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Disengagement – And What After?

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About the Research

What will happen the day after disengagement? Will disengagement bring peace and stability to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and promote negotiations towards a permanent status solution, or will the opposite occur reinforcing the radical Islamist factions who maintain that force alone will convince Israel?

This essay examines these questions from the viewpoint of four central and widely held geopolitical approaches in Israel: The Necessity of Separation; Two State Solution (“Two States for Two Peoples”); The Greater Land of Israel and a Bi-National State. It presents the different approaches, details the scenarios relevant to them, and analyzes the political options common to them and offers several recommendations.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What will happen the day after the disengagement? Will the disengagement usher in tranquility and stabilization for Israeli-Palestinian relations, and enable the parties to resume negotiations and progress toward a permanent status agreement? Or, will the opposite occur, and the disengagement reinforce extreme Islamic factions who believe that only force can have an effect on Israel? This essay examines these questions, through the vantage point of four central and popular geopolitical approaches in Israel:

1. **The Necessity of Separation:** this approach holds that demographic and security considerations make Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip and Northern Samaria a necessity – even unilaterally, if need be.
2. **The Two State Solution:** this approach supports a final status agreement, based on the principle of two states between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean sea, in which both peoples will exercise their right to self determination.
3. **The Greater Land of Israel:** The Greater Land of Israel approach calls for Israel to remain in the territories, for various reasons: National Religious circles, who believe in territorial integrity, justify their position through national and religious reasoning. Security circles supporting this approach argue that given the present security circumstances, and especially in light of threats of terrorism and the weakness of the Palestinian Authority, Israel should not leave the territories.
4. **Bi-National State:** This approach, which characterizes Jewish post-Zionist circles in Israel and nationalist circles among Israeli Arabs, sees a bi-national state between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea as inevitable.

The essay presents the various approaches, spells out the scenarios according to them, and points out the signs indicating the realization of each approach. Analysis of the various geopolitical approaches suggests two main options, which are, in my opinion, those which will stand at the center of the internal Israeli political debate, and around which the main political positioning will be formulated:

1. Contraction to the border
2. Deployment in the frontier area beyond the borders

A geopolitical approach is a sort of psycho-political pattern of thought, resulting from life experience and membership in a defined cultural group. It reflects one's personal and collective beliefs and life experience, the opinions one is exposed to, and the cultural groups to which one is connected. It acts as a filtering lens, through which reality is examined, processed and interpreted. Upon this processed reality, one reaches conclusions regarding the desirable course of action.

At the basis of each geopolitical approach lies a basic assumption; an infallible axiom. This assumption is sometimes displayed as an imperative, or as an inevitable process. The Necessity of Separation approach assumes that **the demographic process** endangers the State of Israel's continued existence as a Jewish and democratic state, and therefore, the disengagement is inevitable. The Two State Solution approach assumes that **moral imperative and economic needs** necessitate separation and achievement of peace. Greater Land of Israel supporters believe that settlement in the Land of Israel realizes **national vision** and fulfills a **divine imperative**. The Bi-National State approach is based on the assumption that both communities, Jewish and Arab, **are irreversibly intertwined**, territorially and community-wise.

Despite the substantial differences between the four approaches, they all share the historicist approach: the view that historical development is not a matter of chance, and that there is a constitutional logic at its foundation, which determines the direction of events. The approaches differ regarding the identity of the factor which determines historical development. Each emphasizes a different, exclusive factor which determines historical development in general, and, specifically, the nature of the relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. These factors, which include demography, morality and progress, national vision and divine promise, and irreversible intertwining, determine the history of the relations between Israelis and Palestinians. These factors determine who will take part in shaping history, and which **political views and strategies** will draw the settlement map.

The approach which guides the essay is doubt regarding the historicist worldview, that is, the worldview which seeks out a logic which determines the path of history. It also distances itself from philosophical-political relativism, which assumes that every geopolitical approach is legitimate. Policymakers must base their geopolitical approach upon a system of criteria able to achieve the maximal number of advantages. The essay presents six criteria, whose essence is the existence of a Jewish democratic state, living in security and peace and enjoying internal solidarity and international support. True statehood is the choice, between geopolitical options, which strives for proportionality between the various principles, while moderating the contradictions between them and preserving proportionality in their realization.

The geopolitical option proposed in the essay in light of these principles, is an Israeli initiative to contract within the borders and to stabilize the frontier beyond the border. This option fits the Necessity of Separation approach, but is also aware of the dangers indicated by Greater Land of Israel devotees. It does not stop at the necessity of separation, rather continues in the direction of a two state solution, while understanding that the process will be slow and paved with crises, as predicted by the Necessity of Separation approach. The two state solution scenario will not be manifested in a complete separation, due to the special circumstances of the two states as indicated by the Bi-National State approach, and a certain amount of common space will exist in the future as well. However, most of the public in Israel oppose such a state, whether as the Greater Land of Israel or as the post-Zionist version of a bi-national state. Israel cannot eternally maintain a situation of separation amidst increasing enmity; rational politics entails progress from unilateral separation to a two state solution of the conflict.

PREFACE

The Plan for Disengagement from the Gaza Strip and Northern Samaria stands at the center of a raging political argument over its meaning and the opportunities and risks it involves. Two questions arise in this context. First, will the Government of Israel be capable of implementing the disengagement? It is worthwhile to examine what will happen if the disengagement plan is not implemented as planned: what will happen in Israel, and what will happen to the relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA), Arab countries, and the rest of the world?

Assuming that disengagement is an inevitable step, the second question arises: what will the day after look like? Will disengagement bring tranquility and stabilization to Israel-Palestinian Authority relations, and allow a return to negotiations and advancement toward a final status agreement? Or might the opposite occur, and disengagement reinforce extreme Islamic circles, who believe that only force can affect Israel? Further, what will take place if the elections of Abu Maazen, Chairman of the Palestinian Authority, and of the Palestinian Parliament, are not accompanied by security and political-economic reforms? Without reform, the terrorism against Israel will continue, and in such a situation it is difficult to imagine checkpoint removal and the easing of Palestinian workers' passage from the PA into Israel.

Scenarios developed by the world bank show that under such conditions, it will be impossible to maintain a viable economy in the PA, and therefore the donor states will not increase their support to it. As a result, the economic crisis in the PA will deepen; distress, poverty and frustration will deepen along with it; and the strength of extremists will increase.

World Bank scenarios, and especially the *status quo* scenario, contradict the understanding of the Israeli and Palestinian public, and that of some in Europe and the United States, who see disengagement as an opportunity to reach a comprehensive arrangement in the framework of the road map.¹ The possibility that the agenda will be set by opponents of disengagement who will do all in their power to obstruct it, should not be discounted *ab initio*. All depends upon the governments' ability to confront these opponents: in the ensuing struggle, will they prevail, or will the opponents on both sides set the agenda?

In light of these questions, now is the time, in my opinion, to clarify what will happen the day after disengagement plan implementation. Will the unilateral approach continue in the future, with unilateral retreats from additional places accompanied by reinforcement of settlement blocs; or, will a change occur, and the next steps in the process be implemented through dialogue and agreement? In other words: what are the possible scenarios and options for the day after disengagement? Different circles in Israeli society, with different geopolitical approaches, have contradicting answers to these questions. These answers will affect Israel's foreign policy, since the ability to advance foreign policy requires confronting the positions of different cultural-political camps in Israel.

This essay examines the questions presented from the viewpoint of four central and widely held geopolitical approaches in Israel:

1. The Necessity of Separation
2. Two State Solution ("Two States for Two Peoples")
3. The Greater Land of Israel
4. Bi-National State

This essay presents the different approaches, details the scenarios relevant to them, and analyzes the political options common to them. Two main options arise from the analysis of the various geopolitical options, and these will stand, in my opinion, at the center of the domestic political debate in Israel:

1. Contraction to the borders
2. Deployment in the frontier area beyond the borders

¹ The World Bank. December 2004. *Stagnation or Revival? Israeli Disengagement and Palestinian Economic Prospects*.

Using various criteria, this essay examines the advantages and disadvantages of each option, and proposes an integrated option, based on contraction to the borders accompanied by stabilization of the frontier area beyond them.

The essay's main objective is to present, before public and policymaker, various developments likely to result from the disengagement plan, including some surprising ones. Thus, the disengagement plan will be examined from a wide perspective, breaking out of accepted thought patterns.

Fixed patterns of thought have advantages and disadvantages: on the one hand, they provide security to those who cling to them, since they grant reality the desired meaning, and accordingly grant legitimacy to decisions, and roughly sketch out desirable future developments. On the other hand, fixed patterns of thought are liable to lead one astray, since they tend to hide or repress undesirable developments. Stubborn clinging to certain models is liable to hide other possibilities and lead to wrong decisions.

At times it has turned out that reality does not behave according to the rules of geopolitical approaches, and tends to contradict basic assumptions and present new challenges, requiring a different viewpoint. Therefore, various geopolitical approaches, interpreting the disengagement plan in different ways, outlining alternate developments, and proposing different courses of action, must be presented before policymaker and public. Thus, policymakers' awareness of developments likely to contradict their geopolitical thought patterns can be increased, ensuring appropriate decision making.

The essay deals with the following subjects:

- the main geopolitical approaches competing to explain the meaning of the disengagement plan and to shape policy
- the foundational assumptions of each approach
- policy and security strategy proposed by each approach
- scenarios derived from each approach
- signs of the degree to which each scenario comes true
- domestic policy developments, associated with the various geopolitical approaches
- recommendations regarding future policy and courses of action.

1 THE GEOPOLITICAL APPROACHES

Definition of a Geopolitical Approach

Different groups in Israeli and Palestinian society adhere to different geopolitical approaches regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the future relations between the two sides. A geopolitical approach is a sort of psycho-political model, a product of life experience and of membership in a defined cultural group. A geopolitical approach reflects people's private and collective beliefs, their life experience, the opinions they have been exposed to and the social groups to which they are connected.²

A geopolitical approach acts as a filtering lens, through which reality is examined, processed and interpreted. On the basis of this processing, conclusions are reached regarding the desirable course of action. Despite the fact that policymakers are exposed to more information than the public, they are not free of the filtering and distortion caused by the psycho-political models to which they adhere. In this regard, there is no difference between the policymaker and the common person. Policy decisions are not derived solely from knowledge; they are also a product of psycho-social models. Reality – the data and information – to which policy makers are exposed is cast in a mold of consciousness, in which it is processed and interpreted. On the basis of this processing, options for action are outlined, and the option chosen is the one which most fits the decision maker's psycho-political model. In this essay, these worldview models are defined as geopolitical approaches.

² Gertjan Dijink. 1996. *National Identity and Geopolitical Visions*. London and New York: Routledge.

The four main approaches in Israeli society today are:

- **The Necessity of Separation.** This approach holds that security and demographic considerations require Israel to sever herself from the Gaza Strip and Northern Samaria, even if it must be done unilaterally. Supporters of unilateral disengagement base their position upon the lack of a partner on the Palestinian side, as was the case during the era of Yasser Arafat. After the election of Mahmud Abbas (Abu Maazen) as President of the Palestinian Authority, a change in attitude and a gradual transition to coordinated disengagement have been indicated. Coordinated disengagement is not negotiation with the PA on the pullout itself or on the reward Israel will receive as a result of it, rather a search for a way to implement the unilateral act through coordination and dialogue with the other side. Disengagement, unilateral or otherwise, is supported by a majority of the Israeli public.³
- **The Two State Solution** (“Two States for Two Peoples”). This approach supports a final status solution based on the principle of two states between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea (“from the sea to the river”), in which each of the two peoples realizes its right to self determination. According to this approach, unilateral disengagement does not ensure the resolution of the conflict, and is liable to perpetuate it, if it is not integrated into a wider approach which will ultimately bring about such a permanent resolution.
- **The Greater Land of Israel.** The Greater Land of Israel approach calls for Israel to remain in the territories for various reasons. The reasoning of religious-national circles, who support territorial integrity, is national and religious. Security circles supporting this approach argue that in the existing security circumstances, and especially in light of the threats of terrorism and the weakness of the PA, Israel must not leave the territories. Security circles

³ According to the January 2005 Peace Index of the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, 59 percent of the general population of Israel supports the disengagement plan, whereas a joint survey conducted by the Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace and The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) in Ramallah, shows that 65 percent of the public in Israel report that if a referendum were held on the subject of the disengagement, they would support it. See: *Joint Palestinian-Israeli Press Release*, March 16, 2005. www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2005/p15ejoint.html

are, however, willing to make territorial compromise in conditions of political or security stability.

- **Bi-National State.** This approach, which characterizes Jewish post-Zionist circles in Israel and nationalist circles amongst Israeli Arabs, assumes that a Bi-National State between the river and the sea is unavoidable. This approach is not presented as ideal, rather as an inevitable situation deriving from the continuation of the Israeli occupation of the territories and from settlement expansion there. These trends are seen as obstructing any possibility of establishing a viable Palestinian state.

The four geopolitical approaches characterizing Israeli society exist also – almost as a mirror image – in Palestinian society, and the interpretation given them is similar. True, the PA rejects the unilateral disengagement plan as manifested in the **Necessity of Separation** approach, as it is concerned that the disengagement from “Gaza first” (to borrow the term from the “Gaza and Jericho first” redeployment after *Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements* of 1993), will also be the end of the disengagement, or – “Gaza last”. However, *de facto*, the PA is signaling its willingness to see the disengagement as part of an **interim arrangement** formulated through dialogue, and as a part of the road map.⁴

The other geopolitical approaches also exist on the Palestinian side. The Two State Solution approach, calling for return to 1967 (1949 armistice line) borders with certain border alterations, is supported by the majority of the populations in Israel and the PA (close to 60% in the Israeli public and 57% in the Palestinian public), and is seen as the appropriate long term solution.⁵ However, most of the population in both communities doubts the chances of short run success of such an approach, and thus betrays a deep distrust in the other side’s ability and willingness to hold up to its side of the bargain.

⁴ Hani Al Hassan. 2004. “An Interactive Model for Peace and Stability in the Middle East”. *The Fifth Annual Herzliya Conference*, December 13-16, 2004.

⁵ For data on the Israeli side see: Tamar Hermann. (2002). “Tactical Hawks, Strategic Doves: The Positions of the Jewish Public in Israel on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”. *Strategic Assessment*, Vol. 5(2): 1-8.

For data on the Palestinian side see: *PSR – Survey Research Unit: Public Opinion Poll #11*. www.pepsr.org/survey/polls/2004/p11a.html; *Palestinian Opinion Pulse*. December 2004. Jerusalem Media and Communication Center. www.jmcc.org/publicpoll/pop/04/dec/pop15.pdf

The **Greater Land of Israel** approach is also shared by certain circles on both sides. The Jews are guided by the idea of **The Greater Land of Israel**, and the Palestinians adhere to the idea of an **Islamic State** in the holy land of the Waqf, stretching from the sea to the river. This approach is characteristic of radical religious circles on both sides. It expresses the belief that the entire land is holy land which cannot be forfeited. This approach characterizes a group amongst each people which is not large, yet has considerable effect and ability to organize action.

The **Bi-National State** approach attracts post-Zionist circles in the Jewish population and nationalistic circles amongst the Israeli Arabs. These circles criticize the idea of a “state of all its citizens” within the State of Israel according to the 1967 borders (1949 armistice lines), and believe that a return to these borders is impossible. In their opinion, an irreversible territorial and demographic situation has arisen from the sea to the river. On the Palestinian side, this approach is accepted by nationalistic secular circles, convinced that a viable Palestinian state is a dream that disappeared in the face of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Under the circumstances which have arisen, a Palestinian state would be but a collection of pockets or reservations with no territorial integrity, and dubious economic viability.

The Four Geopolitical Approaches and their Attitude toward the Disengagement Plan

Each of the geopolitical approaches examines the disengagement plan through its own unique lens, through which it understands the plan’s meanings and implications.

The Necessity of Separation – The primary supporter of this approach is Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, and it is supported also by intellectuals of neo-conservative orientation, such as Dan Schueftan and Arnon Soffer.⁶

⁶ Soffer Arnon and Pollack Keren. 2003. *Israel’s Unilateral Separation from the Palestinian Authority by way of a Separation Fence: Advantages and Disadvantages*. Haifa: The Geostrategy Research Desk, The Center for National Security Research, Haifa University; Schueftan, Dan. 1999. *Disengagement: Israel and the Palestinian Entity*. Tel Aviv: Zmora-Bitan and Haifa University Publishing.

This approach is based on the assumptions that economic and demographic integration with the PA will endanger Israel, since Israel has no reliable partner on the other side, since the negotiations reached an impasse, and since the state of war with the PA is likely to continue for a long time. Without a political solution, Israel is likely to be dragged into a deteriorating conflict with the Palestinians and to be exposed to international pressure, both of which are liable to endanger her. Continuation of the *status quo* is likely to endanger Israel not only in the area of security, but also in the political area, due to the creation of a Palestinian majority between the sea and the river within a few years.

With the changes in the Palestinian Authority after Yasser Arafat's death, a certain change in this assumption has taken place, as the new President, Mahmud Abbas, has expressed a willingness for a cease fire and proven his ability to convince the radical factions to hold their fire. However, the concerns regarding renewed outbreak of hostilities still stand, since Abbas has not disarmed the terrorist organizations, who continue to commit acts of terrorism, albeit to a lesser extent. Against this background, a tendency to move from unilateral disengagement to coordinated disengagement is noticeable. However, Israel's concerns about further terrorist attacks and about the demographic threat remain.

Of all these threats, the demographic threat is considered most severe; more severe even than the threat of terrorism. Without separation, the State of Israel is liable to lose its character as a Jewish and democratic state. If it grants civil rights to the Palestinians, including the right to vote, it will become a bi-national state; and if it denies them the right to vote, it will become an undemocratic state. The way out of this dilemma is dis-engagement: preferably through dialogue, but if there is no partner on the other side – unilateral. The other side of the disengagement plan coin is the tightening of Israeli control in those areas in Judea and Samaria which are to become parts of the State of Israel.

The real partner in the disengagement plan is not the Palestinian Authority, rather the United States, whose role is to grant backing and strategic support and to beat off international criticism. The international pressure on Israel was already visible in the road map, and especially in the quartet's status according to this plan. An additional sign of international pressure is the wide support which was given to the Geneva initiative, prepared by Israeli and Palestinian teams led by Yossi Beilin and Yasser Abed Rabo.

The Necessity of Separation approach rejects the possibility of large scale war, since that would lead to renewed occupation of the Gaza Strip and West Bank, only worsening the demographic problem and increasing the international pressure on Israel. With no political solution at hand, and in order to decrease the demographic threat and the international pressure, and improve Israel's status in the international arena, Israel must unilaterally leave the Gaza Strip. She must continue building the separation fence and tighten her control over vital areas. In this way, it will be possible to lessen the demographic dangers, shorten the lines, and more efficiently defend the state's population from terrorist attacks. On the political plane, the disengagement will beat off international criticism and neutralize other political proposals.

The Necessity of Separation approach undermines fundamental assumptions of both the left and the right. The left believes that leaving the territories will bring about a peace agreement. The right believes that as long as the state of war continues, Israel must not leave the territories. The assumption of necessity of separation is that the arguments of both the left and the right are unfounded. Israel must leave the territories even if the state of war continues, and gain demographic and international advantages.

The Two State Solution (“Two States for Two Peoples”) – this approach is shared by the Labor Party, the Yachad party and the Arab parties.

This approach supports the idea of two states living side by side in peace and security. According to it, Israel must withdraw to '67 borders with certain border alterations, and allow the Palestinians to establish a state on part of the historical Land of Israel. This approach argues that the disengagement can be a step in the right direction, if it is full and fast and integrated in a wider peace plan, like the road map.⁷ Such a step must be accompanied by dialogue with the Palestinian Authority and with international bodies, including European states, capable of assisting the advance of a peace process and the achievement of a political solution.

Some supporters of this approach, like its critics in the PA and right wing Israeli circles, argue that the proposed disengagement is not true disengagement, since Israel will, at least during the first stage, preserve her control over all the entrances into the Gaza Strip, and an independent Palestinian state will not arise in the

⁷ Vilnai Matan. 24.5.2004. “Outline for Withdrawal from Gaza”. *Haaretz*, daily newspaper.

territories from which Israel disengages.⁸ And, indeed, according to article 3 of the disengagement plan, “Israel will supervise and defend the outer perimeter on land, exclusively control the airspace of Gaza, and continue to maintain military activity in the waters along Gaza’s coast.” According to article 6, “In the first stage, Israel will continue to maintain a military presence along the border between the Gaza strip and Egypt (the Philadelphi route) ... and will consider the possibility of evacuating this area in the future.”⁹ Moreover, Israel will continue to be responsible for electricity and water provision, and to be a source of employment for the strip residents. In these conditions, the Justice Ministry and Re’ut Institute argue that even if Israel fully implements the disengagement plan, it is likely to continue to be an occupying force and to be responsible for the Gaza Strip, and continue to be considered as such.¹⁰

According to the Two State Solution (“Two States for Two Peoples”) approach, implementation of the disengagement plan without integrating it into a wider peace scheme will not conclude the occupation or relieve Israel of her responsibility, and Israel’s standing in the international arena will not improve.

The Greater Land of Israel – supporters of this approach, by which Israel must remain in the territories, are the National Religious Party (NRP or “Mafdal”), The National Unity party (“Ha’Ichud Ha’Leumi”) and a faction in the Likud party which opposes the policy of the Prime Minister. This approach sees settlement in all parts of the Land of Israel as an expression of national faith and the realization of the divine promise to the Jewish people. This surety grants the settlements their strength. This approach sees the disengagement plan as an expression of a deep crisis, mainly in the leadership’s lack of confidence in its ability to confront the

⁸ For Palestinian criticism of the disengagement plan, showing that Gaza will remain under occupation even after the implementation of the disengagement, see PLO Negotiation Support Unit. October 2004. *The Israeli Disengagement Plan: Gaza Still Occupied*. www.nad-plo.org/gazaplanpw.php. For similar criticism on the Israeli side see Amidror Yaakov. December 2004. “The Unilateral Withdrawal – A Security Error of Historical Magnitude”. *Strategic Assessment*. Vol. 7(3): 8-13.

⁹ Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s Disengagement Plan, April 16, 2004. www.knesset.gov.il/process/DisengageSharon.htm (no longer available)

¹⁰ Re’ut Institute. September 13, 2004. “The Political Aspects of the Disengagement Plan”. www.reut-institute.org/assets/20050310/ThePoliticalInternationalChallengesoftheDisengagementPlanb.pdf

difficult challenges. According to Moshe Feiglin, the source of the crisis is the undermining of the national faith.¹¹ He believes that the national camp failed in its confrontation with the left wing. According to Moti Karpal, the disengagement plan expresses the deep undermining of religious faith and of faith in God's power to bring the Jewish people to its land. Only a renewal of faith can supply the strength needed to confront the current crisis.¹²

Alongside national and religious reasoning, stand security considerations. Supporters of this approach include not only the national religious camp, but also people concerned with security, worried by a withdrawal from the territories without an arrangement with the Palestinian Authority and without the dismantling of the terrorist infrastructure. These figures warn against uncoordinated withdrawal and of the increase in terrorism which will result from it.

Bi-national State – this approach is commonly accepted by post-Zionist and post-Nationalist circles, who argue that the settlement process in the West Bank and Gaza strip created an irreversible situation, that is: Jewish settlement in the heart of Palestinian areas created a situation irremovable by political decisions. “What has become irreversible”, according to Meron Benvenisti, “is the territorial *status quo* and the transition of the conflict into a tribal, inter-community conflict, whose source is internal”.¹³ Both communities are interlocked and inseparable, and therefore the inevitable result is a bi-national state. Such a state is not necessarily the desired solution. On the Contrary: some of the adherents to this outlook believe that this is a bad solution. However, under the current conditions, no other solution can be outlined, so the most must be made of the irreversible situation of two conflicting communities, tied to each other inseparably.

¹¹ Feiglin Moshe. 28 Cheshvan 5765 (November 12, 2004). “Who Will Blink First”. *Lchatchila LeManhigut Yehudit*. Alon Shvut.

¹² Moti Karpal. 28 Cheshvan 5675 (November 12, 2004). “My Strength and the Bone of My Arm”. *Lchatchila LeManhigut Yehudit*. Alon Shvut.

¹³ Benvenisti, Meron. 1988. *The Sling and the Club*. Jerusalem: Keter, p. 54.

What the Different Approaches have in Common

At the base of the different geopolitical approaches lie different, and sometimes contradictory, assumptions. However, they all share the argument that the realization of their geopolitical approach is inevitable due to the mechanism which propels history.

The different approaches are of course at odds regarding the character of the mechanism that shapes historical development. According to the **Necessity of Separation** approach, separation is inevitable due to a **demographic-national constraint**. This constraint requires disengagement even if it does not attain peace, soon or ever, since the State of Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state hangs in the balance.

According to the **Two State Solution** (“**Two States for Two Peoples**”), peace is inevitable **due to moral imperative and economic development**. The moral imperative requires putting an end to control over another people, and economic development requires arranging the relations between the two peoples and transition from a state of conflict to one of peace. The political process and the economic process are interconnected, and propel history from a state of war to a state of peace.

According to the **Greater Land of Israel** approach, settlement in all parts of the land is inevitable **by religious-national imperative**. Some supporters of this approach obey the imperative of faith, while others obey the national one. Both mechanisms – the religious and the national – are interconnected.

According to the **Bi-National State** approach, the territorial-community tangle is inextricable, and will prevent any attempt to return to the homogenous nation-state.

Despite the differences between the various approaches in the way they grasp the organizing principle of the mechanism which shapes historic development, a uniform historicist structure of thought can be identified in all of the approaches. This structure's main characteristics are:

- The historical developments expected prior to and following the disengagement will be determined by rules and norms which are beyond individual control.

- Adherents of the approach enjoy an advantage in understanding the mechanism which shapes the development of history and its *modus operandi*.
- Adherents of the approach have a monopoly on the truth and on forecasting expected developments.

The Political Approach, the Security Strategy and the Nature of the Border

The difference between the fundamental assumptions of the various approaches is manifest also in different and contradictory proposals regarding political and strategic approach, and the nature of the border between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

The Necessity of Separation Approach argues that it is impossible to resolve the conflict and to reach a solution acceptable to both parties. The war waged today is a low intensity conflict, and Israel cannot bring its full might to bear in order to defeat the weaker party. The continuation of the war means a continual bleeding, damage to the economy, and collapse of legitimacy. High intensity conflict would end in the reoccupation of the territories, and Israel is not interested in that. Under such conditions, the advantage is in the hands of the weaker side. Moreover, the PA leadership is not strong enough to impose its rule on the extremist factors and to advance a comprehensive arrangement. Against this background, the Necessity of Separation approach rejects the idea of an end to the conflict, and instead proposes **management** of the conflict through interim arrangements. Such arrangements will be outlined through dialogue and coordination to the extent possible, and otherwise, unilaterally. During the unilateral activity, only some of the settlements will be evacuated, whereas the rest will stay in Israel's hands, some forever and others as bargaining chips.

The security outlook of the Necessity of Separation approach argues that Israel must act to **contain** the conflict through **deterrence**, by an iron hand policy toward any combat or terrorist activity, and through military deployment around the areas under Palestinian control. This situation requires Israeli control over the international borders with Egypt and Jordan. A security fence or security obstacle separating Israel from the PA will detach the demographic link, limit passage, and enhance security. Such separation assumes that the other party will not be a legitimate partner for quite a while, and that the borders of the state will be

determined unilaterally, by security fences or by ceasefire lines. At the moment of transition from ceasefire lines to stipulated borders, the Necessity of Separation and Two State Solution approaches will converge.

The Two State Solution (“Two States for Two Peoples”) Approach supports a process of **resolution** of the conflict by reaching agreement on all the disputed points: borders, settlements, Jerusalem, refugees, security arrangements, economic arrangements, and use of water sources. This will require economic, planning, and environmental cooperation. Contrary to the Necessity of Separation approach, the **Two State Solution** approach points to real partners on the other side, with whom Israel can advance toward an arrangement. The character of the border will be derived from this reality: the security fence is temporary, and will be replaced in the future by a ceasefire line and an international border. On both sides of the border will be states that live beside each other in peace and security.

The Greater Land of Israel Approach is based on the idea of **elimination** of the conflict. Through military and political action, Israel will bring about the dismantling of the Palestinian terrorist infrastructure, the dispersion of the refugee camps which perpetuate terrorism and the Palestinian problem, and will transfer their residents to Arab countries. According to this approach, the Land of Israel according to the British mandate boundaries, from the sea to the river, is not to be divided. Instead, a regional solution should be adopted, by which the Jordan River will separate between the Jewish nation-state west of it and the Palestinian nation-state east of it – the country of Jordan. The establishment of an additional Palestinian state is not to be agreed to. Israel will grant the Arab residents of the Judea, Samaria, and Gaza regions full human rights, but they will be citizens of the Palestinian state whose capital is Amman. After the dismantling of the PA, the elimination of terrorism and the granting of Jordanian-Palestinian citizenship, Israel will annex the entire territory between the sea and the river. In order to preserve the Jewish character of the State of Israel, she will encourage Arab emigration from all areas of the Land of Israel.¹⁴ Settlement in all parts of the land will continue, and if

¹⁴ *The Regional Outline for Peace – The National Camp’s Plan for a Regional Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. Proposal of MK Benny Elon, Chairman of the Moledet – National Unity (“Ha’Ichud Ha’Leumi”) party. Av 5764 – August 2004. *The Struggle for Home and Motherland*, a letter to settlers in the territories by MK Benny Elon, chairman of the Moledet – National Unity (“Ha’Ichud Ha’Leumi”) party. Av 5764 – August 2004.

borders are drawn, they will be, at most, internal boundaries which will surround the Arab areas.

The **Bi-National State** approach argues that the settlement situation and the interaction between the communities will lead to **transformation** of the conflict, into mutual accommodation and the creation of a communal political and economic space. Therefore, this approach outlines a bi-national space without internal boundaries, or with internal transparent administrative boundaries between the two communities.

Relations between the States, Courses of Action and the Participants in Shaping Reality

At the root of the differences between the geopolitical approaches lie different outlooks regarding the nature of international relations, possible courses of action, and the roles of various participants in shaping reality.

International Relations: Realism versus Liberalism – the Necessity of Separation and Greater Land of Israel approaches are guided by the worldview of realism. This approach claims that the natural state of international relations is one of anarchy and conflict, and thus the state must demonstrate power in order to ensure its security. However, the worldview of the other two approaches – the Two State Solution and the Bi-National State – is liberal: the natural state of international relations is based on a willingness for cooperation, economic trade, activity in a democratic framework, and peaceful resolution of conflict. In this framework, one can advance peace and liberty.

Courses of Action – strategies run the gamut between preserving the *status quo* and changing it. The Necessity of Separation and the Two State Solution approaches adhere to a strategy of changing the *status quo*. Despite the differences between the worldviews of these two approaches – realism versus liberalism – both approaches see the *status quo* as negative, and harmful to Israel. Accordingly, they strive to change it, albeit in different directions: separation, versus a permanent two state solution.

The Greater Land of Israel and Bi-National State approaches adhere to a strategy of preservation of and adaptation to the *status quo*. Despite the immeasurable

difference between these two approaches, both believe that the *status quo* should not be changed. Greater Land of Israel devotees believe that preservation of the *status quo* will increase the pressure on the Palestinians, and ultimately bring about consensual population exchange. Bi-National State devotees believe that preservation of the *status quo* will ultimately lead to a bi-national state.

The Actors Participating in the Shaping of Reality vary according to the different approaches. According to the Necessity of Separation and Two State Solution approaches, the main participants are state and international institutions. These will make the central decision which will lead to a separation arrangement or a permanent two state solution. Although societal organizations and figures in society affect the shaping of solutions, by applying pressure on policy makers, the final decision on the form of the solution is reserved for state and international institutions.

According to the Greater Land of Israel and Bi-National State approaches, the important players in shaping reality are the settlers, and civil society. The assumption latent in these two approaches is that state institutions will end up failing to implement their plans, whether a separation arrangement or a permanent two state solution. It is the members of the Israeli and Palestinian communities themselves who will ultimately shape the character of the relations between them.

2 SCENARIOS ACCORDING TO THE VARIOUS APPROACHES

The various geopolitical approaches not only interpret the current situation; they also describe the future. The possible futures are presented in the media, and they have an effect on the shaping of public opinion.

The Scenario of the Necessity of Separation Approach: “A Bright Future”

The “bright future” scenario describes a transition from the vision of the Greater Land of Israel to an expanded Jewish democratic state. The unilateral disengagement is the beginning of the return to the Jewish and democratic state, whose borders are wider than those of June 5, 1967. The vision of the Greater land of Israel has been exposed as bad bargain, and is exchanged for a State of Israel repaired both in terms of her borders and her national character. According to this scenario, Israel will present the new map as a unilaterally created interim arrangement, since there is no one in the Palestinian Authority to negotiate with. After implementation of the disengagement plan, Israel will argue that it is not possible to advance to the second stage of the road map, as long as the Palestinians have not achieved what is expected of them in the first stage: elimination of the infrastructure of terrorism. The inevitable result is: a unilateral interim solution, in which the borders of Israel and the Palestinian authority are unilaterally defined; and unilateral implementation of Israel’s settlement strategy, especially on both sides of the Green Line, in the greater Jerusalem metropolitan area, and in the Ariel bloc.

According to this scenario, unilateral disengagement will allow a number of gains: maximal (albeit not absolute) **security**, and demographic separation of Jews and Arabs. The advantages latent in this separation have already clearly been proven by the dramatic reduction in terrorist activity against Israel. As a result of the tranquil security situation and increase in stability, **economic growth**, whose mark is already seen in the growth of the national product, will be possible.

The disengagement will also have a calming effect on the Arab population of Israel due to the separation between Israeli Arabs and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza strip. Disengagement, by evacuation of the Gaza strip and continued construction of the fence, will curb the process of Palestinization of Israeli Arabs and reinforce the trend of Israelization. Improvement of the Arabs' economic situation in Israel would make an additional contribution to their integration in the State of Israel.

As a result of the disengagement, Israel will go back to dealing with her major national missions, the central of which is re-planning the settlement layout in the peripheral areas of the Galilee, the Negev and Jerusalem. This plan abandons the dream of **the Greater Land of Israel** for an expanded **State of Israel**, granting priority to geopolitically sensitive areas, such as greater Jerusalem. The central objective here is widening and lengthening of the Jerusalem corridor, in an attempt to break Jerusalem out of a situation as a "border city". An additional sensitive area is the western foothills of Samaria. The objective here is to widen the slim waistline of the State of Israel in the Sharon area.

Formulation of a settlement strategy will require a plan for settlement blocs west of the fence, in order to reinforce the new frontier. The new planning activity will focus on greater Jerusalem. This area is a metropolis spread over both sides of the Green Line. The heart of the future metropolis will be Jerusalem. Ma'aleh Adumim and Beit Shemesh will be secondary centers. Giv'at Ze'ev and the Gush Etzion settlements will be included in it. The metropolis will develop toward the east, the north and the southwest. Implementation of this plan will require changes in two planning schemes: the district planning scheme inside of the Green Line, and the Jerusalem urban planning scheme, bordered by the city's municipal boundaries. The main changes needed will be: alterations of the planning space, so that it applies to the metropolitan area on both sides of the green line; integration of physical planning with political, economic, and social aspects; and raising the level of planning from an urban one to a national one.

The Scenario of the Two State Solution (“Two States for Two Peoples”) Approach: “Courage for Change Before it’s Too Late”

According to this scenario, implementation of the disengagement plan without linking it to a wider move will prevent the establishment of a viable Palestinian state and perpetuate the Palestinians’ economic dependence on Israel. Unilateral disengagement without progress in the peace process will not provide a solution to the geopolitical problem; under the guise of disengagement rhetoric, Palestinian Authority territories will be annexed to Israel, and control over the Palestinians will only continue and intensify. The PA will be under Israeli control *de facto*, even if *de jure* it is granted the status of an independent entity. In the framework of the disengagement plan, the PA will be surrounded by a series of fences: an international fence preventing declaration of sovereignty or contact with neighboring countries; an internal western security-political fence; and a system of internal fences around Arab settlements and Jewish settlements. Latitudinal roads will connect Israeli areas west of the fence with the border with Jordan.

Unilateral disengagement will also prevent long term separation between the two populations, as it will obstruct the creation of a viable Palestinian state and intensify the PA’s dependence upon Israel. Any comparison between the disengagement and security fence boundaries and the 1949 ceasefire lines ignores the fact that the separation in 1949 was between two viable states, whereas the situation in this scenario is different: the disengagement will not allow the Palestinians independent existence. Under these conditions, Israel will have to continue to provide infrastructure and to look after the economy of the Palestinian entity; and if she does not do so, a humanitarian crisis, likely to lead to international intervention, will evolve.

The danger of continuing PA dependence on Israel increases due to the geographic detachment between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and due to the division of the West Bank into a number of cantons by the Jewish settlement blocs. The cantons will be dependent on Israel for infrastructure, economy, and trade. The inevitable result will be a series of Bantustans in the Gaza Strip, in northern Samaria, and in the Ramallah and Hebron areas.¹⁵

¹⁵ Sneh Efraim. October 11, 2004. “Sharon’s Plan will Perpetuate War”. *Haaretz*, daily newspaper.

If the unilateral disengagement boundaries become permanent borders, that will put an end to the possibility of the establishment of a viable Palestinian state. The result will be second class citizens dependent upon the State of Israel. The state's attitude toward them will remain politically indifferent or hostile, economically limiting and discriminatory in almost every area.

A humanitarian crisis occurring in the cantons will lead to wide spread criticism of Israel and international involvement. The unemployment, the dependency, and the rage over land confiscation and alienation will strengthen the militant movements, and support for terrorism will increase. The fence will not serve as a substantial obstacle for those wishing to carry out acts of terrorism. Reinforcement of the fence will require additional military forces along its length, and deterrence will require routine security activity within the Palestinian Authority.

The disengagement will strengthen the terrorist organizations. They will present the withdrawal as a direct result of their activity. A power struggle between different bodies will commence in the Gaza Strip, which may sink into political chaos. Another possibility is understandings between Fatah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad, coordination between the various forces, and establishment of a militant government. Moderate government, under conditions of closure, enclosure, and continued Israeli control over large parts of the West Bank, is not a reasonable possibility.

Withdrawal from the Philidelphi route will allow wide scale weapons smuggling and attacks on Israeli settlements inside the Green Line. Israel will have no choice other than to respond with increasing force, and to consider reoccupation of the Gaza strip. The need to provide for the civilian population, and at the same time confront terrorism, will bring an Israeli military and civilian presence back to the strip.

Implementation of settlement strategy – annexation to Israel of metropolitan Jerusalem and the Ariel bloc – will require coordination with the United States, with a package deal at its center: a significant additional withdrawal from territories of the West Bank in return for reinforcement of the settlements. The Palestinians and the states of Europe will oppose this, and launch a sharp diplomatic attack on Israel and the United States, including petitions to the International Court of Justice at the Hague. The strength of terrorist and Islamic opposition organizations in Arab countries will increase. Due to her sensitivity to criticism and concern about terrorism, the United States will oppose any new Israeli settlement plan in the

settlement blocs which is unaccompanied by progress toward a permanent status agreement. Under these conditions, Israel will have a difficult time attaining American support for the new settlement strategy, especially for the plans regarding Jerusalem. Implementation of the settlement blocs plan despite U.S. opposition is liable to deteriorate the relations between the two countries.

In light of the difficulties during unilateral disengagement, Israel will signal her willingness to advance according to the road map, but will indicate the weakness of the Palestinian Authority and its inability to take responsibility for the evacuated areas. As a solution to this problem, Israel is likely to reconsider her positions regarding international involvement, including Egyptian involvement in the PA territories. Such international involvement will assist the PA in advancing political, economic, and security reforms, and thus allow the renewal of negotiation between the parties.

According to this scenario, IDF forces will withdraw from the Philadelphi route, as a result of Egyptian involvement and in coordination with an international force, and the border crossings between the strip and Israel will be closed. The Palestinians' main border crossing will be into Egypt, and Egypt will assume greater responsibility for the border crossing, especially in regards to smuggling of weapons. Egypt, concerned about the strengthening of Hamas, who is but an offspring of "The Muslim Brotherhood", will act to moderate Hamas' strength, even if that involves a clash with that organization. At the same time, Egypt will act to calm the situation and improve economic conditions in the Gaza Strip. International involvement in Palestine will allow political and economic restoration. The fence will become a sort of ceasefire line, and on its eastern side, the Palestinian system will be rebuilt in a way which will allow the rehabilitation of relations and the continuation of the peace process in the future.

The negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority will reconvene under international brokerage, when the terrorist organizations are disbanded (or integrated into the government), the governmental system is stabilized, and economic conditions are improved. Disengagement from the Gaza Strip, through Israel-PA dialogue, will be a part of an interim agreement, and will express both sides' effort to progress to the second stage of the road map, and ultimately implement the inevitable two state solution.

This gradual progress, mainly the transition from disengagement to resolution of the conflict and formulation of a permanent status agreement, involves domestic change

in Israeli and Palestinian policy. It shows the rise of the pragmatic camp in the PA, and Israel's good relations with that camp's leaders. Palestinian willingness to assume security responsibility in A area and B area is likely to lead to Israeli-Palestinian dialogue regarding post-disengagement stages.

Dialogue will reinforce the PA's status *vis a vis* militant factions, and allow it to rule the Gaza Strip, apparently in coordination with Hamas. In this case, the creation of a PA-Hamas common control mechanism in the Gaza Strip is expected. The experience of participation in government is likely to reinforce pragmatic factions in Hamas, as occurred in the Irish Republican Army since it entered negotiations in Northern Ireland. The PA will contend that it is fulfilling its obligation to prevent terrorism, in a pragmatic and wise way. Instead of civil war which might lead to political collapse, the PA will integrate the militant camp within it, while moderating terrorism.

According to this scenario, a mini-Palestinian state, controlling the international border, will be created. This will likely be a precedent and lead to Palestinian demands for full control over the crossings on the Jordanian border. Stabilization of the situation inside the PA, including political, economic, and security reforms, will heighten the pressure on Israel, requiring her to progress from coordinated disengagement to the next step on the road map, and ultimately to the implementation of President Bush's vision – two states for two peoples – a vision supported by the other Quartet members.

According to this scenario, those circles supporting action limited to disengagement, out of a hope that such a step will remove international pressure, are nearsighted. Ultimately, they will not be able to resist the international pressure and the positive developments in the PA, without provoking the opposition of the rest of the world.

The success of the disengagement plan requires a process of moderation of the conflict, and transition to the final status agreement.¹⁶ The inevitable result will be an internationally legitimate two state solution.

¹⁶ Brom Shlomo. 2004. "The Disengagement Plan: Political and Security Ramifications". *Strategic Assessment*, Vol. 7 (2): 1-9.

The Scenario of the Greater Land of Israel: “Suicidal State”

According to this scenario, the disengagement plan will be halted, or only partially implemented, for the following reasons:

Opposition of the settlers in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza strip – some of them, especially the ideological core, are likely to take drastic action against the evacuation, including rebellion and violent struggle against the evacuating forces. Extremist groups are liable to take most drastic action, including political assassination. These steps will express the deep crisis into which religious Zionism, and Israeli society as a whole, has fallen.

Toppling the Government – the right wing parties’ political support of the settlers, especially that of the National Unity (“Ha’Ichud Ha’Leumi”) party, the National Religious Party (NRP or Mafdal), and part of the Likud party, will reinforce opposition to the evacuation. At a later stage, additional circles in the Likud and Shas will join this opposition, and they will together topple the government, during preparations for the disengagement plan or during stages of evacuation.

Terrorist Activity – increase in terrorist activity, resulting from the disengagement plan, is likely to shuffle the deck for the Government of Israel. Hamas and the Islamic Jihad will accumulate great power and support as a result of their continuing struggle. They will claim that the evacuation is a result of their uncompromising struggle, according to the Hizbollah model, and that the Palestinians must continue their struggle until the full liberation of the holy land. Terrorist activity is likely to be supported by rogue states such as Iran and Syria. A severe attack inside Israel is liable to harden the opposition to any concessions.

Due to growing opposition to the disengagement move, threats to the stability of the government, and increasing terrorism, the government is likely to decide on the preservation of the *status quo*, as future domestic costs of the disengagement will be seen as higher than the expected benefits in the diplomatic arena.

As the clock winds down, the cognizance is growing among supporters of the Greater Land of Israel that the chances of obstructing the disengagement plan are getting smaller and smaller, and that only a miracle can save the settlers in the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria. In this light, the “Suicidal State” scenario warns against what is expected if the disengagement plan is implemented nonetheless. In such a case, the State of Israel is expected to face real dangers: the evacuation plan will

show weakness, damage national security, and bring the terrorism inside the country.¹⁷ The disengagement will be the prologue to continuing withdrawal from territory and from demographic principles. Uprooting of the settlements and unilateral withdrawal will blow wind into the sails of terrorism. The Hizbollah model will become the Gaza model; the Gaza model will become the model for uprising and struggle in the West Bank; and the uprising in the West Bank will become the model for an uprising of the Arabs in Israel. As a result of the disengagement, terrorism will reach Israel's population centers, which will by then be threatened by Palestinian missiles. This scenario also warns against international involvement, upon which the Necessity of Separation and Two State Solution approaches rely.

The assumption that Egyptian presence in the Gaza strip will lead to reduction in terrorism, will also be disproved. Egyptian control over the border crossings will allow wide scale smuggling of weapons into the Gaza Strip, which will endanger Israeli towns.

Egypt, whose relations with Israel run from cold peace to cold war, will continue, as she did in the past, to ignore smuggling of weapons, and will see any Israeli intervention in the Gaza Strip after the withdrawal as intervention in her internal affairs. It might also be that the terrorist organizations will attack Israel from the Gaza Strip, and an Israeli response will meet a severe response from the Egyptian security forces deployed there. As a result, the relations between the two states will deteriorate, indicating a return to the border battles of the 1950's. Another possibility is extended international involvement, which will moderate the terrorist activity, but not succeed in bringing about an agreement or the end of the conflict. The hostility between the two parties will remain unchanged. Combat activities will not be renewed as long as international forces remain in the area, but will break out once again as soon as they leave. Such a situation seems to exist in Kosovo: as long as international forces are present in the area, the hostilities are not renewed; but they will break out once again as soon as they leave, since there has been no true reconciliation between the two parties.

¹⁷ Parts of this scenario were compiled with inspiration from information published by "Minhelet ha'Hitchabrut" ("The Connection Authority"), which defines itself as an apolitical umbrella organization, coordinating between groups and figures working to advance Israeli, Zionist, and Jewish values.

If the international involvement scenario is indeed played out, Israel will confront most difficult situations, which are understated by the left wing. An international force will have difficulty confronting terrorists, who will continue their anti-Israel activity under the umbrella of international forces. Israel will lose her freedom to respond to terrorist attacks. The international pressure on Israel for further concessions will increase, according to the argument that only return to '67 borders, solution to the refugee problem, and cleaning of the deeper causes of the conflict, will bring the conflict to an end.

The disengagement will lead to an extremist Islamic takeover of the Gaza and north Samaria territories, and allow Hizbollah to operate in the heart of Israel. The continuation of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Authority is also liable to reinforce nationalistic and Islamist sentiment among Israeli Arabs, and encourage demonstrations and violent acts of opposition. Severe inequality, and the growing intensity of the geopolitical conflict, will galvanize Israeli Arabs to rise up against the state. This galvanization is likely to reinforce the Arab demand for a bi-national state or a "state of all its citizens". Conversely, the idea of transfer of Arab towns from Israel to the PA will receive growing support. In any case, it will be more difficult to please the Israeli Arabs than the Palestinians outside of Israel, since in addition to all the points of conflict with the latter, the dispute with the former also involves issues regarding the character of the state and the role of its Arab citizens.

Contrary to the opinion of supporters of the Necessity of Separation and Two State Solution approaches, Greater Land of Israel supporters believe that the result of disengagement from the Gaza Strip will be reinforcement of the militant Islamist camp, which adheres to the destruction of the State of Israel. Hamas and Hizbollah flags in evacuated Jewish Gaza Strip settlements will whip up excitement among international terrorists, and prove that Israel understands only the language of force. What began as a unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon, and continued in a unilateral disengagement from Gaza, will be interpreted as a victory for the policy of force and terrorism. According to this scenario, terrorist organizations will claim that the day is not far, when the West Bank and the Galilee too will be liberated by way of struggle and combat. Those fearing for the fate of the State of Israel, and struggling for her future, see unilateral disengagement as her suicide.

The Bi-National State Scenario: “The Post-Zionist Vision”

According to this scenario, the disengagement plan will fail, due to opposition from within and without. The conflict between Israel and Palestine is a complex and unsolvable ethno-national conflict, involving religious, national, social, cultural, and territorial aspects. Complex conflicts like these tend to alternately break out and die down, but not disappear. The settlers, who do not see themselves as subject to the laws of the state, will first act democratically to frustrate state decisions, but if those should fail, they will turn to the path of struggle and break its laws.

According to the bi-national state scenario, a Palestinian state has no chance to exist as an independent state in the borders left to it by the Jewish settlement beyond the Green line. Jewish settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip created an irreversible situation, which cannot be undone by decisions of the state. The Jewish settlements sit on the water sources and occupy the Palestinians’ agricultural land. The separation fence is constructed partly on occupied Palestinian territory, in order to annex additional agricultural lands to Israel, yet leave as many Palestinians as possible beyond it. Under these conditions, the chances for the creation of a viable Palestinian state are non-existent. There are already many Palestinians who understand that there is no chance of implementing the national project by way of a two state solution, and they are willing to return to the old vision of one secular state between the Mediterranean sea and the Jordan river.¹⁸

Among Israelis as well, there are those who understand that the creation of a bi-national state in the future is inevitable. This is not a good or desirable way out; quite the contrary, many believe that a Jewish and democratic nation-state is preferable, but that the settlements do not allow a return to a pre-1967 model. Under the conditions which have developed, many Palestinians and Jews are beginning to understand that there is room for only one state between the sea and the river; one that will be a post-nationalist secular state. During the first stage, it will be an apartheid state of equals and less-than-equals. However, as time progresses, along with the continued growth of the Palestinian population and the granting of the right to vote, the Jewish population will become a minority in the new state, which will become a bi-national and democratic state. In these circumstances, Israel’s disengagement from the Gaza Strip, whether unilateral or coordinated, will not

¹⁸ Tarazi Michael. 20 October 2004. “One State, One Reserve”. *Haaretz*, daily newspaper.

make any difference. At the end of the day, after vicissitudes, conferences, meetings, and declarations, the reality – two communities intermingled and tangled amongst themselves – will remain unchanged; and there will be no choice other than to consider, as necessarily determined by the settlement reality, the establishment of a bi-national state.

Signs Indicating the Realizations of the Scenarios

Adherents to the various geopolitical approaches are able to point out different signs which indicate the realization of their own scenario.

The Necessity of Separation - Necessity of Separation devotees are able to point to the wisdom which characterizes their approach. The evidence is substantial: the construction of the separation fence, which is a part of the disengagement plan, has brought a steep decline in terrorist attacks. That means that in this low intensity conflict, solutions can be found, and security maintained, even without peace, if only the suitable steps are taken. Management of the conflict through separation without a peace treaty has already led to a number of impressive international gains, the most important of which is U.S. President George W. Bush's letter of guarantees. This letter contains recognition of the demographic-geographic reality of Jewish settlement blocs beyond the Green line, which means recognition of no return to '67 borders. Furthermore, the letter contains recognition of the principle - acceptable to Israel - that the solution to the refugee problem must be found within the boundaries of the Palestinian state, and grants legitimacy to Israel's fight against terrorism. Adherents to this approach can also point to the international legitimacy granted to the disengagement plan at the G-8 conference in October 2004, and to wide support in the Israeli public for the disengagement move. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's high popularity, and the formation of a unity government including the Likud and the Labor Party allow him to implement the disengagement plan, which is a manifestation of the Necessity of Separation approach.

Two State Solution (“Two States for Two Peoples”): devotees of the Two State Solution approach are able to support their scenario with bountiful evidence. They can take hold of the words of former Head of the Office of the Prime Minister and current foreign policy special envoy Dov Weisglass, who stated that the purpose of

the disengagement move is “to put the Palestinian problem in formaldehyde”.¹⁹ This statement, according to supporters of the two state solution, testifies to the fact that the Prime Minister did not seriously intend to solve the problem, and that he has no intention of reaching a true resolution of the Palestinian problem. The continued settlement expansion trend, non-evacuation of outposts, and plans for construction in the strip connecting Ma’aleh Adumim to Jerusalem, all reveal the true trend: annexing large parts of the West Bank, and obstructing the possibility of establishing a viable Palestinian state.

The international community does not resign itself to the annexation trends. This is visible in the international response to Israel’s intention to build the separation fence deep inside Palestinian territory and to her attempt to apply the *Absentee Property Law* to East Jerusalem. The judgment of the International Court of Justice at the Hague regarding the fence, and the U.S. pressure on Israel after the decision to apply the *Absentee Property Law*, reinforce the two state solution scenario: the international community indeed condemns Israel for these activities. At the same time, the international community is increasing its involvement in the conflict, in order to advance a comprehensive settlement.

The death of Yasser Arafat, who was the biggest obstacle on the path to peace, and the democratic election of Mahmud Abbas, who has declared his commitment to peaceful coexistence, will make progress toward a permanent status agreement easier. Abbas’ comments about “the Zionist enemy”, his expressions of support of the heroes fighting against Israel, and his calls for realization of the right of return, are only tactical rhetoric, intended to placate the masses. In reality, Mahmud Abbas has proven that he is a pragmatic and level-headed leader, as shown by the deployment of Palestinian security forces to stop terrorist attacks, and by his policy of integration of Hamas in the government - support for which can be found in Hamas.²⁰ Recognition of Abbas as a moderate leader can be seen in the increase of international interest in the conflict, and in the many visits of heads of state. Under

¹⁹ See Dov Weisglass’ interview with Ari Shavit, “The Middle East Blah Blah, With Nothing Behind the Talking”, *Haaretz* magazine, October 8, 2004.

²⁰ A sympathetic stance toward integration of Hamas into the government was expressed by Ismail Hania, one of the important leaders of Hamas in Gaza. According to him, collective leadership is an imperative today, and Hamas will not allow chaos in the Gaza Strip after Israel’s withdrawal. See www.palestine-info.co. *Hamas’s eyes on post-Arafat era*, Nov 1, 2004.

these conditions, there is growing pressure on Israel to keep moving forward after the disengagement from the Gaza Strip, to integrate the disengagement in the road map, and to progress to a comprehensive settlement leading to a two state solution.

The Greater Land of Israel: Greater Land of Israel supporters point out various clues and signs that disengagement plan will not bring about the results its champions so long for. Most of the Palestinian population (approximately two thirds) interpret the withdrawal plan as a victory for the military struggle against the Israeli occupation.²¹ Data also indicates growing involvement of Iran and Hizbollah in assistance to terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and in continued terrorist activity and smuggling of weapons into the Gaza Strip. Egypt, argue supporters of this approach as well as security-minded people, ignores smuggling of weapons, yet talks about strengthening ties. The President of the PA is a weak figure who prefers not to confront militant Islamic groups, and would rather negotiate with them, and integrate them into the government, while turning a blind eye toward the continuing fostering of the terrorist infrastructure. The temporary ceasefire agreement (tahadiye) achieved in Cairo with the Palestinian organizations who do not recognize Israel, instead of the long term ceasefire (hudna) he strived for, is evidence of the PA President's limited maneuvering ability.

Without desire or ability on the part of the PA to disarm the terrorist infrastructure, the terrorist acts continue, and will rekindle the conflict. IDF forces have no choice but to enter PA territory at times as a response to terrorist attacks, and act against terrorists. Under such conditions, what reason is there to evacuate? General Security Service head Avi Dichter's warning that withdrawal from the Philadelphi route will bring about large scale smuggling of weapons and create a real danger for towns in the south of the country, proves that there is no avoiding the need to control the Gaza Strip, or at least its periphery. Under such conditions, separation will not be attained. The opposite will occur: Israel will need to maintain a permanent presence in the wild frontier areas beyond the border, and thus realize – against her will – the vision of the Greater Land of Israel.

Bi-National State: Bi-National State approach devotees argue that despite the rhetoric of evacuation of settlements, the reality on the ground is the opposite. Expansion of settlements and outposts continues *de facto*, and reinforcement of the

²¹ See PSR - Survey Research Unit: Public Opinion Poll #11.
www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2004/p11a.html

settlements in the West Bank is noticeable. The construction of the separation fence through annexation of territory also strengthens the Jewish settlements in the territories. U.S. President George W. Bush's letter of guarantees regarding recognition of demographic facts on the ground means permission to annex large settlement blocs to Israel. This will chop the PA up into tiny unviable cantons, intensify dependence on Israel, and ultimately lead to the establishment of a bi-national state.

The scenarios show the importance of one's geopolitical approach in interpreting the upcoming political moves and their ramifications. The various political attitudes do not allow the facts to confuse them, and each one interprets reality in a way which justifies its worldview, through selective vision and tendentious interpretation. Thus, for example, one approach sees a Palestinian leader's belligerent declarations as signaling continued terrorism, where another sees them as tactical statements intended to serve internal needs, especially in order to win the masses over to the peace process. The psycho-political scheme paints reality with the colors it is comfortable with, and does not accept conclusions liable to undermine it. A rational approach means openness and paying attention to contradictory opinions, and, as a result, change of opinion; but the various described geopolitical approaches limit this possibility, and allow only bounded rationality, which, at most, undermines the edges of the approach.

3 DOMESTIC POLICY ACCORDING TO THE FOUR APPROACHES: TWO COALITIONS

Good foreign policy decisions need domestic support. Without a supportive home front, advance on the foreign policy front is not possible. The Israeli home front is made up of four groups, each with its own distinct geopolitical approach. These groups are likely to create two political coalitions, which will shape Israel's foreign policy: the Borders Coalition, which believes in regional contraction to the borders, and the Frontier Coalition, which supports continued regional presence beyond the borders, for security, national, and religious reasons.

The Borders Coalition: Regional Contraction

The internal dynamic, which began with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's announcement of the disengagement plan, has created a coalition between right wingers in the Likud party who accept the necessity of separation and left wingers in the Labor Party who support the two state solution approach. This coalition is externally supported by opposition parties Shinui and Yachad. Supporters of the Necessity of Separation need support in order to implement the disengagement plan. Two State Solution devotees believe that political developments will turn the security fence (yearned for by Necessity of Separation devotees) into a ceasefire line, an armistice line, and, ultimately, into an international border (Two State Solution devotees' hearts' desire).

The Frontier Coalition: Regional Presence

This coalition is composed of security figures, right wingers, NRP (“Mafdal”) circles, and supporters of the Greater Land of Israel. The common denominator of these coalition formers is the view that evacuated regions are to be seen as a wild and dangerous frontier, and therefore that all must be done to oppose and obstruct the disengagement plan, in its proposed format. A frontier area beyond the border is characterized by a lack of rule of law, and by the threatening potential of strategic terrorism. Stabilization of the area requires preemptive steps, including civilian and military presence inside the frontier. This coalition is made up of the right wing parties: National Unity (“Ha’Ichud Ha’Leumi”) and NRP (“Mafdal”). It receives support from a group of Likud Knesset Members who oppose the Prime Minister’s disengagement plan, and also direct and indirect support of security figures who warn against transfer of territory to the PA before the terrorist infrastructure has been disbanded.

Will it be Possible to Bridge the Gap between the Two Coalitions as the Disengagement Approaches?

The data shows that a majority of the public, 65 percent, supports the disengagement plan. However, a significant group – about 30 percent of the public – opposes the plan and believes that the existing presence should be maintained.²² The question which arises is: will it be possible to bridge the gap between these two coalitions, as the evacuation approaches? The answer can be outlined in two major scenarios: one assuming that the gap cannot be bridged, and another – that it can.

The Gap Cannot be Bridged

If the gap between the two coalitions cannot be bridged, a deep schism and severe crisis will develop. If the plan is not implemented, a large part of the public will feel frustration, rage, and bitterness that a minority has succeeded in forcing its opinion

²² See *Joint Palestinian-Israeli Press Release*. 16 March 2005.
www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2005/p15ejoint.html

on the disengagement supporting majority. This part of the public will receive the understanding and support of the international community, which will condemn the Israeli government's breaking of its promises.

If the government moves to implement the plan, a severe struggle regarding evacuation of settlements will develop, due to the refusal of some of the settlers to obey the law and democratic norms. The ramifications of insubordination are likely to create a deep legitimacy crisis, to undermine the rule of law and the foundations of democracy along with it, and to lead to societal crumbling. Under these conditions, a danger of civil war even exists.

The Gap between the Coalitions is Bridgeable

If it will be possible to bridge the gap between the two coalitions, then it will be possible to reach agreements which will increase the advantages for both coalitions, and reduce both of their risks. It will thus be possible to create legitimacy for political moves and to avoid domestic social crisis. At the present time, it seems that there can certainly be dialogue with responsible circles among disengagement opponents. Disengagement supporters must consider not only what the world will say, but also what will be said within the country. Although the majority supports the disengagement, almost half of the population sees the settlers as an idealistic group, and most support the idea of a referendum. Under these conditions, there is increasing importance to dialogue, calming, and presentation of plans of action which are considerate of concerns, including the concern of an increase in terror. Openness and empathy toward the settlers will allow agreements with those settlers who are motivated by considerations of the welfare and security of the state. It will be more difficult to reach agreement with those who see the disengagement as the halting of the process of divine redemption.

And what will Happen After the Disengagement?

The question "what will happen after the disengagement?" is based on the assumption that the Borders Coalition, which supports regional contraction, will implement the disengagement plan. As this essay is being written, that assumption

is being held to the test. It may shatter against the Frontier Coalition, but it is more reasonable to assume that the disengagement will occur, and as a result, the internal tension within each of the two coalitions, and that between them, will increase. The jolt to Israeli society, resulting from the disengagement and from demands for further withdrawal, will be even stronger than that indicated at the time of writing. Key factors in the developments in post-disengagement Israel will be the Palestinian Authority's strength, the Borders Coalition's power within Israel, and the level of international involvement.

A Strong Palestinian Authority

The domestic front will be affected by the external front, especially by the Palestinian Authority's will and ability to impose its authority upon militant circles and allow progress toward implementation of the next stage on the road map. If the PA succeeds in imposing its authority upon the terrorist organizations, whether by integrating them into government or by disarming them, it will be difficult for Israel to avoid progressing toward the next step of negotiations, including discussion of borders, Jerusalem, and the refugee problem.

Palestinian Authority representatives will contend that if Israel is interested in stabilizing the situation, and in security for her citizens, she must assist in reinforcing the status of the PA. In other words, Israel must show willingness for fast progress - according to the road map plan - toward reaching a permanent status arrangement, and to show goodwill, through gestures and easements. If Israel does not do so, the PA will be seen, in the Palestinian public, as collaborating with Israel and allowing her to enjoy quiet without paying any price for it. Such a position on the part of the PA will likely earn it international encouragement and support, and rouse sympathy even in certain circles in Israel. In such a situation, intense international pressure will be put on Israel to continue negotiations with the PA according to the road map outline, and to progress toward a permanent status agreement which will lead to a two state solution.

A Weak Palestinian Authority

If the Palestinian Authority shows weakness and helplessness toward the terrorist organizations, the approach supporting unilateral action will persist. Israel will contend that following her unilateral withdrawal, the PA must prove similar persistent commitment in unilateral confrontation with the terrorist organizations and with those in the Fatah movement who challenge the elected government. Further, the PA will need to advance political, security, and economic reforms. Israel will argue that until the PA attains control, it will not be possible to advance to the next stage on the road map. Further terrorist activity will reinforce Israel's demand, which will likely be received with international sympathy, especially on the part of the US. Further terrorist activity will assist in preserving the Borders Coalition and in ensuring unilateral continuation of the process.

Intermediate Situation: a Weak Palestinian Authority Feigning Strength

An intermediate situation might arise, with a weak Palestinian Authority and continuation of low intensity terrorist activity. The PA will claim that it has done all it can to decrease terrorism, through dialogue, agreements, and integration of organizations' representatives in government, but that under continued occupation, Israeli control in Jerusalem, and lack of a solution to the refugee problem, not much more can be done. Any attempt to disarm Hamas and the Islamic Jihad will be viewed as surrender and collaboration with the Israeli occupier. In these circumstances, the burden of proof of goodwill and willingness to progress toward an arrangement will be cast upon Israel. Israel will need to reveal willingness to progress toward the next stages on the road map, to withdraw from the West Bank, and to allow progress toward a permanent status agreement. Only such progress can, in the PA's opinion, tranquilize the situation and allow an absolute cease of hostilities. It is reasonable to assume that the states of Europe will support the PA. The big question will be, how the U.S. will act.

Israel will respond, that as long as terrorism against her citizens continues and the PA refuses to directly confront the terrorist organizations, she cannot abandon her citizens' security needs, perform additional withdrawals, or progress towards the next steps on the road map. Further, Israel will blame the PA, claiming that its helplessness toward the terrorist organizations allows them to continue arming for

the renewal of combat. Each side will blame the other of helplessness, and cast the responsibility for the political impasse on the other. In such a situation, both sides will be trapped on a road with no exits, leading only to continued combat. International intervention will depend upon the will and ability of international players to reach understandings regarding the desired arrangement.

How will Potential Developments in the Palestinian Authority Affect Israeli Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy?

Continuation of Unilateral Separation

A weak Palestinian Authority and the continuation of terrorism will allow the continued existence of the Borders Coalition. This coalition will continue in unilateral activity, side by side with continued war against terrorism. It will work to complete the security fence and initiate activity beyond it, in order to fight terrorism, against which the PA is seemingly helpless. The continued combat and the deterioration of the economic situation in the PA will reinforce the voices calling for international involvement. Under these conditions, Israel is likely to encourage international involvement, in order to rebuild the regime in the PA. International involvement could take on various directions: either reinforcement of the ties between the West Bank and Gaza Strip and Jordan and Egypt, or a “protectorate regime” advancing political, security, and economic reforms.

What will happen if there is a strong Palestinian Authority confronting terrorism; or, in an intermediate situation in which the PA is interested in advancing political negotiations, although it has not eliminated terrorism, what will happen if it receives international support for that position? Will Borders Coalition members react in a unified way, or might there be a split in the coalition? Two scenarios on this subject can be presented: a split of the Borders Coalition leading to political stalemate, which will, in turn, lead to a rekindling of the conflict or to international intervention; or continued existence of the Borders Coalition, and progress toward a permanent status agreement.

The Bi-National State

A weak Palestinian Authority and a weak Borders Coalition will allow the realization of the Bi-National State scenario. According to this scenario, the PA will be found in an intermediate position: externally, it will condemn terrorism, but will have difficulty, *de facto*, in controlling it. Simultaneously, the PA will continue its demand to return to the road map and to progress toward a permanent status agreement. The PA's demands and reasoning will be received with international sympathy and support, especially on the part of European states. Within the Borders Coalition, an internal schism will occur: part of it will oppose withdrawal from areas essential in terms of security, and from sites of symbolic and religious meaning; whereas other Borders Coalition members will show understanding toward the PA's claims, and contend that entering negotiations on the permanent status agreement is exactly what will strengthen the PA in its struggle against terrorism. As a result, the Borders Coalition will split into its two main components: on the one hand, supporters of separation without progress toward a final status agreement, and on the other, those supporting progress from separation toward a two state solution. The opponents of continuation of the process will join up with the Frontier Coalition, which opposed the disengagement plan from the start. Moderates in the Likud will join up with the Labor Party, and they will create a new party whose objective is contraction to agreed-upon international borders, through implementation of a two state solution.

The balance of power is not clear; it may well be that the Frontier Coalition will actually succeed in rallying political support, especially if the Palestinian authority is weak, and in gaining international support. According to this scenario, the central struggle over the character of the state will take place in the period following disengagement. Violent opposition by settlers to the disengagement plan – a plan which most of the population supports - will likely stain their name and strengthen the Borders Coalition. However, moderate and convincing opposition on the part of a pained and law abiding group, evacuating despite its opposition, is likely to win them the recognition and support of additional parts of the public, and help the Frontier Coalition in the second and more important stage of the struggle: the stage in which the borders of the State of Israel will be determined.

A split of the Borders Coalition, confronted by a pragmatic and moderate Palestinian Authority, will, *prima facie*, subject Israel to increasing international pressure. Israel will be called upon to advance on the road map path, but the

government will encounter difficulty rallying domestic political support for the continuation of the process. The result will be a deepening crisis in relations with the international community, the possibility of sanctions against Israel, and deployment of international forces to the seamline areas, in order to put pressure on Israel. The Israeli domestic struggle over the character of the state will intensify, and, against the background of the increasing pressure, the Borders Coalition is likely to consolidate into a new format, and make a move into negotiations toward a permanent status agreement under international brokerage. Under these conditions, the road toward the permanent status agreement will be paved with crises. The arrangements formulated by international forces will be supported in Israel and in the PA by weak political coalitions. The agreements signed will be implemented only as a result of international pressure, and will be preserved only as long as international forces supervise them. It is likely that forces on both sides opposing the process will renew the hostilities. The unavoidable result will be the continuation of territorial-cum-communal entanglement, subsequently leading to a Bi-National State

Two State Solution

According to this scenario, a strong Borders Coalition will form as a result of the success of the disengagement, the consolidation of a strong Palestinian Authority, and international support for the continuation of the political process according to the road map outline. The members of the coalition, regardless of party membership, will lend a hand to advance the peace process, understanding that in terms of domestic politics, an historical opportunity to make painful internal changes in the settlement layout since '67 has been made possible. During this process, the Necessity of Separation approach will be abandoned for the Two State Solution approach, and members of the coalition will realize that the Necessity of Separation was only one rung of the ladder. In retrospect, it will appear that the disengagement plan was of decisive importance in creating a new political dynamic.

The power of the coalition will allow it to confront the serious opposition expected on the part of the settlers, and to determine the permanent borders of the State of Israel. During the process, which will be gradual, Israel and the Palestinian Authority will make the transition from unilateral separation to agreed temporary lines, and, later – to permanent borders. This is an optimistic scenario, which

follows the outline of the roadmap. It assumes a strong PA, a political coalition in Israel supporting continued withdrawal and contraction to the border, marginalization of opponents of the process in Israel and the PA, and stable and coordinated international support throughout the entire process. Destabilization of any one assumption in this system of assumptions is liable to cast Israel and the PA into the whirlwinds and struggles described in the previous scenarios.

Israel's Future will be Determined After the Disengagement

The various “day after” scenarios see the meaning of the disengagement differently. In the scenario of a weak Palestinian Authority alongside the Borders Coalition persistence, the disengagement appears as a traumatic but insignificant historical event. However, in the other two scenarios – a strong PA and a split of the Borders Coalition, or a strong PA and a strong Borders Coalition – the disengagement appears as a founding event, which will result in a substantial transformation of Israel's relations with the PA, with her neighbors, and with other international players.

It is clear from the other two scenarios that following the disengagement, the question of the character of the State of Israel will arise in full force. Only in the post-disengagement stage will the real and deep struggle over the character of the State of Israel begin: will she be a state living within agreed upon international borders? A borderless state realizing the vision of the Greater Land of Israel? The scenarios show that the key to progress in foreign policy is in the hands of domestic politics. A strong Palestinian regime and a tight Israeli Borders Coalition are the key to progress in the peace process in the region.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

A survey of the geopolitical foreign policy approaches, and of the domestic policy coalition building possibilities, allows a mapping out of the variety of options available to decision makers in Israel. Decision making in light of these options is not easy, and must ensure rational decisions which will serve the national interest.

How can a rational process of decision making be ensured? Such a rational process means the willingness to listen to critical arguments, and learn from experience.²³ In the present context, the meaning of a rational decision making process is listening to different geopolitical approaches, openly and considering that they may contain some truth; and being able to cast doubt upon an accepted approach.²⁴

It would be worthwhile for decision makers, who confront the geopolitical foreign policy approaches and the possible domestic policy scenarios, to examine themselves by answering a few questions. A few questions for self examination follow:

1. Which ideas, of all the geopolitical approaches described above, should be considered in shaping foreign policy and the national security system?
2. What are the values guiding the decision maker, and those who disagree with him, regarding foreign policy? (A decision maker must be aware not

²³ Popper Karl. 2003. *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. Translation by Aharon Amir. Jerusalem: Shalem Publishing, p. 428.

²⁴ Stanley A. Renshon and Deborah Welch Larson (Eds.). 2003. *Good Judgment in Foreign Policy: Theory and Application*. Lanham and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield.

only of his own values, but also of the values of those who hold different opinions, and of the way they shape their world view).

3. What should be done in the area of foreign policy, in order to deal most effectively and efficiently with the challenges presented by such policy?
4. What should be done in the area of domestic policy, in order to advance harmony between different value-based views, and to bridge the gap between geopolitical approaches?

The Criteria for Formulating Positions

In confronting these questions, the decision maker should formulate a geopolitical option creating the optimal fit between Israel's security needs on the one hand, and the external challenges and internal difficulties on the other.

A number of criteria may guide the formulation of that option.

1. **A Jewish State:** the geopolitical option must ensure the State of Israel's continued existence as the state of the Jewish people; a state in which members of the Jewish people exercise their right of self determination as recognized in international law, establish a refuge for that hounded people, and realize its historical aspirations.
2. **A Democratic State:** the geopolitical option must ensure the State of Israel's existence as a democratic state, in which all residents have the right to vote and be elected, the rule of law and separation of powers are maintained, and human rights are protected.
3. **Security:** the borders necessitated by the geopolitical option, and the activity of the army in the framework of such borders, must provide maximal security to the residents of the state.
4. **Peace with the Neighbors:** Implementation of the geopolitical option must allow establishment of peaceful relation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and, as a result, open the door to peace with the other Arab and Muslim states.
5. **International Support:** implementation of the geopolitical option must ensure international support for Israel.
6. **Internal Solidarity:** implementation of the geopolitical option must gain legitimacy amongst a majority of the population in Israel and reinforce domestic consensus.

More than a few contradictions arise between the criteria we have mentioned. Decision makers must be creative in confronting the difficulties arising from the contradictions. It is possible to balance between different criteria, while maintaining the principle of proportionality, which is a guiding principle of much value.

Contraction to the Border and Stabilization of the Frontier

On the basis of the mentioned criteria, more rational geopolitical option can be formulated: contraction to the border and stabilization of the frontier. A presentation of the main outline of such an option follows.

- **Contraction to the borders:** the recommendation to contract to the border lines derives from an examination of reality, according to the following criteria: the existence of a Jewish state, the existence of a democratic state, ensuring security, and the rallying of international support. This recommendation can be supported by insights arising from the analysis and scenarios of the Necessity of Separation and Two State Solution approaches, and, negatively – also from the Bi-National State scenario. The common ground of the Necessity of Separation approach and the Two State Solution approach is that during the first stage, there will be a unilateral contraction to the border, which, at most, will be coordinated with the other side. The result will be partial demographic separation, shortening the security lines, and demonstration of a willingness to withdraw from territory. As long as there is no Palestinian partner able to ensure security, there should be no negotiation on agreed-upon borders or on the other disputed issues such as Jerusalem, refugees, and evacuation of additional settlements. Further contraction, alongside entrance into negotiation with the Palestinian side, is mainly based on the Two State Solution approach, assuming that there is a strong regime on the other side, able to control the terrorist organizations and guarantee the implementation of the agreements. Ignoring these two approaches is liable to lead Israel to bi-national statehood.
- **Stabilization of the frontier:** stabilization of the frontier – the areas from which Israel will withdraw – is based on the criteria of security, rallying international support, and attaining domestic solidarity. This recommendation can be supported by ideas taken from the Greater Land of Israel and Two

State Solution approaches. Stabilization of the frontier is based on the assumption that Israel cannot leave the Gaza Strip and assume that things will take care of themselves after the withdrawal, as certain security and nationalist circles warn. Israel must stabilize the areas from which she is to withdraw, prior to withdrawal and through negotiation with potential partners in the international community. Disorderly withdrawal is liable to lead to a takeover by extremists, who will endanger not only Israel, but also the stability of the entire region. Israel must take into consideration the possibility that the international community, aware of the expected dangers, will intervene in the activity of the Palestinian Authority without coordination with Israel. For these reasons, it is preferable for Israel to initiate international involvement in stabilization of the frontier, and to participate in the formulation of the parameters of such involvement. Adopting this approach will allow Israel to attain deterrence and a high level of security, as a result of contraction to the borders and of international community involvement. Maintenance of security in the areas of withdrawal will reinforce domestic solidarity and damage the status of those who opposed the disengagement.

- **From Unilateralism to Multilateralism:** the transition from unilateral action to multilateral action is based on the criteria of ensuring international support and the consolidation of the peace process. This recommendation can be supported by ideas belonging to the Two State Solution approach. According to the criteria and insights found in this approach, the transition to multilateralism should be the product of an Israeli initiative, striving toward negotiation including international players, especially the U.S. and the European Union. These players can get involved, assisting in the restoration of the Palestinian Authority in the areas of withdrawal, and stabilizing the security in the area. The chances of success for a multilateral approach rose with the death of Yasser Arafat, due to the new possibility for coordination between Israel and the PA. Thus the disengagement will transform from a unilateral move into a coordinated move, in which various participants take part.
- **Advancement of international involvement is conditional upon improvement of the political relations between Israel and the states of Europe.** Improvement of political relations with Europe, and increase of European involvement in the conflict, must be approached very carefully: Israel must take into account U.S.-E.U. tension, the internal schisms within the E.U., the

traditional European sympathy for the Palestinian cause, and the rise of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic sentiment in Europe. On the other hand, it could actually be that the E.U., which is trusted by the Palestinians, has a better chance of restoring the Palestinian Authority.

The Cooperation Agreement signed by the European Union and Israel in 2004 in the framework of the E.U.'s Neighborhood Policy, and the Action Plan derived from it, should be based upon the balance between Israel's traditional American orientation and the need to develop a European orientation. The Neighborhood Policy Cooperation Agreement determines that the E.U. will be granted a status in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and that Israel and the E.U. will cooperate in the war on terrorism and anti-Semitism. In this framework, it is recommended that Europe be given a role in the area of Israel-PA relations limited to political reform and economic aid to the PA. Such experience and progress will allow examination of Europe's willingness to advance toward a more balanced position on the Middle East conflict.

- **Restoration of the Palestinian Authority:** the recommendation regarding restoration of the PA is guided by the criteria of increasing security and reinforcing the peace with Israel's neighbors. Such a recommendation can be supported by the analysis and scenarios of the Two State Solution approach, by which consolidation of a strong and democratic government in the PA is an Israeli interest. Such a government will be able to act against terrorist groups, grant civilians economic opportunities, and advance a peace process. Restoration of the PA is subject to international involvement and to security, political, and economic reforms. Stabilization of the region will be attained only by an integration of action against terror and political and economic reforms, which will create opportunities for development and growth. Israel must allow the free movement of products and people within the PA, and open the gates into Israel to Palestinian workers, while demanding the PA's intense action against terrorism.
- **Confrontation with the Local Conflict Must Be Integrated with the Advance of Regional Security.** This recommendation is based on a number of criteria: consolidation of peace, increase in security, creation of domestic solidarity, and attainment of international legitimacy. In order to implement this recommendation, policy makers can find support in the warnings and proposals of the Greater Land of Israel and Two State Solution approaches.

These warnings indicate a need for a tie between disengagement and the advancement of a permanent status agreement, on the one hand, and for an increase of regional security on the other. The high level of local and regional interaction with international interested parties in the region necessitates such a link.

Iran's nuclear armament and support for terrorist organizations place an obstacle on the way to peace. In this regard, supporters of the Greater Land of Israel approach are correct in their warnings: due to geopolitical considerations, her struggle for hegemony in the region, and ideological opposition to the existence of Israel, Iran, and apparently Syria as well, will try to sabotage the process of stabilization and to lead to escalation via support for terrorist organizations. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to imagine substantial progress in the political process without taking enemies of peace in the Palestinian Authority and in regional states into consideration.

A policy for stabilizing the Greater Middle East can assist the Palestinian Authority, through reinforcement of governmental power and through financial support for Palestinian society. Success in moderating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict requires cooperation between international players regarding Middle East policy, especially the European Union and the United States. There is a need for involvement which will reinforce moderate players, promote economic development, slow demographic growth, and develop natural and human resources. If this does not occur, the trend toward extremism will continue. States participating in the process should act aggressively and determinedly against states and organizations trying to undermine progress toward an agreement. However, they should not reward terror by halting restoration as a response to terrorist attacks. If terrorism leads to a halt in restoration, terrorist groups will be granted veto power over the political agenda. Efforts should be focused on decreasing terrorist groups' power by determining a political agenda, and by balancing between Israel's security needs and the PA's restoration.

- **Gradual Progress from Conflict to Stabilization and a Peace Agreement:** this proposal is based on the criteria of enhancing peace and security and creating domestic solidarity, while attaining international support and showing consideration for the Palestinian Authority. The idea of progress which is gradual both in terms of **time** and **space** draws from the analyses and scenarios of all the geopolitical approaches surveyed in this essay. It sees

withdrawal from the Gaza Strip as part of a wide and comprehensive process, whose conclusion will be two states for two peoples. The uncertainty surrounding Mahmud Abbas' regime, especially regarding the strength of the extremist circles in the Palestinian Authority, requires cautious progress after the disengagement. In this regard, there is much logic to security circles' warnings of the danger of intensification of terror in the regions of withdrawal.

In light of these warnings, it is appropriate to see Mahmud Abbas' regime as a 'caretaker' government, after which substantial changes in the Palestinian Authority and its orientation toward Israel might be possible. Israel should act carefully to reinforce moderate forces and refrain from extreme steps. Israel, together with the PA, should formulate a process of transition from conflict to stabilization and a peace agreement. The principles of the agreement should be clear from the start. However, the parties should define implementation stages, during which it will be possible to reexamine whether the parties have fulfilled their obligations.

It is important to formulate a number of alternatives for progress toward a political agreement after the disengagement. In the past, a number of theoretical and unbinding plans, such as the Geneva initiative and HaMifkad HaLeumi ("The People's Voice"), have been proposed, but an in-depth discussion of the transition from the present and post-disengagement situation to the permanent status agreement is lacking.

5 CONCLUSION

Supporters of each of the approaches – the Necessity of Separation, the Two State Solution (“Two States for Two Peoples”), the Greater Land of Israel, and the Bi-National State – see the facts through their own psycho-political lens. Within these patterns of thought, facts are diluted with beliefs, by which the facts are interpreted, scenarios are developed, and recommendations are made. Each group tends to blame the other groups of misunderstanding reality, and of ideological, baseless, and incorrect thinking.

At the base of each geopolitical thought pattern stands a fundamental assumption; an undeniable axiom. This assumption is sometimes presented as an imperative or as an unavoidable process. The Necessity of Separation approach assumes that the **demographic trend** endangers the continued existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, and therefore that the disengagement is inevitable. The Two State Solution approach assumes that **moral imperative** and **economic constraints** require separation and establishment of peace. Supporters of the Greater Land of Israel believe that settling the land of Israel fulfills **national vision** and **divine imperative**. The Bi-National State is based upon the assumption that the two communities – Jewish and Arab – are **irreversibly intertwined**, both territorially and community-wise.

Despite the substantial differences between the four approaches, all four share a historicist view: that is, a view by which historical development is not coincidental, rather has, at its base, a founding logic which determines the development of events. The approaches differ regarding the founding factor of development. Each emphasizes a different, exclusive factor which determines historical development – in this case, the nature of relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Among the factors considered decisive in determining the history between Israelis

and Palestinians are demography, morality, progress, national vision, divine promise, and irreversible inter-tangling. These factors determine who will take part in shaping history and which **political views and strategies for action** will shape the settlement map.

Policymakers are in a difficult situation. None of them is gifted with an ability to predict the future, and all that can be expected of them is an attempt to prepare for the future in the best way possible under conditions of great uncertainty. Such preparation requires examining each of the geopolitical interpretations openly, carefully, and critically, considering the opportunities and risks in each of the proposed scenarios, and remembering that often, the scenario which occurs in reality integrates different scenarios. It is possible, for example, that a process beginning as a unilateral separation will turn into a stage in the road map and be integrated into an outline of a final status agreement, or, alternately, lead to a severe conflict. It is also possible that an attempt to implement the vision of the Greater Land of Israel will lead to a bi-national state.

By no means should it be understood that all is correct and permissible, or that each geopolitical approach is legitimate. Policy makers must base their opinion on a system of criteria which will maximize advantages. This essay presented six criteria, the crux of which is the existence of a Jewish and democratic state, living in security and peace and benefiting from domestic solidarity and international support. The art of statesmanship is choosing the geopolitical option directed toward harmonization between the various principles, while moderating the contradictions and preserving proportionality in their realization.

The proposed geopolitical option is an Israeli initiative to contract to the borders and stabilize the frontier. This option fits the Necessity of Separation approach, but is also aware of the dangers indicated by supporters of the Greater Land of Israel. It does not stop at the necessity of separation, and continues in the direction of a two state solution, understanding that the way will be slow, and paved with crises, as predicted by the Necessity of Separation approach. The Two State Solution scenario will not be implemented with full separation, due to the special circumstances of the two states, as predicted by the Bi-National State approach: a certain measure of communal space will exist in the future as well. However, most of the population in Israel opposes the existence of one state between the sea and the river, according both to the Greater Land of Israel version and the post-Zionist bi-national state version.

Israel cannot eternally maintain a situation of separation with intensifying hostility; rational politics requires slow progress from unilateral separation to a two state solution and a resolution of the conflict.