

תכנית ההתנתקות הרעיון ושברו

עורך: יעקב בר-סימן-טוב



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The Disengagement Plan – An Idea Shattered

Editor: **Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov**

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Preface

For over 25 years, the Israel Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has been committed to the promotion of public discourse in Israel and throughout the region, and has contributed to the study of political and social processes, searching for suitable and effective solutions to crises and conflicts.

The disengagement plan was undoubtedly a formative event in the history of the State of Israel. From many aspects it has left its mark on Israeli society, and has influenced its political behavior ever since. The implementation and outcome of the plan have raised tough questions as to the place of unilateral actions in Israeli politics in the future and the extent of their legitimacy in general.

This book is the product of joint research by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Israel and the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, which examines the topic from its different perspectives. This is our humble contribution to the public discussion on this important issue.

Dr. Lars Hänsel

Director of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
in Israel

Preface

Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov

The disengagement from Gaza and northern Samaria was one of the most traumatic events in the history of the State of Israel. For the first time since the Six-Day War, the government of Israel decided on a unilateral disengagement from territories occupied in the Six-Day War, unconditionally and without an agreement. In implementing the plan, the government diverged dramatically from clear political and security doctrines that evolved following the war and served as cornerstones of Israel's foreign and defense policies:

- ❖ Withdrawal from territory without an agreement, contrary to the “land for peace” formula;
- ❖ Withdrawal to the June 4, 1967 border in the Gaza Strip;
- ❖ Revoking the principle of the security importance of territory, including the need for a physical buffer between Gaza and Egypt;
- ❖ Abandoning the importance of the value of settlement, from a security and Zionist standpoint.

Unilateral disengagement was adopted as a conflict management strategy after five years of violent confrontation with the Palestinians following the failure of the Oslo process. One may, to a large degree, view unilateral disengagement as the outcome of the failure to manage the violent conflict with the Palestinians. The fact that the plan was conceived, decided upon and carried out by prime minister Ariel Sharon, who was considered the father of the settlement program for the territories occupied in 1967, raised many questions as to the settlement enterprise in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The disengagement plan, which led to the uprooting of some 8,000 settlers and 25 settlements, sparked a personal, ideological-identity, social and political crisis, one of the harshest ever seen by Israeli society. The prime minister himself, Sharon, defined the decision as the most difficult decision of his life. In light of the

importance and unique nature of the disengagement event, the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies and the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research at Tel Aviv University have joined forces in order to address a number of issues related to the phenomenon of disengagement and its ramifications, and a multidisciplinary research group was formed for this purpose. The group members were asked to confront the issue within their area of research expertise, and emphasis was placed on the attempt to combine the analysis of the disengagement phenomenon with its implications for Israeli society. We did not, of course, deal with all the relevant issues, preferring to focus on just a few that appeared to us the most important. The study consists of eight chapters, and was assembled in a number of stages: Meetings of the research group, presenting the study chapters in a closed workshop and in a public conference, and following these stages, the final consolidation of the study.

In the first chapter, “Disengagement as an identity conflict,” Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov focuses on analyzing the disengagement plan as a conflict of identity in Israeli society: Israel’s identity as a Jewish and democratic state. Since 1967, Israeli identity has been shaped mainly by Israeli control of the territories and control over the Palestinians. This dual control created a clear contradiction between the values of “the integrity of the land,” “land of the forefathers” and settlement on one hand, and the value of preserving Israel as a Jewish and democratic state on the other; the latter value is incompatible with domination of another people. This contradiction finds expression in the positions of the right wing and left wing alike. The identity conflict arises instantly whenever policymakers decide to withdraw from these territories and to evacuate settlements, within the framework of peace agreements or interim agreements or by means of unilateral disengagement, since right wing and settler circles view this as a severe infraction of the values of integrity of the land and settlement, and immediately launch a battle to obstruct it. The disengagement plan, which included withdrawal and evacuation of settlements from territories occupied by Israel in the Six-Day War, immediately evoked a clear conflict between the architects of the disengagement policy, who viewed it as a central means of safeguarding Israel’s nature as a Jewish and democratic state, and the plan’s opponents, who considered it a severe threat to the values of integrity of the land and settlement. The identity conflict was perceived by the plan’s opponents as particularly severe, since the plan was designed and implemented by Ariel Sharon, father of the settlement program in

the territories. Despite the identity conflict, the disengagement was carried out at a relatively low level of violence, with the desire to uphold certain rules; however, there is no certainty that these rules will be upheld in case of another withdrawal from the territories. The Amona affair is a clear indication to this effect. The article consists of several sections: The first section discusses control of the territories as a matter of identity, while distinguishing between territorial identity and ethnic identity and examining the contradiction between the two. The second section focuses on examining the meaning of possible territorial changes as a conflict of identity. The third and last section analyzes disengagement as an identity conflict, in which both sides – the planners and implementers of disengagement, as well as its opponents – preferred to frame the battle as a battle over identity.

In the second chapter, “Religious Zionism in the test of state responsibility: From Kfar Maimon to Amona,” Anat Roth deals with the moral conflict faced by religious Zionism: The head-on collision between the integrity of the land and the Torah on one hand, with the integrity of the land and the State of Israel on the other. The way in which this moral conflict was decided was directly related to the question of the battle against disengagement, the boundaries of resistance and delegitimizing the plan’s opponents in the Israeli public. The article’s central claim is that the main reason that disengagement passed without real violence is the centrality of the principle of state responsibility (*mamlachtiyut*) that underlies the worldview of religious Zionism. It was this principle that guided its leaders to refrain from a clash with the IDF despite the violation of the land’s integrity, so long as the integrity of the people and the state would not be damaged. The article comprises four sections: The first section is mainly theoretical. It presents the characteristics of a proactive religious movement and the sources of the Israeli public’s fear that the settlers would employ violence in the event of a withdrawal and evacuation of settlements. The second section discusses the religious Zionist worldview, its core values and their complexity, and mainly the principle of state responsibility. In its third section, the article addresses the challenge of the moral conflict that disengagement posed to religious Zionism, the dilemmas with which it was forced to cope and the way it decided on these dilemmas, in the decision that was made at Kfar Maimon to refrain from violence. In the fourth section, the article examines the implications of the Kfar Maimon decision on the violent clash at Amona. The article concludes that despite the high level of violence exhibited at Amona, it too was largely limited. However, there is no certainty that the red

lines for restricting violence that were imposed at Kfar Maimon will remain in force in the event of a large-scale withdrawal in Judea and Samaria.

In the third chapter, “The psychological significance of the expulsion,” Baruch Kahana discusses the psychological impact of disengagement on the evacuees, or as he prefers to call them: expellees. The article addresses three main questions:

- ❖ Did disengagement cause psychological harm to the expellees?
- ❖ In case of such harm, which psychological processes can serve to explain it?
- ❖ Was the psychological harm inevitable, or could it have been prevented, or at least reduced?

The author responds in the affirmative to the first question and points at cases of post-traumatic stress disorder among some of the expellees, particularly among young people, as shown by various studies. The crisis undergone by the expellees can be seen in spheres related to their home, their socioeconomic status, and mainly the meaning of their life and beliefs. The author proposes the theory of narrative psychology, which focuses on life stories, as a source for discussing the trauma of the expellees. The trauma was perceived as a narrative crisis for the expellees. The narrative crisis was revealed during the time the disengagement plan was consolidated; in its execution, which involved removing the settlers from their homes and demolishing the homes; and in the post-disengagement period. As for the third question, the author believes that the psychological harm suffered by the expellees was unavoidable due to the expulsion itself. However, it is impossible to ignore the large incidence of psychological injuries that could have been prevented – some were deliberately inflicted and others may have been caused inadvertently – but this does not reduce their severity. The author believes that it was possible to reduce the damage caused by the disengagement had it been conducted with greater sensitivity and consideration, if a communal approach had been adopted towards the settlers, and if they had been able to maintain their natural leadership.

In the fourth chapter, “Compensation and treatment of the evacuees as a means of legitimizing the disengagement policy,” Keren Tamir examines the compensation and the manner in which the evacuees were treated as a means of legitimizing the disengagement. Although the initiators of the disengagement

had surmised from the outset that the compensation and the treatment of the evacuees would not be able to satisfy or appease them, they had hoped that compensation and proper handling would be able to help somewhat and would influence the attitude of the general public towards the disengagement. The article includes four sections: The first section looks at the various types of evacuation-compensation policies proposed and the rationale underlying their formulation. The second section discusses the manner in which the evacuation-compensation policy was carried out and the changes that were made during the said period of time. The third section focuses on the attitude of the evacuees themselves toward evacuation-compensation, while the fourth section examines the extent to which the compensation and treatment of the evacuees actually helped legitimize the disengagement plan. The conclusions of the research indicate that the shapers of the various policies failed in their formulation and implementation of the evacuation-compensation policies, and the evacuees protested this. Emphasizing material compensation instead of maintaining a community framework as the fundamental approach for the evacuation-compensation program on the one hand, and faulty implementation of the compensation policies on the other hand, made it hard for the state to carry out an effective means for coping with the problem of the evacuation. Although the compensation was not meant to address the emotional and ideological distress of the evacuees and could not legitimize the evacuation, its faulty design and implementation made it even more difficult to properly cope with the evaluation problem.

In the fifth chapter, “The disengagement as seen through the media: How do we create legitimacy for the government?”, Anat First examines the role of the media in legitimizing the disengagement plan. Her principle conclusion is that the disengagement process as reflected on the television news channels, re-invented the concept of “us” for the Israeli nation. Television played its traditional role of reinforcing the Jewish and democratic components of Israel’s ruling ideology by presenting the disengagement as a legitimate, obvious and necessary measure while rejecting its opponents as dangerous and violent. The article entails three main sections: The first section is theoretical and analyzes the role of the media in constructing individual attitudes in society, while differentiating between two competing approaches towards the nature of that construction. One claims that the media, as a communal, public and open entity, promotes the democratization, liberalization and pluralization of society and its discourse. The second approach

argues that as with any other establishment action, those who hold sway in society distort the media activity in their favor from the outset. The second section of this research examines the role played by Israeli television in the context of these two approaches, and claims that until the 1980s Israeli television served as an institution that reinforced the Jewish national hegemony but that this position was weakened with the introduction of numerous channels of commercial television. The third section, which is the main part of the research, examines television's role in legitimizing the disengagement using qualitative-semiotic analysis of the reports broadcast on television. The analytical dimensions of the study are based on the following list of variables: quantity, routinizing, multiple framing, symbiosis and providing extensive explanation. The research population consisted of the news broadcasts on Channel 1, Channel 2 and Channel 10. Nonetheless, differences were found in the emphasis of the different channels. Channel 1 established its sense of nationalism "from the top down," Channel 10 did the same from "the bottom up" while Channel 2 combined the two.

In the sixth chapter, "The disengagement process from an organization point of view," Amalya Oliver-Lumerman and Yuval Kalish present a unique organizational approach to analyzing the disengagement process using models that integrate game theory, theories of inter-organizational processes, and studies of small groups. The article is based on two assumptions: First, the actors in the disengagement are equally important within the process. Second, the actors in the disengagement are mutually dependent although their goals are different when it comes to the "final objective." The study entails two parts: theoretical and empirical. The first part presents the theoretical framework of the study and includes a discussion of the following models: Wick's organizational model, which states that any organizational theory must focus on the organizational process; Grassick's punctuated equilibrium model, which describes the time during which changes occur in work teams; and approaches from game theory – the Prisoner's Dilemma, the rabbit game and the trust game. The use of an integrated theoretical approach is the ability to examine the process, the changing relationships between the sides at different points of time. The empirical section uses the integrated theoretical approach, examining the period beginning on July 14, 2005 (when the Gaza Strip was closed off to Israelis) and ending on August 23 (the end of the disengagement in the Gaza Strip). Research statistics consist of the headlines and editorials featured in *Ha'aretz* and *Yediot Aharonot*, which provided rich

information regarding developments during the disengagement and the various stages in the relations of the two sides to the conflict. The study's conclusion indicates that a significant change took place in the perceptions of the two sides to the conflict – the army and the police on one side, and the settlers on the other side – at a certain point of “equilibrium” that brought the sides to agree to an informal cooperation in order to contain the confrontation and prevent its exacerbation.

In the seventh chapter, “The embedded military: The success of the IDF in implementing the disengagement,” Yagil Levy looks at the reason for the IDF's success in carrying out the disengagement. The army's evacuation tactic, which was based on concentration of force and efficient organization, explains the success of the evacuation but not the lack of violent opposition to the evacuation nor the lack of insubordination within the ranks of the army, especially among national-religious soldiers who identified with the settlement movement in the territories. The article's main thrust is that the effective operation of the army, which was based on its being embedded in the social networks of the groups serving in it, primarily the national religious groups, is the factor that would explain the army's successful evacuation with a relatively low level of violence. The army was able to leverage the interests of these groups to preserve their mobility and their status in the army. This interest required them to maintain the army's position and avoid massive clashes with it. Nevertheless, the article emphasizes that any additional disengagement of settlements is likely to be more problematic, especially if the hold of the national-religious groups in the army becomes stronger because such a possible evacuation would completely remove them from their symbolic-military assets and then they might work towards opposing the evacuation. The first part of the article presents the theoretical framework of the research, which focuses on the phenomenon of an embedded army. The second section deals with the challenge of legitimizing the army in light of the changes in its human composition over the years. The third section discusses three issues: the army's evacuation strategy, which integrates symbols of “the people's army” in leveraging the army's investments in religious networks; the strategic dilemma of the religious inductees in socially establishing the evacuation force; and the response by religious groups.

In the eighth chapter, “The disengagement as a missed historical opportunity to resolve the Israel-Palestinian conflict,” Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov examines four

arguments to assess the results and implications of the disengagement on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, some of which complement and some of which contradict one another. First, the disengagement generated unjustified expectations in Israel and outside regarding the plan's ability to end the violent confrontation between Israel and the Palestinians and to bring about a renewal of the political process. These expectations did not correspond at all with reality because, on the one hand, Israeli policymakers did not hide their feelings that the disengagement was a unilateral strategy to manage the conflict, aimed at freezing the political process more than renewing it. On the other hand, the Palestinians did not see any chance for change from the beginning. Therefore, it is no wonder that the disengagement did not bring about the hoped-for change. Second, the disengagement missed a tremendous historic opportunity to change the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, given that it was an extraordinary step that included withdrawal from territory and evacuation of settlements without a political process and without any compensation. Those who are responsible for this missed opportunity were Israel, the Palestinians and the international community, particularly the USA. Third, the disengagement failed to fulfill most of its political and security objectives as the plan's designers and planners had presented them. Fourth, the disengagement generated significant changes in Israel's political and security approaches towards the Palestinians as defined since the Six Day War, and the ramifications of these changes are likely to be reflected in the peace process or as part of a unilateral strategy. The article consists of the following sections: Unilateral disengagement as a strategy for managing and resolving conflict, examining expectations of the disengagement, looking at the disengagement as a missed historic opportunity, examining the relationship between the plan's goals and outcomes, and examining the impact of the disengagement's outcomes on Israel's political-security perceptions.

Afterword

Operation “Cast Lead,” which Israel initiated against Hamas in December 2008 and January 2009, is the central expression of the unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip undertaken by Ariel Sharon. The disengagement failed to reduce the threshold of violence, and even escalated the situation considerably. The violent confrontation with Hamas endangered the security of hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens, not only in the southern part of the country but in the center as well. Operation “Cast Lead,” and the Second Lebanese War, are the result of the bankruptcy of the unilateral disengagement approach as an effective strategy for conflict management, when on the other side there is a non-political player in a low-intensity conflict. Both military operations proved that this type of violent confrontation cannot be won and that unilateral disengagement does not guarantee security under conditions of violent confrontation.

Indeed, Israeli policymakers understood that a policy of unilateral withdrawal should not be used in Judea and Samaria, given the proximity of these areas to population centers in Israel. Olmert’s attempts to continue the disengagement in these areas were halted when the Second Lebanese War broke out because, while Israel’s physical control in Judea and Samaria provides a temporary solution to possible security problems, in Lebanon and Gaza Israel is forced to rely upon unilateral deterrence and external management as a means of achieving temporary calm, given the lack of joint management or any chance for a political settlement. The placement of an international force in southern Lebanon has ensured a reasonable level of security and calm during the past two years. Nevertheless, Israel failed in its attempts to prevent Hezbollah from rearming itself and the security threat has even increased dramatically. In the Gaza Strip, Israel is forced to rely on assistance from Egypt to externally manage the conflict and ensure a controlled cease-fire that will prevent or reduce the smuggling of weapons from Sinai into Gaza. But there is no guarantee that these measures will ultimately prove to be effective. Both in the north and in the south, it appears that when there is no political option and no hope for resolving the conflict, the measures that can be used to manage the conflict are limited from the start and cannot guarantee long-term security stability.

The disengagement was a key factor in changing Israel's political map in 2006. It split the Likud, led to the establishment of "Kadima" and its victory in the elections, thereby significantly reducing Likud's power. In contrast with this the failures of the unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon as reflected in the Second Lebanese War, and the failed disengagement from the Gaza Strip as reflected in Operation "Cast Lead," brought about new changes in Israel's political map. Those who led the withdrawal from Lebanon (Labor) and the Gaza Strip (Kadima) were dealt a blow in the 2009 election and the right-wing parties appear to be returning to power once again. The public's sense of insecurity regarding the central and left-wing parties to achieve security have led to a rise of the right-wing parties, this time, with the belief that they can provide greater security.

The victory of the right in the 2009 elections also indicates the public's lack of faith in a possible peace process with the Palestinians and a decline in their willingness to pay the price of peace, which involves withdrawal from territory and dismantling settlements. Under these circumstances it seems that any attempt to work towards a political agreement that involves territorial compromise and removing settlements will be met with even stronger opposition than in the past.

The ongoing failure in the government's handling of the Gaza evacuees also raises question marks regarding a peace settlement that would entail massive withdrawal from settlements. It is doubtful that economic incentives could be used to enlist political legitimacy for such a measure, given the low effectiveness of the disengagement administration. Thus, it would seem that what was possible in 2005 appears almost unreasonable in 2009.

ההתנתקות מרצועת עזה ומצפון השומרון היתה אחד האירועים הטראומטיים ביותר בתולדות מדינת-ישראל. לראשונה מאז מלחמת ששת הימים החליטה ממשלת-ישראל על התנתקות חד-צדדית משטחים שנכבשו במלחמה זו, בלא הסכם ובלא תנאי. ההתנתקות, שהביאה לעקירתם של כ-8,000 מתיישבים ו-25 יישובים, חוללה משבר אישי, אידיאולוגי-זהותי, חברתי ופוליטי, מן הקשים שידעה החברה הישראלית.

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