world Jewry to which Israel will become not only a last resort but the only existential option. We cannot assume that U.S. Jews, and the communities of Europe and Latin America will continue to exist in the present form in the future.[21](#)

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Our existence in this country itself is certain, and there is no force that could remove us from here either forcefully or by treachery (Sadat's method). Despite the difficulties of the mistaken "peace" policy and the problem of the Israeli Arabs and those of the territories, we can effectively deal with these problems in the foreseeable future.