

Table (III - 5)

Water consumption in the West Bank and Israel

(in million cubic meters)

	West Bank <sup>1</sup>	Israel <sup>2</sup>
Agriculture	90	1325
Industry	(included below)	95
Domestic purposes	10	300
	<u>100</u>	<u>1720</u>
Per capita consumption (cubic meters):		
Overall	142	537
Domestic purposes	13	86

Source: 1. Awartani, *op cit*, p 232. KIDMA, *Israel Journal of Development*, No 13/1977, p 4.

The amount of usable reserves varies considerably from year to year, but on the average it is estimated at about 850 mcm<sup>1</sup>, distributed as follows:

	million cubic meters
Used by Israel, mostly through surface run-off and West-bound through underground aquifers	550
Used by West Bank Arabs	100
Used by Israeli settlers <sup>2</sup>	50
Potential surplus which can be exploited <sup>3</sup>	150

The above-mentioned figures highlight three fundamental features of water politics, namely:

1. Low share of water exploited by local residents (about 12 percent of total usable reserves).

1. *West Bank Hydrology* (London: Rufe and Rafferty Consulting Engineers, 1965), p 15.

2. According to Bonet and Blaide (see reference below) 53 mcm will be required for irrigation purposes Israeli settlements in the Jordan Valley, of which 37 mcm should be obtained from West Bank reserves.

3. Y Bonet and U Blaide, *op cit*, p 17.

- b. Very high share exploited by Israel (about 70 percent of total).
- c. The presence of an attractive usable surplus of about 160 mcm.

#### Israeli water policies

Israel's water policies in the West Bank are underlied by three fundamental motives, namely:

1. Preservation of the West Bank as a catchment area for a major part of Israel's water supply. It has been indicated that about one third of Israel's renewable reserves<sup>1</sup> (i.e. around 550 million cubic meters) originate in the West Bank, mostly through the Cenomanian/Turonian aquifer flowing westward underneath West Bank hills toward the coastal areas inside the pre-1967 border. Israel is certainly anxious to safeguard what it conceives as its water rights in the West Bank, apparently with only little deference to the water needs of the Palestinian residents.

2. Israel faces a large and growing shortage in its water supply. Additional amounts of water are needed to support more intensive agriculture in the Negev, where large areas could be put under irrigation, and also for serving its growing industrial and domestic needs. The deficit is further aggravated by Israel's settlement policy, both in the occupied territories and inside Israel itself. According to the Water Commissioner, Israel is expected to face a deficit of 450 million cubic meters by 1985.<sup>2</sup>

Israel has tried with only little success to meet its additional

1. Barbara Smith, *The Politics of Water on the West Bank*, published in the Middle East International, London, 1980, p 26.

2. Ha'arets, June 5, 1978, quoted from Davis, *op cit*, p 5.