

IS ISRAEL CONTAINED?

Israel, victorious in 1948, 1967, 1973 but not so victorious in its Lebanon campaign, is presented as being invincible. This is not only done to intimidate the enemies of the Judaeon lion but also used as a marketing tool for Israeli technology exports. All this subterfuge ended with the massive drone and missile attack on Israel on the night of the 14th of April. The drone element alone represented the largest ever attack by drones in a single strike.

Of course, the Israeli's presented this attack as an embarrassing failure for Iran. They claimed - Ukraine style - that they and their allies, including the Jordanians directly and the Saudis indirectly who helped refuel allied warplanes, had shot down 99% of the drones and missiles. This meant that of the 300+ drones and missiles fired, only 3 got through. Furthermore, the IDF claimed the damage done was insignificant.

Biden told Netanyahu to take this success and not proceed to attack Iran, for after all, was Iran not humiliated by their failure. He could have added, make money from your success, it represents a marketing opportunity as well. However it did not take long for [the lie to start falling apart](#). Within days the Israeli newspaper [Maariv](#) reported the interception rate was in fact 84% not 99%.

[Scott Ritter](#) was even less circumspect when claiming that Iran had achieved its military goals. In short it was not a case of what was shot down, but what was not shot down; Iran's more advanced missiles which hit three targets, all involved in the attack on its Embassy in Syria. For a fuller technical explanation of the attack follow this link to a [Ritter interview](#). There are a number of aspects to consider. Iran gave up to 72 hours notice of the impending attack. This gave the US, Britain, France, Jordan, Saudi Arabia ample time to assemble an air armada to intercept these munitions. Thus before reaching Israel Iran had to break through this curtain of planes and ships.

Then they had to penetrate the most heavily defended airspace in the world, the airspace over Israel. Clearly Iran had an idea of the scale of the defenses, but nonetheless, they also had the motive and intention of breaking through to demonstrate Israeli vulnerability. Hence the size of their air assault. It was designed to extract a huge cost in anti-missile missiles, around \$2 billion, it was also designed to reveal the tactics and capabilities used by Israel and its allies, and it was designed to distract the air defenses allowing the real package to be delivered. It was a case of; do your assembled best to stop us and even then you will fail.

Of the three targets hit, two were airfields in the Negev and the third was in the Golan Heights, a heavily defended joint US Israeli spy base with over the horizon radars integrated not only into the Israeli defense system but additionally, into the regional US defense sector. Due to heavy military censorship little is known about the damage to this base. All the IDF has owned up to is a drone strike on the crossroads outside of the base, clearly visible to anyone driving past.

Although the timing of Iran's attack was not determined by Iran but by Israel's attack on the Iranian Embassy in Syria, the timing was propitious for Iran. Just days earlier the Israeli newspaper [Haaretz](#) had issued a wake up call to Israel saying we have been defeated in Gaza so we need to discuss this defeat as painful as it is to do so. In the North, Hezbollah was taking its toll of Israeli soldiers and equipment. Israel had become increasingly isolated on the world stage to the point where even the US could no longer veto a ceasefire resolution in the United Nations. The influence of China and Russia continued to grow in the

region accelerated by the increasingly visible defeat of NATO in the Ukraine. And of course the Israeli economy was imploding while simultaneously the global economy was paying the price for the effective closing of shipping lanes by Yemen. The \$20 billion US donation, seen by many around the world as a reward for genocide, will help.

Clearly the western backers of Israel are themselves under growing pressure. Within the key backer, the USA; the Democratic Party is in disarray, the State Department is rebelling, voices of dissent are even being heard within the media, and there are growing mass protests every week in every major city despite the arrests and witch-hunts. Support for Israel is growing ever more unpopular. The latest polling by [Pew Research](#) shows that the US public is almost evenly split over whether they view Israel's military conduct as acceptable or not. Amongst the younger generation sympathy for the Palestinians outweighs sympathy for the Zionists. The crackdown on opposition to Israel is not a sign of strength but of weakness.

Iran had always claimed that it had absorbed the blows delivered by Israel since October 7th so as not to distract from the horrors of Gaza. This may be so, but if they were to have timed their attack, this had to be the best of times. Israel is cornered.

The 1970s.

The 1970s is instructive. After the Iranian missile attack the US instructed Israel not to retaliate. This was not the first time they were asked to restrain themselves. After the Zionists pre-emptively attacked Syria and Egypt in the 1967 war, Israel was told future support depended on restraint. This was made clear by Kissinger, Israel's staunchest supporter in Washington. At the time the US was attempting a balancing act. It did not want fear of Israel to drive the Arab world into the Soviet camp and it did not want the West's oil assets to be nationalized. Indeed even before the 1973 Yom Kippur war, Washington was cultivating links with Sadat in Cairo.

Had Prime Minister Golda Meier and her defense minister Moshe Dayan known about the ferocity and force with which Egypt and Syria would strike, perhaps they would not have forgone pre-emptive strikes in 1973. For two days it was touch and go whether Israel would survive the onslaught. But in the end the threat of using nuclear weapons against Cairo and Damascus together with the US coming good by embarking on the biggest airlift since the *Berlin Airlift*, allowed the Zionists to prevail.

This war had two consequences. It ended the period 1948 – 1973 when Israel faced hostile neighbouring states. From now on the main threat to the Zionist state would no longer be external, but internal emanating from the Palestinians themselves both within and without the borders of Israel. Secondly it ended the absolute rule by the Anglo-Saxon Ashkenazi Jews through the Labour Party.

The trauma Israel experienced during the opening stages of the 1973 war reverberated politically. The Labour Party and Meier were held culpable for the early failures just as today Likud and Netanyahu are held responsible for the failures during October the 7th. (These are just some of the similarities between then and now.) Labour never regained its authority due to 1973 exacerbated by the demographic changes that were occurring due to waves of Aliyah's from North Africa and the Near East which were to dilute the density of Ashkenazi Jews in Israel. Finally, the wave of Russian immigrants in the 1990s together with the higher birth rate of religious Jews all increasingly weighed on the Labour Party which essentially collapsed. It even lost its link to the Histadrut due to the changing composition of the Israeli working class.

In inverse relation to the collapse of the Labour Party was the rise of the Likud party. Unlike the Labour Party the Likud party was ill disposed to a political settlement with the Palestinians. It represented the land hunger of the newly arrived settlers, while its extreme Zionist origins attracted the more nationalistic elements within Zionism, and finally many of its supporters occupied the more precarious jobs subject to competition from Palestinian workers. Negotiations around the *Oslo Accords* following the battering Israel was receiving in Lebanon, and following a weakened PLO finally agreeing to recognise the State of Israel, was to be the last diplomatic gasp of the Labour Party, and in the case of Premier Rabin, it was literally to be his last gasp. His assassination personified the shift towards hardline Zionism which has endured up to the 7th of October.

This is not to say that these hardliners were devoid of pragmatism. Just as Sharon withdrew his forces from Lebanon, five years later he would withdraw the army and settlers from Gaza as well. This step was not designed to strengthen the Palestinians in Gaza, rather it streamlined Zionist control of the strip. It became easier and more clinical to seal off the strip making collective punishment more thorough. Without settlers within the strip to protect, military incursions were simpler to execute efficiently. In any case electronic surveillance no longer required boots on the ground. Likud may have removed settlers from Gaza, but the opposite was the case in the West Bank, where they financed and encouraged the invasion of settlers into the West Bank and East Jerusalem. In this way the pitiful gains of the *Oslo Accords* were reversed with the *Palestinian Authority* turned into a surrogate of the Israeli government.

The developments outside of Israel were important as well. The global economy outside *Comecon* entered its first global recession since the end of the War during the 1970s. This was not caused by the spike in oil prices but certainly aggravated by it as the Gulf Nations sought to punish Israel and its Imperialist backers for its victory. During the 1970s the nationalization of the oil industry in the Arabian Gulf and elsewhere was completed. The leaders of the oil rich region continued to act as rentiers instead of industrializing, using London to recycle and invest their Petro-dollars due to restrictions on US banks dating back to the Great Depression. As a result London was elevated to become the leading international financial center. These nationalizations did weaken US imperialism as it deprived them of a major source of surplus value despite the imperialists continuing to control the oil trade.

Following nationalizations in the 1970s, the Gulf Cooperation Council was set up in the early 1980s. It took faltering steps over the next decades to set up a common market and a common currency. It was more successful with the former than with the latter. But with a combined population of less than 60 million it never had the critical mass to industrialize, nor were the climatic conditions conducive for this. Only a much larger council embracing more populous Arab countries such as Egypt and Iran could have improved the chances for take off. But due to US influence this never happened. In particular the US ensured the isolation of Iran by fostering antagonisms between Shia and Sunni which have only subsided recently due to the intervention of China which has no interest in continuing these divide and rule tactics.

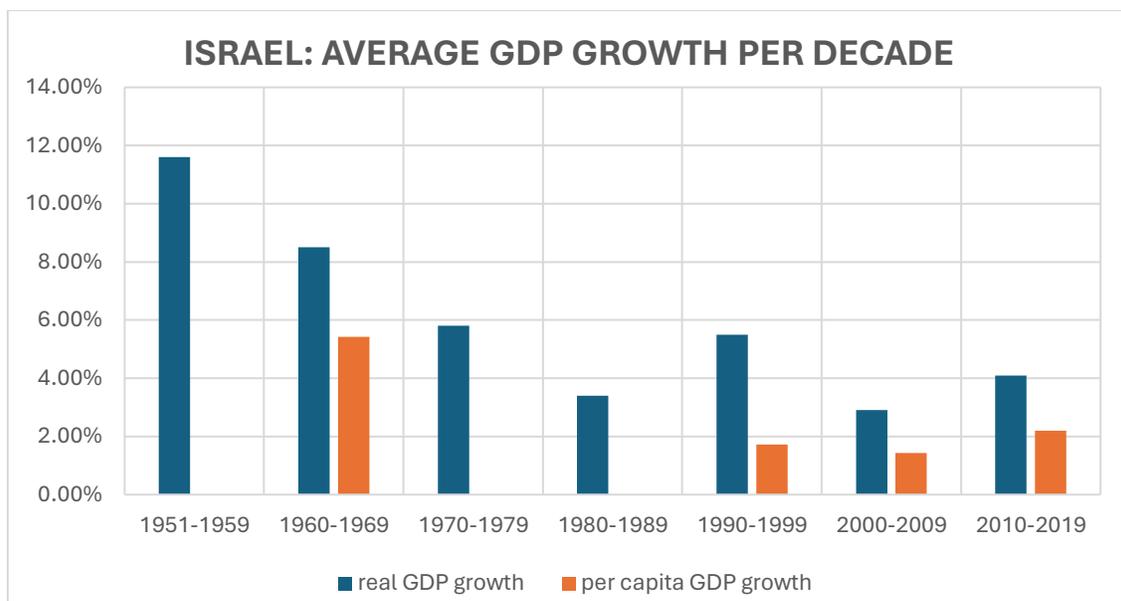
Finally of course, the USSR collapsed at the end of the 1980s depriving the Near East of the possibility of playing off the USSR against the US. Until the emergence of China towards the end of the 2010s, Western Imperialism reigned supreme in the region.

Globally the 1980s was a period of interregnum between a global capitalist economy structured on the outcome of the Second World War but having been plunged into crisis, and re-emerging in the 1990s restructured around information technology and outsourcing to China. As Israel was closely allied to the US in terms of investment, trade, and donations, while bearing the additional costs of the Lebanese

invasion, the Israeli economy was battered in the 1980s. As a result inflation soared, peaking at 445% in 1984. GDP growth fell by two thirds compared to the 1950s and 1960s as the graph below shows. It even fell by 40% compared to the recessionary 1970s.

The response by the Likud party was in line with developments throughout the world, it introduced neo-liberal policies using the veil of its nationalistic rhetoric to hide its intentions. The social democratic measures inherited from the Labour Party including the indexing of wages and prices were systematically eliminated, the welfare safety net shrank and for the first time large pockets of acute poverty emerged especially amongst religious jews. The result was a Likud Party, though having become the dominant party, seldom being able to command an absolute majority which meant it had to increasingly rely on right-wing religious parties. Clearly it was cheaper to bribe these parties than to provide for the whole of Israel.

Graph 1.



GDP growth picked up by 60% during the 1990s but this was due to the influx of Russian immigrants some bearing money. But from 1990 to 2019 income growth per head was only one third of what it was in the 1960s. It appears from the data that Israel began to recover only in the second decade of this century. This was the heyday of Israeli High Tech developments as well as reaching out to the Gulf Economies as well. This can be seen in the [surge in manufacturing exports](#) which peaks as elsewhere in that critical year 2014, when the Chinese wave of investment subsided.

Thus the last ten years prior to the 7th of October is the zenith for the Israeli economy which had emerged as a regional Tech powerhouse attracting the attention of the Gulf Coast monarchies as they sought to move away from oil dependency, and who were not averse to stepping over Palestinian bodies as they beat a path to Israel’s back door to avoid notice. The only remaining competitor to Israel remained Iran.

Iran not Israel remains the key to the Near East, despite all the hype. Should Iran escape US captivity drawing closer to the Gulf Cooperation Council, should the regional common market expand to include Iran, should Iran’s sizeable industrial base be at the disposal of the Council, then the Gulf Area could become a regional economic block with a sizeable competitive presence in the global economy. To this

end, the US and EU obsession with Iran's nuclear programme has as its goal, not so much preventing it from acquiring the bomb, as much as it is intended to slow down its economic development and prevent its integration into the region. But as in most things now, that is not in EU & US hands, but that of China.

Conclusion.

Six months ago it would have been inconceivable that the [Western media](#) would be posing the question whether Israel was an asset or a liability for the West. But it has. Led by Netanyahu Israel is seen as an unpredictable loose cannon pursuing objectives which are hurting Western interests. The livestreaming genocide in Gaza has cost the US support worldwide, undermined its politics and troubled its institutions. It appears the bombing of the Iranian embassy without consulting with the US was the last straw.

If Israel does not respond in a meaningful way to the Iranian airstrike, it means the US has prevailed, and Israel is now cornered. Just as the US has modified its relationship with Israel it will seek to modify its relationship with Iran as Kissinger once did prior to the 1973 war when he sought to wean Sadat away from the USSR. The US is likely to fail once again because of the growing regional influence and diplomatic successes of China in the region.

In that case, the US has a fall back position as it has always had, Israel. In the event of a clash with China, and in the event that Iran sides with China, Israel will be unleashed against it. But not until then. In the meantime Israel will have to put its house in order so that it may become a 'respectable' ally of US imperialism once more. And for that to happen it must engage in a meaningful peace process, aka a sensible two stage solution which will mean the settlers in the West Bank will face some pain and access to the Gaza Strip will have to be guaranteed. Even its partners in the Gulf such as Saudi Arabia insist there must be a settlement with the Palestinians if economic relations are to be maintained.

Israel is weaker economically (despite the \$20 billion infusion) politically and militarily than it has been for many decades. The Iranian sword hangs over its head while the tunnels under its feet haunt it. The Palestinian question can no longer be ignored nor bludgeoned away. For the first time the Likud Party will be forced into reversing course as Labour once had to. It won't be able to resist because despite its bravado, Israel is out of options. The failure of Israel to respond in kind to Iran shows this to be true.

Of course an imperialist imposed two-state solution does not serve the interests of the Palestinian nation. Such a solution will continue to consolidate Zionist rule and legitimize its land grab. The only solution that would satisfy both Palestinian and Jew would be a unitary democratic state in a re-bordered region. Just as the Zionists have conflated anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism, so they conflate the destruction of the Zionist State with the extermination of the Israelis, when in fact all it means is abolishing the exclusive *Jewish right of return* by granting an equal right of return to the Palestinians.

The Zionist state in the end will exist only for as long as Arab and European workers allow it to exist. Workers stand for justice and equality, which means supporting a unitary state for Arab and Jew in the region while opposing their bosses' solution for the region, an unequal two state solution that fails to correct a historical wrong bathed in blood.

Brain Green, 22nd April 2024.