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Between Ballots and Battles: Israeli Military in Politics

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Peri, Yoram. *Between Ballots and Battles: Israeli Military in Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983. 344pp. \$39.50.

The course of events in Lebanon over the past two years has significantly sharpened Israeli internal opposition towards their own military policy. For the first time in five wars, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) did not have the public's total unswerving support. The Kahane Commission was an example of this divided opinion and, even though it gave almost complete exoneration to the army involvement in the Sabra and Shatilah massacres, it was clear that the divisive effects of Lebanon exposed the inherent controversy within the Israeli civil-military relationship.

Yoram Peri's timely book on the growing conflict between the political establishment and the military has been made even more useful because of the recent "strategic consensus" agreement between Washington and Tel Aviv. Peri, who is presently teaching political science at Tel Aviv University, was a political advisor to Yitzhak Rabin in 1974 and 1977.

He skillfully details the political involvement of the IDF from its early days to the present and shows how the centrality of the security issue dominates every Israeli political decision. Moyshe Dayan once described their fixation on security by saying that small nations don't have foreign policy; they have defense policy. Also, the protracted conflict against the Arabs has developed a

concept of the citizen soldier once described by an IDF general as "a citizen on eleven months of annual leave." However, the debacles of the early days of the Yom Kippur War began to cause Israeli public opinion to waver in its absolute trust of the military leadership and question if security matters should really be sacrosanct and shielded from public scrutiny.

Traditionally, the IDF has been considered to have strong central civilian control. It is here where Peri shows remarkable chutzpah by directly challenging the theory of such noteworthy authorities on the IDF as J.C. Hurewitz, Amos Perlmutter and Nadaf Safran. *Between Battles and Ballots* is well researched and factually detailed. Much of the book is based on Peri's Ph.D. thesis, and he provides much evidence to support his theory that the IDF is now a strong, almost independent force taking part in top decisions of the Israeli government. He makes his case by first showing how the military has become a crucial avenue to top political jobs. His detailed analysis discusses the former officers who have moved directly to the posts of prime minister, deputy prime minister, defense minister and many other key posts. He points out that many of these officers devote considerable active-duty time and energy to obtaining these political posts. For example, nearly 20 percent of the local political parties in a recent municipal election were headed by officers. Peri also outlines the essential weakness of the political

system which is supposed to control the military. His accounts of the relationships between prime ministers, defense ministers and chiefs of staff are very revealing and they provide insight into some of Israel's crucial political-military decisions through the years. Another bit of evidence put forth by Peri is that the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza since 1967 has given the IDF an expanded civilian policy-making role at the cabinet level as they deal with the administration of those areas.

This is a useful book for readers interested in Israel's role in the contemporary Middle East. Well organized with impressive footnotes and bibliography, it manifests the fears of a segment of Israeli society who see the growth of the military's political power as dangerous. In fact, Peri's closing statement does not rule out an eventual military takeover of Israel. Perhaps David will become Goliath.

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Buck, James H. and Korb, Lawrence J. *Military Leadership*. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1981. 270pp. \$22.50 paper \$9.95

The premise of this collection of articles on military leadership is that there are no well defined set of concepts that describe what a military leader is or should be, and that attempting to define such a set may be futile because leadership is so situationally dependent. A postscript

by Professor Sarkesian pessimistically concludes that:

"It is the human, moral, and ethical dimension of leadership that are least susceptible to quantification and precise empirical design. Having noted this, it is appropriate to close with the observation that it is unlikely that researchers and practitioners will find precise answers to the concept and exercise of leadership."

So we are told that leadership is too hard to figure out, but here are what some learned people think about it anyway. The learned range from among others: a historian, a psychologist, a philosopher, and a battalion commander. Distinctions between management and leadership are referred to in about half of the articles. Some conclude managers require different skills than leaders; some conclude that one can't be a leader unless he is a manager; and some conclude that the values of management are inconsistent with those of leadership.

The collection of articles are organized around three main topics: theory, special contemporary issues, and leadership in the field. This group of articles would make a good set of readings for students and teachers in an executive course at a senior service school. Especially the theoretical articles which discuss ideas from the viewpoint of several disciplines: organization theory, psychology, and philosophy. Students in senior service schools could test the concepts derived from this set of articles against their experience both as leaders and followers. Students could