

Report on the Bersheeba Peacekeeping Conference of 17 June 2002

From: Jarat Chopra

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1. German Funders

Interestingly, the meeting was funded by the German “Friedrich Ebert Stiftung”.

Present were: Hajo Lanz (head of Middle East/North Africa in Bonn)
Dr. Winfried Veit (Director of the Tel Aviv Office)
Arnold Wehmhorner (Regional Rep. in Sofia)

I drove to Jerusalem with them and had a long talk. They said that they can't say it publicly, but they have been trying to push the issue of third party intervention in Israel. Funding meetings like this is one way.

I explained that we have been trying to find people to talk to on the Israeli side and they are willing to help. They are talking about trying to take Israelis and Palestinians to other peace operations, as in the Balkans, as a way of educating them. I tried to explain that we have already done a lot of thinking about this and really need some direct contacts.

I also raised the issue of the fact that we might be doing a round of meetings in Europe and were interested to know who in Berlin might be working on this. Hajo Lanz said he would try and find out in more detail than they have, and that we should keep in contact with him about this.

They were clear that Fischer's office had inserted the third party intervention element in the German plan. They presumed that the Middle East section of the Foreign Ministry was involved. But they would try and find the right names.

They also said that Volker Perthes (sp?) of the SWP (International Institute for Politics and Security) in Berlin was working on the Middle East and maybe officially involved in some way. Also, the Conflict Resolution Institute in Frankfurt maybe involved.

They also have an office in East Jerusalem that focuses on the West Bank and Gaza, but that they are down to 15% functioning capacity because of travel restrictions of participating Palestinians. I'm not sure if there is any additional role for this office to play additional to the Tel Aviv office.

2. Conference Organizers

Joel Peters: basically, he was as we estimated beforehand. He is engaged and interested in trying to assist a process in any way he can in terms of contacts on the subject. Ben Gurion University is a formal partner of the Ebert Stiftung.

David Newman: He started the Dept. of Politics and Govt. at Ben Gurion, and is more established than, and in fact hired, Joel Peters. Newman coincidentally edits a journal, *Geopolitics*, the board of advisors of which I sit on. He wrote a good piece for the *New York Times* on settlements (21 May 2002). He also wrote an article for the *Jerusalem Post* (which he laments is moving right) on changing attitudes within Israel on third party intervention. He believes that since international intervention is the latest issue to become part of the domestic debate, it won't leave it.

In his JPost article, Newman cites a Peace Index of the Steinmetz Peace Research Institute in Tel Aviv. It says that 40% of Jewish Israelis would accept international intervention, and 35% would accept it in the form of troops. **Perhaps we should talk to Khalil Shikaki to do a comprehensive survey of the issue, including what the Palestinian street requires in terms of intervention. I could think of specific questions that could add strength to the debate.**

Both Peters and Newman left the UK at different times. Both are pretty much on the left, despite Newman coming from an ultra-Orthodox family, whose sister is a conservative settler in the West Bank.

3. Conference Participants

The level of peacekeeping discussion was relatively basic. There were one or two people who were alright.

There were three relevant Israeli participants. The most significant of these was **Gen. Baruch Spiegel**. He now is with ECF, and had been the Israeli counterpart in developing the security framework for the Jordanian peace deal. After I spoke, he came up to me and said that we need to meet. So he may be the best new contact from the meeting.

Gen. Shlomo Brom was also there, but we had met with him last summer.

Both gave very critical presentations of the experience of traditional-style peacekeeping operations in the area. Or at least, they contrasted UNIFIL in Lebanon with UNDOF in the Golan Heights and UNEF/MFO in the Sinai. Their lessons from these experiences are standard peace operations lessons. **But what is important to note is that the level of their thinking really has to do with the nature of peacekeeping as it existed before the 1990s—the period of time when these missions were created. They seem not to have thought about the variety of options that have been created since then, that are more relevant to what we need.**

It is also interesting to note that they indicated cracks in the notion that Israelis have to rely only on themselves. But in this context, they remember U Thant's withdrawal of UNEF from the Sinai in 1967—in other words, the one time they needed the UN was the one time it pulled out. This seems to be a traumatic event of mythic proportions in their minds.

In short, Brom stated that the negative Israeli view related to (1) negative experience of UN deployments that are not impartial, but favour the other side; (2) the UN is an anti-Israeli platform generally; and (3) the trauma of the '67 war.

Israel wants freedom of action and doesn't want international constraints. "Internationalization" is a bad word. The Israeli view is that Palestinian violence is intended to lead to an Israeli-overreaction which will then bring in international forces, which will be a poor deal for Israel and threaten its existence.

They see a role for monitoring and verification.

They are preoccupied with any intervention being based on the agreement of the two sides as a lesson of success and failure in the missions in the region. If something is deployed before a permanent settlement, then it should be based on an interim agreement, or some kind of agreement, even if it is a partial one.

Brom notes that at the end of "Op Defensive Shield", there were two problems that the parties themselves couldn't solve: the sieges of Arafat compound and the Church of the Nativity. So there are important functions that the parties can't perform by themselves. For instance, exit points for Palestinians to rest of the world: Israel doesn't trust the Palestinians not to smuggle weapons; the Palestinians don't want the Israeli control to impinge on their sovereignty.

Israel would prefer a non-UN force over a UN force. Israel doesn't trust the UN; it doesn't want to depend on the ineffectiveness of the bureaucracy; it feels the UN system is susceptible to external interference.

Spiegel likes the **Israeli-Jordanian experience**. It established strong liaison systems with very rapid investigative procedures and capacity. We should look at this.

A third Israeli participant was **Daniel Taub**, from the Foreign Ministry. He noted that the anti-international resolve is wavering. He pointed out that every agreement with a neighbouring country required a third party, either to get agreement or to implement it.

Israel can't do everything itself. It can't win militarily, and it doesn't win even if it makes unilateral concessions, as at Camp David.

At one end of the political spectrum, Peres is calling for the Quartet to be more involved. (Peres apparently had an op ed in the papers to this effect?) At the other end, Sharon is calling for an international conference.

Israel sees "internationalization" as having several possible meanings, some of which Israel won't change its views on, others it might.

- (i) transferring responsibility for solving the Palestinian-Israeli problem to the international community. Israel won't change its rejection of this. It sees the UN as pro-Palestinian. It feels that decades of hostile UN resolutions on the issue haven't changed anything on the ground; but bilateral negotiations have.

- (ii) The active involvement of a third party in bilateral negotiations. Although this is welcomed, he said there is much to be skeptical about. For instance, the two sides harden their positions when there is a third party. Or a third party can have its own agenda. There is less compliance with agreements drafted by third parties than if the parties put the terms of the agreement forward.
- (iii) Some form of international presence. Peacekeeping has a limited role: what can it do to prevent terrorism? **(This is a key point: the fact is that a peace operation has little to offer in fighting what the IDF can't finish off. It can offer more to the weaker party than the stronger. So how can it be sold to the stronger party?)** There is the bad experience with UNIFIL, where Israeli forces had to be accountable, but not invisible terrorist organizations. He cited **TIPH and the Grapes of Wrath** model as useful to consider. I responded.
- (iv) The involvement of the international community in institution-building.

Taub concluded after we had an exchange that maybe something that combined a “buffer” and a pervasive “transition” may be the thing to put together.

Annex: Biographical Notes

(1) Conference Organizers

Joel Peters is senior lecturer in the Department of Government and Politics at Ben Gurion University of the Negev where he teaches courses on international relations and conflict resolution. He is also a member of the academic committee of the Chaim Herzog Center for Middle East Studies and Diplomacy. He is a member of the executive committee of the Israel Association for the Study of European Integration and the Israel Association for International Studies and has just been appointed as Director of the recently established Centre for the Study of European Politics and Society and Ben Gurion University.

His research interests and publications cover Israeli foreign policy, the Arab-Israeli peace process, regional cooperation and peacebuilding (with particular reference to the Middle East and Mediterranean) He is currently co-directing with Charles Hauss (George Mason University and Search for Common Ground USA) and international research project on Reconstruction and Reconciliation in Conflict Resolution and is co-authoring (with Charles Hauss) an introductory textbook for Wadsworth on International Relations. He is the book review editor of the academic journal Geopolitics (published by Frank Cass).

David Newman is founder and chair of the Department of Politics and Government at Ben Gurion University of the Negev. Born and educated in the UK, his degrees are from the University of London (B.A -1978) and the University of Durham (Ph.D - 1981). From 1982-1987 he was a member of faculty at the Department of Geography at Tel Aviv University, and from 1987-1998 at the Department of geography at Ben Gurion University.

Prior to setting up the Department of Politics, Newman was Director of the Humphrey Institute for Social Research at Ben Gurion University. He has spent periods of time as a visiting professor of Geography at the University of Calgary (1993-1994) and of Political Science at York University, Toronto, Canada (1994-1995).

Newman specialises in political geography and geopolitics and has published widely on the territorial aspects of the Arab/Israel conflict. He currently serves as editor of the international journal of Geopolitics (published three times yearly in London) and is known for his political commentary column which appears in the Jerusalem Post.

(2) Israeli Participants

Baruch Spiegel served in the IDF until 1998. In 1976 he became a commander in the Golani unit, where he would also serve as Chief Commander between 1988 and 1990.

During this period, Spiegel continued his university studies and, in 1991, he received a joint masters degree in Middle East Studies, Political Science and Management

from Haifa University and the National Defense Institute. In the same year, he was promoted to the position of Brigadier General, becoming the Head of the IDF Liaison Unit, where he was responsible for security relations between Israeli and Arab forces, as well as with peace-keeping forces.

Spiegel was appointed, on behalf of the IDF, to be responsible for negotiations with Jordan. In this capacity, alongside his colleague General Mansour Abu Rashid, he drafted the military and security annex of the Israeli-Jordanian Peace Agreement, which was eventually signed in October 1994.

The following year, he was appointed as the Deputy Coordinator of Government Activities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, dealing extensively with all civil and security issues related to the Palestinians. He continued in this position until 1998, when he officially left the IDF to work in the private sector.

Since 1998, Spiegel has been the principal consultant to the Tel Aviv-based Economic Cooperation Foundation (ECF), a NGO led by Dr. Yair Hirschfeld, the initiator of the Oslo back-channel. At the ECF, Spiegel is the leading advisor on all security-related issues, particularly in building bi and trilateral security understandings en route toward and beyond permanent status. He is also the chief consultant on cross-border cooperation, particularly to Cooperation North, the first Israeli-Palestinian cross-border alliance. Moreover, in 2000, Spiegel teamed up again with General Mansour and, since then, he has helped forge a strong partnership between the Amman Center for Peace and Development and the ECF, as well as with other leading Israeli institutions and bodies.

Shlomo Brom joined the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies as a senior research associate in November 1998 after a long career in the I.D.F. His last post in the I.D.F. was as Chief of the Strategic Planning Division in the Planning Branch of the General Staff. Before that he was the Deputy Chief of the Strategic Planning Division for three years. During his six years in these posts Brig. Gen. Brom participated actively in the peace negotiations with the Palestinians, Jordan and Syria. He also took part in the re-examination of Israel's Defense Policies and handled the strategic relation of the I.D.F. with the USA Armed Forces and other militaries. Previously, Brig. Gen. Brom served in different positions in the Air Force Intelligence organization until he reached the position of the Deputy Chief of the Air Force Intelligence for Research and Production. He was also the Israeli Defense Attache in the Republic of South Africa, and a member of a Strategic Think Tank in the Office of the Prime Minister. His recent publication is *Israel and South Lebanon: In the Absence of a Peace Treaty with Syria*. 1999.

Daniel Taub is Director of the General Law Division in Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His areas of responsibility include international organisations, humanitarian law and counter-terrorism cooperation. He has been extensively involved in the peace process and served on Israel's negotiating teams in both the Israel-Syria and Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. He spent the past academic year as a Wexner Fellow at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

(3) UN Participant

Anthony French is Senior Legal Adviser, UNTSO/UNDOF/UNFICYP. He is 59 years old, graduated from the University of Queensland, Australia

in 1971 with an LLB and a BA majoring in Political Science. He joined United Nations in 1976 and has spent his entire career with peace keeping missions in the region as legal adviser, sometimes as acting political and press officer. He has also undertaken short assignments with United Nations peacekeeping missions in Kuwait, Iraq and Georgia. He was legal adviser to UNIFIL in its initial period from 1978 to 1983.

(4) Other Participants

David Last (PhD) is an officer in the Canadian Armed Forces, a graduate of the Royal Military College of Canada (BA), Carleton University (MA), the London School of Economics (PhD), and the US Army Command and General Staff College (MMAS). He commanded Blue Beret Camp in UNFICYP (Cyprus) 1992-93, where he completed research on the handling of incidents and worked with the Intercommunal Conflict Resolution Steering Committee. He conducted research in Croatia with the Peacekeeper Interview Program in 1994, and served as the Military Assistant to the Deputy Force Commander of UNPF from May-December 1995 (in Zagreb). From January-July 1996 he was the Civil Affairs officer for the Serb side the Canadian Multinational Brigade area (in northwest Bosnia).

Major Last spent two years developing courses and conducting research at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, and then served as national staff officer for Counter Terrorism and Special Operations before coming to teach at RMC in 1999. His book, *Conflict De-escalation in Peacekeeping Operations*, is published by the Canadian Peacekeeping Press (1997), and recent articles appear in *International Peacekeeping*, *Canadian Foreign Policy*, and *Fletcher Forum*.

Major Last teaches in the Department of Political Science at the Royal Military College of Canada. His research interests focus on third party intervention in protracted social conflict.

Richard Caplan is a Lecturer in Politics and International Relations at the University of Reading; a Research Fellow at the Centre for International Studies, University of Oxford; and a Research Associate at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in London where he published the Adelphi Paper, *A New Trusteeship? The International Administration of War-torn Territories*. He has also served as a Specialist-Advisor to the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs of the UK House of Commons; as Editor of *World Policy Journal*, the quarterly journal of the World Policy Institute in New York; and as Deputy Director of the London-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting. He has written widely on international organisations and conflict management, European security and defence policy, humanitarian intervention, and the crisis in former Yugoslavia, with articles appearing in *International Affairs*, *Survival*, *International Peacekeeping*, *Ethics & International Affairs*, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, *Forced Migration Review*, and the *SIPRI Yearbook* as well as in various edited volumes. He is author of the forthcoming *Europe and the Recognition of New States in Yugoslavia* (Cambridge University Press) and co-editor of and contributor to *Europe's New Nationalism: States and Minorities in Conflict* (Oxford University Press, 1996) and *State of the Union: The Clinton Administration and the Nation in Profile* (Westview Press, 1994). He holds degrees in politics and

international relations from the University of London (PhD), the University of Cambridge (MPhil) and McGill University (BA).

Fred A. Lazin is the Lynn and Lloyd Hurst Family Professor of Local Government and a member of the Department of Politics and Government at Ben Gurion University. He is a Phi Beta Kappa Graduate of the University of Massachusetts and received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Chicago. He has taught at UCLA, GWU, Cornell, Tufts and CUNY.

He recently finished a research project on Israel's absorption of Russian and Ethiopian Jewish immigrants from 1989-1992. His current research involves a study of the issue of "Freedom of Choice" (for Soviet Jews) among American Jewish Organizations, 1970-1991. His most recent books are Politics and Policy Implementation: Project Renewal in Israel, Israel in the Nineties and The Policy Implementation Process in Developing Nations. He teaches courses in American Politics, Public Policy, and Urbanization and Poverty.

Matthias Ries, 33, holds an M.A. in History and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Heidelberg. His studies focused on the Middle East Conflict, conflict resolution, international relations, and electoral systems. His Ph.D. research has examined the course and the outcome of the Oslo Channel. After his first visit in Israel and Palestine in 1987, he has participated in a wide range of NGOs and public policy organizations, including the "German-Israeli Working Group for Peace in the Middle East" and the "German-Palestinian Association". In 1999 he was trained by the "forumZFD" (Forum Civil Peace Service) to be a "peace professional". The forumZFD is an association of various German peace organizations, church groups, and other NGOs aimed at creating and strengthening non-violent conflict transformation and setting up a Civil[ian] Peace Service (CPS) as an instrument of civil policy. He is currently coordinating the project "Willy Brandt Center Jerusalem" within this framework.

Arnold Wehhoerner (MA in Sociology and Economics). Personal Assistant to Minister of Interior, Land Hamburg. Has worked for the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung with postings in Thailand, Bonn, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Namibia and Bonn. He is Currently the project Manager of the Regional Office of the FES in Sofia for Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania.

Peter Kmec is Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Slovakia in Tel Aviv. He has worked for the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE) in Georgia and Vienna.