Introduction

WHEN THE BERLIN WALL CRUMBLED in 1989 and the Iron Curtain collapsed, optimism spread throughout the world. Politicians and intellectuals saw these events not only as the "end of history"—the end of the Cold War and a great victory for liberal democratic values—but also as an opportunity for establishing a new world order, a future devoid of war. After all, since the end of World War II in 1945, more than 160 wars had been fought worldwide, in which 28 million people had been killed. Did humanity not deserve to begin a new "postwar" era and to build a "postwar" society? Soon, however, those envisioning such possibilities came to realize that their optimism was no more than wishful thinking. The drive to war, so deeply engrained in mankind's genetic code, is not easily purged.

During the 1990s alone, there were fifty-seven major armed conflicts in forty-five locations.[1] Today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, one out of every fifteen countries—with a combined population of one billion, or one-sixth of humanity—is involved in one kind of war or another: guerilla war, insurrection, civil war, revolutionary war, secessionist war, or international terror war. In Congo alone, the death toll since that country's civil war began in 1998 has been estimated to be as high as 4.7 million. Though its death toll has been greater than that of any other ongoing war in the same period, the conflict in Congo is otherwise typical of today's wars. The combatants are mostly irregular militias, their victims are mostly unarmed, and the fighting is lengthy: it has gone on for more than five years. Whereas a century ago most conflicts occurred between nations, and 90 percent of casualties were soldiers, today almost all wars are civil wars, and 90 percent of the victims are civilians. The aspiration for peace has not yet overcome the primal drive to war.

The optimistic wave that spread around the world at the end of the twentieth century—the supposed end of the war age—was amazingly

similar to the wave that swept over intellectuals in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century, when liberals and evolutionists, as well as Socialists and Communists, believed that the historic function of wars had been exhausted. However, the optimists of the 1990s, like those of two hundred years earlier, made a grave error in judgment. Wars have not disappeared; they have just changed in nature. Today, terms such as "fourth-generation warfare," "low-intensity conflict," "subconventional war," and "perceptual warfare" are commonly used. These new conflicts demand a shake-up of the analytic approach as well, since these conflicts are so different from the old wars. They are not being conducted between regular armies but, rather, between civilian societies. Soldiers have been replaced by irregular fighters, many of whom do not wear uniforms. The purpose of these wars is not, as it was in the past, to conquer territories or to wipe out military formations. Rather, they are fought in front of the cameras, to gain the sympathy of the international community and to shape civilian consciousness. Under such circumstances, the distinctions between war and peace fade; war is conducted at the rear, and even the relationship between strength and weakness has changed. Subconventional warfare, for example, can diminish the strength of a conflict's dominant party and actually empower an otherwise weaker side.

New Boundaries between the Military and Society

The common denominator in all these changes is the social context of war: the connection between the military and civilian society—that is, the association between war and society, and the tension between military strategy and politics—and hence the relationship between generals and politicians. For the new wars, like peacekeeping and peace building, are conducted under politically saturated circumstances, in which the military and civilian spheres now interact. This situation requires renewed discussion about a topic that has been marginalized too long—the civil-military relationship.

The tension between political thought and action, which are entrusted to civilian leaders, and the art of war, which is entrusted to military experts, has occupied social thinkers since the beginning of modern democracy. How can the elected, the people's representatives, control those who wield the weapons? Can civilian leaders curb the desire for war

in those who choose the military as a lifelong career? And, most important, can civilian leaders limit the political power of military leaders, preventing them from dictating policy and keeping them under the authority of the state?

A concise and generally popular answer to such questions was provided 170 years ago by the military theorist Karl von Clausewitz, who famously wrote in his book *On War* that "war is the continuation of politics by other means." Therefore, war has to be subordinate to statesmanship, and warriors must always be subordinate to politicians. Or, to quote Maj. Gen. (res.) Israel Tal, a military theorist and developer of Israel's Merkava tank, the military component is forever just one part of the whole of national might: "The military leadership represents the part, while the national political leadership represents the whole, the inclusive vision of the nation's resources in its striving for survival."[2]

In the second half of the twentieth century, political scientists, political philosophers, and military sociologists all searched for rules and principles for determining a normative system to govern relations between democratic armies and their civilian superiors. The term that they adopted as a regulative principle was *professionalism*. The professional soldier—a description that also became the title of a book by Morris Janowitz, a pioneer of military sociology—is a military officer who specializes in preparing for and conducting war. He has a great responsibility toward society, and, being professional, he receives operational autonomy and a freedom to act according to his professional principles. In return, however, he must understand that politics is beyond the scope of his authority. He must remain neutral in a political sense and accept absolutely civilian authority.

The concept of professionalism, which has been used to marry the arts of war and statesmanship and to ensure the subordination of the military echelon to the political echelon, was developed by the founding fathers of the discipline of civil-military relations. But, even among them, approaches varied. Samuel Huntington distinguished between two types of civilian control over the military: subjective control achieved through rules and principles that ensure the maximization of civilian power, and objective control achieved through professional officers' internalizing that they must operate exclusively in the military domain and that they must be politically neutral.[3] A rather different take was presented by Samuel Finer, another founding father, at All Souls College, Oxford University.

He wrote of mature democracies in which military men ride on horseback and are permitted to be involved in, but not to interfere in, politics. They are permitted to exert influence to a certain extent and even to pressure the civilian government. But they are barred from blackmailing the government, from getting involved in determining who will be in power, and, above all, from seizing power themselves.[4]

While such theories of civil-military relations held during the Cold War years, they were forgotten with that war's end. It became increasingly clear that such ideas did not suit the new era, an era in which military units are sent on peace missions and nonuniformed fighters conduct subconventional, low-intensity warfare. When a photograph of one helicopter strike in the heart of a refugee camp, or even the conduct of a single infantry soldier at a checkpoint on the way to Baghdad or Bethlehem, can be transmitted by satellites, in real time, to millions of homes around the world, it becomes difficult to distinguish between strategic political decisions and military operative action. Such conventional distinctions become much less relevant, as do the mechanisms that previously defined the division between civilian leaders' responsibilities and generals' responsibilities. Politics and military action become much more integrated, and therefore both the military's desire for an autonomous status and the presumption that professionals in khaki will abstain from involvement in politics are no longer realistic.

The new situation has alarmed those who worry about the future of democracy. Even a decade ago, explicit warnings were made and concern was warranted. "Beware!" proclaimed those who observed the U.S. armed forces at the time. "The U.S. military is now more alienated from its civilian leadership than at any time in American history, and more vocal about it," wrote one observer.[5] "It seems clear that the United States is now experiencing a weakening in civilian control of the military," another remarked.[6] The same critic went even further and speculated whether continuing in such a manner might end in a military putsch.[7]

Similar voices were heard in Israel during the late 1980s and 1990s. "Tactics have taken over strategy" (that is, the operational perception of the military imposed itself on, and dictated the overall political thinking of, politicians), wrote a critical sharp-eyed observer of the Israeli defense establishment.[8] Using more subtle language, but with equally profound implications, Major General Tal described the weakening of the government's

status vis-à-vis the military: "When the government wants to assess situations or, alternatively, to set policy, it relies on the same source—the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] General Staff—which it is itself supposed to oversee, whose recommendations it is supposed to critically analyze, and which it is supposed to guide."[9] However, very soon such observers realized that a normative collapse had not taken place but, actually, that a new relational system had been created.

Such developments brought on by the new era require new theoretical reflection, in Israel and around the globe. Discussion must ensue, and care must be taken in doing so, especially given the sensitivity of such subjects in democracies. Indeed, rather than discussing who decides and who executes policies, or how best to ensure the subordination of officers to politicians or the civilian control of the military, scholars already have begun using terms such as "shared responsibility," "concordance," and "an unequal dialogue."[10]

To sum up, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, observers have increasingly recognized that boundaries separating politics and politicians from fighters in democracies have become blurred and that the influence of politicians on military decisions has been much greater than previously believed. At the same time, however, the influence of military officers over the design of national policy has been more intrusive than previously believed, and the potential for military influence on foreign policy and international relations has been greater than had been thought. Contemporary democratic theory must account for the fact that military organizations have become heavyweight players in the running of state affairs and exert vast influence in the international system.

At the beginning of the current decade, the *Washington Post*'s military correspondent, Dana Priest, set out on a journey to report on the activity of the commanders of the U.S. military's global command posts. Offering eyebrow-raising conclusions in her book, *The Mission*, she revealed that U.S. policies in various regions of the world are determined more by the generals who command U.S. operations there than by the State Department via its ambassadors. The generals have human and economic resources at their disposal, she reported, that are two or three times the resources available to diplomats, and they have contacts not only with foreign militaries but also with heads of state. They are concerned with matters extending far beyond narrowly conceived security issues, Priest disclosed.

It is thus no wonder that she referred to the generals with a term from the Roman Empire: "proconsuls."[11]

While Priest was examining the military's political status in the American empire, an insurgency took place in the territories Israel has occupied since 1967. The collapse of the peace talks between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government in the summer of 2000 led to the outbreak of the second uprising, called the "Al-Aqsa intifada." This latest chapter in an almost hundred-year conflict between Jews and Arabs was the catalyst for this volume's research. Over the proceeding chapters, I examine how the professional Israeli military has coped with the difficulties of this new war. In particular, I address the following questions: What relationships have existed between the military and the government in Israel? What has been the division of labor between politicians and generals? To what extent has the IDF influenced the setting of Israeli foreign and defense policies? And how has the IDF's altered role affected its relations with civilian society?

The conclusions of this research have relevance beyond Israel. Israel, as I see it, is a notable case study, as it can cast light on the general worldwide pattern mentioned above. Those who wish to understand the new relationship between war and statesmanship, and between generals and politicians, and those who want to examine in-depth the political influence armed forces have in the current era, should turn to the Holy Land. While the principles of parliamentary democracy have not been undermined and while democratic procedures continue to be practiced in Israel, a situation in which there is a symbiotic pattern of joint responsibility has emerged, an unequal dialogue, or, as I prefer to call it, a pattern of political-military partnership.

From the beginning of the intifada in September 2000, the IDF was not just the operational arm that conducted the war against the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian organizations. It also had a central role in setting Israeli foreign and defense policy, wielding influence at the suprapolitical level, the strategic level, and the operational level, no less than at the tactical military level. It acted as a central political player and was a partner in policymaking. It did not get involved in politics as an organization outside of politics might do; in fact, it has been involved in politics as an inside partner, a stakeholder, as it were. On several occasions during the course of the war, for example, Israelis reading their morning

papers learned about deep disagreements between the defense minister and the chief of general staff (CGS), as though the CGS was not a public servant subordinate to the country's elected representatives but rather a political player equal to them in weight and status. Frequently, the IDF's position was accepted at the end of the day, even though the CGS had not forced politicians to act against their wills and had reiterated democratic norms, affirming that in a functioning democracy, it is, of course, the political echelon that determines policy.

As my research expanded, I discovered that this state of affairs did not begin with the Al-Aqsa intifada but had already existed in the beginning of the 1990s. It became clear to me that the military was a principal decision maker determining both Israel's conduct during its eighth war and its conduct in the peace process ten years earlier. As I read more documents and interviewed more central players from the peace process of the 1990s, a picture emerged of an IDF with its own clear vision for the Middle East, a view that the IDF encouraged successive Israeli governments to adopt. To conclude, the Israeli case is instructive about the true nature of today's new relationship between the military and the state, between generals and politicians, and between politics and the art of war. The model of political-military partnership that developed in Israel at the end of the twentieth century might well anticipate similar civil-military relations in democracies throughout the twenty-first century.

The Book's Structure

This book was written with the general public in mind, not just specialists in civil-military relations. Therefore, while it is not altogether devoid of theory, it uses little theoretical terminology. Thus, the first chapter presents key questions on civil-military relations in Israel. It describes research conducted in this area and discusses one of the most frequently asked questions on this subject in the past decade: is Israeli society militaristic? With great detail, I disprove in this chapter the thesis that the IDF's position in politics is compatible with the instrumental model, demonstrating that the military is not simply the instrument of political authorities. I argue that another model exists in Israel, one based on a political-military partnership.

Chapter 2 describes the geostrategic changes that occurred in the Middle East in the late 1980s, prompting the IDF to recommend a

revolutionary transformation in Israel's policies toward her Arab neighbors. I argue that the military was an important catalyst for reversing the government's policy; because of its influence, the government decided to open negotiations toward a peace settlement, even at the cost of giving up territories captured in the Six Day War in 1967.

Chapters 3 and 4 cover an issue that has seldom been raised in studies of the IDF: its political dimension. Chapter 3 analyzes the IDF structure and clarifies how the IDF gained its vast political prowess. In addition to exploring the importance of the Planning and Policy Directorate, I also examine the unique role of the Military Intelligence Directorate (MID), which is responsible for gathering intelligence on Israel's adversaries, ultimately determining the way Israel's entire political class perceives the world. In the period under study—the 1990s until summer 2005—two factors led the MID to become an especially powerful influence on the design of Israel's foreign policy: the malfunction of the political leadership, which faced a protracted political crisis and lacked a clear vision for a political solution, or the courage to actualize such a vision, if one existed; and the MID's dominance within the intelligence community at large. Chapter 4 describes how the IDF acted as a political machine during this period.

The IDF decided in the late 1980s that it would be to Israel's advantage to engage in a peace process, and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin included the IDF as a major policymaking and negotiating partner. In 1996, however, the picture changed. Chapter 5 examines how Rabin's assassination and the rise to power of the Likud Party, headed by Benjamin Netanyahu, led to a halt in the peace process and to a rupture in the relationship between the military and its political captain. The disagreement between the military and political echelons regarding issues of national security brought an unprecedented reaction from Israel's military elite, which actively—though democratically—participated in routing Netanyahu from power in 1996. The return to power of a left-of-center government, headed by former IDF chief of staff Ehud Barak, sparked the resumption of the peace process. However, as described in chapter 6, it was eventually curtailed because of the failure of the Camp David summit in July 2000 and because of the outbreak of the intifada in September of that year. In response to these events, the IDF formulated a new, tough, and unyielding policy toward the Palestinian uprising. Just as the IDF had earlier been

an initiator and an active partner—not only an implementer—in advancing the peace process, it now became an influential and outspoken advocate of the new hard line. It promoted this view to such an extent that, by the end of Barak's term in office, some, including cabinet ministers, saw the IDF as the tail that wagged the dog.

Chapter 7 describes the tensions between the government and the military that continued during Ariel Sharon's first government, from 1999 to 2002. When this national-unity government was confronted with international constraints, its schizophrenic makeup and "dual policy" led to inconsistent positions. This created tension between CGS Shaul Mofaz and the prime ministers he served under—first Barak, then Sharon. The tension and resulting conflicts that are described in chapters 6 and 7 were caused not just by personal friction but also stemmed, to a large degree, from the new type of warfare Israel faced: low-intensity conflict.[12] Chapter 8 analyzes the IDF's counterinsurgency warfare as a manifestation of this type of conflict, as a war that is characteristic of our present era.

Chapter 9 further describes Israel's policy toward the intifada, in its various stages, both before and after Operation Defensive Shield in March 2002 and from the appointment of Moshe "Boogy" Ya'alon as CGS in 2003 to the summer of 2004. During Ya'alon's tenure, the friction between the military and the political echelons continued and became more overt. Although the IDF carried out Sharon's policies, at times the military and political echelons disagreed about what Israel's policy should be regarding the Palestinian Authority and its prime minister Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen), the security fence, and disengagement from the Gaza Strip. In the end, this tension led Sharon and Mofaz to essentially fire Ya'alon by not extending his term in office for another year, as is common practice.

Chapter 10 examines Mofaz's and Ya'alon's conduct as CGS from a historical perspective. Here the description of the intifada's chronological development pauses, and we move to an analysis of the CGS's special status as a major political player in Israel. The historical events analyzed in this chapter illustrate the role played by previous chiefs of staff, especially in the political decision making required for moving from war to a peace involving the ceding of territory. Moshe Dayan's position in the 1950s and Mordechai Gur's position in the 1970s are explored; though they are not unique, they are especially interesting.

While chapters 1 through 10 focus on the political arena, with the government on one side and the military on the other, the broader civilian sphere is examined in chapters 11 and 12. A low-intensity warfare, such as the intifada, is conducted not just against the hard core of the resistance but also against the civilians in whose midst the insurgents operate. Therefore, this raises questions concerning the justification of the war *(jus ad bellum)* and of the means used and measures taken *(jus in bello)*. The issues of "purity of arms," a moral obligation not to hurt innocent civilians during military operations, and conscientious objection, and the criticism of and protest against the burden of reserve duty, all raised questions regarding the IDF's identity and the legitimacy of its operations. This caused a change in its perception of how to end the war. Toward the end of 2003, these issues brought about another shift in IDF policy: the IDF recognized that its iron-fist policy against the insurgents might reduce the level of Palestinian violence but would not end the conflict and that "a political horizon" was also needed.

Sharon also realized that the status quo would not bring an end to hostilities and recognized the heavy toll of the continuous occupation and the growing impact of conscientious objection on Israeli society. This led Israel in the summer of 2005 to unilaterally withdraw from the Gaza Strip and dismantle Jewish settlements there, bringing a symbolic end to yet another stage of the conflict.

Chapter 13 provides a postmortem of the intifada and analyzes Palestinian and Israeli claims of victory. While Israel succeeded in preventing the Palestinians from attaining most of their major strategic goals, it was not able to achieve its own strategic objectives. It brought neither a Palestinian surrender nor a change in the Palestinians' goals, which is the main objective of counterinsurgency warfare. This chapter also further describes the tension in political-military relations created by the intifada.

The last three chapters resume the theoretical analysis of the model of the political-military partnership. Chapter 14 presents reasons for the strain between the two cultures that exist in Israel—the security culture and the diplomatic culture. The practical distinction is not between generals in khaki and civilians in pinstriped suits but between these two cultural coalitions, each of which includes representatives from both the military and political sectors. While the dominance of the security culture has distinguished the Israeli case since the state's founding, chapter 15

illustrates the negative impact of this culture, both on the Camp David summit in 2000 and on the course of the al-Aqsa intifada, from its beginning until the summer of 2005. Although the Palestinians' share of the blame for the failure of Camp David and the unfolding of the second intifada is greater by far, Israel's security culture made Israel a partner to the failure and continued violence. However, one should bear in mind that this book does not attempt to judge Palestinian policy or to compare it with Israeli policy, as my intent here is not to analyze Palestinian society or political culture. Rather, my focus is on Israel's military and polity. The book's final chapter summarizes this research and presents some recommendations for improving the relationship between the generals and their political bosses.

The democratic view is that generals should assist decision makers in the halls of government but that they should not sit as equals around cabinet tables. The military's substantial influence on Israel's policymaking and the friction between its generals and its government stems not from any intention on the IDF's part to grab the reins of power from the politicians, but from the weakness of the political echelon caused by the intractable conflict with the Palestinians.

As the government had no blueprint for a political solution to the problem created by the Palestinian uprising, it expected the IDF to provide a military answer, even though, according to IDF thinkers, "the correlation that existed in conventional warfare between military gains and political achievements" does not apply to low-intensity conflicts, and even though the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was not amenable to a pure military solution.[13] Indeed, after four years of fighting, the IDF succeeded in preventing the Palestinians from realizing the intifada's original goals, but it could not quell the fighting altogether and is still compelled to fight a war of attrition that is contrary to the fundamental tenets of its national-security doctrine.

The nature of *la guerre révolutionnaire* is such that military considerations have a secondary importance. But in the absence of a clear strategic directive from the government, the military is sometimes forced to determine its own, thereby fulfilling a function that, according to democratic theory, is supposed to be provided by the political echelon. The IDF is forced to act on a political plane, and the policy it adopts does not always correspond to the wishes of the elected government.

Therefore, as long as a democratic Israel rules over the Palestinian people, Israeli civilian society will remain split about the future of the territories, and the IDF will continue to pay the price for the protracted conflict and the politicians' lack of courage to make historic decisions. Israelis view the IDF as their shield, and thus it enjoys their broad support. But the ongoing occupation and counterinsurgency warfare will increase friction between the military and civilian society, and the IDF will sink deeper into the political mire.

Background and Methodology

The research leading to this book was conducted during a three-year period. Partial findings were first presented in a report titled *The Israeli Military and Israel's Palestinian Policy,* which was published in 2002 by the United States Institute of Peace.[14] As a result of the large response I received to that article's publication, I extended and updated the research through the summer of 2005.

The study is based on many primary sources and documents collected from the IDF and other Israeli security agencies and governing institutions, as well as on a long series of in-depth interviews with senior figures from the Israeli military-political elite. The list of interviewees presented in the appendix does not include a very large number of senior officers who are still serving and therefore asked to remain anonymous. This situation often accompanies research on current security matters. Similarly, I am not able to quote certain documents I received from sources in the security system, documents underlying various assertions appearing in this work.

One of the ways to overcome this methodological difficulty is to refer to other publications, particularly newspapers that covered the subject. Generally speaking, I refer to newspaper articles only when they cite specific information I also possess from internal sources that cannot be quoted. I have used this method in the past, although I should note that in recent years the defense establishment has shown a greater willingness to be scrutinized and criticized by external academics, and so I have been able to cite more primary sources than previously. For example, in the past year, several research studies on the intifada have appeared in Hebrew that cite materials that had been classified when I commenced this study. The

publication of these books now allows me to reveal some of the material I had at my disposal during the early stages of my research.[15]

A Final Note

When my first book on the IDF, *Between Battles and Ballots: Israeli Military in Politics*,[16] was published in 1983, readers were surprised by some of my claims. However, the warning I raised in that book, that the continuation of the occupation would deepen political involvement of the IDF and create a more problematic relationship between the military and society in Israel, has proved to be accurate.

Israeli society has managed, despite its current situation, to preserve a democratic institutional structure. Even so, the occupation and especially the nature of the ongoing war with the Palestinians are threatening Israel's democratic soul and its moral fabric. It may well be that, in comparison to the way other democracies act or are currently acting in similar situations, Israel should be praised for its conduct. But, when aspiring to follow superior values, the comparison to others should not suffice—values should not be relative but absolute. This is undoubtedly the case for a nation that brought the Bible to mankind and that aims to raise its own children based on the ancient morals of the prophets.

This book focuses on events since the early 1990s, a time when many hoped that a hundred years of conflict between Israel and its surrounding neighbors was soon to end. Unfortunately, that decade ended with a cursed war in which Israelis and Palestinians continued, driven amok, to shed each other's blood. But the state of affairs on the day of this book's publication should not extinguish hope. In the words of the late Yitzhak Rabin, winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace and a statesman and friend with whom I was fortunate to share many hours of conversations over these matters, "For us, the acceptance of the existing state of affairs should not even be considered an option. It must be out-and-out rejected."