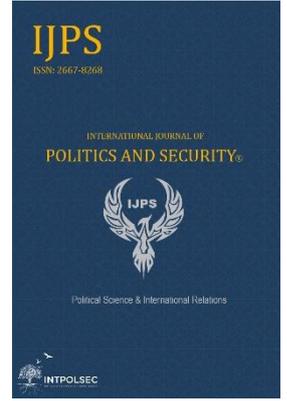


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## Is Israel Still A State that “Dwells Alone” in Its Foreign Relations?

A. Murat AĞDEMİR\*

### Abstract

*The Jewish people have experienced a history of persecution, restrictions, expulsions, and pogroms. All these accumulated to shape the worldview of the Jews and caused them to see the world as two parts, the Jewish and non-Jewish. The Jews believed that they are a people “who dwells alone”, they should be dependent only on other Jews, and they should be self-reliant. This frame of mind has inevitably affected the policy makers’ decisions while conducting Israel’s foreign relations. In this regard, the purpose of this study is to examine the worldview of the Jewish people and the policymakers to understand how this belief has shaped the foreign policy of Israel and to scrutinize whether the thought of “no friends” is still a valid argument for Israel.*

**Keywords:** *Israel, Israel Foreign Policy, Jews self-reliant, Decision makers.*

### 1. Introduction

The foreign policy of a state is shaped by various factors, including systemic and domestic elements. Systemic explanations discount the importance of domestic and internal variations within the separate nations,<sup>1</sup> such as historical experience, national character, or cultural heritage. On the other hand, the role of non-state actors in world politics is also significant.<sup>2</sup> An analysis lacking these factors would not have much explanatory value. This is also true for Israel. The history of the Jews in foreign lands during diaspora life has affected the Israeli people and the leaders who are responsible for the conduct of foreign policy. Because it is clear that the weight of Jewish history has influenced foreign policy choices,<sup>3</sup> past experiences of the Jewish people can serve as an explanatory factor for the explanation of Israel’s foreign policy.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David J. Singer, “The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations”, *World Politics* 14, no. 1 (1961): 80-81.

<sup>2</sup> See Robert O. Keohane ve Joseph S. Nye, *Transnational Relations and World Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

<sup>3</sup> For studies of this kind, see Michael Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel: Setting, Images, Process* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972); Shmuel Sandler, “Is There a Jewish Foreign Policy?”, *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 29, (1987): 115-121; Aaron Klieman, *Israel and the World after 40 Years* (New York: Pergamon-Brassey’s, 1990).

<sup>4</sup> For an example see Ofira Seliktar, *New Zionism and the Foreign Policy System of Israel* (London: Croom Helm, 1986).



The Jews have a strong feeling of insecurity due to their history full of threats to their existence like the slaughters, pogroms, or the Holocaust in their diaspora life. After two thousand years of exile and diaspora life fearful of extermination, history brought a legacy of deeply felt insecurity to Israel. The past experiences entrenched this sense of insecurity which had increased with the attacks on the Jewish people in Palestine in the 1920s and has been strengthened after the Arab countries' collective attack as a response to the establishment of Israel in 1948. Since then, Israel has felt that it has been surrounded by a hostile world, and tended to see itself as lonely in the world, and in a state of isolation, which is believed by many in Israeli society. The past experiences of the Jewish people and the belief of the worlds being antisemitic have become part of the common understanding of the Jews.

In this sense, the historical experience can be examined as one of the important elements influencing Israel's foreign policy. These experiences have resulted to form a Jewish prism through which to read the events happening in the international arena. This prism is the psychological dispositions of the historical legacy through which images are filtered.<sup>5</sup> In this context, political actors in Israel have believed that the world has negative feelings toward the Jewish state, and the struggle for survival is so strong that drastic measures and all means could be used in the conduct of Israel's foreign policy. On the other hand, the combination of the Jewish historical experiences of persecution and the Holocaust has been central to the construction of the identity of isolation and self-reliance<sup>6</sup> (or self-help). This notion implies that the Israeli people are alone in a hostile world, and the international community has been seen as having "offered up the Jews as prey to the enemy's jaws"<sup>7</sup> during the Second World War. This self-reliance is closely linked to the Jewish narrative of being a "people that dwells alone" and the "two camp" thesis. In this view, the world is seen as divided into Jewish and non-Jewish "camps" with the non-Jewish camp being basically hostile towards the Jews.<sup>8</sup> The notion of the people that dwell alone has been also called the "people apart syndrome"<sup>9</sup> which reflects the mentality of providing their protection and not trusting others.

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<sup>5</sup> Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System*, 11-12.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel J. Roberts, *Survival or Hegemony? The Foundations of Israeli Foreign Policy* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1973), 115.

<sup>7</sup> Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (New York: Henry Holt, 1991), 428.

<sup>8</sup> Alan Dowty, "Israeli Foreign Policy and the Jewish Question", *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 3, no. 1 (1999): 8-12.

<sup>9</sup> Asher Arian, "A People Apart: Coping with National Security, Problems in Israel", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 33, no. 4 (1989): 610.



Self-reliance simply results from the belief that states, in order to ensure their survival, should rely on their power rather than external powers and agreements or defense pacts with them. The principle of self-reliance passing from the historical Jewish people in the diaspora to Israel as a legacy has required to be militarily, economically, and politically self-reliant. Israel should be strong enough not only to meet her national interests and to provide national security but also not to be restrained in her freedom of action. Israel's foreign policy has included this principle because of the Jewish history and the mistrust of any kind of external power due to the experiences in the diaspora.

Given the accumulated experiences of diaspora Jewish life, which included hatred, mistrust, and contempt for Jews, this paper tries to analyze the effects of this historical experience on Israel's foreign policy. It begins by looking at the Jewish life in exile in a sense of isolation in a hostile world. It tries to elaborate on the growth of the notion of the "people that dwell alone" the self-reliance principle, and their effect on the people who are responsible for the conduct of the foreign policy in Israel. In the end, the paper considers how far Israel can still be ascribed as a lonely state in the international community of states.

## **2. Suffering of the Jews in Exile and Antisemitism**

The destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD by the Romans is a watershed event in Jewish history, marking the end of sovereignty and the start of diaspora.<sup>10</sup> Jews were expelled from their promised land<sup>11</sup> in Palestine to the whole Roman world (and even beyond). Diaspora life was not a neutral experience; it was a life lived in exile, the Jews lacked autonomous political organization, and they were stated as "a pariah people."<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, even though Jewish communities never lived in total isolation from the outside world, to survive, they had to manage their internal affairs and their relations with the outside world. Jewish life

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<sup>10</sup> Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (New York: HarperCollins, 1987), 136-143.

<sup>11</sup> The holy texts within the scope of Judaism, in addition to being a religious teaching for the Jews, also constitute the historical, cultural and social heritage of the Jewish people. Jews read religious texts as a record of Israel's history and geography, and the land they consider sacred and that they believe was promised in Palestine is considered an important part of this reading. In this regard, Jews believe that the land of Palestine has been promised to them by God within the framework of the Jewish scriptures and of the Bible.

<sup>12</sup> Arnaldo Momigliano, "A Note on Max Weber's Definition of Judaism as a Pariah-Religion", *History and Theory* 19, no. 3 (1980): 313.



in the diaspora and sometimes the physical security of the community itself was dependent on the tolerance of the larger community in which it existed.<sup>13</sup>

Jewish diaspora life was largely closed off from the outside world, and they were forced to live in ghettos. Traditional accounts of Jewish history after the destruction of the Second Temple paint a picture of enforced passivity and powerlessness. Throughout their history, the Jewish people have endured persecution, massacre, murder, and pogroms. After they were murdered in pogroms and massacres for centuries, in modern times the Holocaust continued this saga of Jewish suffering, destroying six million innocent victims in the most terrible circumstances.<sup>14</sup>

Jews scattered throughout the world were living in diaspora mainly in Europe and the Middle East. Antisemitism, a complex and perplexing form of hatred of the Jews, had already existed in the ancient world, and Jews were a convenient community of others to point to as scapegoats. They were blamed by Christian populations for the death of Christ from the times of early Christianity, were subject to blood libels, and were blamed for killing Christian children, poisoning wells, and bringing the plague to communities.<sup>15</sup> The crusades were accompanied by violent attacks on Jewish communities, and Crusaders murdered Jews in pogroms as they blamed them for causing the Black Death of 1348, as Christian mobs “plundered, destroyed and killed Jewish communities.”<sup>16</sup>

Two of the most notorious antisemitic accusations of Christian populations against Jews were the so-called “blood libel” and “host desecration.” In medieval Europe, violent antisemitism probably increased significantly, especially with the promulgations of the “blood libel,” the allegation that Jews were using the blood of Christian children for ritual purposes.<sup>17</sup> The second such charge made against Jews was that of “host desecration.” It was the accusation that the Jews poisoned the blood and bread employed by Catholic priests in the Mass. Besides

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<sup>13</sup> Raymond Cohen, “Israel’s Starry-Eyed Foreign Policy”, *Middle East Quarterly*, 1994, <https://www.meforum.org/221/israels-starry-eyed-foreign-policy> (23.04.2022).

<sup>14</sup> Hilary L. Rubinstein vd., *The Jews in the Modern World A History Since 1750* (New York: Arnold Publishers, 2002), 110.

<sup>15</sup> Gabrielle Grossman, “The Re-shaping of Anti-Semitism Through the Ages”, *The Journal of Psychohistory* 41, no. 3 (2014): 198.

<sup>16</sup> Doris L. Bergen, *War & Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 5.

<sup>17</sup> Allan Mohl, “The Evolution of Anti-Semitism: Historical and Psychological Roots”, *The Journal of Psychohistory* 39, no. 2 (2011): 119-121.



these two well-known charges, the Jews were also subjected to many other kinds of abuses, such as the depictions of the Jews portrayed as the murderers of Christians.<sup>18</sup>

With the growing of modernity and the intellectual sophistication of Europe, fantasies such as the blood libel and the host desecration began to lose their hold, and the eighteenth-century Enlightenment brought hope to Jews. The French Revolution was a positive development, and Napoleon's victories throughout Europe brought better conditions for the Jews.<sup>19</sup> Jews experienced rising toleration and emancipation; ghetto walls came down, and obstacles to professional advancement disappeared.

However, this optimism was short-lived. Following the Enlightenment of the 18th century, the French Revolution, and the Emancipation, the reasons for persecution began to revolve around complaints concerning the Jews' incomplete assimilation to the modern societies they were living in.<sup>20</sup> In 1791 the Pale of Settlement<sup>21</sup> began to be formed in Russia and Jews were limited as to where they could live. Beginning at around the same period, pogroms against Jews occurred in Odesa, Kyiv, and Warsaw.<sup>22</sup> The antisemitism between the 1870s and the 1930s which culminated in the Holocaust signaled a reversal in the situation of the Jews that had begun with the Enlightenment. In this regard, there were some prominent antisemitic events during this period. For instance, the Hungarian parliamentarian Gyozo Istoczy mentioned the possibility of a "mass extermination" of the Jews. Adolf Stoecker in Germany established the antisemitic Christian Socialist Workers Party in 1878. Wilhelm Marr published 1879 "The Victory of Judaism over Germanism," in which the term "antisemitism" first appeared. During the 1880s and 1890s, antisemitic pogroms erupted in Russia, which forced the Eastern European Jews to move westward. On the other hand, a new wave of the "blood libel" accusation unfolded in Europe, and antisemitic parties in Austria, France, Germany, and Hungary gained electoral success.<sup>23</sup> This sudden emergence and the growth of

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<sup>18</sup> Rubinstein vd., *The Jews in the Modern World*, 111-112.

<sup>19</sup> Abram L. Sachar, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 278-284.

<sup>20</sup> Clive Jones ve Emma C. Murphy, *Israel Challenges to Identity, Democracy and the State* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 4.

<sup>21</sup> Pale of Settlement was a huge geographical ghetto stretching from Baltic to the Black Sea in which the majority of Eastern European Jews in the Russian Empire would live until the 1917 revolution. See Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, 358.

<sup>22</sup> Sachar, *A History of the Jews*, 309-322.

<sup>23</sup> Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 257-278; Richard J. Bernstein, *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 49; Robert F. Byrnes, *Antisemitism in Modern France* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), 81-82;



antisemitic violence stunned many Jews who were predicting a further blossoming of enlightenment.<sup>24</sup> Because, Jews who were previously persecuted mainly for religious reasons, had to face a new kind of antisemitism after the Enlightenment. Before the 18th century, antisemitism was characterized and motivated by sheer hatred and religious zeal. The new antisemitism was secularized, primarily politically and economically motivated, and its target was Jewish ethnicity.

Antisemitism was profoundly felt by those Jews living in Europe. They had to cope with pogroms in Russia during 1881-1882, riots in Kishinev in 1903, the murder of Jews throughout western and southern Russia in 1905, accusations of betrayal (the Dreyfus Affair in France), and the emergence of racist approaches and antisemitic policies in different countries. As a result, at the end of the 19th century, political Zionism entered the stage of history, and it was an answer to the challenges of modernity which was shaped by enlightenment, secularisation, liberalism, and nationalism. When various remedies, including emancipation, assimilation, separation, and overt persecution and discrimination failed to solve the Jewish Question, “the relationship between the Christian majority and the Jewish minority,”<sup>25</sup> a growing number of Jews turned to political Zionism and independent statehood.<sup>26</sup>

Antisemitic events were also witnessed between the two World Wars. However, once Hitler came to power, he paved the way for the most horrific event in Jewish history, the Holocaust. The centrality of the Holocaust in Jewish identity has been unparalleled. The Holocaust both “formed the collective identity” of Israel and is the “shadow” in which “the most fateful decisions in Israeli history” were conceived.<sup>27</sup> It has formed a twentieth-century link with an established narrative of two millennia<sup>28</sup> of Jewish history which is remembered as

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Albert S. Lindemann, *The Jew Accused: Three Anti-Semitic Affairs (Dreyfus, Beilis, Frank) 1894-1915* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 92; Claire Hirshfield, “The British Left and the ‘Jewish Conspiracy’: A Case Study of Modern Antisemitism”, *Jewish Social Studies* 43, no. 2 (1981): 95; Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God, and History* (New York: Penguin Publishing, 2004), 313; Meyer Weinberg, *Because They Were Jews A History of Antisemitism* (New York: Praeger, 1986), 93.

<sup>24</sup> David N. Smith, “Judeophobia, Myth, and Critique,” in *The Seductiveness of Jewish Myth: Challenge or Response*, ed. S. Daniel Breslauer (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), 125-126

<sup>25</sup> Bernard Reich ve David H. Goldberg, *Historical Dictionary of Israel* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2008), 260.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Segev, *The Seventh Million*, 11.

<sup>28</sup> Dowty, “Israeli Foreign Policy,” 4.



being marked by expulsions, pogroms, and persecution.<sup>29</sup> For this reason, it is important to understand the effect of the Holocaust, for explaining the Jewish people's thoughts and feelings about other people. The influence of the Holocaust on the Jewish people's collective memory has been pervasive throughout Israel's short history:

“The Holocaust remains a basic trauma of Israeli society. It is impossible to exaggerate its effect on the process of nation-building... There is a latent hysteria in Israeli life that stems directly from this source... It accounts for the prevailing sense of loneliness, a main characteristic of the Israeli temper since Independence. It explains the obsessive suspicions, the towering urge for self-reliance at all costs in a world which permitted the disaster to happen. It explains the fears and prejudices, passions, pains, and prides, that spin the plot of public life and will likely affect the nation for a long time to come. The lingering memory of the Holocaust makes Arab threats of annihilation sound plausible. But even had there not been any Arabs, or if by some wondrous event their enmity were to disappear overnight, the lingering effect of traumatic memory would probably be almost as marked as it is today. The trauma of the Holocaust leaves an indelible mark on the national psychology, the tenor and content of public life, the conduct of foreign affairs, on politics, education, literature and the arts.”<sup>30</sup>

In short, Jews had suffered at the hands of the masses; and antisemitism, from theological to social to ethnic, had punctuated Jewish life through the centuries. The reasons for these persecutions were diverse and changed throughout the centuries. However, their effects would affect the life of the Jewish people, and for the Jews, the only reliable allies were and would be the other Jewish communities. This attitude has been labeled as the “two-camp” thesis, which divides the world into Jewish and non-Jewish parts, with the latter seen as hostile and untrustworthy to Jews.<sup>31</sup> According to this belief, Jews should be dependent only on other Jews, and they should be self-reliant.

### **3. “People that dwell alone” and Self-Reliance**

After the birth of Israel, when Jews moved into this newly formed country of their own, they did not forget the mentality of being alone and the suspicion and mistrust of the “gentile”<sup>32</sup> world. Statements and thoughts of the leaders and policymakers reflect the effect of the historical legacy of the Jewish people. Prime Minister Golda Meir was one of the important leaders who felt that her conclusions were based on these distant happenings which were

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<sup>29</sup> Judith Elizur, “The Fracturing of the Jewish Self-Image: The End of ‘We Are One?’” in *Israel: The First Hundred Years, Volume III Israeli Politics and Society Since 1948 Problems of Collective Identity*, ed. Efraim Karsh (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 14.

<sup>30</sup> Amos Elon, *The Israelis: Founders and Sons* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), 198-199.

<sup>31</sup> Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System*, 90, 98, 314, 502.

<sup>32</sup> Gentile is the term used by the Jews which refers to the people who are not Jewish.



relevant at all times and places. She expressed her fears as a child of a pogrom in her native hometown, Kyiv:

“That pogrom did not take place at all, but to this day I remember how frightened I was and how angry I was that the only thing my father could do to protect me as I waited for the bullies to come was to nail some planks on the door. And more than anything else I remember the feeling that this is happening to me only because I am Jewish... That was a feeling that I felt many times in my life-the fear, the feeling of being downcast, the awareness of being different, and the deep instinctive belief that a person who wants to stay alive had better do something about it.”<sup>33</sup>

Similarly, Meir explicitly stated her feelings while she was at a press conference in Washington: “And you Mr. Alsop you say that we have a Masada complex... it is true. We do have a Masada complex. We have a pogrom complex. We have a Hitler complex.”<sup>34</sup> Pinhas Sapir, one of the prominent leaders, had the same feelings, as Meir:

“We have a Warsaw Ghetto complex, a complex of the hatred of the Jewish People, just as we are filled with a Masada complex... From the fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto, from the fighters in the ghettos, in the forests, and from the other camps we inherited the justified feeling with our backs to the wall. This feeling guided us in our various struggles and wars.”<sup>35</sup>

The establishment of a state for the Jews did not displace the sense that the Jewish people dwell alone. For David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel, Jewish people living in different parts of the world was the only reliable ally for Israel. He stressed this belief in the speech he made in 1955: “It is not important what the Goyim (non-Jewish people) say, but rather what the Jews do.”<sup>36</sup> Since then, this thought has become part of Israel’s foreign policy. The thought of the world divided into Jews and others have become an important component of Israel’s relations with other countries:

“One of the most fundamental aspects of Israel’s diplomatic tradition is its attitude towards the outsider and foreigner. While Zionism sought constantly to attain international recognition, it was afflicted at the same time by deep, sometimes obsessive, misgivings regarding the intentions of foreign individuals and governments. Antisemitism played a dominant role in molding the dichotomous perception of a world divided up into Jews and Gentiles.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Asher Arian, *Security Threatened Surveying Israeli Opinion on Peace and War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 162.

<sup>34</sup> Daniel Bar-Tal ve Dikla Antebi, “Siege Mentality in Israel”, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 16, no. 3 (1992): 263.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 264.

<sup>36</sup> Christopher L. Schilling, “The Ghetto Complex: Rethinking Israel’s Foreign Policy”, *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences* 5, no. 4 (2010): 466.

<sup>37</sup> Sasson Sofer, *Zionism and the Foundations of Israeli Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 365.



This attitude was reflected, for example, in the belief of Yaakov Herzog, an adviser to Meir. He thought that Jewish history was unique, and it also left a legacy of uniqueness for Israel. He wrote that:

“We are not a normal people, we are not free from the Galut (exile) burden and we are not accepted by the world... Political Zionism maintained that the concept of ‘people who dwell alone is, in fact, an abnormal condition. In reality, the concept of ‘people who dwell alone is the natural condition of the Jewish people.”<sup>38</sup>

The perception of the distinction between Jews and others has had fundamental effects. After Israel was established, the world was often to be seen by many Israeli policy-makers, and by much of the Israeli public, as an inhospitable place, at best indifferent to the fate of the Jews. This profoundly affected the attitudes of the policy-makers toward foreign policy. “The re-interpretation of antisemitism and the Holocaust contributed to a highly Hobbesian perception of international order in Israel.”<sup>39</sup> This perception was clearly expressed in Prime Minister Menachem Begin’s book, *The Revolt*: “The world does not pity the victims; it respects the warriors. Good or bad-that is how it is.”<sup>40</sup> The sense of isolation and the notion of the “people that dwell alone” was still felt by many Jews in Israel. According to this perception, now that the Jews has a state of their own, as one of the Presidents of Israel, Chaim Herzog<sup>41</sup> stated, antisemitism was now being directed against Israel:

“Both the Holocaust with all its hardships and the establishment of the State of Israel did not remove the antisemitism from the world. The hatred of Israel has not ceased; rather it has found other avenues of expressions-against Zionism and against the State of Israel. The phenomenon of hostility towards Israel in the world often takes on very extreme and irrational emotional qualities, which discloses something far deeper than political disagreements per se.”<sup>42</sup>

This sense of loneliness was greatly increased by a string of events. The days preceding the 1967 Six-Day War were especially traumatic for the Jewish people. They saw the evacuation of UN observers from the Egyptian-Israeli border, and the US failed to break the Egyptian blockade of Israel’s southern sea lanes. The threats from Arab countries and the international inactivity prior to the 1967 War reinforced Israel’s distrust of other states while prompting fears of a possible repetition of the Holocaust. After the war, Israel faced international condemnation because of its occupation of the territories it had seized. Although

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<sup>38</sup> Ilan Peleg ve Paul Scham, “Israeli Neo-Revisionism and American Neoconservatism: The Unexplored Parallels”, *Middle East Journal* 61, no. 1 (2007): 86.

<sup>39</sup> Seliktar, *New Zionism*, 107.

<sup>40</sup> Arian, *Security Threatened*, 163.

<sup>41</sup> He is the father of the incumbent President of Israel, Isaac Herzog.

<sup>42</sup> Bar-Tal ve Antebi, “Siege Mentality,” 264.



Israel received large-scale weapons and equipment from the United States during the war and these aids enabled the course of the war to turn in favor of Israel, Israel's almost defeat at the beginning of the 1973 Yom Kippur War strengthened the notion of "a nation that shall dwell alone."<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, the arms embargo of France on Israel and the massive break-off of diplomatic relations by many countries (including most of the African and communist ones) following the wars of 1967 and 1973 were chilling. There were many states and firms in compliance with the Arab boycott, and there were many UN votes criticizing Israel, including the 1975 UN resolution which equated Zionism with racism.<sup>44</sup> Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was reactive when the resolution about Zionism was accepted, and his expression was an important example of his thoughts about Jews' place in the international community: "The whole world is against us when was it not so!"<sup>45</sup> In short, Jews in Israel saw themselves and Israel as sharing the same fate as the Jews in the diaspora during history. Thus, Israel was a "pariah state" like the Jews had been a pariah, people.

The wars of 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973 strengthened the sense of isolation in a hostile world and the belief of the "people that dwells alone." The Jewish people began to think that they were facing the same fate as the Jews who lived in the diaspora. The only difference seemed to be the geographical place they were living, and the others they faced to live together. They had been mostly in Europe during diaspora; after the state of Israel was born, they were in their state. However, they were to experience a similar feeling of isolation. There was a resemblance between the fate of the Jews everywhere, whether in Israel or the diaspora. Even Abba Eban, one of Israel's moderate leaders, similarly described the conditions, as Israel was approaching the 1967 Six-Day War:

"The chilling wind of vulnerability penetrated every corner of the Israeli consciousness. When we looked out at the world we saw it divided between those who wanted to see us destroyed and those who would not raise a finger to prevent it from happening."<sup>46</sup>

Eban's words show the depth of the worldview of "us" and "them" and the feeling of isolation. It was apparent that the Jewish people in Israel were still affected by the horrific past

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<sup>43</sup> Shmuel Sandler, *The State of Israel, the Land of Israel The Statist and Ethnonational Dimensions of Foreign Policy* (London: Greenwood Press, 1993), 146.

<sup>44</sup> Merom Gil, "Israel's National Security and the Myth of Exceptionalism", *Political Science Quarterly* 114, no. 3 (1999): 411.

<sup>45</sup> Efraim Inbar, "Israeli National Security, 1973-1996", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 555, no. 1 (1998): 66.

<sup>46</sup> Abba Eban, *My Country* (Jerusalem: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), 180.



of their ancestors. They were victims in a hostile world and were persecuted through the ages. All these experiences influenced both the national mood and the conduct of Israel's foreign policy. On the other hand, they had a direct bearing and emphasis upon self-reliance, and on policy-makers skepticism toward the outside world. The influence of the Jewish past on Israel's foreign policy was described by Klieman appropriately:

“At the level of attitudes and perceptions, nineteen centuries from Masada to Maidanek still profoundly influence Israeli international conduct... This weight of Jewish history lies heavily on both leaders and the public. It is one of the primary sources for Israel's underlying insecurity and perceived isolation.”<sup>47</sup>

As the Jewish people continued to experience hostility from other people while they were living in their state, they began to see themselves and their new state to be the object of persecution and discrimination again. The perception of the world as divided between “us” and “them” was most famously articulated in the popular song of the late 1960s entitled, “The Whole World Is Against Us.”<sup>48</sup> In this respect, the situation of the people in Israel was of a nation that dwells alone, and the feeling of mistrust was an important feature of the foreign policy of Israel. They thought that other people would do nothing to protect Jews or Israel, as nobody did during the Holocaust. As Begin wrote:

“Ask the Jews: Is it possible to destroy a people? Is it possible to annihilate millions of people in the twentieth century? And what will the ‘world’ say? The innocent ones! It is hard to believe, but even in the twentieth century it is possible to destroy an entire people; and if the annihilated people happen to be Jewish, the world will be silent and will behave as it usually behaves.”<sup>49</sup>

Prime Minister Menachem Begin was one of the important leaders who was affected by the negative experiences of Jewish history. Begin's conduct of Israel's foreign policy was a product of his own life experiences. He encountered as a youth the antisemitism in Brest-Litovsk, and his family was killed during the Holocaust. It was apparent that his intellectual and political identity and worldview were shaped by the pervasive and deadly antisemitism of the 1930s and the Holocaust.<sup>50</sup> The trauma of the Holocaust particularly affected Begin's political opinions. During his political life, he usually viewed events through “the prism of the 1930s,” and “drew analogies with events in this period.”<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, according to Begin, because Israel represented the Jewish people, it was experiencing the same hostilities

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<sup>47</sup> Klieman, *Israel and the World*, 53.

<sup>48</sup> Amnon Rubinstein, *The Zionist Dream Revisited: From Herzl to Gush Emunim and Back* (New York: Schocken, 1984), 80.

<sup>49</sup> Arian, *Security Threatened*, 163.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Ilan Peleg, *Begin's Foreign Policy, 1977–1983 Israel's Move to the Right* (Westport: Greenwood, 1987), 66.



that the Jews in the diaspora had faced, and Israel's isolation was proof of antisemitism directed against it. That's why he frequently denounced foreign criticism of Israel's policies as motivated by antisemitism. When he was asked to explain Israel's part<sup>52</sup> in the Phalangist killing of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, for instance, he stated that "Goyim kill goyim... and they blame the Jews."<sup>53</sup> He also labeled the very inquiry a "blood libel."<sup>54</sup>

As a result of all the historical experiences, the Jewish people have seen themselves as living in a hostile environment, surrounded by enemies, and constant threats and danger. For this reason, the traumatic history of the Jews including the Holocaust has created a feeling of mistrust towards "others," which also led to the development of the principle of self-reliance in Israel's foreign and security policy:

"The clear feeling of basic mistrust regarding the international environment is the basic feature of the foreign and security policy of Israel. There is a fundamental belief that in the final analysis, the world will do nothing to protect Jews, as individuals, as a collectivity, as a State."<sup>55</sup>

The above examples provide powerful reasons and evidence of this central characteristic of the Jewish people. This characteristic is "self-reliance," which is the result of the feeling of aloneness (people that dwell alone). Self-reliance is significant because, at the global level, Israel sees a world where power and force dominate, and whereby security is only assured through self-reliance and the projection of force. Secondly, self-reliance not only prevents Israel's vulnerability when the ally or the big power changes her policies and stops supporting the state but also provides freedom of action to pursue the national interests of the state.

The principle of self-reliance for Israel means to rely on its military power, rather than on external guarantees such as peace or defense agreements. Israel needs self-reliance to ensure its survival, and this notion is extremely dominant in the Israeli national security paradigm. Ben-Gurion knew that building a militarily strong country was extremely important to survive: "Israel stood up by its strength and will stand firm only if it trusts first and foremost in itself as

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<sup>52</sup> As Defense Minister, Ariel Sharon was forced to resign in 1983 after an investigation found him to be responsible for not stopping the massacre of Palestinians by the Lebanese Christian phalange in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. See Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall Israel and the Arab World* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 416-417.

<sup>53</sup> Jacob Abadi, *Israel's Leadership from Utopia to Crisis* (Westport: Greenwood, 1993), 97-98.

<sup>54</sup> Peleg, *Begin's Foreign Policy*, 63.

<sup>55</sup> Asher Arian, Ilan Talmud ve Tamar Hermann, *National Security and Public Opinion in Israel* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), 21-22.



a power of growing greatness.”<sup>56</sup> He also pointed out the combination of self-reliance and military power in 1948 that “we should not deceive ourselves by thinking that formal diplomatic recognition will solve all our problems... We must not forget that our security depends on our might.”<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon asserted in 2001 that “we must all know that we can never place our fate in the hands of anyone else.”<sup>58</sup> The combination of self-reliance and military power was also expressed in the statement made by Rabin following the 1973 war: “Israel shall dwell alone and only our military might guarantees our existence.”<sup>59</sup> Rabin also touched upon the same topic when he spoke at the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the uprising against the Nazis by Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto in April 1993, and stated what the Jewish people should have learned of the Holocaust: “What will we learn? We will learn to believe in a better world. But most importantly, we will not trust in others any longer, generous as they may be: only us, only ourselves. We will protect ourselves.”<sup>60</sup>

The lessons of the Holocaust were also brought into focus during the 2006 Lebanon War. It was invoked by the associations between Hitler and Iranian President Ahmadinejad, and the notion of a broader existential threat. There was a strong sense that the international community was in a state of what Shimon Peres referred to as “paralysis” concerning the Hezbollah problem.<sup>61</sup> He wrote of Hezbollah: “Israel really is alone. No one else can stop them. And, on the other hand, no one else can defend us. We have to defend ourselves in... a dangerous world.”<sup>62</sup> Besides, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert expressed similar feelings at that time. He quoted Ben-Gurion and stated that in the struggle for existence, the Jewish people must “always memorize to ourselves, day and night, that our existence-our freedom, our future-depend first and foremost on ourselves, our efforts, our abilities, and our will.”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System*, 265.

<sup>57</sup> David Ben-Gurion, “David Ben-Gurion: Broadcast to the Nation after the Arab Invasion (May 15, 1948)”, *Jewish Virtual Library*, May 15, 1948, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/ben-gurion-broadcast-to-the-nation-after-the-arab-invasion-may-1948> (26.04.2022).

<sup>58</sup> “Sharon Maintains Control in Face of Demographic Shift”, *The Irish Times*, August 20, 2005, <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/sharon-maintains-control-in-face-of-demographic-shift-1.482484> (26.04.2022).

<sup>59</sup> Inbar, “Israeli National Security 1973-1996,” 66.

<sup>60</sup> Arian, *Security Threatened*, 175.

<sup>61</sup> Shimon Peres, “The Lessons of War with Hezbollah”, *New Perspectives Quarterly* 23, sy. 4 (2006): 23.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ehud Olmert, “Ehud Olmert Administration: Remarks at Meeting with Heads of Local Authorities During War (July 31, 2006)”, *Jewish Virtual Library*, Temmuz 31, 2006, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/prime-minister-olmert-remarks-at-meeting-with-heads-of-local-authorities-during-war-july-2006> (26.04.2022).



It is clear that the notion of the “people who dwell alone” and self-reliance have been important factors in explaining the foreign policy conduct of Israel. On the other hand, the weight of history has profoundly influenced the worldview of the Jewish people, their threat perception, and their attitudes toward other peoples. In this context, the notion of “the people who dwell alone” which has affected the foreign policy of Israel has been a result of the collective historical memories, and above all, of the Holocaust. The belief that Jewish survival was constantly imperiled and that antisemitism has been widespread fueled the fears and anxieties of Israeli Jews, including Israeli policy-makers. Therefore, these sensitivities and fears of Israeli politicians and the Israeli public at large are simply inexplicable without reference to Jewish historical memories, especially the traumatic collective memory of the Holocaust.

#### **4. Israel’s Foreign Relations and A State that “is not alone”**

The historical legacy has affected the worldview and foreign policy perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes of Israeli policy-makers and the general public. Whenever they felt condemned by the international community, the more they were reminded more of their Jewish past. Whenever they were welcomed, the more confident they became, and they thought that they were moving away from their predecessors' fate. Despite long-standing efforts to isolate Israel, since its independence, it tried to have good relations with most members of the international community and has joined international organizations. However, the historical experiences of the state of Israel reinforced the feeling of isolation of the Jewish people “as the evoked set of individual and collective memories.”<sup>64</sup> In this context, the notions of “people that dwell alone” and self-reliance have been well rooted in the political culture of Israel and have been expressed in a variety of ways at different times. For example, in 1974, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said: “We should have no illusions and we should know that we are isolated in the world. Out of 137 member states of the UN, less than 10 support us. Israel shall dwell alone and only our military might guarantees our existence.”<sup>65</sup> International recognition and support were not trusted, and the only reliable friends were the other Jewish communities of the world. An example of this view was expressed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in 1988 when an international court ruled in Egypt’s favor on the Taba dispute: “The UN, the world court,

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<sup>64</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 213-216.

<sup>65</sup> Robert Slater, *Rabin of Israel* (London: Robson Books, 1977), 204.



international arbitration, or international conference-it's always against us."<sup>66</sup> The belief in a "two-camp thesis," which accepted the world as divided into Jews and the others, considered other Jews as Israel's only reliable friend. This thought was also expressed by Ben-Gurion:

"Do not forget that although Israel enjoys the friendship of many nations, it is the only country which has no self-governing 'relatives' from the point of view of religion, language, origin or culture... The only permanent loyal 'relatives' we have is the Jewish people."<sup>67</sup>

Even though Israeli policy-makers tried to be self-reliant, being a small state with limited resources, surrounded by hostile countries, and full of insecurity and isolation made it impossible for Israel not to need a big power's support. The demand to be self-reliant and the need for major power support put Israel in a significant dilemma. Israel needed this to protect her territories, get arms, and be recognized as a legal state in the region especially in the first few decades after it was established. As a young state newly established in the bipolar world system, she looked for support both from the West and the East. It tried to pursue a nonidentification policy between 1948 and 1950. On the other hand, although the strength of leftist parties in Israel made Israel inclined to the Soviet Union,<sup>68</sup> the security concerns of Israel have required the support of the US due to Israel's being a small state. However, the importance of good relations with the US was embraced at the expense of the self-reliance principle. Therefore, despite Ben-Gurion's doubts about the intentions of the great powers, which was stated as "in time of peace there is no need for them, and in time of crisis they are useless,"<sup>69</sup> the US support was accepted as one of the basic pillars of the political dimension of Israeli military policy.

This dependency was criticized by some decision-makers who claimed that it restrained Israel from following her national interests in the international arena.<sup>70</sup> Although there were cases when the United States objected to Israel's policies (as during the 1956 War), in most cases, it did not prevent Israel from following the path that was thought necessary and whenever fundamental Israeli interests were perceived to be endangered. As a result, Israel noticed that the US support has been beneficial for Israeli interests and so it should not be undermined at

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<sup>66</sup> Klieman, *Israel and the World*, 45.

<sup>67</sup> Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System*, 276.

<sup>68</sup> Avi Shlaim, "Israel Between East and West, 1948-56", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 4 (2004): 658-660.

<sup>69</sup> Anders Liden, *Security Perception: A Study of Change in Israel's Official Doctrine 1967-1974* (Lund: Distribution Studentlitteratur, 1979), 118.

<sup>70</sup> Avi Kober, "Israeli War Objectives into an Era of Negativism", *Journal of Strategic Studies Special Issue Israel's National Security Towards the 21st Century* 24, no. 2 (2001): 191.



the expense of being self-reliant. However, this did not mean that Israel would wait for support and ignore the principle of self-reliance. Instead, it tried to create a balance and Ben-Gurion's following quotation shows this situation:

"I do not say that no material aid will come from outside, but if there is any hope for such a help- and this hope does exist-then to the degree that we demonstrate to the world that we are not dependent solely on outside help, to that degree such help may be forthcoming. Even God himself helps only those who help themselves."<sup>71</sup>

On the other hand, the Oslo peace process was a watershed in Israeli foreign policy. It came about due to major changes in the international system as well as in the Middle East due to the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the Gulf War. In this regard, some of the leaders came to believe that international and regional conditions were more favorable to Israel and wanted to get rid of the basic sense of isolation deriving from the historical legacy of the Jews. They thought that the belief of "the people that dwell alone" created obstacles in front of the peace process.<sup>72</sup> For instance, Rabin expressed that attitudes toward the Jewish state have changed and the Jews should abandon the traditional fear and suspicion of the gentile world: "Israel is no longer a people that dwells alone'...and has to join the global journey toward peace, reconciliation, and international cooperation."<sup>73</sup> On another occasion, he pointed out the changes in the international arena, and mentioned the need for change in the belief of isolation:

"The world is no longer against us... States which never stretched their hand out to us, states which condemned us, which fought us, which assisted our bitterest enemies... regard us today as a worthy and respectable address... This is a new reality... Peace requires a world of new concepts."<sup>74</sup>

There were important changes in the world affecting Rabin's thoughts about the fate of Jewish people. When the Cold War ended, Israel's enemies lost their Soviet support, and Iraq was defeated in the Gulf War in 1991. These international and regional developments were acknowledged as a window of opportunity. Besides all these developments, Rabin's Labor

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<sup>71</sup> Ariel Levite, *Offense and Defense in Israeli Military Doctrine* (Jerusalem: Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies, 1989), 30.

<sup>72</sup> Efraim Inbar ve Shmuel Sandler, *The Changing Israeli Strategic Equation: Toward a Security Regime* (Tel Aviv: BESA Center for Strategic Studies, Security and Policy Studies No. 23, 1995), 54.

<sup>73</sup> Efraim Inbar, *Israel's National Security Issues and Challenges Since the Yom Kippur War* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 89.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.



government had a different security understanding, and Rabin was an optimist about peace and Israel's standing in the world.<sup>75</sup> As he declared at that time:

“The train that travels towards peace has stopped this year at many stations that daily refute the time-worn canard-the whole world is against us.’ The United States has improved its relations with us... In Europe, our dialogue with the European Community has been improved and deepened. We have been inundated by visiting heads of state and we have responded to them with friends and with economic and other links. We are no longer a people that dwells alone.”<sup>76</sup>

With this statement, he tried to point out his belief that Israel would be no longer isolated and the need for Jewish people to cease the notion of “the people who dwell alone.”<sup>77</sup> Rabin was the first leader of Israel who saw the international changes as positive developments for Israel and thought that the new security environment also reduced Israeli threat perception of her existence. This attitude change was part of a far-reaching diplomatic revolution that Israeli foreign policy underwent in the early 1990s.

It is evident that before the establishment of the Israel, state-seeking, and state-making dominated Israel's foreign policy and diplomacy. After the state was established, foreign policy was determined by the element of state-keeping. In this regard, finding and retraining major power political support and the thought of self-reliance which points out that Jews would never again find themselves unable to defend themselves helped shaped the foreign relations of Israel.

However, as seen above, from the 1990s onwards Israel wished and tried to integrate itself fully into the international community, rather than regard itself as destined to remain apart. Unlike in earlier decades when Israelis had tended to view the rest of the world with a large degree of suspicion and pessimism, Israeli policy-makers began to feel a new sense of optimism and confidence in Israel's ability to integrate itself into the international community.

This policy orientation has gradually shown that Israel is not alone in the world without any friends. It has become clear that it now has a diversified foreign policy orientation. Every country in the world has friends and foes. Israel is one of them, and not only it faces hostilities, but also friendships. There have been practical and regional considerations, such as political, economic, and strategic interests, which made it necessary for Israel to develop close ties with

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<sup>75</sup> Efraim Inbar, *Rabin and Israel's National Security* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 133.

<sup>76</sup> Neil Caplan, “Oom-Shmoom Revisited: Israeli Attitudes Towards the UN and the Great Powers, 1948-1960,” in *Global Politics, Essays in Honour of David Vital*, ed. Abraham Ben-Zvi ve Aharon Klieman (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 167.

<sup>77</sup> Michael Barnett, “Culture, Strategy and Foreign Policy Change: Israel's Road to Oslo”, *European Journal of International Relations* 5, no. 1 (1999): 21.



various countries. For instance, after its relations with many of the African countries were cut in 1973, Israel found new partners in Latin America.<sup>78</sup> When it found itself surrounded by enemies, it aligned itself with the second circle of countries surrounding the first. Because of the hostility of its neighbors, Israel was compelled to look beyond in search of friends and markets. Consequently, Turkey, Iran, and Ethiopia have been new countries strategically important to Israel (as they were also the primary targets of its periphery doctrine),<sup>79</sup> and Israel has attached great importance to the strategic relations with India.<sup>80</sup> Even though Israel lost some of these countries such as Turkey and Iran, it has found new friends, such as Greece and South Sudan.<sup>81</sup>

Israel's international relations have shown the changing patterns in the shifts in Israel's global position, priorities, policies, and self-perceptions. During the 1990s, Israel developed its relations with many Asian and African countries and inaugurated diplomatic relations. Even though the primary reason for the turnaround in Israel's standing in the international arena was the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, especially after the beginning of the peace process, Israel has developed ties with many states. Today, despite the resumption of diplomatic relations with many states that never had any links with Israel in the past, Israel has also bolstered its relations with China, India, and the economic tigers of Asia; the growing economies of Eastern Europe; and Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina. As part of the Asian continent, Israel has been interested from its inception in good ties with Asian states, China and India in particular. During the 1990s Israel finally established full diplomatic ties with both of these countries, and Israel's relations especially with India have taken on an ever greater significance since the beginning of the new millennium.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Benjamin Neuberger, *Israel's Relations with the Third World (1948–2008)* (Tel Aviv: The S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies Research Paper No.5, 2009), 20-21.

<sup>79</sup> Klieman, *Israel and the World*, 92.

<sup>80</sup> Neuberger, *Israel's Relations*, 14-15.

<sup>81</sup> Yoel Guzansky, "Israel's Periphery Doctrine 2.0: The Mediterranean Plus", *Mediterranean Politics* 19, no. 1 (2014): 100.

<sup>82</sup> For the relations between Israel-China and Israel-India, see Jonathan Goldstein, "The Republic of China and Israel, 1911-2003," in *Israel: The First Hundred Years Volume IV Israel in the International Arena*, ed. Efraim Karsh (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 216-248; Aron Shai, *Sino-Israeli Relations: Current Reality and Future Prospects* (Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies, 2009); Binyamin Tjong-Alvares, "The Geography of Sino-Israeli Relations", *Jewish Political Studies Review* 24, (2012): 96-121; P.R. Kumaraswamy, "The Maturation of Indo-Israeli Ties", *Middle East Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (2013): 39-48; P.R. Kumaraswamy, "Israel-India Relations: Seeking Balance and Realism," in *Israel: The First Hundred Years Volume IV Israel in the International Arena*, ed. Efraim Karsh (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 249-267.



As for Israel's relations with major powers, it has significant ties with both the United States<sup>83</sup> and Russia. Israel has a unique relationship with the United States and since the foundation of Israel, different factors shaped the relations between the two countries and sustained the relations to its current special position. Especially after the Six Day War, the relations between the United States and Israel improved considerably and with the election of President Reagan, a new period has begun. The unique relations found over time still pervade the present-day. For nearly a half-century, sustained political and military support of the United States has shown that the United States is Israel's main ally and friend in the world. The United States has been Israel's significant strategic partner its presidents in turn have pledged their commitment to Israel's security for decades, which many defined as a national interest of the United States. On the other hand, Israel has been one of the very few states in the Middle East to maintain regular relations with Russia after the Cold War. Now it seems that both states are benefitting from this to upgrade their ties to a higher level which may reach a strategic one very soon. In fact, there are multiple converging interests for both countries to expedite establishing a realistic and pragmatic relationship, regardless of any differences in their views on certain international issues.

Moreover, although affected by the course of the Palestinian conflict, and Israeli leaders perceive Iran as the greatest threat to Israel in more than two decades, Israel's relations with its neighbors in the Middle East seem to improve. While Israel is still maintaining peace accords with Egypt and Jordan, it recently signed treaties to normalize relations with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain<sup>84</sup> and begin a normalization process with Sudan, deepening and making public dramatic shifts in Israel's regional position. The emergence of an Israeli-Sunni Gulf accord centered on security cooperation may provide Israel with a unique opportunity to both

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<sup>83</sup> As stated above, Israel sought to have good relations with the United States at the expense of the self-reliance principle. However, the special relationship Israel currently enjoys with the United States has not come into existence suddenly. The relations of the two countries can be examined in three periods of time. During the first period beginning with the creation of the state of Israel until 1967 Six Day War, United States tried not to dissent Arab world and was cautious in its relations with Israel. However, after the Six Day War the relations between United States and Israel began to improve and with the election of President Reagan a new period of strategic relations has begun. The unique relations founded during the course of time still pervades in the present-day. As for Russia, Israel has good bilateral relations that have developed over the years. Compared with the past Cold War, today, the level, scope, and importance of relations between Israel and Russia are unprecedented. Both states see each other as an important friend and seek to establish mutual understanding to improve cooperation in different areas.

<sup>84</sup> Güngör Şahin ve Serhat Güzel, "Orta Doğu Güvenliğinde Yeni Açılımlar ve İbrahim Antlaşması", *Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, no. 34 (2021): 15-28.



address the Iranian threat and move towards normalizing its relationships with Sunni Gulf states.

As it is clear, despite the sense of being in isolation in the world, Israel is not an isolated country. On the other hand, it should not help isolate itself by its policies toward its nearby neighbors, which might put it in a ghetto in the international community. Even though it has enemies, it has also friends and Israel is not alone. The Jewish people need to come out of the vicious circle of thinking they are still “a people that dwells alone,” and stop seeing the world as divided between the Jews and the others. They should not feel like lonely people in the world. As is evident from the diversification of its foreign relations, Israel has many friends and supporters all around the world.

On the other hand, as new generations emerge in Jewish society, and as Israel continues to develop new connections around the world, the impact of Jewish historical factors on Israel’s foreign relations will most probably decrease over time. The understanding of the reality that others do not want to destroy the Jews or Israel will help Jewish people overcome the siege mentality and the feeling that the Jewish people dwell alone in the world.

## **5. Conclusions**

A century after Jews were to live in different alien nations and have been made the scapegoat for many undesirable events. The isolation and suffering of the Jews have had a tremendous impact on the Jewish people who have come to believe that Jews have been a nation that dwells alone in the world. In this regard, historical experiences of persecution and the Holocaust were central to the construction of the identity of isolation and self-reliance. The notions of “people that dwell alone” and self-reliance have been deeply embedded in Israeli political culture, influenced Israel’s foreign relations, and Israel’s international isolation seemed to prove that the Jewish people’s destiny was to stand apart from other nations.

On the other hand, apart from the above-mentioned considerations, since its independence, Israel tried to maintain positive relations with the majority of the international community and established relations with as many countries as possible. Israel’s close friendship with the United States has been a linchpin of its foreign policy and the Oslo peace process was the centerpiece of Israel’s new foreign policy orientation. Israel’s developing diplomatic relations with countries in Asia, Africa, and South America and growing



normalization of relations concerning the Abraham Accord countries have also made tangible improvements in Israel's foreign relations. All these developments have demonstrated that the notion of Jewish people who dwells alone is increasingly becoming a bygone feeling which Israeli people and policymakers are to realize that they have overcome over many years of statehood.

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