

The Star and the Scepter: A Diplomatic History of Israel

by Emmanuel Navon

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In this ambitious and comprehensive volume, Navon provides a history of Israeli and Zionist foreign policy from the inception of the modern Zionist movement until the present day. *The Star and the Scepter* is not, however, merely a recital of dates and events. Rather, Navon, a senior fellow at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security and at the Kohelet Policy Forum, locates the origins and form of Israeli and Zionist foreign policy practice within both Jewish history and the Jewish approach to foreign and defense policy.

The author displays a firm grasp of granular detail and broader trends as he depicts the emergence of the modern Zionist movement, and the sometimes sharply divergent attitudes and approaches toward foreign policy issues within various Zionist trends. Navon identifies a central strain of realism in foreign policy that balances ideals with sober calculation. David Ben-Gurion's "realistic and resolute" leadership during the late British Mandate exemplified this trend.

The Star and the Scepter provides a detailed narrative in the short but eventful history of modern Israel. Navon discusses the "strategy of the periphery," whereby the Israelis sought to bypass the then-solid wall of Arab hostility by allying with



non-Arab regional powers. The dilemmas facing the Jewish state regarding territories captured in the 1967 Six-day War receive appropriate attention, as do Jerusalem's relations with the United States, Europe, and Asia, and the successful navigation of challenges which today finds the state in a situation of unprecedented prosperity and diplomatic advantage. Navon concludes that a "unique eschatology"—rooted in the Hebrew Bible—of combining faith with pragmatism lies behind this achievement.

The Star and the Scepter is not only timely but overdue. This well-written and readable book sets out to and succeeds in providing a needed update of Israeli foreign policy.