

# ISRAELI RESERVE GENERAL MATTI PELED CALLS: SUSPEND US AID TO ISRAEL

**B**RUZONSKY: In the conditions you have described -- and granted the Left in Israel and the Left in the US is terribly weak and divided -- but you must speak up as you do for a reason

so do you think it is important in the US that American Jews speak up for sanctions and a clear suspension of aid to Israel; I mean do you consider this important or are we kidding ourselves?

PELED: It has become important now more than ever before. You see until now there was an assumption that there is a division of opinion in Israel and that each side is trying to persuade the other side to listen to it and maybe accept its views. And this has been going on for about 20 years.

What is happening now is entirely different. The expansionists, the annexationists, are deliberately working against every possibility of solving the conflict...in coordination with the United States I should say.

So those of us who believe that this is an unacceptable development it is necessary to think of very radical and unprecedented steps to counter this. And since they cannot go on implementing their annexationist policies without American money, I think it is our duty to call upon the United States to stop giving money to Israel.

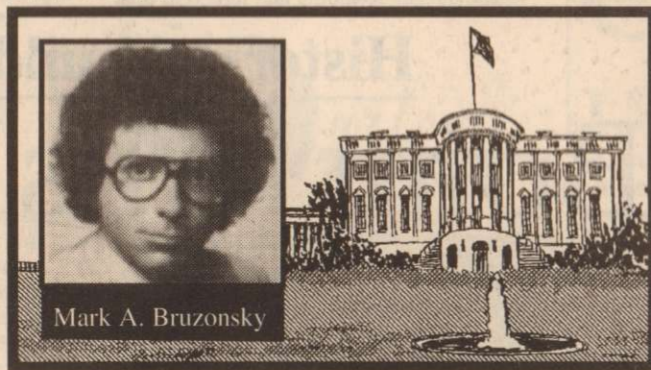
**B: And to try to build up public pressure for this, starting with American Jews?**

P: But let me tell you. People are talking, and I think justifiably, of the tremendous power of the Jewish lobby in Washington. I think that if the Jewish lobby would not exist the United States would have created it as an excuse because it is such a useful instrument to justify American policy in the Mid-east. I don't know what they would do without it. They really need it. I think that whenever the American administration wants to do something that is unacceptable to the lobby they do it all the same.

**B: But how does one explain the almost total impotence of expert opinion. The experts in America were pushed aside during recent months; the people that knew the region best, that had the most to say, their views were not listened to....**

P: I came to the conclusion some time ago that as far as expertise is concerned probably the greatest experts they are in America, just about on everything, certainly the Mid-east. But when it comes to political decisions they have little influence. Political decisions are not taken on the basis of expertise but for different

## From



Mark A. Bruzonsky

## Washington

sanctions against Israel is the most effective means we have at this time to raise these issues, even though we know that there isn't going to be this policy implemented any time soon?

P: Well unless elected officials will find that this is what the public expects....

**B: Or unless they find that their geopolitical interests have now shifted so that it's in their interests to force a shift. But from everything you've said before we're worse off then when we met 15 year ago!**

P: Right...right.

**B: You see no hope at all? I don't hear any optimism at all in your voice?**

P: No. And the fact that the Soviet Union has been eliminated as a world power really leaves the United States the sole arbiter in this region. I read in the paper that Primakov even commends Baker for his very impressive successes!

**B: So does (Feisal) Hussein just a few kilometres from here. (Joint laughter)**

**What about Hussein? Tell me about Hussein. Why do the Palestinians negotiate and push the PLO out of the picture and cooperate with the Americans? Why don't they have a better policy? Why does Hussein hold four meetings with Baker and then insist he's not negotiating?**

P: I think really it is very unfortunate. But maybe one explanation is that they are getting tired, and exhausted, and fed up with the situation. Their sacrifices are tremendous. Economically things are very bad.

what does he say?

P: I had a chance last February in Geneva where I criticised openly this policy of claiming the sympathy of the Left in Israel -- this is wrong, you get nothing out of it, you don't even get their sympathy.

**B: Much of the Israeli Left's uses the Palestinians....**

P: Unfortunately the crisis with Iraq has only shown me how right I was. The whole Israeli Left disappeared immediately. So Sha'ath said, 'well we don't have any other way, we have to try'....

I can understand that they feel exhausted, they feel frustrated, they will agree you to know to a straw.... But it will lead nowhere. It just shows how weak they are.

**B: But they have another problem. Hussein told me and I see it in Washington. (The so-called 'moderate' or pro-American Arabs) are working now with members of the Israeli lobby.... They are sending them talk with Assad. And Hussein said to me that this is because we need to try to understand these people and to try to convince them about our case. And of course I said to him that these people are going to outmanoeuvre you at every step of the way, you haven't got a chance, what kind of policy is this?**

P: You know, I last talked with him about it when he went with Yael Dayan to the United States. And they signed a joint letter which was published in the press where he actually subscribed to the political programme of the Labour Party which denies a Palestinian state and denies the PLO. And I said how could you sign that paper? And he said the same thing that it was a way to approach some people of influence to show them that we are nice and so, I said, this is wrong...and besides, if you sign such a letter together with Yael Dayan, what is left for me to do? Should I be more Palestinian than you are? If you accept the Labour Party programme, what am I supposed....

**B: Anyway...since they will not get anything for this excessive moderation, if we can call that, isn't this the last few years of this kind of leadership. Isn't their credibility just going to totally be destroyed?**

P: We are seeing that, already....

**B: And it must be the Israeli plan to let Hamas take over....**

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■ ■ If the Jewish lobby would not exist the United States would have created it as an excuse because it is such a useful instrument to justify American policy in the Mid-east. I don't know what they would do without it. They really need it. I think that whenever the American administration wants to do something that is unacceptable to the lobby they do it all the same

■ ■ Political decisions are taken on an entirely different level with operating factors that have absolutely nothing to do with reality on the ground

■ ■ Politically I'm sure that Feisal Hussein is conducting a mistaken policy

■ ■ Peace Now is a terrible misfortune for us

■ ■ We've come to a point that unless we advocate very radical steps that we've in fact given up the struggle

them to march.

**B: Why?**

P: Because they were fooled by their leaders....

**B: What do you think of Peace Now by the way?**

P: It's one of the worst things that has happened to us!

**B: What? Is that right?**

P: One of the worst things.... Well, you see, nice people in Israel who feel unhappy with the situation but who are not prepared to do anything sincere about it, they get together twice three times a year. And as the saying goes here "they give their conscience to the laundry". And they get it back cleaned up. And they go back home happy and satisfied. There's nothing more to it then that. They stand in a demonstration. They shout a few slogans. They go back home very happy, very satisfied, they have done the job, but they are not prepared to shake the system.

**B: But in the States they are even worse. In the States they soak up the money and resources from the really progressive Jewish community.... People like Stanley Sheimbaum hold meetings and raise money for them! And Stanley thinks he's doing something for peace!**

P: This is why we don't get any money even from the sources we use to get.... You know Gail Pressberg, she's now working for them.... So this is a substitute



Defence Secretary Richard Cheney

Defence spending is declining to come down to the pre-World War II level of 3.2% of GNP by 1995, cutting for example its fleet of 450 ships down to 310. But military and political planners are more acutely aware of need to protect US interests in Asia, Africa and the Mid-east in the wake of the Coalition War.

GEORGE MOSES finds

# American military at the crossroads in 1995

NEXT week the US Senate will debate the American defence budget for the next fiscal year -- October 1991 to September 1992. This puts consideration of the budget on a schedule well ahead of that of previous years and increases the likelihood that Congress will complete its action and have a budget on the president's desk before the beginning of the new fiscal year.

In large part the speed of this action is attributed to the calm political waters created by last year's budget summit agreement, which has dampened much -- but by no means all -- of the debate and the political infighting which normally surrounds the defence bill. The absence of apparent political excitement, however, masks an intense curiosity about the direction and speed of American de-

military role meeting a declining defence budget.

While analysts agree that defence spending is declining, they have not yet reached a consensus on how large that decline will be. Many accept the analysis that brings the level down to the area of 4 percent of GNP by 1995 but at least one individual, a high ranking national security official in past Democratic and Republican administrations, believes that it could go as low as 3.2 percent. American military spending has not represented such a small part of its economy since well before World War II.

When defence spending reaches levels that low it is virtually certain to go up.

Before World War II the United States had not accepted a role as a global military power; its only military objective was the



reasons.  
I don't know if I ever told you about my experience with Brzezinski -- I don't know if this should be publicized. Did I ever tell you the story?

**B: Of course it should be publicised.**

PELED: Well, you decide....

When Carter ran for office, he sent Brzezinski as an expert to study the situation and report to him. He came incognito. And one day I was invited by the director general of the Foreign Office to secretly meet with Brzezinski. He called me and said -- very secretly, don't tell anyone, Brzezinski is there on a very important mission and he wants to see you. And so I went to Tel Aviv and met him in a hotel. And he told me that he had been around the country for a few days and had a lot of arguments and a lot of explanations and he had reached a point where he couldn't bear it anymore and he said let me hear something which makes sense.

We sat for three hours. He accepted my analysis. He told me it was the only cogent point of view he came across in Israel. And then, before I left him, I said, "well, I wish you success. I know you are working with Carter and if he wins, in that case you will probably be secretary of state or head of the (National) Security Council."

He portrayed modesty, but in any case he said that "when you come again to the United States be sure to look me up."

After Carter won the election I happened to be in Washington and I called him because I said this is the time for me to talk to someone who can make a difference. And he wouldn't see me. I tried several times to go to see him. He wouldn't even allow me to get near the White House.

When he was here he was an "expert"; and when he went into the White House he became a politician. And there is absolutely no relationship between the two!

The same is true with (former assistant secretary of state for Near East affairs Harold) Saunders. I met Saunders when he was in the State Department and he was one person; and at Brookings (Institution) he was another person.

**B: The same was true when Nahum Goldmann came. He had an excellent meeting with Carter when he first became president. And then there was so much pressure that Goldmann was shocked when he came again and the president wouldn't let him come to the White House.**

P: So when you talk with the experts, they are wonderful; they really know what they are talking about; they are very thorough; they are very systematic; their books are excellent. But all this has absolutely no effect on political decisions. Political decisions are taken on an entirely different level with operating factors that have absolutely nothing to do with reality on the ground: who pays your reelection; how many votes can you bring me; entirely different considerations. And therefore the political decisions don't reflect what you would expect to be the recommendations of the experts.

**B: But still you said you do consider it important that a group of American Jews, like the Jewish Committee on the Middle East, try to start raising these issues in a public way to force a debate that the politicians don't want to have.**

P: Yeah. That's right. And this may affect their decisions, the political decisions.

I don't believe anymore in going around the United States as I use to for so many years and "exposing the facts". Nobody really cares! Now I know so what if you have all the right figures. People are not interested in figures; not on this kind of thing.

So public pressure is probably the only way left.

**B: And do you agree with me that calling for**

are the only military objective was the immediate defence of its own territory and people. Clearly the political realities of the 21st century cannot be accommodated by the budgetary standards of the 1930s. The military requirements of the future will demand the planned major system upgrades, production of advanced munitions and electronic systems, and development of next generation aircraft and other weapon systems. The rising cost of acquiring and operating weapons and equipment incorporating advanced technologies will exert enormous upward pressures on defence spending even with the planned cuts in forces.

**B: And the right policy would be?**

P: The right policy would be, first of all, not to accept any of the Israeli premises, the 1989 "peace initiatives" or anything else; adhere to the position that an international peace conference based on (UN Security Council resolutions) 242 and 338 with the PLO officially representing the Palestinians is the only way of dealing with the situation, and nothing else. And if Israel doesn't accept this, then nothing is going forward.

**B: But the American and the Israelis would then say the Palestinians are rejectionists.**

P: OK, so they will say that. But this must be the price. Anything else.... You saw what happened with the "dialogue" (reference here to the US-PLO Dialogue held in Tunis during 1991). It was a disgrace, this whole process of dialogue!

**B: So why did Chairman Arafat do what he did. Is he also of limited intelligence? The chairman gave everything in Geneva and then got wrapped in this "dialogue" which then was terminated. So is the chairman simply not up to the job?**

P: I don't know. But I can imagine that he also reflects the balance of pressures from various groups. Right now I can imagine that he's pressured by the Palestinians in Kuwait.

**B: But he could have demanded that he get something real for what he did in 1989. Instead, look what he got, what you said.**

P: As soon as the Israeli plan in May of 1989 was published, it so happened that I had a chance to speak before the NGO meeting in New York, and I told them, 'reject it entirely, don't even deal with it, this would be the wrong step for you to even deal with it'.

Well, as you know, they didn't pay any attention to that....

Look here, there was this meeting in Spain the other day. Now what's the point? And then Nabeel Sha'ath says "we were wrong in the positions we recently took...."

**B: So there's little new here. Nabeel has been wrong in all the major positions he's taken. He was wrong in 1982, he was wrong in 1988, and now he's wrong in 1991.**

P: And what's the point in saying to Yael Dayan and Lova Eliav? What's the point?

**B: Well, I think their point is that maybe these Israelis will pressure the Israeli government. Isn't it? Or it seems you not only think Feisal Hussein's policy is wrong but that Sha'ath's and the chairman's policies are wrong.**

P: I said to adhere to very basic principles: International peace conference, 242 and 338, PLO represents the Palestinians, no preconditions, sit down and start talking.

**B: And when you say this to Sha'ath,**

take over....  
P: At one point, the Israeli government thought that Hamas would be an instrument...eventually they saw that it had become too dangerous an instrument. But... divide and rule...of course it's the old game.

**B: How long do think the Sha'aths and Hussein can last as year after year goes by and their policies prove to be not only undignified and not very smart but in the end they get nothing?**

P: I don't know how long. But recently Sari Nusseiba came out of prison and said it was a mistake to meet with Baker. So maybe the prison did something good for him (joint laughter).

I think really it was a mistake to meet Baker.... Just as they didn't want to meet Shultz for very good reasons; the same reasons were valid in this case.

But I think they are becoming exhausted; and this is one of the indications of being exhausted and desperate....

**B: So do you think Camp David II is coming?**

P: No, I don't think it's coming...

**B: An arrangement that buys more time....You can't just leave the region tense.**

P: Shamir has made it very clear, he is not going to make any concessions. And if pressured he will call general elections. General elections means that for eight months nothing will be done. And from a general election the Likud will come back to power strengthened. Which means maybe even Sharon will be the top. Peres....

**B: Even if the Labour came to power, so what?**

P: They would attempt to appear nicer. But no, I don't think they will make any fundamental changes; just appearance.

**B: But in the end they would not, could not, make a settlement.**

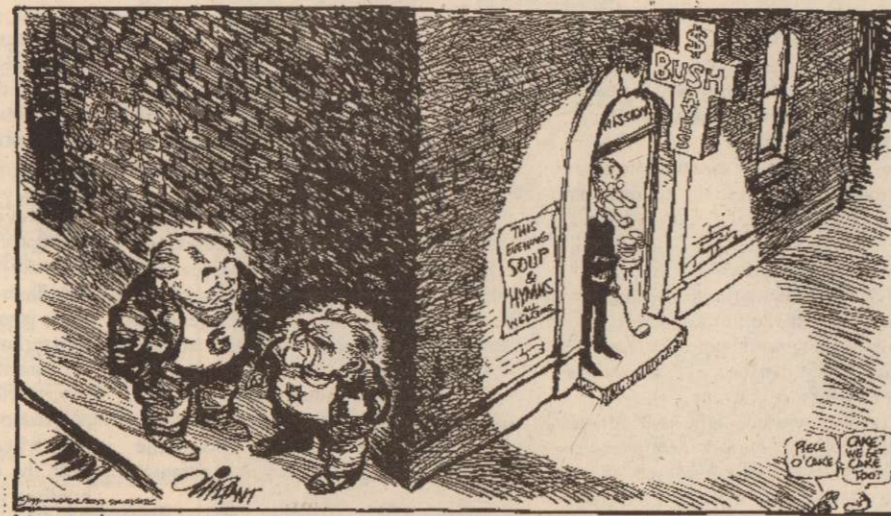
P: No, no....

**B: So the only hope here, if I understand you correctly, the only possibility is that if for some reason the politics of America changes and the US says they've had enough of this and pay for it yourself if you want to continue this. And you see no change of this happening unless there is a groundswell in public opinion....**

P: Yes. And maybe, I'm not sure, with Europe becoming more independent of the United States and restoring some kind of a balance internationally, this may offer new chances...maybe.

**B: What about a dramatic gesture? Remember, there were all this kibbutzniks and they were going to march to Cairo and meet with the PLO.**

P: But they didn't...because their leaders didn't want



**NOW, DON'T TAKE ANY GUFF FROM HIM -- WALK IN THERE, TAKE THE SOUP LIKE HE COMES IT TO YOU, AND WALK OUT AGAIN. HE'LL PROBABLY WANT YOU TO STAY AND SING, BUT JUST TELL HIM TO GO TO HELL!**

the speed of American defence policy changes in the post-cold war era.

**B: And in America it is a way of pacifying people.**

P: Here too. Somebody is very unhappy; he hears all these nasty stories.... So, he is given a chance. Come out one day and hold a poster in front of the prime minister's house. Then you go back home satisfied; you've done your job. Whereas on the other side, as you know, they are much more effective. They set up settlements. They go on beating, and killing, and confiscating land.

Peace Now is a terrible misfortune for us.

**B: Is Shamir, do you think, right in thinking that if he can purchase ten or 15 more years of time that the Palestinian issue will be unsolvable?**

P: This is certainly what their aim is.

**B: Well, it looks to me as if he might be right.**

P: If the United States will go on financing unlimited settlements, if they will go on financing settlements which have no economic foundation except American money, then of course eventually there will be half a million Jews in the West Bank and it may be an irretrievable situation.

It all depends on American money.

**B: When you say irretrievable you don't mean the Palestinians will give up, you just mean the conflict will go on indefinitely in different form?**

P: Well you see, a strong argument for the Palestinians is that now in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip they are an overwhelming majority. When they will be just 60 percent of the population, theoretically, this will require a different attitude because nobody will say evict half a million Israelis just to make the Palestinians happy.

It will be a different problem. And Shamir is aiming at that. And inside his heart he knows that this can be done because American money is available.

**B: So we agree then that the time is right for Israelis and American Jews to take what is in a sense the final step which is a call for ending the special relationship with Israel, end support for Israel.**

P: Certainly end support for Israel....

**B: Yes, not a call for Israel's destruction, but rather a call to really save Israel by denying her the resources to continue forward as is now happening....**

P: Right, right.

**B: How long have you thought this strategy was desirable? Or have you been pushed by the events of the last year or two?**

P: Well, for a long time I thought that it would be sufficient for the United States to pressure Israel politically and dramatically by limiting the rate of military increase.... But I see now that all this doesn't happen and the situation is getting worse, and we are now faced with such an aggressive annexationist policy that unless we do something soon it may be too late.

**B: If the world press comes to you now and says we heard that you and American Jews association with the Jewish Committee on the Middle East (JCOME) are now saying what we thought you would never say publicly, you're willing now to say to the American press and the European press what you're willing to say to me? I mean the Israeli Left for so long has thought these things but not said them publicly....**

P: Yes.... I think really we've come to a point that unless we advocate very radical steps that we've in fact giving up the struggle.

**CONCLUDED**

only military objective was the immediate defence of its own territory and people. Clearly the political realities of the 21st century cannot be accommodated by the budgetary standards of the 1930s. The military requirements of the future will demand the planned major system upgrades, production of advanced munitions and electronic systems, and development of next generation aircraft and other weapon systems. The rising cost of acquiring and operating weapons and equipment incorporating advanced technologies will exert enormous upward pressures on defence spending even with the planned cuts in forces.

By the middle of this decade America will have to choose between even deeper cuts in forces than those presently planned and a reversal of what will have been by then an eight-year decline in defence spending accounted for in uninflated dollars. The outlines of this choice are already beginning to emerge. The Congressional Budget Office, which operates independently to provide budget information to Congress and in the past has not shown a particular affinity for defence programmes, recently concluded that without real-dollar growth in the defence budget after 1995 the navy would not be able to sustain its planned fleet of 450 ships and could be reduced to as few as 310 ships. Military planners will be unanimous in their response that a fleet of that size is incapable of meeting the force projection requirements of US policy.

Further political force to reverse declines in defence spending will come from the accumulated effects of cutbacks in defence industries and defence communities around military installations as well as popular and Congressional views of a proper military posture for the United States.

So 1995 is likely to be the year of the "big bang" in the American defence debate. Advocates of reduced spending and of other priorities will continue to insist on a lower priority for military, but by the tide of history will be flowing strongly against them. Unless the world changes even more radically than we suspect, American military strength will continue to be maintained.

With recognition of these requirements in place a political collision becomes inevitable. It will probably occur in 1995, and it will be the result of these requirements for a world-wide

requirements in place a political collision becomes inevitable. It will probably occur in 1995, and it will be the result of these requirements for a world-wide