

## BOOK REVIEWS

Klieman, Aaron S. *Israel's Global Reach: Arms Sales as Diplomacy*. Oxford: Pergamon/Brassey's, 1985.

The late Israeli Defence Minister, Moshe Dayan, once argued that "Small nations do not have a foreign policy. They have defence policy." Without referring to the general applicability of this sombre, even grim, perception of the position of small states in the international system, *there seems to be little doubt that it accurately reflects Israel's national experience*. Not only have security issues been the impetus behind Israeli foreign relations, but they have also determined to a large extent the nature and characteristics of these relations.

A new and important insight into the dynamics of Israel's unique interrelationship between foreign and defence policies has been provided by Aaron S. Klieman's latest book, *Israel's Global Reach*. Departing from the assumption that "for a country and leadership elite long dominated by what can best be termed a national security mentality, any distinction between diplomacy and defence is blurred under the larger rubric of national security," (p. 29), the author sets out to describe and explain the consequences of this state of affairs. The result is an incisive and compelling analysis of the origins, structures and evolution of *Israel's arms sales policy, and one which is much more than a mere recapitulation of the fluctuations of Israeli policy*.

The arms sales policy portrayed by Klieman is both impressive and disturbing. On the one hand, he shows us a resourceful and innovative state, which has not only managed to overcome existential problems and an inherent dependence on external support, but has also succeeded in turning these liabilities into an asset — a state whose wariness of unreliable arms suppliers (for example, France) led it to develop an extensive arms industry and which used its war experience to promote its arms sales. On the other hand, the author cannot ignore the haphazard and opportunistic nature of the Israeli decision-making process. Klieman does not devote much space to this specific questions, but his characterization of the process is hardly generous:

a sequence of low-level, ad hoc, and specific decisions taken in response to opportunities as they arise

rather than a

predetermined plan, well defined and rigorously enforced. [p. 92]

Yet, the overall balance-sheet of Israeli arms sales is, by and large, positive. In the domestic plane, the arms industry is one of the bright spots in the beleaguered Israeli economy. Today arms sales exceed \$1 billion a year and account for at least one fourth of Israeli industrial exports; the local armament process has provided the main motivating

force for industrialization, and military industries have produced considerable spinoffs in several nonmilitary sectors. Finally, longer production runs of military equipment have enabled the Israeli Defence Forces to be better prepared at lower cost.

Internationally, arms sales have constituted a major foreign policy tool, enabling Israel to preempt Arab influence and to extend its own influence and prestige, as well as to gain diplomatic and economic openings on various levels. These range from close ties with the United States and Western Europe to relations with governments which secretly make extensive military purchases from Israel. Arms sales have also broadened Israel's margins of independent action by giving it some insurance against embargoes imposed by the United States. However, as the author makes clear, this is by no means a total insurance because many of the systems made in Israel themselves depend on American components.

Indeed, Klieman is well aware of the constraints and uncertainties facing Israel's arms sales policy in an international environment of increasing competition: so far, Israel has had little success in the U.S. market for sophisticated military technologies and has sometimes been criticized by the United States for the use of U.S. developed weaponry or the sale of American equipment to other countries. The more Israel becomes a competitor in the world arms markets, the more American industry and labour will resent continuing U.S. economic, technological and military support for Israel. With the help and inspiration of Israel, moreover, other developing countries are entering the international arms market.

In these circumstances, and in the light of Israel's slim margins of risk and error, the author urges re-consideration of policy, the most important element of which should be the incorporation of arms sales policy into a broader, more coherent national strategy. "Foreign military sales are means to identifiable ends," he argues, therefore

these ends deserved to be clarified, first in the minds of those responsible for making Israeli policy; and second, to a great extent, in the mind of the broader Israeli public.... Failure to establish and maintain general policy guidelines, publicly enunciated and carefully enforced, could be detrimental. [p. 216]

Klieman also questions the general direction of arms sales policy and advocates a move away from export items of high visibility (such as the *Kfir* fighter and the *Merkava* tank) in favour of the less visible and more specialized market for defence software and components where Israel has built up a formidable reputation (EW, ECM, precision-guided weapons, and the like). Given Israel's cost-effective expertise in these areas, its affiliate status within the EEC, the glut in oil prices and Europe's increasing desire to play a role independent of the United States, it might find this course more beneficial.

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