The Last Arab–Israeli Battlefield?

Implications of
an Israeli Withdrawal
from Lebanon

Edited by
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Preface

For the past fifteen years, Israel and its local allies have been fighting a bloody, low-intensity war against the Iranian- and Syrian-backed Hizballah (Party of God) in the hills of southern Lebanon. By July 2000, according to a unanimous vote of the Israeli cabinet, Israeli troops will no longer be in southern Lebanon, as Israel has committed itself to withdraw its remaining forces from that region.

Yet, depending upon the circumstances of that withdrawal—whether by open agreement with Syria and Lebanon, through tacit arrangements, or via unilateral action—withdrawal itself may not mean the end of the war. Instead, the war may simply move from the killing fields of southern Lebanon to the new war zone of the Lebanese–Israeli border. In addition, the combatants themselves may change, with Palestinian rejectionist groups picking up the mantle from a Hizballah that will undoubtedly claim victory. Although withdrawal does create opportunities for calm and peace along the border, it also raises the prospect of heightened tension, renewed violence, and even the possibility of conventional war between the main protagonists, Israel and Syria. What is clear is that the unsatisfactory conditions of the last fifteen years will be terminated.

To assess the potential implications of Israeli withdrawal—and the repercussions for U.S. interests in this Arab–Israeli tinderbox—The Washington Institute assembled a team of seven experts well versed in the region's problems: four contributors from outside the Institute and three from our full-time staff. These include Steven Hecker, Defense Department; John Hillen, National Defense Strategy Study Group; Frederic Hof, Armitage Associates and former U.S. military attaché in Lebanon; IDF Lt. Col. (res.) Gal Luft, Johns Hopkins University's Nitze School of Advanced and International Studies; Patrick Clawson, the Institute's director for research; Michael Eisenstadt, senior fellow at the Institute; and Nicole Brackman, a Soref research fellow.

While U.S. policymakers rightly invest time and energy in the diplomacy of peacemaking, it is no less important to recognize the potential for a descent into conflict and to consider now the steps that can be taken to deter and, if necessary, contain it. We are proud to publish this timely study as a guide for U.S. policy.

Fred Lafer   Michael Stein
President   *Chairman*

Executive Summary

By Patrick Clawson and Michael Eisenstadt

A n Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon would mark a major change in the status quo that has prevailed in the Middle East for the last twenty years. This will create both risks and opportunities for the peoples of the region and for U.S. policy.

What happens after an Israeli withdrawal is contingent on two factors: the circumstances under which the withdrawal occurs, and the response of key regional and international actors—including the United States. In this study, we have identified three possible scenarios for an Israeli withdrawal:

* Unilateral withdrawal without any coordination with the actors on the ground.
* Withdrawal with tacit or informal understandings about who will assume security responsibility for areas vacated by Israel.
* Withdrawal in the context of agreements between Israel and Lebanon, and between Israel and Syria.

Without U.S. diplomatic intervention, the most likely outcome of a unilateral withdrawal would be that Hizballah, splinter groups affiliated with it, or Palestinian rejectionists—acting under Syrian and Iranian pressure—launch cross-border attacks on Israel. Lebanon will leave the "liberated area" in the hands of Hizballah, and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) will not deploy in the South. Israel's likely response would be intense artillery fire and air strikes. If the cross-border attacks are serious enough the Israeli targets could well include Syrian forces in Lebanon or even in Syria proper. Yet, such a cycle of escalating violence is not inevitable; with much vigorous diplomacy and a little luck, unilateral withdrawal could instead lead to a shaky standoff with only sporadic cross-border attacks.

At the other extreme, were withdrawal to come in the context of agreements between Israel, Lebanon, and Syria, the most likely outcome would be a dramatic reduction of cross-border attacks and a reassertion of Lebanese government authority in the South. A destabilizing factor would be Lebanon's strong grievance against Israel over the Palestinian refugees. The solidity of the peace would depend on support from the international community, whether the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) is adequately reinforced, and whether Israel's deterrent capabilities are strengthened. Meanwhile, Hizballah or splinter

groups would continue to carry out terrorist attacks in Israel either directly or through support to Palestinian rejectionist groups in Lebanon or in the West Bank and Gaza.

Exactly how each of the various regional actors—Hizballah, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, UNIFIL, Lebanon in conjunction with Syria, and Israel—will react to each of the three scenarios is summarized below, along with implications for U.S. policy.

HIZBALLAH

A unilateral Israeli withdrawal would reduce Hizballah's motivation to continue its armed campaign against Israel. Yet, Hizballah would face pressure—from Tehran and probably Damascus—to continue attacks (although Damascus could turn to Palestinian rejectionist groups in Lebanon as another option). Hizballah would also likely retain a portion of its guerrilla forces, the Islamic Resistance (IR), prepared to conduct cross-border raids against Israel Defense Forces (IDF) posts along the border and to carry out katyusha rocket attacks into northern Israel. Hizballah may also, at least covertly, assist Palestinian rejectionist groups intent on conducting cross-border attacks. If a unilateral IDF withdrawal is not complete—that is, if the IDF remains on even the smallest portion of Lebanese territory—Hizballah will continue attacks with the backing of Damascus.

An Israeli withdrawal in the context of a peace agreement with Syria holds the greatest promise for stability. In this scenario, the voluntary disarmament of Hizballah's guerrilla forces is likely, and Damascus and Beirut would show little tolerance for any militant splinter groups attempting to conduct cross-border attacks. Iran, out of concern for its continued relations with Syria and Lebanon, would also be unlikely to actively subvert a Syrian–Lebanese peace deal with Israel. Hizballah, however, would be likely to retain its terrorist wing, the Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO). IJO terrorist attacks, or at least covert assistance to Palestinian terrorist groups operating in the West Bank and Gaza, will remain an outlet for the continuation of Hizballah's "armed struggle" against Israel and "liberation of Jerusalem." Iran is likely to continue its support for such activity, but in the event of an Israeli peace deal with Syria and Lebanon, Damascus would probably prohibit the IJO from using Lebanon as a training and operations base.

THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

The 350,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon pose one of the greatest challenges to Israeli–Lebanese peace. Many Lebanese blame the Palestinians for the outbreak of the civil war that wracked their country from 1975 to 1989, and Lebanese of all persuasions are united in their desire to see the Palestinian refugees leave their country as part of an Israeli–Lebanese peace treaty—if not sooner.

Both the Lebanese and the Palestinian refugee leadership in Lebanon recognize that a unilateral withdrawal would effectively remove the refugee issue from the peace process "radar screen." Although this is but one of several key issues in the Palestinian–Israeli final status talks, the absence of a formal Israeli–Lebanese deal would mean that Beirut's demands vis-à-vis the refugees would hold little weight. Accordingly, Lebanon might turn a blind eye to Palestinian attacks on Israeli targets staged from Lebanon in order to ensure that the refugee problem remains on the international agenda. Moreover, Palestinian Authority chairman Yasir Arafat has incentives to ignore, and perhaps even foster, unrest in the Lebanese refugee camps—in order to impede progress on the Syrian–Lebanese–Israeli track or to create leverage over Israel in negotiations.

Peace treaties—between Israel and both Lebanon and Syria—hold the greatest promise for a solution to the refugee problem. Whereas Lebanon's declaratory stance toward the refugees is that they should "return" to Israel, the overriding concern of the Lebanese is that they leave Lebanon. Resettlement in third countries would satisfy the primary Lebanese demand for a departure of the refugees, without adversely affecting the demographic balance in Israel. But should some or all of the refugees remain in place following the signing of a peace treaty between Israel and Lebanon, their sense of betrayal and resentment could pose significant security problems for the Lebanese.

In any case, the profound sense of alienation among the refugees, the intense radicalism in the camps, inter-Palestinian rivalry and conflict, and the severe lack of educational and socioeconomic opportunities make the refugees unattractive not only as future citizens of Lebanon, but as citizens of a future state of Palestine headed by Arafat. Farsighted negotiators will attempt to construct a solution for the refugees that gives them social and economic (if not political) opportunities in Lebanon for an interim period, pending emigration to other countries.

UNIFIL

Under unfavorable circumstances—such as a unilateral and uncoordinated Israeli withdrawal—UNIFIL is unlikely to step into a volatile security vacuum to enforce peace and security in southern Lebanon. Under the right circumstances, UNIFIL could play an important role in facilitating an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and keeping the peace afterwards. If the IDF should succeed in coordinating its withdrawal with Lebanon—and possibly with other actors—then the promise of greater regional stability could convince the UN Security Council to reinforce UNIFIL in both size and capability to help it fulfill its original mandate. Even a reinforced UNIFIL, however, will insist that it act only as a supporting player whose actions should complement the willful and peaceable intentions of the principals—namely Israel, Lebanon, and probably

Syria. And if Israel signs peace treaties with Lebanon and Syria—which is the preferred scenario from the UN's point of view—it is possible that the Security Council might take extra steps to augment UNIFIL to enable it to help monitor and safeguard a peace agreement.

SYRIA AND LEBANON

Any prospective Israeli withdrawal will be weighed in Damascus and Beirut within the context of Syrian political interests. These include regime maintenance, preservation of the privileged position Syria enjoys in Lebanon, and reacquisition of the Golan Heights. Damascus seeks to prevent a resolution of the southern Lebanon problem that would come about independently of Syria and in a manner neglectful of, or harmful to, Syrian interests there. Syria has established, and Lebanon has fully accepted, an unbreakable linkage between Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon and Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Both Damascus and Beirut therefore oppose any plan for an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon accomplished outside the context of a prior Israeli–Syrian accommodation.

In the event of a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, Damascus will try to maximize the risks to Israel associated with an uncoordinated withdrawal while trying to avoid a devastating Israeli attack on Syrian military targets. Syria's most likely responses will include diplomatic pressure on the United States and the UN to forestall Israel's action and renew direct peace talks; direction to Beirut to keep the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) out of the South and away from the border; and pressure on Hizballah (accompanied perhaps by instructions to Palestinian rejectionist groups) to harass Israeli troops during the withdrawal, declare "perpetual resistance," and prepare—but not necessarily execute—cross- border operations. For its part, Lebanon is likely to follow Syria's policy lead, coordinate very closely with Syria and Hizballah on the deployment of LAF units to the interior of the South, and at all costs avoid having the LAF closely identified with any cross-border operations. Indeed, it is unlikely that the LAF would deploy to the former security zone. Instead, Lebanon will leave the "liberated area" in the hands of Hizballah until Israel makes a strategic decision for peace.

An Israeli withdrawal in the context of a tacit understanding with any or all of the players on the ground—UNIFIL, the LAF, and Syria, among others— entails great risks, but disaster is by no means certain. Syria might press Lebanon not to cooperate with UNIFIL in securing its border with Israel, which could result in anti-Israel violence that might provoke Israeli attacks on Lebanon's infrastructure. On the other hand, Syria might make a virtue of necessity, publicly claim victory, assure the United States of its full support for the UN and the Lebanese government, and lobby for the immediate resumption of Syrian–Israeli peace talks. The most likely pros-

pect is that there would be an extended "wait and see" period of relative quiet once Israel's withdrawal is completed. Yet, if it becomes clear that nothing is moving on the Syrian–Israeli track of the peace process, UNIFIL itself might become an occasional target of Syrian-inspired violence from the Lebanese side. In effect, such attacks would represent a policy of holding UNIFIL and the UN hostage to the renewal of negotiations on that track—a policy that could serve as an interim alternative to the very dangerous prospect of attacking Israel.

An agreed-upon withdrawal is the preferred scenario for all of the principal state actors: Lebanon, Israel, and Syria. For Lebanon and Syria, an Israeli withdrawal in the context of peace treaties would legitimize measures directed against those in Lebanon who might favor continued violence against Israel. But for Lebanon to be willing and able to take such steps, it must have the total backing of Syria, meaning, in practical terms, the presence of Syrian personnel alongside Lebanese security elements on the Israeli–Lebanese border; the total cooperation of Hizballah, which will happen only if it voluntarily retires from militia and terror activities; relief on the Palestinian refugee issue; an enhanced role for UNIFIL; and a "green light" from Israel for a sizable LAF presence, perhaps augmented by Syrians, in southern Lebanon. At least for the near term, the ultimate responsibility for securing the Lebanese side of the Israeli–Lebanese border will reside in Damascus. If the final exclusion of the IDF from the Lebanese arena and the confirmation of Syria's long-term success in Lebanon were not enough to ensure Syria's performance as the guarantor of a peaceful Lebanese–Israeli border, surely the full recovery of the Golan would be a critical motivator. To be sure, there could be continuing tensions owing to lapses in competence among security forces, the efforts of saboteurs, or even sharp differences between the parties themselves, especially if Lebanon's Palestinian problem is allowed to fester.

ISRAEL

Following its withdrawal from Lebanon, Israel could potentially face a wide array of threats and challenges. In addition to the immediate threat of terrorist activity, the IDF's primary concern would be the significant reduction in Israel's ability to conduct counter-guerrilla operations against Lebanese militias. During the Israeli occupation of Lebanon, the IDF failed to prevent Hizballah from launching rockets to the Galilee; with the elimination of the security zone, Hizballah would be able to conduct these operations more easily. The potential risks brought about by a withdrawal include a considerable reduction in Israel's intelligence capabilities in Lebanon, the renewed possibility of cross-border incursions, cross-border direct fire, katyusha attacks, cooperation between Hizballah and Palestinian organizations in international terrorism, and the possi-

bility of Beirut and Damascus converting southern Lebanon into a theater of conventional military operations.

If Israel withdraws in accordance with tacit understandings or an explicit agreement, it could promote agreement on steps to mitigate these threats. These include security arrangements (demilitarization and verification measures), military-to-military contacts, mutually beneficial corrections of the Israeli–Lebanese border, and confidence- and security-building measures. In addition, whether Israel withdraws unilaterally or by agreement, it will likely adopt a number of operational responses to deter terrorists from approaching and crossing the border, including improving its early warning capability; reinforcing obstacles along the border such as barbed wire, minefields, and electrified fences; strengthening passive protective measures—such as bomb shelters—for border residents; enhancing the IDF's ability to undertake cross-border commando raids and air strikes; and fielding the tactical high energy laser system (THEL), which is intended to shoot down incoming katyusha rockets.

Unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon could constitute a serious strategic gamble for Israel. With Syria raging over yet another missed opportunity to recover the Golan, coupled with a reinvigorated Iranian effort to support Hizballah in undermining Israel's security, it would only be a matter of time before one of the anti-Israel players in Lebanon succeeded in pulling off a bloody terrorist attack on Israel. Furthermore, unilateral withdrawal will be an irreversible move. Israel will not be able to reoccupy the security zone because the dissolution of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) and the betrayal felt by the southern Lebanese population will deny Israel the local cooperation that would be so crucial to reoccupation. Israel's only option would be to retaliate by means of intensive air strikes and artillery fire. But the lessons of the wars in Iraq and Kosovo show the limitations of air power against camouflaged ground forces—let alone small guerrilla units hosted by a supportive civilian population. Israel is likely to find itself adopting a strategy of punitive air attacks against Lebanese, and maybe even Syrian, infrastructure targets. If such a strategy proves successful in deterring Syria, then a delicate balance may be achieved along the Israeli–Lebanese border. With the IDF deployed along the international line, Hizballah and its allies will engage mostly in border clashes with the IDF but will refrain from attacking civilian targets. If all fails, and life in northern Israel becomes unbearable while a Syrian–Israeli agreement remains elusive, Israel will have to look for a more drastic solution—perhaps even including attacks on targets in Syria itself.

IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY

In the near term, the key post-withdrawal U.S. interests in Lebanon are preventing or—if necessary—containing possible post-withdrawal vio-

lence and restoring peace and stability to Lebanon and to the Israeli–Lebanese border. The concern is that border violence with Israel could hinder efforts to achieve Arab–Israeli peace; lead to renewed Israeli strikes on Lebanon's civilian infrastructure, and perhaps even an Israeli–Syrian war fought on Lebanese territory; and produce additional death and destruction in Lebanon, further hindering national development and reconstruction there. To prevent such violence, the United States should pursue the following policies after an Israeli withdrawal:

- **Promote full compliance with UN resolutions.** The United States should call on all parties to implement fully UN Security Council Resolutions 425 and 520. Such implementation should be a cornerstone of post-withdrawal U.S. policy toward Lebanon. In practice, this means forcefully reminding Beirut of its obligation and Damascus of its responsibility for controlling the Lebanese side of the border, as well as insisting that UNIFIL fulfill its mandate to verify that Israel has fully withdrawn and to assist the Lebanese government in reasserting control.

- **Bolster Israeli deterrence.** The United States should vigorously promote international acceptance of the principle that, once Israel has fully withdrawn, any further attacks on Israel or Israelis should be constituted as clear aggression to which Israel has the right to respond with preemptive and retaliatory strikes, in accordance with the UN Charter's right of self-defense. To that end, the United States should enhance Israel's ability to preempt and retaliate by giving political support, in the form of American sanction for Israeli actions. In addition, the United States should provide military–technical assistance and cooperation, intelligence, border security devices, and advanced weapons such as the THEL.

- **Reward peace; penalize violence.** The United States should ensure that Lebanon and Syria reap benefits for preventing attacks on Israel—or, alternatively, pay a price for tolerating or encouraging post-withdrawal violence. Levers available to Washington include the prospects of aid and investment, political cooperation, military assistance to the LAF, and an American commitment to help foster the stability of post-Asad Syria.

- **Ensure post-withdrawal stability.** The United States should promote security arrangements by helping to monitor compliance with informal arrangements or formal treaties; supporting peacekeeping operations financially, logistically, and politically; and helping to implement confidence-building measures such as the creation of joint committees to maintain a permanent line of communications and contain occasional violence.

- **Engage in preventive diplomacy.** The United States should seek to defuse potentially explosive issues that could spark renewed

violence by ensuring the safety of former SLA members and the stability of the economy of southern Lebanon, addressing the problems of the more than 350,000 Palestinians in the country as a whole, and demanding that Lebanon end the presence of international terrorists on its soil. Should it fail in the last of these, Lebanon should be added to the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism.

Lebanon has traditionally been a sideshow for U.S. policymakers focused on the Middle East peace process. But following an Israeli withdrawal—with the potential for increased violence and escalation this could entail—Lebanon will likely become a major preoccupation for Washington. Accordingly, the United States should do all it can to ensure that an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon is a basis for building peace and stability in the region, and not a cause for further bloodshed and deterioration.

Introduction

By Patrick Clawson and Michael Eisenstadt

I srael's presence in southern Lebanon has been the subject of much controversy. Paradoxically, so too has been the Israeli government's announcement that it would withdraw from Lebanon by July 2000. After years of demanding that Israel leave Lebanon immediately and unconditionally, the Lebanese government now seems unhappy at the prospect that this will in fact occur. As Lebanese president Emile Lahoud said recently, "An Israeli unilateral withdrawal will not work. It will lead to another war." Equally confusing, after years of insisting that the presence of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in Lebanon was essential for Israeli security, some in Israel now maintain that withdrawal would provide Israel a with strategic advantage.

These controversies suggest a need to better understand what will happen in the event of an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. In that spirit and with this study, we have undertaken an examination of the security implications of such a withdrawal—the security problems that may arise, as well as the opportunities that may be created—especially as they affect U.S. policy and interests. The problems arising from a withdrawal naturally receive more attention than the opportunities. Although the less optimistic possibilities are not necessarily more likely, cautious planners should nevertheless think them through. By so doing, they can advise on how to shape the environment in order to minimize the risk of problems occurring, as well as on how to prepare for the reality of such negative contingencies should they arise. For the same reason, this study looks at various low-probability scenarios whose appearance would be particularly troubling. In short, the fact that a potential problem is raised here should in no way be read to mean that we think it will in fact occur.

This study does not examine whether Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon is a good idea, nor does it consider whether Israel will in fact withdraw. The impact of a withdrawal on Arab–Israeli relations as a whole (e.g., on the Israeli negotiations with the Palestinian Authority) is also purposefully left unaddressed here. These issues are certainly worthy of the considerable interest they have generated. But the topic examined in this study—namely, the implications of an Israeli withdrawal—is also important and has not received the attention it deserves.

At this writing (March 2000), the state of peace talks among Israel, Syria, and Lebanon at the time of a future Israeli withdrawal is uncer-

tain. Rather than speculate about where those talks will stand, however, we consider three different scenarios under which a withdrawal may occur, without judging which scenario is the most desirable or most likely. The three scenarios follow:

- **Unilateral Israeli withdrawal absent any coordination with the actors on the ground.** The essential feature of this scenario is the absence of cooperation—formal or informal, direct or indirect—between Israel and any other party regarding security arrangements. Under these circumstances, Israel would withdraw with its forces constantly at risk. Implicit here is the probability that Israel would have no assurances of any sort that Syria, Lebanon, Hizballah, or other parties would refrain from attacking Israel and Israeli interests after an IDF withdrawal—in particular, that these actors would refuse to provide any guarantees of a quiet border. Whether one of the parties would in fact launch attacks, or encourage or tolerate others in doing so, is one of the key questions the authors address.

- **Withdrawal with a tacit or informal understanding among the state parties.** The essential feature of this scenario is that Lebanon and Syria do not seek to undermine the withdrawal while it is occurring. Some ambiguity is assumed here in the post-withdrawal Syrian and Lebanese stance toward Israeli security, though exactly what Lebanon or Syria would do regarding border security is one issue the authors consider. Less important is the character of the informal understanding. There may well be no direct coordination among the parties, much less open acknowledgement that even indirect contact is occurring.

- **Withdrawal in the context of a formal agreement.** Whether such an agreement takes the form of full peace treaties between Israel and Lebanon as well as between Israel and Syria is not particularly important here. For our purposes, the main requirement is that all three governments coordinate, approve, and publicly support the withdrawal. Given the short time remaining until July 2000, it seems unlikely that full peace treaties will be signed by then. But this scenario nevertheless remains a point of interest because of the possibility that a withdrawal agreement could also be an interim arrangement, or, even more likely, that it could be postponed by the prospect of an impending peace treaty.

This study considers what each of the major actors will do after an Israeli withdrawal, with emphasis on the security problems that could arise. In the first chapter, Steven Hecker examines how Hizballah will react—specifically, what factors will influence the organization's decision about whether to continue armed struggle against Israel. Nicole Brackman then looks at the possible responses of Palestinians in Lebanon and the pros-

pect that radicals—dissatisfied about the continuing refugee problem—may step up attacks on Israel and Israeli interests. Next, John Hillen examines what can be expected from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in a withdrawal scenario. In his chapter, Frederic Hof considers what actions the Lebanese Armed Forces and Syria will take, and penultimately, Gal Luft looks at post-withdrawal options for the IDF, after a brief informational sidebar he includes about the South Lebanon Army. These chapters are primarily analytical rather than policy oriented. By contrast, in the final chapter of this study, the editors offer advice concerning U.S. policy options in dealing with these contingencies. This advice is proffered by the editors alone; the assent of none of the authors should be presumed. Indeed, each author is responsible only for his or her own chapter, though in the opinion of the editors, the chapters are quite consistent with one another in their analysis. The study concludes with appendices containing background material, including pertinent UN Security Council resolutions.

LEBANON

Security Zone

● City

0   25 mi

0   25 km

This map is based on the map as presented in the
Middle East Contemporary Survey, Vol. 15 (1996),
Boulder, CO: Westview Press. p. 474.
Map: D. Swanson/Equator Graphics, Inc.

Tripoli ●

N

Mediterranean Sea

LEBANON

Baalbek ●

Nabishit ●

Janta ●

★ Beirut

● Damour

Sidon ●   ● Jezzine

Marjayoun ●

SYRIA

Tyre ●
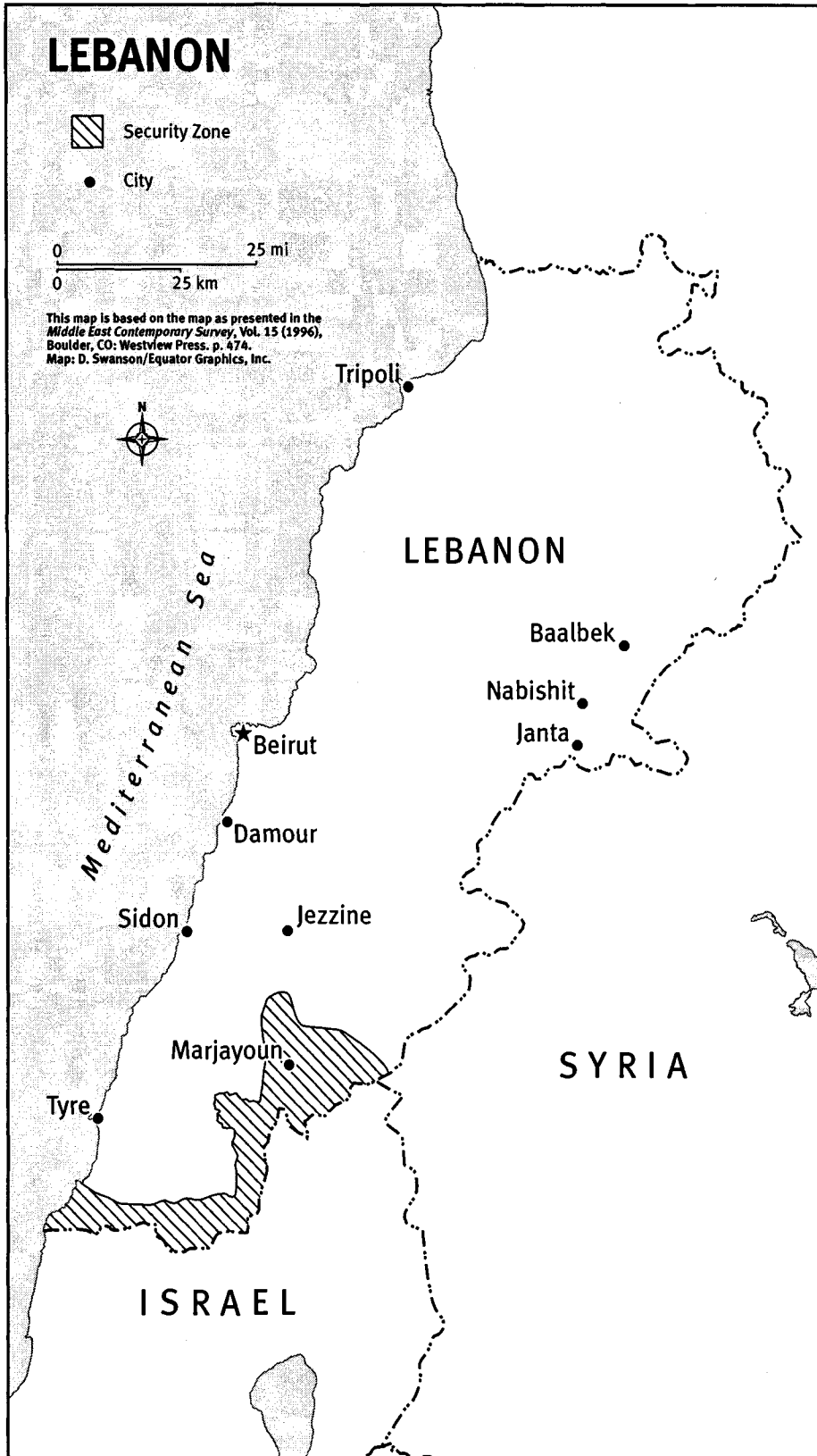
ISRAEL

Hizballah's Response to an Israeli Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon

By Steven A. Hecker

The guerrilla forces of Hizballah's Islamic Resistance (IR) (*al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya*) are the unrivaled leaders of the near-daily armed campaign waged against Israeli and Israeli-supported Lebanese forces in southern Lebanon. Moreover, Hizballah's terrorist wing, the Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO), has a demonstrated terrorist capability, both in the region and overseas. These two instruments give Hizballah's leaders several options in the event of an Israeli withdrawal, in the context of either a negotiated agreement with Syria, or a unilateral withdrawal. The use, or nonuse, of Hizballah's armed elements will carry significant implications for the security environment in southern Lebanon and northern Israel, and for the durability of any Israeli peace agreement with Syria and Lebanon.

DELIBERATE AMBIGUITY

Hizballah is maintaining what can best be described as a policy of deliberate ambiguity regarding its intentions following an Israeli withdrawal, and its official statements rule out no possibility. Hizballah's secretary general, Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah, when questioned about Hizballah's response, typically answers in the following manner: "We are anxious . . . not to disclose it until the time comes."[1] Hizballah's assistant secretary general, Shaykh Naim Qassem, has similarly postponed the question of the organization's intentions, declaring, "This is the question we will answer after Israel fully withdraws from southern Lebanon."[2] And most recently, Nasrallah himself demurred: "As to the continuation of armed action, that is a question we will not talk about now."[3]

While avoiding commitments and specifics, Hizballah officials since late 1999—coinciding with a growing Israeli consideration of unilateral withdrawal outside the framework of an agreement with Syria on the Golan Heights—have stressed the possibility of continued violence fol-

lowing an Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon. Shaykh Qassem has stated that the continued occupation of the Golan Heights and the unresolved issue of Lebanon's Palestinian refugees would leave the "arena" open to all eventualities.[4] Bellicose statements in recent years about "occupied Palestine" also serve to suggest Hizballah's continued confrontation with Israel even after a withdrawal from Lebanon. Shaykh Nasrallah, for example, has warned, "Palestine belongs to the Palestinians and not the Jews. Only our weapons and our martyrs will bring peace in this region."[5] And this kind of harsh rhetoric continues despite the resumption of direct Syrian–Israeli peace talks. Nasrallah recently vowed, "There is no solution to the conflict in this region except with the disappearance of Israel. Peace settlements will not change reality, which is that Israel is the enemy and that it will never be a neighbor or a nation."[6]

Other statements, however, suggest a cessation of at least direct armed conflict. Shaykh Nabil Kaouk, Hizballah leader in southern Lebanon, announced in 1998, "We will continue resisting as long as there is occupation of our land. We don't foresee that [the Israelis] will withdraw soon, but they will one day, and then Hizballah will be victorious and glorious."[7] Also in 1998, Shaykh Qassem offered the following: "Our connection to the issue [of Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon] is therefore limited to the defense of our land and people against the occupier."[8] And finally, according to Shaykh Nasrallah in October 1999, "We will keep on fighting *until* the Israeli occupation is out of our land without any conditions or accords. [emphasis added]"[9]

Hizballah's outwardly ambiguous stance and seemingly conflicting statements are based on several factors. First, it wants to keep all of its options open. A declaration of intent would tie Hizballah's hands, a particular liability given the present uncertainty over the circumstances and situation on the ground at the time of an Israeli withdrawal. Instead, it is most likely that Hizballah's leadership has adopted a wait-and-see attitude and will weigh its options at the time of a withdrawal. Second, Hizballah wants to avoid giving Israel anything that could be construed as security guarantees should it withdraw. As Shaykh Nasrallah stated in an interview, when referring to a possible Israeli withdrawal, "If and when that day comes, I will tell you what we will do. I have no reason [until then] to reassure the Zionists for [anything]."[10] Third, a declaration in the current setting could anger Damascus, or at least complicate its negotiations, particularly if such a declaration were to suggest any relaxation of Hizballah pressure against Israel before a negotiated settlement on the Golan is concluded. Finally, the seemingly conflicting messages from Hizballah leaders reflect a catering of their rhetoric to specific audiences—often with the more mild statements directed toward Western journalists, and the more bellicose statements made for the consumption of Hizballah's militant followers in Lebanon.

GUERRILLA AND TERRORIST WINGS

Both together and separately, Hizballah's guerrilla wing, IR, and its terrorist wing, the IJO, have the capability of destabilizing the security environment in the region. The IR, in particular, has firmly established its credentials as the most effective armed element battling the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and its allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) in the "security zone."

Islamic Resistance

Hizballah's IR force consists of an experienced cadre of 300–400 men, augmented by 2,000–3,000 part-time fighters who live as civilians in southern Lebanon until activated on an as-needed basis.[11] Shaykh Nasrallah has also suggested that an elite unit within the 300–400-man cadre receives about three years of training.[12] IR guerrilla squads are equipped with M16 and AK-47 assault rifles, grenades, machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades, and anti-tank missiles.[13] The IR's fire support teams have 81 millimeter (mm) and 120mm mortars, 106mm recoilless rifles, and katyusha rockets.[14] The air defense units possess SA-7 shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles and Zu-23 23mm anti-aircraft guns mounted on flatbed trucks.[15]

But katyusha rockets, with a range of about 21 kilometers, are arguably Hizballah's most valuable weapon, as they can be fired into Israel from north of the security zone with virtual impunity, giving Hizballah a "poor man's" strategic weapon. In addition to the 107mm and 122mm rockets, Hizballah may also have access to 240mm rockets with a 40-kilometer range, putting more northern Israeli towns at risk, including Haifa's northern suburbs.[16] Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah, an influential Shi'i cleric in Lebanon who acts as the unofficial spiritual guide to Hizballah, seemed to confirm Hizballah's access to, if not possession of, the rockets in 1998. He stated that the group "has more advanced weapons than at the time of the 1996 [Operation Grapes of Wrath] battles. Israeli infrastructure is now in the range of the resistance's weapons."[17] In the event of an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, katyusha rockets fired from the Israeli–Lebanese border would increase the reach of the weapons, putting more Israeli towns within range.

While Hizballah's IR is not the only organization conducting guerrilla-style attacks against the IDF and SLA in the security zone, it has been credited with some 90 percent of all such attacks.[18] IR forces are disciplined, well trained, and capable of conducting sophisticated intelligence gathering against the IDF and SLA in the security zone.[19] Furthermore, IR units also have a demonstrated ability to maintain an operational tempo of roughly two attacks per day over extended periods.[20] IR guerrillas reduce their exposure to IDF artillery and air raids by employing hit-and-run tactics. Over the past several years, the IR has

conducted increasingly deadly and sophisticated attacks, including road-side bombings against IDF and SLA patrols. Some of these attacks have occurred near the Israeli border, which also speaks to the IR's ability to infiltrate deep within the security zone.[21] Additionally, specially trained anti-tank units have reportedly scored successes, damaging IDF tanks in the security zone, for instance, in the fall of 1997.[22]

But the IR's evolution from an undisciplined and poorly trained mob to an effective guerrilla force is perhaps best demonstrated by the ratio of Hizballah to IDF casualties. In the mid-to-late 1990s, this ratio decreased to less than 2 to 1, from a ratio of more than 5 to 1 in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[23] Some twenty to thirty Israeli soldiers are killed each year, and many more are wounded.[24] Reduced IDF casualty rates in 1999 (only twelve killed and fifty-seven wounded) may have increased the ratio at the expense of Hizballah, although a spike in IDF casualties thus far in early 2000 may mean the swing in Israel's favor was only temporary.[25] Regardless, Hizballah leaders point to the IR's continued ability to attrite Israeli forces as the key factor behind a growing internal Israeli debate about the merits of occupying southern Lebanon.

Islamic Jihad Organization

The other armed element of Hizballah, its terrorist wing—the IJO—has conducted spectacular terrorist operations since Hizballah's founding in 1982. Known or suspected operations in Beirut include the suicide truck bombings of the U.S. embassy in April 1983, the U.S. Marine barracks in October 1983, and the U.S. embassy annex in September 1984; and the kidnapping and detention of several Americans and other Westerners in the late 1980s.[26] The IJO is also believed to be responsible for the hijacking of TWA flight 847 in 1985 from Athens to Beirut.[27] Although not known to have conducted a terrorist attack in Lebanon in recent years, the IJO does retain a terrorist infrastructure there and thus remains capable of carrying out such attacks.[28]

The IJO also has demonstrated its intent, on more than one occasion, to carry out a terrorist operation in Israel, an act normally associated with the Palestinian terrorist groups Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). For instance, a Hizballah operative preparing to execute a terrorist bombing accidentally detonated explosives in his eastern Jerusalem hotel room in 1996. Additionally, Hizballah may have been linked to Steven Smyrek, a German convert to Islam who was arrested by Israeli authorities in late 1997 for allegedly planning, on behalf of Hizballah, terrorist attacks in Israel.[29]

In addition to conducting its own attacks, the IJO has provided assistance to Palestinian terrorist groups. In October 1997, Hizballah publicly admitted to the training of Hamas members in Lebanon[30] and has recently stepped up cooperation with the PIJ,[31] a move which appears to

be driven by Iran's motivation for terrorist attacks that derail the peace process.[32] To consider the potential impact of the latter, one need only recall the February and March 1996 suicide bombings by Palestinian terrorists in Israel, which led to the suspension of peace talks and contributed to a change of government in Israel.

The IJO does not limit itself to operations in the Middle East; it has established cells in Europe, Africa, South America, North America, and elsewhere.[33] The existence of these cells indicates that Hizballah may be capable of attacking Israeli targets from many worldwide locations. For instance, it is believed to be responsible for the bombings of two buildings in Buenos Aires: the Israeli embassy in March 1992 and the Argentine–Jewish Mutual Association building in July 1994.[34]

POST-WITHDRAWAL OPTIONS

The IR and IJO provide Hizballah's clerical leadership with several options in the event of an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon. These options cover a broad spectrum, including those that risk provoking decisive and disproportionate Israeli counterstrikes against not just southern Lebanon but the entire country's infrastructure. Hizballah's post-withdrawal options, broadly stated, include the following:

- IR cross-border attacks into northern Israel against IDF border positions (including the possibility of doing so under an assumed organizational name in an attempt to maintain deniability);
- Direct or indirect support to armed Palestinian militant groups, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command (PFLP–GC), staging cross-border attacks from southern Lebanon; and
- IJO terrorist raids staged from Lebanon against Israeli civilians in northern Israel, and terrorist attacks against Israeli and Jewish interests outside the region.

Options less likely to provoke immediate and decisive Israeli military action include the following:

- Retaining its 300–400-man IR force. This force would not initiate attacks, but would be prepared to conduct cross-border guerrilla raids and rocket attacks as Hizballah's self-declared "protector" of Lebanon, in response to an Israeli ground incursion into southern Lebanon or continued Israeli air strikes on Lebanon—particularly when such attacks result in civilian casualties;
- IJO operations against Israeli targets staged from outside Lebanon (and Syria); and
- IJO support for Palestinian terrorist groups based in Lebanon, though these groups might be forced to stage attacks outside Lebanon.

A final option would entail disarming and disbanding the IR and ceasing IJO operations; both armed wings would also stop providing assistance to Palestinian militants.

HIZBALLAH'S CALCULUS

The leadership of Hizballah does not operate in a vacuum. Rather, it is subject to internal and external influences and conducts cost–benefit analyses just as any other major actor in the Lebanese equation. The decision of the Hizballah leadership on how to respond to an Israeli withdrawal will be shaped by three primary considerations: the organization's relations with Damascus, its relations with Tehran, and its domestic agenda.

Syrian–Hizballah Relations

Hizballah, while certainly not a Syrian surrogate, respects Syrian hegemony over Lebanon and understands the need to cooperate, for its own survival, with the Hafiz al-Asad regime. This reality is manifested in several ways:

1. Syria oversees Hizballah's resistance campaign.

Hizballah's operations in southern Lebanon are coordinated with Damascus, a fact that Hizballah officials openly admit,[35] though the extent of Syrian oversight is subject to debate. Top-level Hizballah officials frequently meet with Syrian leaders who provide strategic guidance, and the more tactical oversight is reportedly provided by Syria's military intelligence chief in Lebanon, General Ghazi Kannan.[36] Although it is clear that Syrian control is not absolute,[37] it is equally apparent that Damascus does set general boundaries for Hizballah to ensure that Syrian interests are met. For example, Syria has intervened with Hizballah to stop katyusha rocket attacks into northern Israel in order to prevent an escalation of tensions that could spiral out of control and prompt IDF air raids against Syrian targets.[38] The latest example of such intervention occurred in early February 2000, when Syria reportedly stopped Hizballah from firing katyusha rockets into northern Israel following Israeli air raids against Lebanese infrastructure and Hizballah targets.[39]

Developments in the Syrian–Israeli peace process have also impacted the level of resistance attacks in the security zone. Lulls in these attacks have, on occasion, coincided with forward movement in Syrian–Israeli peace talks, suggesting Syrian directives for relative "quiet" in the security zone to maintain the momentum for further negotiations.[40] For instance, the start-up of direct Syrian–Israeli negotiations in December 1999 reportedly prompted Damascus to press Hizballah for restraint in southern Lebanon,[41] while the IR stepped up its attacks on the IDF and SLA in late January and early February 2000 following the cessation of these direct talks.[42]

2. Hizballah refuses to offer any security guarantees to Israel in the event of a unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon.

Reports out of Israel in late 1999 indicated a growing willingness by the Ehud Barak government to conduct a unilateral withdrawal, prompting Shaykh Nasrallah and his deputy, Shaykh Qassem, to issue statements, widely quoted in the Lebanese press, on the inseparability of the Lebanese and Syrian tracks of the peace process.[43] The statements also carried the related demand for an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights as well as from southern Lebanon.[44] Hizballah's explicit linkage of the two tracks, although not completely contrary to its desires, strongly suggests Syrian involvement, as Hizballah has no attachment to or equities in the Golan Heights. Damascus supports these threats to underscore two points: It will not permit the Lebanese–Israeli peace track to be delinked from the Syrian–Israeli peace track, and Syria will not disarm anti-Israeli militants in Lebanon without a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

3. Hizballah's leadership accepts direct Syrian involvement in Hizballah's domestic political fortunes.

The prelude to the 1996 Lebanese parliamentary elections demonstrated Hizballah's willingness to play by Syrian rules governing Lebanese domestic politics. Shaykh Nasrallah agreed in August 1995, after a meeting with Syrian officials in Damascus, to Syria's demand that Hizballah run candidates in southern Lebanon on a joint list with political rival Amal candidates.[45] (For more on Amal, see the text box on the next page.) Nasrallah agreed to the demand, undoubtedly cognizant of the damage it would do to Hizballah's election prospects. This intervention on behalf of Nabih Berri's Amal reflected the Syrian policy of preventing any one group in Lebanon, including Hizballah, from becoming too strong and too independent of Damascus. Syria is also concerned about Hizballah's domestic Islamic fundamentalist agenda, which is at odds with Asad's secular, Ba'thist regime. Although mindful of Syrian power and influence, Hizballah has no ideological affinity with the Ba'thist leadership.

Moreover, Hizballah's stated intent to drive the Israelis out of southern Lebanon diverges from Syria's interest in keeping the Israelis pinned down there until an agreement can be reached on the Golan Heights. Hizballah wants the freedom of action to carry out its resistance campaign, but Damascus wants to regulate the guerrilla campaign to maintain pressure on Israel. Simultaneously, it must prevent tensions from escalating out of control that would expose Syrian forces in Lebanon to IDF reprisal attacks or, worse yet from Asad's perspective, provide the impetus for a unilateral Israeli withdrawal; an IDF withdrawal from southern Lebanon in the context of an agreement with Syria would allow Damascus to take credit for the "liberation" of Lebanon.

AMAL

Amal, an acronym of *afwaj al-muqawama al-lubnaniyya* (the Lebanese Resistance Battalions), was established in the late 1970s as the political organization and militia of the Shi'i community in Lebanon. In 1980, Nabih Berri, who later became Speaker of the Lebanese parliament, assumed leadership over the organization and has retained this position ever since. Amal has competed with Hizballah since the 1980s for control over the Shi'i community in southern Lebanon, and the end of that decade witnessed violent clashes between the two organizations; Syrian support ultimately helped establish Amal's military and political victory over the Iranian-funded Hizballah. In the 1990s, as Hizballah became increasingly active in armed resistance against Israel, Amal was blamed by its critics for playing a more minor role. To demonstrate its commitment to the anti-Israel campaign, the organization had to increase its military activity to the point that, by 1998 and 1999, Amal had almost quadrupled its number of attacks against the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and South Lebanon Army (SLA) compared to previous years.

Amal currently has about 2,000 fighters who occasionally operate against IDF and SLA positions in the security zone. Its most common modus operandi is the use of mortar strikes and the laying of explosive charges against IDF and SLA soldiers (for example, in January 1998, the organization claimed responsibility for a bomb hidden in a videocassette that had been given to an SLA intelligence officer); this is the case particularly in the western sector of the security zone, where Amal's power base lies.

The organization's primary objectives are to liberate Lebanese soil from Israeli occupation and to restore Lebanese sovereignty to the South. But unlike Hizballah, Amal's leaders have refrained from indicating that the organization has any interest in pursuing the war against Israel following an Israeli withdrawal.

Amal offers a more moderate political program than that of Hizballah and, because of its close relations with Syria, is likely to continue emphasizing political means as opposed to the military efforts exercised by Hizballah. It is therefore unlikely that Amal will engage in cross-border operations against Israel following an IDF withdrawal from Lebanon unless instructed by Damascus to do so.

—*Gal Luft*

Nevertheless, Hizballah will avoid a major conflict with Syria. Shaykh Nasrallah and the rest of Hizballah's leadership understand all too well the methods Syria can employ against Lebanese groups crossing Syrian red lines:

- Use of armed force against Hizballah. Syria's 30,000 troops in Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) are much larger and more capable than the IR forces, and Damascus has demonstrated its willingness to employ deadly force against Hizballah on multiple occasions.[46]
- Support of Hizballah's rivals. Syria appeared to have backed, or at least allowed, the 1997 formation of an armed Hizballah splinter group led by Shaykh Subhi al-Tufayli, former Hizballah secretary general.[47] Although his group, apparently too radical for Syria's liking, was crushed in a shoot-out with Lebanese forces in January 1998 in the Bekaa Valley, al-Tufayli continues to live in the Bekaa thanks to Syrian protection.[48] Furthermore, Syria's backing of Amal, which includes the provision of arms as well as political support, also serves to remind Hizballah that Syria has other options in Lebanon's Shi'i community.[49]
- Syrian interruptions of arms deliveries for Hizballah from Iran. Syria's control over the flow of weapons, which are flown to Damascus from Iran and then trucked into Lebanon, provides Asad with a major lever to pressure Hizballah.[50] Prior attempts by Hizballah to obtain weapons from Iran outside of Syrian channels have led to Syria's confiscation of Hizballah arms caches as a disciplinary measure.[51] The Syrian capacity to halt Iranian arms supplies to Hizballah through Damascus and its ability to monitor major Lebanese ports closely ensures that it can choke-off Hizballah's existing and potential critical arms supply routes.

Yet, attempts by Hizballah to circumvent Syrian control over the flow of weapons demonstrate the tug-of-war that can occur with Damascus, most notably the unsuccessful attempt in 1996 to smuggle weapons into Lebanon in a truck convoy via Turkey.[52] Syria has also turned down requests by Iran to ferry weapons to Hizballah directly through Beirut's international airport.[53] But Shaykh Nasrallah continues to push for more freedom of action in the security zone, and during episodes of Syrian–Hizballah tension over the scope and timing of attacks in southern Lebanon, Hizballah looks to Tehran for intervention with Damascus on its behalf.

Iranian–Hizballah Relations

Hizballah will carefully consider its ties to Tehran as the group weighs its options following an Israeli withdrawal. Hizballah's relationship with Iran is significant for several reasons:

1. Tehran provides Hizballah with political backing.

This backing ensures that Syria cannot act against Hizballah's interests without at least considering the consequences for Syrian–Iranian relations.

2. Iran provides generous levels of monetary aid.

Estimates of Iranian financial aid to Hizballah vary widely, between $60 million and $100 million per year.[54] This aid allows Hizballah to provide a vast array of social services to its constituencies in Lebanon, boosting its appeal among Lebanese Shi'i. Aid levels have fallen from previously reported levels of $300 million per year, probably because of Iran's own economic problems.[55] The drop-off is apparently spurring Hizballah to achieve greater financial self-sufficiency.[56]

3. Iran provides weapons to Hizballah.

Iran transports the weapons via aircraft to Damascus, with an average of two flights per month.[57] Hizballah needs these weapons to carry out the "resistance" campaign in southern Lebanon against the IDF and SLA.

4. Iran's Revolutionary Guards stationed in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley train Hizballah's IR.

The Revolutionary Guards provide guerrilla warfare training, including evasion and escape techniques and underwater demolition.[58] A 1993 Israeli press report claims that Iranian trainers occasionally participated in IR operations, resulting in the death of three Iranians in one attack.[59] A more recent report quotes Israeli intelligence as indicating that up to two hundred Iranian Revolutionary Guard forces were recently dispatched to Lebanon, some for the first time, entering the security zone as part of their ongoing Hizballah training effort.[60] (See text box, facing page.)

5. Iran supports Hizballah operations overseas.

Iranian diplomats provide "logistical or other support" to Hizballah's foreign cells in Europe, Africa, and South America.[61] As part of a quid pro quo, Hizballah operatives have carried out, on at least two occasions, assassinations and bombings in Europe coordinated by and on behalf of Iranian agents.[62]

6. Hizballah's leadership maintains significant ideological ties to the Iranian regime.

Although Iran did not create Hizballah, it was instrumental in helping to launch the organization's military and social role in Lebanon, and Hizballah has maintained ideological ties to the regime in Iran since 1982. Many of Hizballah's clerical leaders have longstanding ties to Iranian governmental clerics. Iran's Islamic revolution continues to inspire and influence Hizballah, not least in its antipathy toward Israel and the U.S. government.[63] This in turn serves as the ideological underpinning of IR and IJO operations. Hizballah's objective is to create an Islamic republic in Lebanon, along the lines of the Iranian Islamic Republic,

IRAN'S ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY GUARD CORPS

The Revolutionary Guards provide Iran with a political and military foothold in Lebanon. The force first arrived there after the 1982 Israeli invasion in order to participate in the fighting and to provide training and logistical aid to pro-Iranian revolutionary groups, which were rather undeveloped at the time. Although initially about 1,200 Revolutionary Guards were based in Lebanon, their numbers gradually dwindled to a few hundred by the early to mid-1990s. In the years since the 1985 Israeli withdrawal to the security zone, the Revolutionary Guards have expanded their mandate to education, welfare, and community services, though their primary activities are still military training and instruction. The Guards' "al-Quds" forces provide this training in Lebanese camps under Hizballah control, and in addition, training bases in Iran host Hizballah and Palestinian activists for short periods during which they gain experience in field command, communication, and new weapons.

Today, there are several score Revolutionary Guards in Lebanon, and the size of the Guard presence is strictly limited by Syria. It is unclear whether Syria will continue to allow a Revolutionary Guard presence after peace agreements are signed with Israel. This depends primarily on Syria's relations with Iran and Hizballah and, to a lesser extent, on the nature of the relations that will evolve between Syria and the United States. The Revolutionary Guards are likely to assume an important role as a bridge between Hizballah and Palestinian Islamic groups like Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the attempt to create a common framework within which all pro-Iranian organizations will operate after an Israeli withdrawal.

—Gal Luft

with its concept of *velayat-e faqih,* or rule by the clerics.[64] Hizballah, however, has over the years adapted its program to the realities of Lebanon's own domestic political system.

Domestic Political Goals

Hizballah will not respond to an Israeli withdrawal without considering the impact of that response on the Lebanese body politic. Hizballah has succeeded in gaining power through Lebanon's political process since its decision to participate in the 1992 parliamentary elections, and the organization has taken several steps in the 1990s to broaden support among its power base—the Shi'i in the Bekaa Valley, the suburbs of southern Beirut, and particularly southern Lebanon, where Hizballah competes with Amal:[65]

1. Establishing a vast and effective network of social services in Shi'i areas throughout the country

These include hospitals, medical and dental clinics, schools, and a construction company that rebuilds homes damaged or destroyed in southern Lebanon as a consequence of Israeli reprisals in the context of the resistance campaign.[66]

2. Ensuring the responsible conduct of its members of parliament

Widely regarded as hardworking and noncorrupt, Hizballah members of the Lebanese parliament are also known for their sense of pragmatism and their cooperation with non-Shi'i parliament members. They are known not for their militancy, but rather for their principled defense of Lebanon's poor (Shi'i and non-Shi'i alike) and for their focus on economic and social policy.

3. Easing enforcement of Islamic values in areas under its control[67]

These measures, in addition to the broad-based appeal of the Hizballah-led "resistance" campaign, have broadened Hizballah's appeal among the professional, more secular (relative to Hizballah's traditional religious base), middle-class Shi'is, many of whom have shifted their allegiance from Amal.[68] Hizballah has also worked diligently over the past several years to broaden its appeal among non-Shi'is by moderating its image and portraying itself as a promoter of Lebanese national interests. Examples of its activities include the following:

- Stressing that its armed campaign in southern Lebanon against the IDF and SLA is on behalf of all Lebanese. Closely related to this effort was Hizballah's November 1997 creation of the so-called "Lebanese Brigades of Resistance," whose membership is open to all Lebanese and is modeled after and commanded by IR.[69]
- Making its vast social network available to all Muslims and even to Christians.[70]
- Creating an effective public relations apparatus including websites, a television and radio station, and a publication, all of which are made available to both Shi'i and non-Shi'i Lebanese.
- Participating in the 1992 and 1996 parliamentary elections. This move demonstrated Hizballah's willingness to work within the system. In parliament, Hizballah members cooperate with Lebanon's other factions, including Christians.[71]
- Reassuring the public that Hizballah—although it seeks to establish an Islamic republic in Lebanon—will not seek to do so by force. Shaykh Nasrallah, in a 1995 interview on a Maronite-controlled television station, made the following declaration: "I want you to listen very carefully because I want to reassure the Christians—as well as secular and other Muslims who don't sup-

port such a move—that we would never try to turn Lebanon into an Islamic state by force."[72]

• Stressing the Lebanese nature of Hizballah, and claiming that its ties to Iran and Syria do not make it subservient to either state. As Shaykh Nasrallah has argued,

> We in Hizballah speak Arabic in the Lebanese dialect. Hizballah's leadership is clearly Lebanese and is elected by Lebanese cadres. Hizballah's political line and movement serve Lebanese national interests. . . . Hizballah receives great political and moral support and protection from Iran and Syria. This is true. But this does not transform Hizballah into a pro-Iranian or pro-Syrian party. This support does not strip Hizballah of its Lebanese, Arab, and Islamic identity.[73]

Hizballah's efforts to expand its support base and domestic appeal have paid dividends that it would be loath to jeopardize. It has won the support of the Lebanese government, which publicly backs the IR's resistance campaign. A Hizballah parliament member confirmed that "we are satisfied with the way the government is dealing with the basic issue of the resistance. We are even more satisfied with the official government line."[74] In fact, acceptance of Hizballah as a legitimate political group on the national scene seems to be Hizballah's most cherished accomplishment domestically, as it strongly suggests Hizballah's political permanency in Lebanon. Shaykh Nasrallah underscored this point in a 1997 interview: "There is no ambiguity with regard to Hizballah's political future. It is a political party which is currently active in the arena and which will remain so after the [Israeli] withdrawal."[75] In a separate interview, Nasrallah declared, "We are not only a military movement; we have popular roots everywhere. No one will be able to uproot us, no matter what happens."[76]

HIZBALLAH'S ANTI-ISRAEL IDEOLOGY

Hizballah's pragmatic efforts that are intended to ensure its long-term political survival have come at the expense of the group's more hardline, ideological wing. When al-Tufayli broke ranks in 1997, he accused Hizballah's leadership of diluting the organization's revolutionary character for the sake of political expediency. There is little evidence to suggest, however, that Hizballah's anti-Israel ideology has moderated. Shaykh Nasrallah has repeatedly rejected the notion of recognizing Israel under any circumstances, referring to it as "the enemy of Lebanon, the Arabs, and the Muslims."[77] In another interview, he stated, "As to Israel, we will continue to consider it an illegitimate, alien and cancerous entity which we cannot recognize."[78] Hizballah's view of Israel as an illegitimate entity seems to remain deeply rooted in the organization's ideals. This suggests that Hizballah's ideology will remain anti-Israel well after an Israeli

withdrawal from Lebanon, and that the group will continue to associate with and perhaps assist other rejectionist groups, including those advocating violence to achieve their goals.

Likely Hizballah Responses to Withdrawal Scenarios
One can envision three potential responses of Hizballah to Israeli withdrawal:

1. An Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in the context of a peace agreement with Syria on the Golan Heights
In this scenario, Hizballah would have little choice but to declare victory and voluntarily end its IR campaign. Shaykh Nasrallah has stated that Hizballah "would deem a peace settlement to be a victory for the resistance and the logic of the resistance."[79] Israel will insist on security guarantees along its northern border with Lebanon as part of any peace deal with Syria involving a withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Once Syria commits to a peace deal, attempts by Hizballah to undermine an agreement through provocative cross-border attacks, by its own doing, or by sponsoring a splinter group, would cross a Syrian red line. The Iranian arms pipeline to Hizballah, through Syria, would be shut off as part of any peace deal, depriving the IR of the weapons it would need to continue its guerrilla campaign in the long term. Damascus (and Beirut) would likely disarm and disband the IR forces to prevent rogue elements from undermining a peace deal and to allow the LAF to secure southern Lebanon without a major fight.

Already, Syria seems to have signaled its intent to disarm Hizballah's resistance fighters in the event of a peace agreement. Colonel Bashar al-Asad, heir apparent to his father Hafiz al-Asad, once predicted, "Those that chose the path of resistance did so for a specific reason. When the causes that led to the resistance are gone, I believe its members will go back to normal life and will choose other ways to serve their country after achieving their long-cherished victory."[80] Likewise, Syrian foreign minister Faruq al-Shara declared the following in 1995: "But if the result being sought by the resistance is achieved—meaning the liberation of the land from occupation—then Syria can play its role in convincing the resistance that its aims have been realized."[81]

Hizballah has come close to acknowledging that it would respect the wishes of the Syrian and Lebanese governments under such a scenario—without actually abandoning its policy of deliberate ambiguity—recognizing the inevitability of one day ending its resistance campaign in the context of peace agreements. Muhammad Raad, a Hizballah member of the Lebanese parliament, declared that, following an Israeli withdrawal, "Hizballah will consider its operational methods in light of changes and developments. There is no need to preempt things. Hizballah will act in accordance with

what it assesses to be in the interest of Lebanon and the Lebanese, *and of the special relationship with Syria.* [emphasis added]"[82] Shaykh Nasrallah himself, questioned recently about Hizballah's intentions in the event of an Israeli peace deal with Lebanon, stated, "However, let it be understood, that once that region [southern Lebanon] is freed, Hizballah will not exercise any security measures there. That is indisputable, because the region will be under the sovereignty of the Lebanese government."[83] He further added, "When a peace agreement is concluded between the Lebanese government and Israel, we would surely disagree with the Lebanese government about that, but we would not make any turmoil out of it."[84]

In the improbable event that Hizballah's leadership should want to defy Syria by conducting cross-border attacks, Tehran is unlikely to support such an effort, despite its opposition to the peace process and its role as arms supplier for Hizballah. Iranian president Muhammad Khatami has stated that Tehran will not interfere with a Syrian–Israeli peace deal.[85] Moreover, after Ehud Barak's election victory in May 1999 and the goodwill gestures between Barak and Asad, Khatami reportedly advised Nasrallah to prepare for the potential shift away from resistance attacks,[86] advising that Iran and Syria would help Hizballah with such a transition.[87] Khatami's policy is probably predicated on the belief that Iran ultimately cannot prevent a Syrian–Israeli peace deal, and that efforts to thwart it would lead to a rupture in ties with Damascus. This would consequently jeopardize Iran's access to and ties with Lebanon's Shi'is and damage Tehran's current efforts to expand ties to the Arab world, often with Damascus as a conduit. The possibility exists, however, that the conservative-controlled security establishment in Iran, including Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as well as the Ministry of Intelligence and Security, would act independently of President Khatami and support Hizballah militants or splinter groups vowing to conduct cross- border attacks on Israel. Lack of overt Iranian support, however, would likely limit the appeal of any militant splinter groups, deny them true legitimacy, and allow Syria and the LAF to act forcibly against any rogue militants without fear of a serious backlash from Tehran.

Defying Syria would also threaten Hizballah's domestic standing. Beirut would be given Syria's blessing to disarm Hizballah forcibly and, in the process, destroy the good will that Hizballah has so painstakingly built up with the government. Lebanon's Shi'is, which constitute Hizballah's political power base, are also unlikely to support cross-border attacks, particularly in the absence of support from Damascus, Tehran, and Beirut. A defiant Hizballah would thus be completely isolated.

Hizballah is likely, however, to keep intact its terrorist wing, the IJO, and use it against Israeli interests in the region and perhaps overseas. The organization has made it clear that it will not normalize relations with Israel or accept its legitimacy "even if the entire world recognizes

Israel."[88] Shaykh Nasrallah has added that "even if the Syrian Golan and southern Lebanon are returned by Israel there will still be a great national and Islamic problem to resolve. . . . [T]he just and global solution to the Palestinian issue is the restitution of all of Palestine to its true owners."[89] The IJO therefore gives Hizballah and its supporters in Tehran an outlet for continuing an "armed struggle" against Israel, albeit covertly, after a peace agreement.

Damascus, however, is unlikely to allow the IJO to stage terrorist attacks from Lebanon. Doing so is likely to constitute a direct violation of any peace deal with Israel, thus threatening Syrian credibility. Damascus would also view terrorist activities launched from Lebanon as a challenge to its authority in the area. Moreover, if the United States makes an issue of the presence of an IJO infrastructure in Lebanon after a peace deal, Damascus would likely want to address the issue satisfactorily in order to guarantee Syria's removal from the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism. For the IJO, this would mean both shifting its infrastructure to Iran, which already provides support to Hizballah and other terrorist groups, and attempting to operate out of the West Bank and Gaza. Some operations could be in conjunction with Palestinian terrorist groups, given the close links that Hizballah already has with Hamas and the PIJ.[90]

Regarding the SLA, Hizballah would likely honor an Israeli–Lebanese–Syrian agreement that provides promises of protection for SLA members— if Beirut and Damascus take such a provision seriously. The precedent for allowing Beirut to determine the fate of SLA soldiers may have been set following the SLA withdrawal from Jezzine in June 1999. In this case, Hizballah did not carry out a revenge campaign against SLA soldiers or suspected collaborators who stayed behind in Jezzine and seemed content to leave the fate of SLA soldiers in the hands of the Lebanese judicial system—although this may have had more to do with not wanting to stiffen the resolve of remaining SLA members. Regardless, isolated blood reprisals against SLA troops and supporters, considered traitors by Hizballah, cannot be ruled out, even after a peace deal. A Hizballah member of the Lebanese parliament ruled out a Hizballah vengeance campaign against SLA strongholds after an Israeli withdrawal but warned of individual acts of revenge.[91] The likelihood of reprisals would increase if Hizballah perceives that the state is failing to take "necessary" legal action against SLA members, or if it believes a revenge campaign would carry the tacit support of Beirut and Damascus.

2. Unilateral Israeli withdrawal based on informal understandings

Prime Minister Barak will wait to see if he can pull his forces out of Lebanon as part of a peace deal with security guarantees provided by Damascus and Beirut. Nonetheless, the suspension of direct talks between

Israel and Syria in January 2000 as well as ongoing resistance attacks leave open the prospect of an Israeli withdrawal without any formal agreement. Such a withdrawal could come, however, with the cooperation and assistance of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).[92]

A unilateral withdrawal would expose the divergent interests of Syria and Hizballah. For its part, Syria would lose its primary lever for pressuring Israel into a deal involving the Golan Heights. Also, while Syrian leadership could claim credit for a negotiated Israeli withdrawal, it could not effectively do so in the event of a unilateral pullout. In this regard, Damascus has made clear the inevitability of continued unrest along Israel's border with Lebanon in the event of a unilateral withdrawal.[93]

Yet, a unilateral Israeli withdrawal would mean the realization of Hizballah's goal of driving Israel out of Lebanon and cast the organization as Lebanon's "liberator" from Israeli occupation. To underscore this role, Hizballah will strike hard against withdrawing IDF and SLA forces, as it did when the SLA pulled out of Jezzine in June 1999 despite its having refrained from a revenge campaign against SLA members who remained behind. In the event of a complete Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, Hizballah's leadership would undoubtedly be reluctant to conduct cross-border attacks following a unilateral Israeli withdrawal, regardless of Iranian—and perhaps Syrian—pressure to do so. The reasons are many:

- The threat to Hizballah's domestic standing as a result of a backlash by Shi'is and non-Shi'is alike. A complete Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon would deprive Hizballah of justification for conducting cross-border attacks; unprovoked attacks on Israel would prompt disproportionate Israeli retaliatory air strikes throughout Lebanon as in June 1999, when a series of Israeli air raids— in response to cross-border katyusha rocket attacks—killed ten Lebanese, wounded sixty-four, destroyed bridges, and knocked out electrical power plants near Beirut.[94] Prime Minister Barak vowed, "We will have to retaliate, to respond, very forcefully" if guerrilla attacks continue after an IDF withdrawal.[95] Many South Lebanese Shi'is and non-Shi'is would likely turn against Hizballah, as they did against the Palestinians in the 1970s and 1980s, if it uses southern Lebanon as a war zone against the Israelis. Mouafac Harb, a prominent Lebanese journalist, warned that if Hizballah attacked Israel's northern border after Israel withdrew, thus instigating an Israeli bombing response on Lebanese infrastructure, Hizballah would lose credibility among the Lebanese.[96] Similarly, a UNIFIL official has observed:

  I know the Hizballah people in the field. Most of them are from the South, that is, their families and property. They know that what they do

today is acceptable in Lebanon because this is a struggle for 'libera-tion.' But they also know that if the IDF withdraws, all their actions beyond the border will, in effect, mean war. Do you think it likely that someone living beyond the border will want to risk everything after withdrawal? He won't want his village to be damaged because he fired some stupid katyushas at Israel.[97]

Hizballah's leadership has shown pragmatism by moderating its image and broadening its support base. Certainly the leadership is also sufficiently pragmatic to recognize that it will be unable to justify unprovoked, cross-border attacks that result in Israeli re-taliatory raids plunging Beirut into darkness, destroying villages, and inflicting casualties. The same Shi'is who now constitute Hizballah's political power base turned against the Palestinians during the Lebanese civil war, in part because the Palestinians exposed Lebanon's residents to Israeli attacks. Hizballah's sensi-tivity to a domestic backlash is probably amplified in anticipation of the Lebanese parliamentary elections scheduled for the latter half of 2000.

- Unwillingness to commit significant resources and sacrifice its cadre for the Palestinian cause. As an Israeli journalist pointed out, "the coolness between the Shi'is and the Palestinians is of-ten overlooked amid solidarity rhetoric."[98] Hizballah's leadership appears to genuinely support Palestinian aspirations vis-à-vis Is-rael, but it believes that any blood spilled in that effort should be mostly Palestinian. Shaykh Nasrallah seemed to confirm this sen-timent when he stated,

The occupation of Jerusalem is an abnormal situation that cannot con-tinue, and there will be resistance to the Israeli occupation, but we believe this is the responsibility of the Palestinian people. When Israel occupied Lebanon, did we ask for anyone to come and fight on our behalf? Nobody can fight for Palestinian land other than the Palestin-ian people, who resist inside Palestine. This nobody other than the Palestinians themselves can do.[99]

Likewise, Shaykh Kaouk of southern Lebanon has declared, "to help the Palestinian people doesn't necessarily mean that we will aid them militarily, but we do say that when there is an aggressor, there must be resistance."[100]

- Reluctance to challenge the international legitimacy of an Israeli pullout and engage in an armed campaign against UNIFIL. A unilateral Israeli withdrawal coordinated with UNIFIL in accor-dance with Resolution 425 would bestow international legitimacy on the withdrawal, thus making it even more difficult politically

for Hizballah to justify cross-border attacks. Moreover, Hizballah's
leaders would also likely be reluctant to engage in clashes with
UNIFIL troops positioned along the border to prevent cross-bor-
der operations following the withdrawal.

Nonetheless, Hizballah would likely retain at least some portion of its
core guerrilla force. With the major issues on the Syrian and Palestinian
tracks still unresolved and Syria issuing barely veiled threats to incite
trouble in response to a unilateral withdrawal, Hizballah's leadership
would want to keep its IR force available for contingencies. Doing so
would give it the option of responding, as the self-proclaimed "defender
of Lebanon," to the possibility of Israeli ground incursions. Shaykh
Nasrallah seemed to indicate as much when he stated, "Even if the en-
emy withdrew from the South and the western Bekaa, Lebanon will al-
ways be targeted. Therefore, it has to be on the alert to fight with all the
appropriate weapons on the military, political, intellectual or other lev-
els."[101] Moreover, maintaining the IR force would please Damascus, which
would not want to see Hizballah "reward" Israel by dismantling its guer-
rilla force.

To further placate Damascus and Tehran, both of which are eager to
keep up the pressure on Israel, the IR would likely assist Palestinian
rejectionist groups conducting cross-border attacks with Syrian backing.
Assistance could include the provision of weapons and training, but it would
likely be covert, to ensure there is no visible evidence directly linking
Hizballah to cross-border attacks. The groundwork for such a plan seems
to have been laid recently. The PIJ, a group normally associated with ter-
rorist operations staged from the West Bank and Gaza, conducted three
operations against Israeli and SLA forces in the security zone in Novem-
ber 1999, apparently with Hizballah's assistance, and it announced that
southern Lebanon constitutes an "open front" for the PIJ.[102] This threat
and these attacks, which apparently occurred with Syria's backing, under-
score that Damascus can encourage Palestinian rejectionist groups to keep
the pressure on Israel. These groups, moreover, would certainly benefit
from access to Hizballah's arms and expertise.

Hizballah's leadership would also likely use IJO operations against
Israel. The case has already been made that IJO operations and assis-
tance to Palestinian terrorist groups would continue even in the event of
a Syrian–Israeli peace deal. But the likelihood is even greater in the event
of a unilateral withdrawal, given Syria's probable inclination to support
IJO attacks as a method of continuing pressure against Israel. Syria may
also allow IJO terrorist operations to be staged from Lebanon, despite
the risks this could pose to Syria.

A unilateral withdrawal would probably not bode well for SLA mem-
bers who remain behind. Absent a peace deal that protects the SLA's in-
terests, Hizballah would be more free to exact revenge against SLA soldiers

and suspected collaborators. This likelihood would increase if Hizballah perceives Beirut's prosecution of SLA members to be insufficient.

3. Uncoordinated unilateral Israeli withdrawal

This scenario is likely the most difficult for Hizballah, in that it could result in the most pressure from Damascus and Tehran to carry out cross-border attacks. Without an Israeli withdrawal in accordance with Resolution 425 (see Appendix A) and the deployment of UNIFIL troops to the border, Hizballah's two patrons would have little reason to restrain their support for such attacks. Nonetheless, the case has already been made that the Lebanese people, including the Shi'i community, would not support unprovoked guerrilla raids into northern Israel after an Israeli withdrawal—whether or not it is in accordance with Resolution 425—and Hizballah's leadership hardly feels compelled to take giant risks on behalf of the Palestinian cause.

In fact, the leadership would likely be able to withstand Syrian pressure for cross-border attacks in this scenario. Damascus probably would find its current policy of placing broad constraints on Hizballah guerrilla activity easier to implement than trying to pressure the group into cross-border attacks it may not wish to conduct. Moreover, as Mouafac Harb has argued, while Syria could make Hizballah's life more difficult in Lebanon, the organization does have a margin by which it can exert its independence from Damascus.[103] This margin is small but sufficient for Hizballah to proclaim victory after an Israeli withdrawal and still keep its IR intact, employ the IJO against Israeli interests, and provide assistance to Palestinian guerrilla groups and terrorists. In this way, the IR might conduct cross-border attacks on a limited basis in the name and on behalf of Palestinian militant groups, which would both placate demands by Tehran and Damascus to keep the pressure on Israel and at the same time provide enough cover to ensure plausible deniability for Hizballah.

'HEROES FOREVER'?

Some experts argue that Hizballah would lose its *raison d'être* were it ever to abandon its armed struggle, and therefore the leadership would not do so even if it were in the organization's best interests. The reason runs as follows: "Hizballah is shining now because no one else is fighting Israel. But when a political solution is found, Hizballah will fade away."[104] But this is a flawed argument.

First, it disregards Hizballah's current success in Lebanon's political arena, where it is accepted as a legitimate political party. Second, it ignores the inroads Hizballah has made into the Shi'i political base in Lebanon. A study published in 1996 on Hizballah by the American University of Beirut concluded that the "Islamist success in carving a niche in a community still seeking self-identity and adequate national repre-

sentation means that Islamists are unlikely to lose the support of exter-
nal backers should Middle East peace negotiations reduce Hizballah's
resistance role."[105] Finally, it disregards the realism of Hizballah's leader-
ship in recognizing the inevitable abandonment of its armed resistance
campaign. Shaykh Fadlallah argued in 1997 that "a settlement between
the Arabs and the Israelis is inevitable, irrespective of how long it takes
to conclude."[106] Likewise, as one Hizballah member observed, comment-
ing on the eventual transformation of Hizballah to an organization en-
gaged mostly in political activities, "we don't expect to be heroes
forever."[107] It is likely that the ending of resistance operations will dimin-
ish Hizballah's nationwide stature and revolutionary zeal. The organiza-
tion appears to be sufficiently woven into Lebanese society to guarantee
its survival as a political entity in the post-withdrawal era.

HIZBALLAH'S COHESION
Regardless of which course of action Hizballah's leadership may choose
in response to an Israeli withdrawal, some degree of internal dissent ap-
pears inevitable. The importance of such a decision for Hizballah's fu-
ture, the potential meddling by Tehran and Damascus, and the existence
of tensions in the organization's recent past all point to the likelihood of
dissension. The case of Subhi al-Tufayli serves to illustrate the tension
between hardliners and moderates within Hizballah. Al-Tufayli, who bit-
terly opposed Hizballah's decision in 1992 to participate in Lebanese
parliamentary elections, became marginalized throughout the 1990s
because of his "radical and uncompromising line."[108] In January 1998,
he challenged the authority of the Lebanese government by occupying a
Hizballah building in Baalbek along with two hundred of his followers,
an action that resulted in the previously mentioned battle with Lebanese
forces in the Bekaa Valley.[109] While the incident ended al-Tufayli's so-
called revolution—he had established a breakaway faction in 1997—it
also exposed the existence of a hard-line cadre within Hizballah's ranks.

   If Hizballah's leadership echews cross-border attacks in the event of
a unilateral withdrawal, as has been suggested, then the likelihood in-
creases for the creation of a breakaway faction by the more radicalized
elements of Hizballah. Many members of the 300–400-man armed cadre
of the IR, in addition to IJO operatives, are probably inclined to con-
tinue the armed conflict against Israel, regardless of whether Israel with-
draws from Lebanon. This sentiment may also be shared by some of the
2,000–3,000 "part-time" Hizballah fighters who live and work off of the
economy in southern Lebanon. Tehran and Damascus could encourage
the formation of an al-Tufayli-like splinter group composed of the more
hardline clerics and guerrillas, viewing it as a useful means of continuing
attacks against Israel in lieu of a pacified Hizballah.

   Although the emergence of a splinter group is possible, Shaykh

Nasrallah is probably capable of securing broad support for his deci-
sions from the rank-and-file and the leading clerics. Nasrallah enjoys
widespread support, having led Hizballah since 1993, and the organiza-
tion even amended its charter in July 1998 to allow for the reelection of
Nasrallah for a third term.[110] Significantly, Nasrallah has maintained firm
control over the IR's military operations by appointing his allies as guer-
rilla commanders in southern Lebanon, with Shaykh Kaouk as military
coordinator there.[111] This indicates that a Nasrallah order to halt attacks
following an Israeli withdrawal is likely to be carried out by the vast ma-
jority of Hizballah members.

CONCLUSIONS

An Israeli withdrawal in the context of a peace agreement with Syria
holds the greatest promise for stability. In this scenario, the voluntary
disarmament of Hizballah's IR forces is likely, and Damascus and Beirut
would show little tolerance for any militant splinter groups attempting
to conduct cross-border attacks. Iran, out of concern for its continued
relations with Syria and Lebanon, would also be unlikely to actively sub-
vert a Syrian–Lebanese peace deal with Israel.

An Israeli withdrawal in accordance with UN Security Council Reso-
lution 425, and in cooperation with UNIFIL, would still lead to pressure
from Tehran, and perhaps Damascus, for continued attacks. The pres-
ence of UNIFIL forces along the border, and Hizballah's likely efforts to
avoid direct conflict with UNIFIL, would complicate Hizballah's plans
for cross-border attacks. Nonetheless, the other ingredients of instabil-
ity—retaining IR guerrillas, the potential for katyusha rocket attacks, as-
sistance to Palestinian guerrilla groups, and the threat of IJO terrorist
attacks against Israel proper and Israeli targets worldwide—would all
remain.

A unilateral Israeli withdrawal would greatly reduce Hizballah's mo-
tivation to continue its armed campaign against Israel, but by no means
would it usher in stability, particularly if the withdrawal is not coordi-
nated with UNIFIL. Hizballah would likely face pressure—at least from
Tehran and possibly from Damascus as well—to continue attacks (al-
though Damascus could turn to Palestinian rejectionist groups in Leba-
non as another option). Hizballah would also likely retain a portion of
its guerrilla forces prepared to conduct cross-border raids against IDF
posts along the border and to carry out katyusha rocket attacks into north-
ern Israel in response to any renewed Israeli attack against Lebanon.
The IR may also, at least covertly, assist Palestinian rejectionist groups
intent on conducting cross-border attacks. Terrorist attacks by the IJO
against northern Israel, staged from southern Lebanon, are also more
likely in the event of a unilateral withdrawal, given a lack of Syrian incen-
tives to allow Lebanese forces to secure the border.

Nevertheless, any unilateral IDF withdrawal, if not complete, will provide Hizballah with a pretext for continuing attacks with the backing of Damascus. Shaykh Nasrallah recently warned, "If [the Israelis] stay in a piece of land that we consider to be Lebanese, we will persist in our resistance until it is freed."[112] The more credible the Israeli threat of severe retaliation for cross-border attacks following a unilateral withdrawal, the less likely Hizballah would be to conduct such operations, particularly if unprovoked. Hizballah undoubtedly recognizes the negative domestic political ramifications of provoking Israel into widescale attacks on the Lebanese infrastructure. But Hizballah, as Lebanon's self-proclaimed "protector" against Israeli aggression, will stand ready to conduct attacks in response to what it perceives as Israeli provocations against Lebanon, particularly Lebanese noncombatants.

Following a unilateral Israeli or negotiated withdrawal from southern Lebanon, a large and timely dose of economic aid and development for the South could provide a powerful incentive among residents of southern Lebanon to keep the area pacified and prevent it from being used as a staging ground for cross-border attacks. Among the residents who would benefit from job creation and economic opportunities are the 2,000–3,000 "part-time" Hizballah fighters, perhaps in need of an incentive to shift away from armed conflict following an Israeli withdrawal.

Hizballah's leadership will not recognize Israel, even if both Syria and the Palestinians reach peace agreements with the Jewish state. Hizballah's ideological hatred of Israel is likely to persist long after an Israeli withdrawal, and it will keep its ties with Palestinian terrorist groups. Hizballah is also likely to retain its own terrorist wing, the IJO, in any case. IJO terrorist attacks, or at least covert assistance to Palestinian terrorist groups operating in the West Bank and Gaza, will remain a Hizballah outlet for the continuation of its "armed struggle" against Israel and "liberation of Jerusalem." Iran at least is likely to continue its support for such activity, but in the event of an Israeli peace deal with Syria and Lebanon, Damascus would likely prohibit the IJO from using Lebanon as a training and operations base.

Hizballah will retain close ties with Damascus and Tehran no matter which of the above scenarios play out. These ties will continue to be a function of Syrian hegemony over Lebanese affairs, as no political organization can expect to survive in Lebanon in the absence of cooperation with Damascus. Similarly, Hizballah will continue to look to Tehran for guidance, material and monetary support, and for protection of its interests vis-à-vis Syria.

Damascus, as the power broker in Lebanon, can effectively pressure Hizballah to cease cross-border attacks. It can choke-off Hizballah's primary arm supply routes, greatly inhibiting the IR's capability to continue its guerrilla campaign, and it can complicate IJO operations by preclud-

ing the use of Lebanon—and of course Syria—as staging bases for ter-
rorist attacks. Syria, however, does not exercise total control over
Hizballah's guerrilla activities and probably has even less knowledge of
and influence over IJO plans and operations. Moreover, Damascus will
not exert pressure for restraint on Hizballah without continued forward
progress in the peace process.

Regardless of the Israeli withdrawal scenario from Lebanon, Hizballah
is unlikely to disappear even after a cessation of its guerrilla campaign.
Thanks largely to the power of Shaykh Nasrallah, the group will prob-
ably avoid an implosion, despite the likelihood of dissension among
Hizballah's clerical leadership over the response to an Israeli withdrawal.
The group's longevity also seems assured as a result of its legitimization
as a political party in Lebanon. The formation of a splinter group is pos-
sible, although any such group is unlikely to pose a serious challenge to
the legitimacy and authority of Nasrallah.

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43. For example, see David Rudge, "Hizbullah Urges Lebanon to Set Conditions for Withdrawal," *Jerusalem Post*, October 28, 1999, p. 3.
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engaged in a number of armed clashes.

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47. Blanford, "Hizbullah: Lebanon's Heir Apparent?" p. 18.

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53. *Middle East Mirror,* February 8, 1996, p. 4.

54. See Douglas Jehl, "Lebanon Fighters Gain Stature, but for How Long?" *New York Times,* April 21, 1996, p. 8; and Kenneth Katzman, "Hizballah: A Radical Militia in Lebanon," *CRS Report for Congress,* October 7, 1993, p. 17, which both place the estimate at $60 million per year. Katzman, however, in "Terrorism: Middle Eastern Groups and State Sponsors," p. 6, quotes then–Secretary of State Warren Christopher as stating in 1996 that Iran provides about $100 million per year to Hizballah.

55. Katzman, "Hizballah: A Radical Militia in Lebanon," p. 17. See also Ranstorp, "Strategy and Tactics," p. 108.

56. Ranstorp, "Strategy and Tactics," p. 124. See also Storer Rowley, "Hezbollah on a Mission to Moderate Its Image," *Chicago Tribune,* June 15, 1998, p. 1, which reports that Hizballah maintains a commercial network that includes supermarkets, department stores, and gas stations; and Judith Palmer Harik, "Between Islam and the System: Sources and Implications of Popular Support for Lebanon's Hizballah," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40 (March 1996), p. 63, which indicates that Hizballah's chief source of income may now be contributions from expatriate Shi'is.

57. John Lancaster, "U.S. Sees Hope for Dialogue with Iran," *Washington Post,* February 23, 2000, p. A17.

58. Katzman, "Terrorism: Middle Eastern Groups and State Sponsors," p. 6. See also Venter, "Hezbollah Defies Onslaught," p. 82.

59. *Middle East Mirror,* May 25, 1993, p. 5.

60. "Israel: Pasdars Up Ante in Lebanon," *Iran Times,* January 14, 2000, p. 1.

61. Katzman, "Terrorism: Middle Eastern Groups and State Sponsors," p. 6.

62. See Michael Eisenstadt, *Iranian Military Power* (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1996), p. 73.

63. See Norton, "Walking between Raindrops," p. 87.

64. Ibid.

65. Lebanon Shi'is account for approximately 35 percent of the population, making them the country's single largest confessional group.

66. See, for example, Marjorie Miller, "Hezbollah Battles to Shed Extremist Image in Lebanon," *Los Angeles Times,* November 28, 1997, p. A5, for details on health services and the "Jihad Construction Company," which repairs homes quickly and free of charge. Also see Larry Kaplow, "Hezbollah Turns to PR to Fight Off Terroristic Image," *Atlanta Constitution,* March 4, 1999, p. B1, for a

description of other Hizballah social services, such as rebuilding roads and providing drinking water for southern Beirut residents.

67. Katzman, "Hizballah: A Radical Militia in Lebanon," p. 8.
68. Norton, "Walking between Raindrops," p. 93.
69. "Lebanon's Hizbollah as Trailblazer," *Middle East Mirror,* November 4, 1997, p. 9.
70. Ibid.
71. Katzman, "Terrorism: Middle East Groups and State Sponsors," p. 6.
72. "Adjusting to Change," *Middle East Mirror,* November 3, 1995.
73. Nasri Hajjaj, "Interview with Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah," *al-Ayyam,* FBIS-NES-2000-0105, January 1, 2000.
74. "Hizbollah Explains Its 'Katyusha Policy,'" *Middle East Mirror,* September 28, 1999, p. 16.
75. Sadiq al-Husayni, "Lebanon: Nasrallah on Ties with Iran, Arab Regimes," *al-Sharq al-Awsat,* FBIS-NES-97-289, October 16, 1997, p. 5.
76. Ranstorp, "Strategy and Tactics," p. 105.
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78. "We're Not Syria's Cat's-Paw, Says Hizbollah."
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82. "What Future for Hizbollah," *Middle East Mirror,* July 8, 1999.
83. Antoine K. Kehdy, "What Hezbollah Will Do," *Washington Post,* February 20, 2000, p. B5.
84. Ibid.
85. Blanford, "Hizballah: Lebanon's Heir Apparent?" p. 6.
86. Davis, "Report: Iran Planning to Demilitarize Hizbullah."
87. Ibid.
88. "Hezbollah Vows Never to Recognize Israel," Agence France Presse, July 26, 1999.
89. Ibid.
90. See "Rearguard Battle," *Middle East Mirror,* February 15, 2000, p. 8.
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93. "No End to Resistance If Israel Opts for 'Lebanon First,' Asad Warns," *Middle East Mirror,* November 12, 1999, p. 9.
94. See Blanford, "Hizbullah: Lebanon's Heir Apparent?" p. 12.
95. Sari Bashi, "Barak Vows Reprisals If Attacks Continue after Lebanon Pullout," *Washington Post,* February 22, 2000, p. A20.
96. Comments by Martin Kramer in "Lebanon in the Equation of Arab-Israeli Peace." See also Nomi Morris, "Hezbollah Transforming Itself from Military to Political Force," Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Service, June 23, 1999, which indicates that other Lebanese analysts believe "public support in Lebanon for an armed struggle will end once Israeli troops are out of the country."

97.   Daniel Sobelman, "UNIFIL Will Be Alone with the Lebanese," *Ha'aretz*, November 1999, p. 3.

98.   Thomas O'Dwyer, "Nasrallah: Hizbullah's Ruthless Realist," *Jerusalem Post*, September 9, 1997.

99.   Ibid.

100. Sharrock, "Lebanon Rivals Lost," p. 22.

101. "Daily Report," http://www.moqawama.org, November 30, 1999.

102. "Israel and Syria Playing 'Delicate and Dangerous Game' in Lebanon," *Middle East Mirror*, November 15, 1999, p. 16; and "Counter-Signal Asad," *Middle East Mirror*, December 8, 1999, p. 9.

103. Comments by Martin Kramer in "Lebanon in the Equation of Arab-Israeli Peace."

104. Quotation by Arda Ekmkjl, a member of the board of directors of the Armenian Evangelical College (a private high school in Beirut), in Douglas Jehl, "Lebanon Fighters Gain Stature, but for How Long?" p. 8.

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107. Anthony Shadid, "For Hezbollah, Peace May Not Mean a Victory," *Chicago Tribune*, June 19, 1998, p. 8.

108. Ranstorp, "Strategy and Tactics," p. 131.

109. Norton, "Walking between Raindrops," p. 95.

110. Katzman, "Terrorism: Middle Eastern Groups and State Sponsors," p. 7.

111. Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'allah in Lebanon* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), p. 77.

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Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon: The Achilles' Heel of the Peace Process?

By Nicole Brackman

If the Palestinian refugees are the orphans of the peace process, then those living in Lebanon are its hopelessly abandoned children. Rejected in their adopted home, Lebanon's Palestinian refugees are subject to the ebb and flow of both the Israeli–Syrian and the Israeli–Palestinian negotiating tracks. The refugees' plight may be a high-profile issue for Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority (PA), but neither has much incentive to deal with the refugees themselves. Any efforts toward the refugees' political and social rehabilitation in Lebanon or the PA could threaten the stability of either government.

The anger and resentment felt by the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon would pose a threat to stability and peace in the aftermath of an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. In the event of a unilateral withdrawal, Hizballah or the governments of Lebanon and Syria might seek to harness the refugees' frustration by encouraging attacks on Israel, each for their own reasons. Conversely, should Damascus press Beirut to sign a peace treaty with Israel that results in the integration of most of the refugees in Lebanon, the sense of betrayal many of the refugees would almost certainly feel could result in violence against Israel and the Lebanese government. Consequently, the problem of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon represents a significant threat to the longevity of any Israeli–Syrian–Lebanese peace agreement.

THE REFUGEES AND THE GOVERNMENT

According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), approximately 350,000 Palestinian refugees live in Lebanon (about 9 percent of the country's total resident population) and are distributed over several refugee camps all over the country (see map, p. 35). These numbers are controversial; other estimates are significantly lower, and some are higher. The refugees have long been viewed with suspicion by their Lebanese hosts, who see them as a threat to the delicate sectarian balance in Lebanon; Palestinian involvement in the Lebanese

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civil war and in the terrorist attacks that provoked the Israeli invasions of 1978 and 1982 are cited by the Lebanese as further justification for this attitude.

Although no national census has been held in decades, available evidence indicates that the country is 70 percent Muslim and 30 percent Christian. Intercommunal tensions were papered over in the 1989 National Reconciliation (Taif) Accord, which was designed to guarantee representation of each group and subgroup by reapportioning specific positions in the government. Christians, however, still wield a disproportionate share of power and influence. The integration of the overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim Palestinian refugees would upset the demographic balance that underpins the confessionally based Lebanese government. Similar shifts in this demographic balance led to the explosion of the Lebanese civil war of 1975–89.[1]

The Lebanese blame the Palestinian refugees for the outbreak of the civil war in 1975 and the Israeli invasion in 1982. Many Lebanese trace the descent to civil war to the November 1969 Cairo accords signed by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Lebanese government, which gave the PLO extraterritorial status and freedom of action in the refugee camps. In the 1970s, the PLO exploited this special status and capitalized on the relative weakness of Lebanon's governing authority in the South to create a virtual "state within a state," using its military power against Lebanese soldiers as well as against the Israelis.

Israel's 1982 invasion succeeded in ejecting the PLO leadership from Lebanon, and in the 1985–87 "War of the Camps" the Syrian-backed Amal militia decimated much of the organization's military and institutional strength. Nonetheless, the Palestinians in the camps retained their arms, though since the mid-1980s they have engaged largely in sporadic but intense internecine conflict.

PALESTINIAN GROUPS PRESENT IN THE CAMPS

The refugee camps today are a microcosm of the Palestinian ideological landscape, and the groups competing for the loyalty of the refugees represent a broad range of political and religious outlooks and affiliations—from Marxist–Leninist groups, such as Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command (PFLP–GC) on the left, to Islamist groups such as Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) on the right.

The major secular–nationalist groups include Fatah and its dissident offshoot, Fatah Rebels; the Abu Nidal Organization (ANO); and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and its offshoots, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and the PFLP–GC.

PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMPS

CAMP POPULATIONS

▲ Less than 10,000

▲ 10,000–20,000

▲ 20,000–40,000

▲ More than 40,000

● City

0 _____ 25 mi
0 _____ 25 km

Se a

Mediterranean

Nahr el-Bared

Tripoli ● ▲ **Beddawi**

LEBANON

Baalbek ●
▲ **Wavell**

Beirut ▲ **Dbayeh**
Mar Elias ▲▲ **Shatila**
Burj el-Barajneh ▲

Saida ● ▲ **Ein el-Hilweh**
▲ **Mieh Mieh**

Litani R.

SYRIA

● Marjayoun

Tyre ● **El-Buss**
▲ **Burj el-Shemali**
▲ **Rashidieh**

ISRAEL

Palestinian refugees registered
with UNRWA in Lebanon:
Approximate number in camps: 200,000
Approximate number not in camps: 150,000
Figures and map from December 31, 1998
Map: D. Swanson/Equator Graphics, Inc.

- Fatah, headed by Yasir Arafat, is the largest faction of the PLO, and it was traditionally the dominant mainstream group in the camps. The expulsion of the Fatah leadership from Lebanon in 1982, the War of the Camps in 1985–87, and the 1987–93 Palestinian intifada—which drew PLO resources to the West Bank and Gaza—led to the decline of Fatah's social and economic networks in Lebanon. As the political influence of Fatah—and to some degree leftist groups like PFLP–GC—diminished, various Islamist groups, including Hamas, the PIJ, and several smaller and more extreme groups aligned with Hizballah, have made serious inroads in gaining support in the camps.

    In the past two or three years, however, Arafat has been attempting to reconsolidate Fatah's control by installing his own followers in the leadership of the camps' popular committees, but this effort has been only partly successful. In August 1999, Arafat loyalists gained partial control over Lebanon's largest refugee camp, Ein al-Hilweh. Fatah's political resurrection among the refugees has been coupled with a dramatic increase in military activity in the camps; Lebanon's *al-Safir* newspaper reported in the autumn of 1999, for example, that Fatah recently graduated forty-five fighters from its "Martyrs of the Return Course" into the Fatah military forces.[2]

- The Fatah Rebels, numbering 800–1,000, are a pro-Syrian group under the command of Col. Sa'id Musa Maragha (Abu Musa). Active mostly in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley, the group has an uncompromising approach toward Israel and rejects the Oslo process. Abu Musa's dependence on Damascus ensures the group's subservience to Syrian demands.

- The ANO, which has a few hundred members, split from the PLO in the 1970s and is led by Sabri al-Banna. It has been involved in international terrorism (against Arabs and others) and continues to operate primarily in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. It has received financial support from Damascus and, more recently, from Libya. It adheres to a rejectionist philosophy.

- The PFLP, founded by Dr. George Habash and consisting of about 800 activists, has recently been redefining its mission. It is understood to be financed and influenced by—although not necessarily loyal to—Damascus. In recent months its leaders (namely Habash's deputy Abu Ali Mustafa) have expressed a willingness to be incorporated into the pro-Oslo Palestinian mainstream.

- The DFLP, which has a waning support base of about 400 members, also is funded primarily by Syria. Established by Naif Hawatmah, the DFLP ideologically opposes recognition of Israel,

although of late it has "moderated" its stance, claiming that the destruction of Israel should not be the Palestinians' main goal.

- The PFLP–GC, under the leadership of Ahmad Jibril, has a membership of around 700 activists and has been fiercely opposed to the Oslo process as well as to any accommodation with Israel. Like the PFLP and the DFLP, it enjoys financial and material support from Damascus.

All of these groups have engaged in terrorist activities in the past against targets in Israel and in the international arena.[3] Indeed, although the PLO signed the 1993 Oslo accords, much of the Palestinian leadership in Lebanon—including Fatah activists—has rejected any accommodation with Israel.[4] That the refugee groups are so heavily influenced by Syria, however, means that they will likely accede to Asad's direction regarding activity against Israeli targets—whether that means engaging in or refraining from cross-border attacks or international terrorism in the event of an Israeli withdrawal.

Among Islamist groups in the refugee camps, Hamas and the PIJ are the most active, but some extremist splinter factions are also present and in some camps are quite influential. Hizballah, for example, is not unknown in the camps, but its influence is mainly felt through its proxy support of other groups like the PIJ. The vacuum left by the combination of Fatah's refocus toward PA activities and the decision of the other secular–nationalist groups to concentrate on political rather than military activity has created unprecedented opportunities for the Islamist groups to mobilize support in the refugee camps of Lebanon.[5]

- Hamas concentrates its efforts on improving social and economic services in the camps, as it does in the West Bank and Gaza. By taking over delivery of these services, which the Lebanese government, UNRWA, and the PLO leadership have been unwilling or unable to provide, Hamas has experienced a dramatic upswing in popular support in the camps. It has followed a pragmatic approach, emphasizing political propaganda, speaking out against the lack of civil rights for Palestinians in Lebanon, and providing social services.[7]

    Hamas's supporters in the camps may or may not identify with the movement's more violent activities, but Israeli experts feel that the increased popularity of Hamas will probably not represent a threat in terms of cross-border attacks or violence against Israeli interests abroad following an Israeli withdrawal, whether unilateral or negotiated.[6] Unlike some of the other Islamist groups, Hamas currently does not cooperate with Hizballah; the Sunni–Shi'i divide has proven insurmountable, despite the two groups' common rejection of Israel.

- The Palestinian Islamic Jihad, unlike Hamas, has demonstrated both a willingness to work with Hizballah and a greater focus on military activities against Israel. This has translated into opportunities to exploit Hizballah's resources and facilities in Lebanon as well as greater freedom of movement and action. The PIJ has been attempting to recruit in the refugee camps, but other, smaller groups have had greater success.

- 'Usbat al-Ansar (the League of the Supporters), a splinter Palestinian and Lebanese Islamic group that maintains the extreme *takfir* ideology,[8] competes with Fatah for dominance in Ein al-Hilweh, the largest refugee camp in Lebanon. The group has been involved in clashes with the Lebanese military and is assisted by al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Group), another group active around Sidon that has connections to Iran.

Two points should be noted. First, in the refugee camps, some of the groups draw their strength from their ties to traditional notable families. These families often change group affiliations, leading to shifts in the ideological character of politics in the refugee camps. By contrast, the focus of Hamas on social welfare has earned it the fairly consistent support of the refugees; the group also works to cultivate its image as a defender of the common and oppressed Palestinians, and this identification is especially salient given the widespread perception among the refugees that Fatah and the other secular–nationalist groups have abandoned their cause. Second, support for each group varies among camps; some camps, particularly Rashidieh and the refugee camps in the South, have a greater preponderance of Fatah loyalists than do other camps. This regional variance is important, as those camps closer to Israel would represent a direct threat to it in the wake of a withdrawal.

LEBANESE POLICY TOWARD THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

Lebanon's policy toward the Palestinian refugees has been to reject not only the possibility of naturalization or permanent residence in the country, but also any accommodation to their presence. The government opposes *a priori* any peace agreement that would keep the refugees in Lebanon, and Lebanese laws reflect this policy of exclusion. Whereas Jordan and Syria offer citizenship or its functional benefits to their resident Palestinian refugees, Beirut bars refugees from employment in most sectors, denies them access to the Lebanese health care system and other social services, and prevents them from attending Lebanese schools and universities. Building is also prohibited in and around the refugee camps, contributing greatly to overcrowding and unsanitary conditions. These laws became increasingly restrictive following the 1989 Taif agreement, and since 1995, the government has imposed severe travel restrictions

on Palestinian refugees.

In addition to economic, social, and political restrictions, the Lebanese have also taken legal and military action against the Palestinian refugee camps. In the past few months, Beirut has arrested several top Fatah officials and passed a death sentence (in absentia) on Arafat-loyalist Fatah commander Sultan Abu al-'Aynain for forming armed bands and inciting armed rebellion. In December 1999, Lebanese security forces surrounded several refugee camps, placing them under a virtual state of siege. The Palestinians escalated the conflict, with Yasir Arafat's aide, Ahmad 'Abd al-Rahman, reinvoking the thirty-year-old Cairo agreement—which gave the Palestinians freedom of action within the Lebanese refugee camps—in a move that stoked Beirut's ire.[9]

Clearly, the Lebanese feel sufficiently threatened by the activities in the camps to take action. The Lebanese government is now better equipped to act against Fatah members than it has been in the recent past: Fatah's power base in Lebanon was decimated in 1982-84, while the organization's main efforts are now directed toward building the PA and supporting Arafat. But it is clear that Beirut perceives the specter of Islamism looming on the horizon. Many in the Lebanese government, especially Christians, tend to see the Islamist phenomenon in the refugee camps as monolithic and believe that the Iranians are behind the growth of Islamist groups.

In addition, the growth in support for Hamas, the PIJ, and the splinter groups represents at least in part a reaction to the recent awakening of Lebanon's Sunni community. The upsurge of Sunni power, in the context of the decline of the Christians' demographic weight and political clout, is threatening to both Beirut and Damascus—as evidenced by a wave of arrests of Sunni activists in northern Lebanon in late 1999 and early 2000 as well as clashes in Syria and Lebanon during that period.[10] Thus, Islamism—coming on the one hand from the Sunni-inspired Muslim brotherhood offshoot Hamas, and on the other from the Shi'i, Iranian-backed Hizballah—is seen as a threat by many Lebanese. Such groups, which frequently inspire political disquiet even among domestic constituencies, are—when combined with the instability and disaffection of the refugee camps—seen as potentially explosive.

LEBANON, THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES, AND THE PEACE PROCESS

The Lebanese government, the PA, and the refugee leadership in Lebanon have all insisted on the right of the refugees to return to their original homes in Israel. For Lebanon, this policy is one of a larger list of conditions that President Emile Lahoud has indicated are prerequisites for a peace deal with Israel: an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese and Syrian territory, compensation for the years of Israeli occupation since

1978, a resettlement of the Palestinian refugees outside Lebanon, the halting of "water theft" by Israel, the release of Lebanese prisoners from Israeli prisons, and the right to put South Lebanon Army members on trial.[11]

It can be safely assumed that Lebanon will follow the Syrian lead concerning an Israeli withdrawal and security arrangements. The refugee issue, however, threatens to disturb the complacent attitude of Beirut toward Syrian directives. More than anything else, the Lebanese worry that a failure by Israel to satisfy Lebanon's demands on the refugee issue will not stop the Syrians from making their own deal with Israel on territory, and that any Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon—whether unilateral or as part of a peace treaty—will mean that Lebanon will be forced to accept the Palestinian refugees as permanent residents.

There are three possible scenarios for an Israeli withdrawal, and each will affect, and in turn be affected by, the Palestinian refugee situation in Lebanon. The first is a unilateral Israeli withdrawal; the second is a unilateral withdrawal with some kind of coordination between Israel and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL); and the third is a withdrawal as a part of a formal peace treaty with Lebanon.

Unilateral Withdrawal

One of Prime Minister Ehud Barak's key campaign promises in the run-up to the June 1999 elections was that he would withdraw Israeli troops from southern Lebanon by July 2000, regardless of whether Israel had signed peace treaties with Syria and Lebanon by that time. Many commentators feel that it was the threat of a unilateral Israeli withdrawal that convinced Asad to resume peace negotiations in December 1999. In the past, both Lebanon and Syria argued that UN Security Council Resolution 425 required Israel to withdraw from Lebanon unconditionally (see Appendix A). Yet, the specter of a unilateral Israeli withdrawal—with the concomitant loss by Syria of its main source of leverage against Israel (i.e., Hizballah's war of attrition against the Israeli occupation) resulted in warnings by Lebanon and Syria that they could not be held responsible for security on Israel's border in the event of a withdrawal outside the context of peace treaties that met their basic demands.

The recent intensification of cooperation between Hizballah and the PIJ also points to additional dangers in the event of a unilateral withdrawal.[13] Should Hizballah decide not to continue its armed struggle against Israel following a unilateral withdrawal, it might nevertheless assist Palestinian groups such as the PIJ desiring to do so.

Moreover, following a unilateral withdrawal, the refugee leadership, Beirut, Damascus, and even Yasir Arafat might—each for their own reasons—be interested in quietly encouraging Palestinians to conduct spo-

radic attacks on northern Israel as a way of prolonging the conflict and keeping the Palestinian refugee question on the international agenda. In this scenario, Lebanon would risk Israeli retaliatory strikes in an attempt to generate U.S. and international—especially European and Arab—pressure to redress Lebanon's grievances regarding the Palestinian refugees.

These grievances are clear: A unilateral Israeli withdrawal would effectively remove the refugee issue from the peace process "radar screen" and make it more difficult for Beirut to leverage its demands vis-à-vis the refugees in negotiations with Israel. Although refugee resettlement is sure to be a key issue in Palestinian–Israeli final status talks, a unilateral withdrawal would give Arafat the incentive to ignore, and perhaps even to foster, unrest in Lebanon's refugee camps. The refugees' protracted presence and misery in Lebanon may be politically useful to Arafat, to impede any progress in negotiations between Syria or Lebanon and Israel, or as a bargaining chip in his own negotiations with Israel. This second option is illustrated by a recent Fatah pronouncement by Sultan Abu al-'Aynain that the weapons in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon are "for use in the war of resistance against Israel." He was echoed by senior PLO official Faruq Qaddumi.[12]

A Withdrawal Coordinated with UNIFIL: 'No Peace, No War'

As in the previous case, in this scenario militant activities within the camps and Palestinian and/or Hizballah terrorism across the border would present a serious threat to Lebanese sovereignty—and could result in heightened Israeli–Lebanese tensions. Because the withdrawal would be tacitly coordinated with parties on the ground, presumably with the blessing of Beirut and Damascus, these two governments would likely crack down on the Palestinians and Hizballah. Technical Israeli adherence to Resolution 425 would give Syria and Lebanon no room to maneuver; Israel would be in compliance with international law, so any subsequent attacks emanating from Lebanese soil (regardless of their sponsor) would constitute a causus belli and entitle Israel to respond, leaving the Lebanese, Syrians, and the refugees with very little leverage against Israel.

Alternatively, the Syrians and Lebanese may decide that—absent any other options for pressuring Israel—sporadic attacks by Palestinian groups along the border would serve their interests. Although such a policy may or may not induce Israel to make concessions on the Palestinian refugee issue, or even to participate in negotiations with Syria, it would serve to keep the issue of the refugees in Lebanon on the international agenda. But the Lebanese reluctance to permit any strengthening of Palestinian autonomy or power in Lebanon—especially strength of arms—makes this option less likely. Although Syria may think it advantageous to em-

power the Palestinian groups along the Lebanese–Israeli border, the Lebanese government is apt to reject a policy that could prove not only unpopular among its population but destabilizing in the already chaotic south. Even if the Palestinian groups were to be used within the context of an attrition campaign on Israel's border, they would be tightly controlled, and it is doubtful that the situation of the refugees on the ground would markedly improve.

Consequently, a UNIFIL-coordinated withdrawal is probably the least desirable for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and, in the long run, for the Lebanese government. A withdrawal with the tacit coordination of parties on the ground would leave the Lebanese refugees in a "status quo minus" situation. To prevent hostility that could provoke Israeli retaliatory attacks, Beirut might actually tighten its enforcement of repressive anti-refugee laws. These laws would also serve to give vent to Lebanese frustrations regarding the continued presence of the refugees, and would remind the Palestinians that they are not welcome and should not expect their circumstances in Lebanon to measurably improve.

Withdrawal in the Context of Peace Treaties

The refugees' ultimate fear is that peace agreements between Israel and Lebanon, and Israel and the PA, will ignore their aspirations and thus signify a betrayal of their cause. Beirut and Jerusalem both have an interest in ensuring that the refugees do not end up on their own respective soil and in making the refugee question fade from the scene. To add insult to injury, most refugees believe that Arafat has cast his lot with Israel and is likely to agree to a curtailed Palestinian right of return— that is, to within the borders of the future state of Palestine rather than to within Israel proper.

Although the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and elsewhere worry that peace agreements will not resolve the refugee question to their satisfaction, such agreements offer the greatest promise for a solution. The public Lebanese position may be that the Palestinians should "return" to Israel, but their overriding concern is that the refugees leave Lebanon— regardless of their ultimate destination. Resettlement in third countries, possibly including Western nations, would satisfy the primary Lebanese demand without affecting the demographic balance in Israel.

A peace treaty would almost certainly require Syria to constrain Hizballah in southern Lebanon. Moreover, Israel (and the United States) are likely to demand that Damascus curtail Iranian military support for Hizballah. The expected consequence of Syria's meeting these demands would be the withering of cooperation between Hizballah and the PIJ— especially if Hizballah became invested in the Lebanese political process.[14] Assuming that at least some Palestinian refugees remain in Lebanon

after the signing of peace treaties, however, Iranian support of the Islam-
ist groups in the refugee camps could continue.[15] Yet, the combined pres-
sure of the Lebanese, Syrians, and PA on the refugees to refrain from
provocative acts might mitigate the direct threat they pose to stability
and peace.

In the unlikely event that Syria were to reduce its military presence
in Lebanon as a requirement of a peace agreement or as a result of U.S.,
Arab, or Lebanese pressure to comply with the Taif Agreement's provi-
sions, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) would have to assume sole re-
sponsibility for confronting hostile Palestinian groups and maintaining
control over the camps, especially in southern Lebanon. The rejectionist
groups in the refugee camps, dedicated as they are to continuing the
struggle against Israel, might see such a scenario as giving them the great-
est potential for increased activity, given the relative weakness of the LAF
as an armed force compared to the Syrian armed forces. This is likely to
be the case particularly if the traditional weakness of governance persists
in southern Lebanon. Paradoxically then, the Palestinian refugees may
therefore pose more of a security problem for a post-Israeli southern
Lebanon in the context of a negotiated withdrawal than they would in
the context of a unilateral one.

CONCLUSIONS

The biggest obstacle to solving the problem of the Palestinian refugees
in Lebanon will be enforcement of whatever agreement is reached. The
fundamental problem here is that the governments involved are negoti-
ating on behalf of people who do not recognize their authority. The
antagonism between Beirut and the Palestinians (both those in the camps
and those in the PA), as well as the radicalism that holds sway in the
refugee camps, means that the refugees are likely to reject any solution
that does not allow their return to Israel. Short of a violent, forced de-
portation, the Lebanese will not be able to carry out massive third-coun-
try resettlement. Clinching a deal is likely to require U.S. mediation and
a general Western commitment to accept some limited resettlement of
Palestinian refugees in their countries—as well as (and much more plau-
sibly) generous compensation packages and development project aid
for the host countries. These are a necessary lubricant for a deal that will
probably also involve extending citizenship and services to the refugees.

Lebanon has given itself little bargaining room with its persistent
refusal to consider permanent residency—if not naturalization—for its
Palestinian refugees. Although perhaps understandable in light of
Lebanon's recent history, the result of Lebanon's policy of exclusion has
been an even greater radicalization of the refugees and an increase in
the potential for instability in the wake of an Israeli withdrawal. The ad-

dition of external actors such as Iran, Hamas, the PIJ, and Syria will further complicate Israel's effort to disengage from Lebanon and to resolve the refugee problem.

Even the most optimistic scenario—a negotiated Israeli–Syrian–Lebanese peace treaty resulting in Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, the extension of Beirut's authority over the area, and the dismantling of Hizballah's terrorist capabilities—retains the potential for violence by the Palestinian refugees against both the Lebanese and Israel. Whether this comes at the behest of Yasir Arafat (for his own reasons) or as a result of the refugees' perception of betrayal and abandonment by Arafat, the potential for bloodshed remains the single most difficult obstacle to a sustainable peace agreement with Lebanon. The profound sense of alienation among the refugees, the intense radicalism of the camps, intra-Palestinian conflict and rivalry, and the severe lack of educational and socioeconomic advancement make the refugees unattractive not only as future citizens of Lebanon, but also as citizens of any other state (even, or especially, a future state of Palestine led by Yasir Arafat). If the negotiators have foresight and political courage, they will attempt to construct a solution for the refugees that gives them social and economic (if not political) opportunities in Lebanon for an interim period, pending their emigration to other countries.

NOTES

1.   In fact, Beirut has serious problems with its own Sunni citizens as was demonstrated by the recent violence between the Lebanese authorities and Sunni Muslim extremists in which at least thirty-eight people were killed (*Agence France Presse* and *al-Nahar*, January 5, 2000).
2.   See *al-Anwar*, October 26, 1999.
3.   See Gal Luft, "Securing Israel's North Following an IDF Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon" in this volume and *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1998*, U.S. State Department Publication 10610, April 1999.
4.   Jaber Suleiman, "Report from Lebanon: The Current Political, Organizational, and Security Situation in the Palestinian Refugee Camps of Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29, no. 1 (Autumn 1999), pp. 66–80.
5.   Despite ideological identification with groups which have engaged in terrorist acts, the vast majority of Palestinians are not associated with terrorism.
6.   Author interview with Reuven Paz of The International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, February 1, 2000.
7.   This follows Hamas's similar tactical effort in the Palestinian Authority to integrate into the political arena, despite the organization's continuing opposition to the Oslo process.
8.   This ideology maintains that even secular Muslims are heretical.
9.   *Middle East Mirror*, December 3, 1999.
10.   These include the arrest of 'Usbat al-Ansar group leader Chief Abu-Mihjan. *World News Connection*, January 7, 2000.

11. Jacky Hugi and Sheffi Gabai, "Lebanese Conditions for Agreement," *Ma'ariv*, December 2, 1999.
12. *Agence France Presse,* January 3, 2000.
13. Ibrahim Awad, "Interview with Lebanese Prime Minister Dr. Salim al-Huss," *al-Majallah*, December 12, 1999.
14. Howard Schneider, "Israel's Arab Enemies Losing Their Purpose: Exile Groups Being Drawn into Peace Process," *Washington Post,* December 23, 1999.
15. Cooperation among the Islamist groups and Iran is growing; in December, Iran inaugurated a new electricity substation in the Rashidieh refugee camp south of Tyre. See *al-Safir*, December 22, 1999.

The Role of UNIFIL
after an Israeli Withdrawal
from Southern Lebanon

By John Hillen

A lthough the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon is officially titled an "interim force" whose mission is reviewed and extended twice yearly, the UN harbors no illusions about a quick exit from the area under any scenario. Like many other actors present over the past two decades, UNIFIL—the UN Interim Force in Lebanon—is deeply woven into the fractious fabric of political, economic, and social life in southern Lebanon. Moreover (again, like most other actors in the area), the UN would not wish to take sole or even primary responsibility for peace and security in southern Lebanon even after a withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

Nonetheless, it is quite conceivable that, under certain scenarios, UNIFIL would somehow act to fill the security vacuum left by an IDF withdrawal. In the event of either a comprehensive peace agreement or even an IDF withdrawal closely coordinated with the government of Lebanon and other actors, UNIFIL could well expand in both size and operational potency in the attempt to fulfill its original mandate. The light of regional stability at the end of a more than twenty-year tunnel of frustration could convince the UN Security Council to reinforce the UNIFIL peacekeepers in order to take advantage of developments in southern Lebanon. Recent events both at the UN and in the region augur for this possibility. At its headquarters in New York, the UN appears to be rebounding from its disastrous experimentation with the large, expensive, and dangerous peacekeeping missions lasting from 1993 to 1996. In the autumn of 1999 alone, the UN approved new missions to Kosovo, East Timor, Congo, and Sierra Leone—moves that will more than double the number of "Blue Helmets" worldwide. In the Middle East, the recent pronouncements of Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak's government regarding an IDF withdrawal from southern Lebanon have prompted

policymakers to consider the possible political scenarios and maneuvers discussed in other chapters of this study. If the major players in the area purposefully support the peace, the UN may take extra steps to have UNIFIL support their efforts.

Under the right circumstances and conditions, UNIFIL could play an important role. Under unfavorable circumstances such as a unilateral and uncoordinated IDF withdrawal, however, UNIFIL is unlikely of its own accord to step into a volatile security vacuum to enforce peace and security in southern Lebanon. Throughout this process, even a reinforced UNIFIL will insist that it act only as a supporting player whose actions should complement the willful and peaceable intentions of the principals—namely Israel and Lebanon (and probably Syria). If the IDF withdrawal takes place under conditions that leave southern Lebanon in disarray, it is unlikely that UNIFIL will attempt to fulfill its mandate to help restore peace and security to the region.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF UNIFIL

In an examination of UNIFIL's twenty-two-year history, one fact stands out: UNIFIL was created and has survived as a stop-gap political measure, not as an operational tool for the execution of its mandate on the ground. Numerous studies (especially Israeli) that criticize the operational efficacy and seeming impotence of UNIFIL miss this point. The operation was never structured to succeed in traditional military terms. In fact, its consistent military ineffectiveness is well known and perhaps even purposeful.[1] Since the day of its inception up to its most recent operations, UNIFIL's military effectiveness has always been sacrificed on the altar of political expediency. It is a mission that was hastily created to serve needs other than the tactical situation in southern Lebanon and this remains the case. Moreover, the UN is an institution that is expert in the use of passive and inert military forces employed as a confidence-building measure rather than as active military units applying coercive force to influence an adversary. This accounts in large measure for UNIFIL's essentially passive character, which will not be significantly altered operationally after an IDF withdrawal from southern Lebanon. It is therefore worthwhile to explore UNIFIL's origin and history before turning to an analysis of its current operations and role in various withdrawal scenarios.

UNIFIL was born in the wake of the events of March 11, 1978, when the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) seized an Israeli bus south of Haifa. In the ensuing clash with Israeli security forces, nine PLO guerrillas were killed along with thirty-seven Israeli citizens. The IDF launched its invasion of Lebanon three days later, on the night of March 14–15, 1978. That day, the government of Lebanon lodged a strong protest with the UN Security Council against the invasion. The

Security Council met at Lebanon's request on March 17 to consider the issue, and the United States took the lead in drafting a resolution to help ameliorate the situation.

The principal factor motivating the urgent U.S. call for Security Council action in the form of this resolution was the need to avoid damaging the Camp David peace conference between Egypt and Israel, scheduled to start on March 21 of that year. Consequently, the United States brought much pressure to bear in the Security Council to quickly create a UN peacekeeping force for southern Lebanon. Brian Urquhart, then–UN undersecretary general for special political affairs (and therefore entrusted with all peacekeeping missions) had strong reservations about placing such a force in the area:

> The hard facts of the situation militated against deploying such a force. Government authority, an important condition for successful peacekeeping, did not exist in southern Lebanon, where a tribal, inter-confessional guerrilla war was raging. The terrain of southern Lebanon was ideal for guerrilla activity and very difficult for conventional forces. The PLO, a dominating factor in the area, was under no formal authority. Another important element, the Israeli-sponsored Christian militia of the volatile Major Saad Haddad, though illegal, would certainly be supported by Israel. A force of the size and with the mandate necessary for the job was unlikely to be agreed upon by the Security Council. Southern Lebanon would almost certainly be a peacekeeper's nightmare.[2]

Despite these misgivings held by the UN's top peacekeeping official, the U.S.-drafted resolution was passed almost immediately (with abstentions by the USSR and Czechoslovakia) as Resolution 425 on March 19, 1978, and UNIFIL was thereby established. The broad mandate given to this force required it "to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restore international peace and security, and assist the government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area."[3] More important for operational considerations, the last paragraph of the resolution asked the secretary general to submit a plan for the implementation of this resolution within twenty-four hours of the resolution's passing.[4]

The "terms of reference" that constituted UNIFIL's operational basis reflected this rushed, ad hoc, and incomplete planning. The UN used, as an operational guideline, the terms for the United Nations Emergency Force II (UNEF II) and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Sinai and on the Golan Heights, respectively, two traditional (and ongoing) peacekeeping missions that the UN considered "satisfactory."[5] The terms of reference were built around the principles of peacekeeping, a passive doctrine that reflects self-imposed limitations on the use of military force. The effect of UNIFIL's passive terms of reference has handicapped the force ever since, and will do so

in future operations that may follow an IDF withdrawal. More robust rules of engagement are not likely to be attempted, as they would necessitate an entirely different force structure and modus operandi than that used by UNIFIL for the past twenty-two years.

UNIFIL is very much a creature of the hurried circumstances surrounding its birth, when important predeployment operational considerations that had always been key imperatives of peacekeeping missions were ignored; in particular, the issues of clearly defining UNIFIL's area of operations and ensuring that the force would have the consent and cooperation of the local factions remained unaddressed. The UN itself recognized that "these two questions weighed heavily on the operations of UNIFIL."[6] But as Brian Urquhart recalls, these kinds of practical considerations were "swept aside" by the determination to push through a quick decision.[7]

The terrain and military objectives of UNIFIL's mandate necessitated a force far larger than that which the Security Council considered "normal" for traditional peacekeeping missions. Military requirements centered exclusively on meeting the mandate of Resolution 425 would have demanded a force closer in size and strength to that of the 1960s Congo operation (20,000) than to that of the UN force then in the Sinai, UNEF II (7,000). But the political imperatives and conditions that influence UN missions were paramount and could not be so easily dismissed. Because all the parties concerned with the situation in southern Lebanon were reluctant to accept a large force, UNIFIL was structured and employed as a small, traditional peacekeeping force of under 5,000 (later increased to just over 6,000). No one in the United Nations had a desire for a repeat of the Congo episode, one that William Durch said "was nearly as searing for the UN as the Vietnam War [was] for the United States."[8]

ANALYSIS OF UNIFIL OPERATIONS

Although the UN is frank about UNIFIL's inability to accomplish its stated goals over the past twenty-two years, the political objectives of UNIFIL remain those listed above in Resolution 425. In turn, the military contingents of UNIFIL have military objectives that support each of those goals. These objectives are derived from traditional peacekeeping practice, which maintains that the objectives and modus operandi should be determined in light of several conditions: the strict impartiality of the UN force, the use of the force in a passive manner, the use of arms only in self-defense, and most important, the assumption that the UN force will enjoy the cooperation of the local factions.[9] Given the UN's unpleasant experience with more active forms of "peace enforcement" in Bosnia and Somalia, these passive rules of engagement are not likely to change substantially in the future.

In the early days of UNIFIL, the rushed and poorly executed deployment of lightly armed and passive peacekeepers might have had some positive impact, had the local factions been as cooperative on the ground as the Security Council hoped they would be. But the collapse of that crucial assumption, coupled with UNIFIL's imprecise plan of operations, served to cripple military effectiveness from the start. As a result, UNIFIL was given unrealizable objectives as a peacekeeping force operating with a traditional peacekeeping modus operandi. In addition to UNIFIL's seemingly impossible tasks, the military mismanagement of the force contributed even further to its ineffectiveness. A brief review of UNIFIL's record with regard to its three tasks follows:

Task 1: Confirm the Withdrawal of Israeli Forces

UNIFIL has sporadically attempted to realize the mission of confirming the withdrawal of the IDF from southern Lebanon since the invasion of 1978. In theory, this would entail observing and reporting on the status of the IDF in southern Lebanon as well as occupying the former IDF positions with an eye toward returning them to the proper Lebanese authorities. For the UNIFIL battalions in the field, this involved the establishment of stationary observation posts (OPs) and traffic control points, undertaking patrols, and conducting relief-in-place operations on IDF positions. The intention was to occupy a traditional interpositional buffer zone (as in the Golan Heights) to keep the local factions separated.[10] (See map, next page)

UNIFIL experienced little success in the accomplishment of this mission until after the Israeli invasion of 1982. During that operation, UNIFIL's response, like most of its operations, was inconsistent and varied greatly by national contingent. Some contingents put up a brief armed fight, some merely stood aside, and some tried passive measures such as establishing roadblocks. Much of this varied response was due to ambiguity about the concept of "self-defense." Officially, UNIFIL's peacekeepers are authorized to use force "when attempts are made to prevent them from performing their duties under the mandate of the Security Council."[11] This was interpreted as a rule of engagement that allowed the peacekeepers to use the force of arms not only in personal self-defense, but also in defense of their mandate when under armed attack.[12] When confronted with an overwhelming force such as an Israeli armored column, however, the futility, ambiguity, and subjectivity of these rules of engagement became evident. They left too much room for interpretation, and, given the traditional lack of a unified approach to UNIFIL operations, were interpreted differently. Traditional peacekeepers such as those in UNIFIL or UNDOF have not had the ability or mandate to formulate a "backup" plan when consent and cooperation break down.

Nabatiyya

LEBANON

Kaoukaba

Marjayoun

INDIAN
BATTALION*

Qleia

Al-Khiyam

Tyre

FINNISH
BATTALION

Qantara

GHANAIAN
BATTALION

Markabe

FIJIAN
BATTALION

IRISH
BATTALION

NEPALESE
BATTALION

Brashit

Naqoura

Bint-Jubayl

ISRAEL

N

0   5 mi

0   5 km

Map: D. Swanson/Equator Graphics, Inc.

UNIFIL area of operation

Approximate area under Israeli control

UNIFIL/IDF area

UNIFIL operational boundaries

UNIFIL inter-battalion boundaries

O UNIFIL Headquarters

● City

*Note: The Indian Battalion's area of operation
is not clearly defined, but is located in the
northeastern part of the Israeli security zone.

UNIFIL-ADMINISTERED AREAS

By June 8, 1982, the entire UNIFIL area of operations was under IDF control, and since 1982, the IDF and the South Lebanon Army (SLA) have maintained virtual control over much of southern Lebanon. This left UNIFIL operating in occupied territory that, as Alan James noted, has made "the terms of its original mandate even less applicable than they had ever been to the situation on the ground."[13] In 1985, the IDF again carried out a three-phase withdrawal that left most of the old enclave and some additional territory north of the Litani River in the hands of the IDF and the SLA. Israel saw this zone as vital to providing security to its border—a goal that Israel insists UNIFIL is unable to accomplish. Even after this Israeli withdrawal, the security zone included more than seventy armed IDF/SLA positions in the UNIFIL area of operations.[14]

Hostilities between Israel and opposing factions in southern Lebanon have continued at varying degrees of intensity since 1985 and are recounted elsewhere in this study. Some events of particular concern for UNIFIL, however, should be noted here. In July 1993, the IDF launched a large operation principally consisting of air and artillery attacks against Hizballah in response to rocket assaults on Israel.[15] Faced by heavy criticism from the UN over the hundreds killed and wounded in that attack, Israeli authorities concluded a ceasefire with Hizballah and insisted that the security zone was only a "temporary arrangement."[16] Again in April 1996, Hizballah escalated its attacks on Israel—firing some four hundred katyusha rockets into the security zone and seventy into Israeli cities and villages in the Galilee.[17] Israel responded with Operation Grapes of Wrath, a massive artillery bombardment against Hizballah and civilian infrastructure targets in Lebanon. Worldwide attention was once again drawn to the conflict when the IDF accidentally shelled a UN refugee camp at Qana, killing more than one hundred Lebanese civilians.

Diplomatic efforts by the United States, France, and the UN helped to bring about the April 1996 Understanding between Israel, Lebanon, Hizballah, and Syria (see Appendix D). Under the terms of this understanding, both Hizballah and Israel agreed not to endanger or carry out attacks against civilians or civilian-populated areas. Both parties, however, retained the right to self-defense. The understanding thus served more to draw new parameters for protecting civilians than to end the fighting in southern Lebanon. Even so, the understanding has since had the effect of significantly lowering cross-border violence and civilian casualties.

Task 2: Restore Peace and Security in the Region
UNIFIL's goals in this respect have centered on "preventing the recurrence of fighting, ensuring the peaceful character of the area of operations, and to that end, controlling movement into and out of the zone."[18] Within its zone of operation, UNIFIL has worked to (1) conduct mobile patrols and occupy observation posts and checkpoints on roads; (2) de-

tect, halt, and disarm armed infiltrators in the area of operations; and (3) deny movement to belligerent parties in the area of operations intent on conducting hostile actions.[19] Despite UNIFIL's imperfect and greatly undermanned buffer zone, Gen. Emmanual Erskine, one of the first force commanders, stated that the main objective of UNIFIL in its initial phase of operations was "to prevent contact between the two groups [IDF/SLA and the PLO]."[20]

Most successful conventional peacekeeping missions—including the UN deployments in the Sinai and on the Golan Heights—have had well-defined and sparsely populated buffer zones. By contrast, with UNIFIL's basic function, jurisdiction, and even physical area less than clearly determined, the peacekeepers could only react to Israeli and PLO moves. They could not set their own "terms of battle." In fact, in March 1978, the IDF was still expanding its own area of operations as the terms of reference for UNIFIL were being completed in New York. By September 1978, when the UNIFIL area of operations had solidified, its headquarters at Naqoura, the guard detachment at Tyre, the Norwegian and Nepalese battalions in the northeast sector, and five permanent observation posts on the Lebanese–Israeli border had all been isolated from the main body of UNIFIL's six infantry battalions.

Each of these isolated detachments—including UNIFIL's headquarters—was subject to constant harassment, frequent attacks, and virtual states of siege by the belligerents in southern Lebanon, being without mutual support from other UNIFIL elements. For instance, the French detachment in the Tyre area fought a running gun battle against PLO elements in May 1978, resulting in the loss of three French soldiers and the wounding of fourteen more, including the battalion commander.[21] The Norwegian and Nepalese battalions were similarly isolated and harassed. Indeed, the disjointed deployment of UNIFIL not only prevented it from fully achieving its tasks, but also greatly endangered the units that were isolated from the main body.

In a more benign peacekeeping environment, this isolation might be acceptable, as UNIFIL could place its units where they could mutually support one another in a seamless buffer zone. But in Lebanon, the hostility and noncollaboration of the belligerents has meant that "the UNIFIL area constituted an imperfect buffer between the opposing forces."[22] The hostility of the UNIFIL area, characterized by one commander as a "semi-war zone," was obviously far from benign;[23] to continue passive military operations in such an incoherently occupied zone of operations was beyond the pale of military logic. Nevertheless, such difficulties are often part and parcel of the strategic environment for a UN peacekeeper.

In attempting to "restore peace and security" to the area, the Security Council deemed it essential that the various UNIFIL contingents have both

a common purpose and a continuity of operations. But both these objectives were hampered by the variety of operational procedures and differing rotation policies of the individual contingents. Considerable turbulence occurred within the force, for example, when member states pulled out their contingents. The pullout of the French and Iranian battalions in 1979 necessitated a "significant change in the deployment of the Force."[24] Another major redeployment undertaken just before the 1982 Israeli invasion also weakened the UNIFIL force posture.[25] In the northeastern area of UNIFIL operations, the 1982 withdrawal of the Nepalese battalion meant that the Norwegian contingent had to expand its area of operations substantially. UNIFIL never recovered control over this gap in its area of operations, and consequently, when the Nepalese rejoined UNIFIL in 1985, they were sent to an entirely different area in the Southeast.[26] In 1998, the long-serving Norwegian contingent quit the mission; it has since been replaced by a battalion from India.

Nonetheless, UNIFIL did what it could. Operations settled into the conduct of mobile patrols and the occupation of observation posts and traffic control points in order to prevent a recurrence of fighting in southern Lebanon. When belligerents were determined to carry on with their actions, they either circumnavigated the understrength UNIFIL force by moving in small numbers or, as in the case of the IDF, merely ignored the UN presence. The atmosphere remained hostile, and veteran peacekeeper Gen. Indar Rikhye noted that "the number of shooting incidents against UN troops was comparable to the worst of the Congo experience."[27] By January 1999, 222 UNIFIL peacekeepers had lost their lives;[28] after the Congo, UNIFIL remains the costliest UN military operation.

The ineffectiveness of the Lebanese government, the continued belligerency of groups such as Hizballah, and the virtual control of the UNIFIL area by the IDF and the SLA since 1982 has sharply reduced UNIFIL's chances of restoring peace and security to the area. Yet, during the 1980s and 1990s, no withdrawal of the IDF or its active proxies from southern Lebanon was likely as long as elements that threaten Israel were able to use the UNIFIL area of operations and surrounding area as a base for hostile actions against Israel. The UN was forced to accept this reality and to concede that Israel did not consider UNIFIL capable of ensuring peace and security in southern Lebanon.[29] Recognizing this, throughout the mid-1980s, UNIFIL reduced the number of its positions throughout the area, especially those isolated in the security zone. In the 1990s, it streamlined its operations even further. This was a tacit admission of failure in maintaining an authoritative presence in pursuance of the missions set out in Resolution 425. But as Alan James has noted, "If one is simply in the business of flag waving, a lot of flags are not required."[30]

Task 3: Assist in Restoring Lebanese Authority

UNIFIL operations supporting this objective have included assisting Lebanese government forces to occupy positions in the area and supporting Lebanese military operations in the restoration of local authority. Specifically, UNIFIL has focused on protecting the movement of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in the UNIFIL area of operations and conducting combined operations with the Lebanese government forces both to conduct patrols and to man observation posts and traffic control points.

These operations were never conducted in a sustained or serious manner. This was largely because of the failure of UNIFIL to make progress on its first two objectives, which were preconditions for fulfilling the third. The continued instability in the area, the continued presence of Israeli and hostile Islamic forces in the enclave and later the security zone, and the lack of authority exerted by the Lebanese government in Beirut all combined to hamper this mission. UNIFIL attempted to help deploy Lebanese gendarmes and army troops to the area but was frustrated by repeated attacks on the Lebanese columns by the various factions in southern Lebanon.[31]

Beginning in the mid-1980s, UNIFIL greatly increased its humanitarian efforts to meet the growing needs of the rapidly expanding population of southern Lebanon. In 1978, the UN estimated that the population was at most a few thousand; by the time of the 1982 Israeli invasion, this figure had increased to 150,000.[32] Since the invasion and particularly since the mid-1980s, UNIFIL has worked closely with UN relief agencies and other nongovernmental organizations to help coordinate and deliver humanitarian aid to a population that is now approaching half a million. The lack of Lebanese governmental authority led UNIFIL to assume many of the functions of the Lebanese government concerning the security and welfare of the population (much as Israel has done in the security zone it established in southern Lebanon).

UNIFIL continues to remain deployed in southern Lebanon largely because the Lebanese government does not appear capable of assuming these responsibilities itself. The implementation of the 1989 Taif accord led to the restoration of Lebanese governmental authority in Sidon, Tyre, Jezzine, and a number of villages in the Ghanaian sector of UNIFIL's area of operation.[33] UNIFIL, however, remains the *de facto* civil authority/civil service in much of its zone. In fact, if one reads the language in Security Council reports since 1982 that ask for a renewal of the force's mandate, UNIFIL's responsibility for facilitating the provision of humanitarian aid has become its primary raison d'être. This implied mission, which was not specifically a part of the original mandate, has made the disengagement of UNIFIL even more problematic. As one observer has noted, "the Force has been sucked into the economic and political fab-

ric of the wider society in which it operates and of which it has become an integral part. UNIFIL increasingly has come to function as a pseudo-government for the South whose chances of being replaced by the appropriate authorities in the foreseeable future seem remote."[34] This situation has led many observers to note that UNIFIL is now as much a part of the southern Lebanon problem as it is part of the solution.

RECENT OPERATIONS AND EVENTS

Since 1985, the basic political–military state of affairs in southern Lebanon has remained relatively constant. The IDF continues its occupation and reserves the right to retaliate for attacks on its troops and northern Israel. As long as the government of Lebanon is unable to exercise effective authority over this territory and prevent these attacks, the IDF is not likely to withdraw or even cease retaliatory options. For its part, the Lebanese government continues to insist that there is no possible justification for the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. In the meantime, Hizballah, Amal, and others profit from the confusion over authority and legitimacy, and over what lies ahead.

UNIFIL is well aware that it is a witting hostage to this environment but sees few alternatives. In its semi-annual reports to the Security Council, the UN secretary general's office takes a "glass half full" approach to UNIFIL's operations. It notes the small but important "role played by UNIFIL in controlling the level of violence in its area of operation and thus in reducing the risk of a wider conflagration in the region." The office furthermore "stresses [UNIFIL's] importance as a symbol of the international community's commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon" and "reiterates the conviction that the solution to the problems of southern Lebanon lie in the full implementation of Security Council Resolution 425," pointing "to the humanitarian assistance UNIFIL is able to provide from modest resources."[35]

To those ends, UNIFIL carries on with its daily operations: manning forty-five checkpoints on the principal roads in its area of operation, occupying some ninety-five observation posts to observe movement on an as-needed basis, and combining those functions in some twenty-nine other checkpoints and observation posts. Although it has a total strength of some 4,483 troops (not including civilians counted in the earlier figure of more than 6,000), light infantry battalions from Fiji, Finland, Ghana, India, Ireland, and Nepal provide the 3,500-odd soldiers that conduct the actual operations. While in its lifetime UNIFIL has had a few heavy weapons (the Dutch battalion, now gone, brought 120 millimeter mortars and anti-tank missiles), its overall composition is light, not armored, infantry. Patrolling is done on foot and by vehicle, but well within the longstanding passive rules of engagement.

In the last sixth-month period for which UNIFIL submitted a full public accounting of activity in its area of operations (July 1998–January 1999), its peacekeepers reported 386 operations by "armed elements" against the IDF and SLA and some 280 similar operations outside of UNIFIL's area of operation. The majority of these operations were carried out by Hizballah, although the Shi'i militia Amal took responsibility for 30 of them. Some 3,000 mortar rounds, rockets, and anti-tank missiles were used. The IDF and SLA responded with more than 18,000 rounds of artillery, mortar, and tank fire—an increase of 70 percent over the previous reporting period—as well as seven air raids in UNIFIL's area.[36] The peacekeepers do little more than record these various violations, although UNIFIL has increased its efforts to protect civilian inhabitants from the fighting.

Despite the recent increase in the level of violence in southern Lebanon, Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak remains committed to carrying out his election pledge to withdraw Israeli forces from southern Lebanon by July 2000. While the details concerning a possible Israeli withdrawal in all its permutations remain unclear, an examination of the various options for UNIFIL, as well as the likely UN response to three scenarios under which the IDF might withdraw from southern Lebanon, now follows.

OPTIONS FOR AN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL: THE UN AND UNIFIL

UNIFIL faces a dilemma in the context of any scenario under which the withdrawal of the IDF from southern Lebanon might occur. On the one hand, it would want to see its mission accomplished and the full provisions of Resolution 425 realized. This would add UNIFIL to the fairly short list of UN peacekeeping success stories. With some missions lasting three, four, or even five decades, UN peacekeeping often faces the criticism that its presence represents not a solution, but the absence of a solution. On the other hand, under no circumstances is UNIFIL likely to substantively alter is size, force structure, command-and-control arrangements, or modus operandi in order to accomplish its mandate. In other words, UNIFIL would welcome the chance to complete its mission, but it is not likely to walk an arduous "extra mile" to do so. UNIFIL, like other actors, is keenly aware of one thing: it does not want to be left "holding the bag" as the principal authority enforcing peace, security, and order in the power vacuum of a post-IDF southern Lebanon.

As noted below, in some cases the UN mission would have to expand in both size and modus operandi to fulfill its duties after an IDF withdrawal. Under some scenarios UNIFIL could well expand slightly, alter its force structure and operating patterns in some small ways, and perhaps even grow into some new roles that would not be a radical break with its past. There is some room for growth at the margins, depending

on the opportunities presented and the amount of support provided by other local actors. But the constraints of the UN system, the lessons learned from a half-century of UN peacekeeping, and recent experiences with peace-enforcement operations will serve to anchor UNIFIL in something like its current form and role.

The constraints that militate against a dramatically different UNIFIL are formidable. Financially, UN peacekeeping is even more strapped than the regular UN budget (which it has exceeded in recent years). The UN spends some $140 million per year on maintaining UNIFIL and the operation is currently in debt by almost the same amount. In 1996 the secretary general mandated a 10 percent reduction in UNIFIL's size as a cost-saving measure.[37] Selling a 20–30 percent increase in UNIFIL's budget would require the secretary general and members of the Security Council to invest some considerable political capital. Moreover, it would require a heavy investment of political capital by the American president, who would have to sell the increased financial burden to a very skeptical Congress (the United States currently finances almost one-third of the cost of UN peacekeeping).

In terms of management, the UN has learned much from its experience in directing large and ambitious peacekeeping operations in belligerent environments. The lesson of the Congo mission in the 1960s and of the missions in Cambodia, Bosnia, and Somalia in the 1990s is that the UN is best suited to manage smaller and less ambitious forces in more benign environments. Many at the UN felt that their most ardent supporters in America during the 1993–95 period dumped impossible missions such as Bosnia and Somalia in the organization's lap and then refused to provide the support it needed to do anything except fail.[38] The UN is finished with trying to control expensive and complex military operations that are best managed by a competent military alliance such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In recent missions such as Kosovo and East Timor, the UN has allowed a multinational military force to intervene first, following on with UN forces only after the environment has become more supportive. Therefore, even a fairly large expansion of UNIFIL would have to take place within the traditional passive rules of engagement and principles of peacekeeping; the UN has no wish (nor the resources and wherewithal) to manage heavy combat forces in a volatile environment.

Given these financial and political constraints, there is little room for movement toward altering UNIFIL's size, composition, or mission. Nonetheless, two mitigating factors could make an expansion of UNIFIL possible. First, the chance to seize an opportunity for a peaceful solution to the problem of southern Lebanon will weigh heavily on even the most jaded Security Council members. If the expansion of UNIFIL's mission

or mandate could potentially provide the decisive edge in a complicated equation, it could be approved. Second, UN peacekeeping is currently enjoying one of its periodic revivals, with three new missions having been approved in the autumn of 1999. An expansion of UNIFIL could ride this wave of enthusiasm. But even then such a move would likely happen only in small increments and within the context of very specific developments on the ground.

Withdrawal with a Comprehensive Agreement or Treaty

The Politics
An IDF withdrawal within the context of peace treaties with Lebanon and Syria is the preferred outcome from the standpoint of the UN. Moreover, the more comprehensive the treaty (involving Syria, the United States, and other outside powers in addition to Israel, Lebanon, and local actors), the more amenable the UN will be to taking extra measures to ensure its success. The United States and other permanent members of the Security Council, who would approve any change in UNIFIL's size or mandate in light of any treaty, would be more inclined to do so if regional powers are invested in the guarantees of the treaty. The possible details of such a treaty are outlined in other chapters of this book, but according to the UN's priorities, the treaty would have to do the following:

- Obtain a commitment from Lebanon to prevent cross-border terrorism—this would include ground infiltrations and rocket attacks—and a pledge by both Israel and Lebanon to not engage in activities that threaten the security of the other.
- Create confidence-building measures such as a standing joint military committee to prevent accidental retaliation, hasty escalation, or other actions taken in response to small and uncoordinated incidents.
- Provide specific timetables for the IDF withdrawal, the disarmament of the SLA and Hizballah, and the reoccupation of southern Lebanon first by UNIFIL and then by the LAF.
- Address the status of the SLA, Hizballah, Amal, and other armed elements remaining in southern Lebanon.
- Create zones in which armaments are forbidden and those in which they are limited. Zones in which they are forbidden would have to take into account the proximity of the Haifa and Galilee population centers (vis-à-vis the range of newer katyusha rockets).
- Create a high-level monitoring group to assist UNIFIL in enforcing demilitarized and force-reduction zones.

- Provide for automatic sanctions for violations of treaty provisions.
- Provide measurable, achievable, and sustainable goals for UNIFIL (i.e., an exit strategy).
- Provide international training programs and other assistance to the LAF to make it militarily competent to carry out the duties of border control and internal security in southern Lebanon.

The Operations

UNIFIL's objectives in such a scenario would not depart greatly from its original mandate. Operations would differ in scale and complexity. In implementing a comprehensive agreement, UNIFIL would follow a pattern it used in "overseeing" the IDF withdrawals of 1978 and 1985. In the first phase, IDF and SLA positions would be turned over to UNIFIL in classic relief-in-place operations. In the second phase—one that may lag by several months to a year—UNIFIL would turn the positions over to the LAF. While the LAF is technically capable of carrying out security missions in southern Lebanon, it may move tentatively for political reasons—especially in the face of instability. This may necessitate a "go slow" program in which the LAF handles security only in those areas most receptive to its presence, only gradually taking over border control or moving into the more hostile areas.

In addition to influencing Hizballah, Syria's army in Lebanon could help the LAF to assume control. No doubt, Syrians would seek ways to use such a presence to pressure Israel. But if Israel were to mute its objections to a Syrian military presence near the border, then the stabilizing effect on the LAF would have advantages in the long run. If the IDF has no objection to Syria playing a certain role in helping the LAF to establish competent control in the area, the UN will not complain. Conditions under which these handovers could take place would be explicitly outlined and agreed upon to prevent such operations from occurring prematurely (such as handovers made to a unit not capable of taking control or located in a volatile local environment). The operation would proceed from north to south, slowly but methodically approaching the international border.

UNIFIL would establish force limitation zones along the lines of those used in the Sinai. The zones would be established in accordance with the relative security concerns of each side (the range of artillery and rockets; nothing much could be done about aircraft). UNIFIL and the LAF, along with international monitors from a contact group (as specified in the April 1996 Understanding) would control the zones, and the contact group would impose strict sanctions on violators. Various confidence-building measures and joint groups would be implemented to reinforce the basic provisions of the zones. In order to temporarily allay concerns about long-range weapons that lay outside these zones, UNIFIL

could resurrect its long-moribund air operations. Because it has rarely been able to secure flight clearance from the IDF for operations over southern Lebanon, the UN has almost never used its small air arm for reconnaissance and monitoring. That capability could be enhanced, or the United States could offer the services of some high-technology monitoring devices as it does for the current multinational peacekeeping mission in the Sinai (the Multinational Force and Observers [MFO]).

In both the turnover of key security-control points and the monitoring of the arms control zones, UNIFIL would seek to live up to its name as an "interim" solution. It would act as the bridge between the IDF and the LAF, a bridge that could not stand without its two competent pillars. The cooperation of the principal actors—as well as the local adversaries—would be the key to success. UNIFIL would have to expand to carry out these tasks. A minimum of two extra battalions of mobile infantry would be needed as well as some specialized capabilities for monitoring and support (engineers, communications, and so forth). More sophisticated surveillance devices such as ground radar and artillery would also have to be deployed. All these reinforcements should ideally come from the professional armed forces of industrial nations. And in the event that this peace agreement is linked to a settlement in the Golan (a Syrian demand), the 1,200 troops of the UNDOF mission there could be folded into UNIFIL. The UN could conceivably be ready to put such a force in place—at least its initial elements—within two to three months.

Regardless, the force would still work under the principles of peacekeeping that would require strict impartiality and passive rules of engagement. UNIFIL would merely be a decisive complement to the willful actions of the Israelis, Lebanese, and others seeking to implement the peace agreement. The more this cooperation is present, the more likely the UN would be to reinforce UNIFIL and approve its mandate through the completion of its mission. If all went fairly well, UNIFIL could be phased out in two to three years. This is an optimistic assessment that assumes the political and security environment of southern Lebanon would be stable and generally peaceful within that timeframe. Even then, UNIFIL might stay on in a reduced observer capacity. Instability in the region after the implementation of this plan would considerably lengthen the phasing out of UNIFIL.

The Consequences
The security consequences of this scenario very much depend on the quality of the peace agreement, and the UN will not be able to do much to preclude a demise. This fundamental fact is often frustrating for local parties who seek a "silver bullet" solution from the UN. Quite to the contrary, UN peacekeeping (and UNIFIL in particular) is a self-help technique designed merely to complement the primary efforts of the

belligerents. Even an expanded UNIFIL that is competently and authoritatively carrying out its operations cannot thwart any party intent on bringing about the collapse of the peace process. UN operations like UNIFIL can bolster the confidence of the various sides when suspicions run high or nerves waver, but they can guarantee nothing.

The key to success is the transfer of authority for the peace, security, and order of southern Lebanon from the IDF and SLA to the LAF. As noted below, the will of the LAF to "take charge" is in some doubt in anything but the best of circumstances. Anti-Israel rejectionist groups or disgruntled SLA elements seeking to disrupt the process or sabotage the peace can serve this cause by attacking when both sides are weakest: the IDF in the midst of withdrawal, or the weak and fractious LAF in the act of taking over. In such a case, Israel would undoubtedly reserve the right to retaliate by both land and air in southern Lebanon, and the Lebanese government would probably abandon the most volatile areas. Some progress could be preserved in such a scenario if the transition were far enough along that actions were limited to cross-border air, long-range artillery, and rocket attacks only. This would represent somewhat of a Pyrrhic victory, but it might be an improvement over the status quo.

IDF Withdrawal in Coordination with Other Actors

The Politics
This scenario would be the next most desirable. Many of the political and operational dynamics would be the same, although important distinctions would remain that could have a significant impact on development on the ground. In this scenario, neither Lebanon nor Syria would be parties to a comprehensive peace treaty. Even so, lack of coordination among local actors could compensate in many respects for the high-level political cover that would otherwise be provided by an international treaty. The UN might be tempted to support a serious endeavor to implement Resolution 425 through the efforts of local actors. From a UN perspective, this scenario has many of the features of a withdrawal in the context of a peace treaty, though executed in what could be a less politically supportive environment. Still, with support from the United States and the Security Council, the UN might be enticed to try, seeing a coordinated withdrawal as a hopeful step toward the fulfillment of Resolution 425, rather than its consumation. For UNIFIL, this would be a tempting risk–reward proposition, if the possibility existed that Hizballah could declare victory and eschew violence and that the LAF could competently assume control of most of southern Lebanon after a few years.

The coordination involved in this sort of move would undoubtedly entail many of the same steps taken in the scenario involving peace trea-

ties. There would still be mechanisms for handing over security positions; some demarcation and intensive monitoring of force limitation zones; confidence-building measures; guarantees; sanctions concerning cross-border aggression; and provisions for the status of the SLA, Hizballah, the LAF, and other local actors. The chief differences would be that, absent high-level political participation (especially by outside powers), the potential for a violent breakdown could well be greater. Although it is possible that a heavy diplomatic hand from the United States could ameliorate some of the uncertainty accompanying the absence of a comprehensive peace agreement, it would not be able to replace Syrian influence. The Lebanese government and the LAF hold the keys to success, and that means Syrian acquiescence at the least. UNIFIL would play a central role and incur great risks in doing so. Nonetheless, it is not unreasonable to assume that the UN could see this as an opportunity worth seizing.

The Operations
UNIFIL would only take on this role if it sensed that the transition to Lebanese authority was realizable and sustainable, but it might also prepare itself for a bumpy ride along the way. Thus, while it would still operate within the basic parameters of a neutral peacekeeping force, UNIFIL's operations would have to change in two respects.

First, because of the greater risk involved, the force would have to be expanded both quantitatively and qualitatively. This would require a new Security Council resolution and thus the investment of some political capital by the United States. Although new and more aggressive rules of engagement are not likely to be formally proffered, the new forces would undoubtedly be a little more robust (for defensive purposes) than the current UNIFIL troops that they would complement. A minimum of three to five battalions of well-armed mechanized infantry would be needed to help guide this transition. These would be expensive professional forces from industrial countries like the NATO allies. It is highly unlikely that the United States would contribute any ground troops given the current operational strain on the U.S. military that is associated with peacekeeping. Getting quality forces of this sort could be problematic because of the peacekeeping commitments of these countries in the Balkans and elsewhere. It is quite possible that UNIFIL would be promised such forces and then have to make due with ones less capable—thus hampering the mission. A particular problem is that the new forces could take months to arrive. It is difficult to see them being in place by July 2000 were Israel to withdraw by then.

Second, because the hand-off of security positions to the LAF would probably be delayed in many areas, UNIFIL forces could expect to stay much longer and perform a greater role in providing for the peace, se-

curity, and order of southern Lebanon. The goal would still be for UNIFIL to be an interim transition force between the IDF and SLA on the one hand and the LAF on the other, but the potential exists in this kind of scenario for the transition period to be both longer and more unstable.

UNIFIL operations, especially with a more robust force, would be centered on preserving the integrity of a buffer zone that would ostensibly run from the Israeli–Lebanese border to Tyre and then northeast to Marjayoun and Kaoukaba. As noted, special force-limitation zones along the coast and in the Jezzine salient would have to be rigorously monitored, as katyusha rockets in either of these areas could threaten Haifa and the Galilee, respectively. The challenge here would be that both these areas would lie well outside the UNIFIL zone. Lacking an official treaty supported by Syria and Lebanon, it could prove quite difficult to protect these areas. Moreover, a robust UNIFIL air component might be denied permission by both sides to conduct confidence-building monitoring and reporting. Thus, even if UNIFIL were to succeed in preventing significant ground operations in the areas it occupies, it might have to rely on the deterrent effect of the IDF's air force and Hizballah's katyushas upon one another to prevent an exchange over its zone. In this scenario, UNIFIL and the local actors would have to live with the limitations of effectiveness imposed by the general conditions in which the mission is carried out.

The Consequences

There are many uncertainties related to this scenario, not least the actions of Lebanese or Palestinian rejectionist groups that have shown a propensity for taking advantage of power vacuums. Recognizing this, Israel undoubtedly would withdraw in such a way that would preserve a considerable amount of latitude for retaliating on the ground and in the air. Local coordination required for an IDF withdrawal would have to be intense indeed if Israel were to cede its security zone to a reinforced UNIFIL with only vague promises of a competent LAF eventually filling in. Chances are that the IDF would hedge its bets enough to ensure that this would be a difficult if not impossible task for UNIFIL. Ultimately, this scenario could produce a southern Lebanon that is only slightly less volatile, but at least the IDF would have extricated itself to some degree. The UN's role would be greater—which might deter some members of the Security Council and the international community from supporting the idea—but that hesitance could be overcome by Great Power pressure (especially from the United States), evidence of progress on the ground, and the absence of major setbacks for UNIFIL itself. An Israeli pullout that occurs prior to a full expansion of UNIFIL would likely create a power vacuum within which Hizballah could occupy former IDF and SLA positions, thus adding enormously to UNIFIL's problems.

Unilateral IDF Withdrawal

The Politics
This is the least attractive option for the UN. From UNIFIL's perspective a unilateral Israeli withdrawal would leave southern Lebanon with a power vacuum and consequently more unstable. This could lead the Syrians to encourage attacks on Israel and the Lebanese government to avoid taking control of territory in the South. Moreover, the UN would realize that a unilateral IDF withdrawal could only be sold domestically in Israel if the IDF reserved the right to strike back against attacks from southern Lebanon. The Israeli military options accompanying such a policy could take the form of ground incursions or massive retaliations against the civilian infrastructure in Lebanon. The potential for additional violence would deter the UN from expanding UNIFIL's limited role to support this course of action. As noted, UNIFIL is a savvy local player and is well aware of its limitations. Even if tempted by the possibility of fulfilling the first provision of its twenty-two-year-old mandate, it would be deterred by the specter of being the primary force ensuring peace, security, and order in southern Lebanon.

A unilateral withdrawal seemingly offers a quick end to the most problematic aspect of UNIFIL's mandate, but at a price. An important task would be accomplished but at the expense of leaving UNIFIL "in charge" of southern Lebanon. UNIFIL will not agree to such a bargain and will seek to fulfill its entire mandate only as a complement to the actions of the other local players. Even the possibility of "progress" toward fulfilling Resolution 425 will not outweigh the fact that UNIFIL would have to play the lead, not a supporting security role, in southern Lebanon after an IDF withdrawal. For this reason, there is little hope that the Security Council would support any expanded role for UNIFIL in this scenario.

The Operations
Lack of political support in New York would translate into lack of action in the field. The most likely response by UNIFIL would be to bear down in its current form—or perhaps contract even further. UNIFIL could not hope to occupy unilaterally the seventy-odd IDF and SLA positions both inside and south of its area of operations—even in the unlikely event that these positions were simply abandoned. Instead, the mission would likely concentrate on what has become its *de facto* reason for existence, which is to provide humanitarian aid, civil services, and some measure of support to local governance in the areas it currently occupies. Its posture would come to resemble that of 1979–81 when the IDF was "withdrawn" from southern Lebanon and UNIFIL found itself able only to observe an episodic border war fought in, around, over, and through its zone.

The Consequences

The consequences of this course of action are not entirely bleak. It is conceivable that Hizballah, Amal, and others will cease their attacks on Israel once southern Lebanon is "liberated." If that happens, UNIFIL could act more vigorously (though still within its current size and mandate) to help the Lebanese government assume control of the region. If the situation turns out to be less benign, UNIFIL will try to ride the situation out, as it has in the past. In either scenario or in any scenario in between, UNIFIL will certainly not initiate action. It is simply not capable of driving the local situation one way or the other and would be leery of even attempting such action in the absence of a peace treaty or some closely coordinated withdrawal plan.

CONCLUSIONS

There is the hope in some quarters that the UN will "ride to the rescue" of southern Lebanon and play both a proactive and central role in an IDF withdrawal from southern Lebanon. These hopes are misplaced. The character of the UN and of UNIFIL—neutral, passive, and reactive—would essentially condition its response in any scenario. The various roles that it could play differ mainly in terms of their scope, rather than their character. The UN will be more supportive of initiatives to reinforce UNIFIL and expand (at the margins) its size and mandate if an Israeli withdrawal occurs as part of a peace agreement. A peace treaty would rally the requisite political support for a reinforced UNIFIL, while the UN would not need many more troops to work in a supportive environment. Alternatively, if a closely coordinated withdrawal (absent a peace treaty) presents itself, the UN might be inclined to reinforce UNIFIL even more vigorously, as long as the Security Council (especially the United States) decided that the risk was worth the reward and that an authoritative Lebanese force could eventually and competently arrive on the scene in southern Lebanon. Any such reinforcement would be carried out within the context of peacekeeping. That is, UNIFIL would still be expected to be a supporting player, not the lead actor, in any scenario. The UN and UNIFIL understand well that one of the keys to success in southern Lebanon is not to be left "in charge" when things go sour. For this reason, UNIFIL is unlikely to take any extra measures to support a unilateral IDF withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

NOTES

1. See especially my analysis of UNIFIL's problems with force structure, command and control, and military operations in *Blue Helmets: The Strategy of UN Military Operations* (Sterling, Va.: Brassey's Inc, 1998), pp. 114–138.
2. Brian Urquhart, *A Life in Peace and War* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), p. 288.

3. Security Council Resolution 425, March 19, 1978 (See Appendix A).
4. Bjørn Skogmo, *UNIFIL: International Peacekeeping in Lebanon, 1978–1988* (London: Lynne Reinner, 1989), p. 12.
5. S/12611, Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 425, March 19, 1978, para. 4.
6. UN Department of Public Information (UNDPI), *The Blue Helmets* (New York: UNDPI, 1990), p. 113.
7. Urquhart, *A Life in Peace and War,* p. 289.
8. William Durch, *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping: Case Studies and Comparative Analysis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 31.
9. S/12611, para. 8.
10. UNIFIL encountered two significant problems in these operations, however. The first stemmed from the fact that the UNIFIL area of operations had never been officially defined and agreed upon by all the parties concerned. By the end of the third phase of Israeli withdrawal in June 1978, UNIFIL had occupied the maximum amount of territory that it physically could, though that amount was only 45 percent of Lebanese territory occupied by the IDF south of the Litani River. In addition, the UNIFIL territory was effectively split into two separate zones, and is still divided by a gap some 15 kilometers wide in which UNIFIL has been able to maintain only a few isolated positions. The area of southern Lebanon under IDF control through its South Lebanon Army (SLA) proxy became known as "the enclave." UNDPI, *The Blue Helmets,* p. 121.
11. S/12620, Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNIFIL, March 23, 1978, addendum 4, para. 24.
12. The most thorough discussion of this interesting and perplexing issue on which opinions still vary widely can be found in F. T Liu, *United Nations Peacekeeping and the Non-Use of Force* (New York: International Peace Academy, 1992).
13. Alan James, *Peacekeeping in International Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1990), p. 344.
14. S/1994/62, Report of the Secretary-General on UNIFIL for the period July 21, 1993–January 20, 1994, para. 10.
15. Ibid., para. 12.
16. Ibid., para. 26.
17. See Adam Frey, "The Israel–Lebanon Monitoring Group: An Operational Review," *Research Notes,* no. 3 (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, September 19, 1997).
18. S/12611, Report of the Secretary General on the Implementation of Security Souncil Resolution 425, March 19, 1978, paras. 2(d) and 6.
19. Tasks are specified in S/12845, Report of the Secretary-General on UNIFIL for the period March 19 to September 13, 1978, para. 27.
20. Emmanuel A. Erskine, *Mission with UNIFIL* (London: Hurst and Company, 1989), p. 33.
21. S/12620, addendum 4, para. 17.
22. UNDPI, *The Blue Helmets,* p. 131.
23. Erskine, *Mission with UNIFIL,* p. 114.
24. S/13384, Report of the Secretary General on UNIFIL for the period January 13 to June 8, 1979, para. 9.
25. S/15194, Report of the Secretary-General on UNIFIL for the period December 11, 1981 to June 3, 1982, para. 9.

26. Marianne Heiberg, "Peacekeepers and Local Populations: Some Comments on UNIFIL," in *The UN and Peacekeeping: Results, Limitations, and Prospects,* eds. Indar Rikhye and Kjell Skjeslbaek (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), p. 165.

27. Indar Rikhye, *The Theory and Practice of International Peacekeeping* (London: Hurst and Company, 1984), p. 105.

28. S/1999/61, Report of the Secretary General on UNIFIL for the period July 16, 1998–January 15, 1999, para. 14.

29. S/20416, Report of the Secretary-General on UNIFIL for the period July 26, 1988 to January 24, 1989, para. 32.

30. James, *Peacekeeping in International Politics,* p. 345.

31. S/12845, paras. 49–50.

32. S/15455, Report of the Secretary-General on UNIFIL, October 14, 1982, para. 14.

33. UNDPI, *The Blue Helmets* (3rd Edition, 1996), p. 108.

34. Heiberg, "Peacekeepers and Local Populations," pp. 150–151.

35. UNDPI, *The Blue Helmets* (3rd Edition, 1996), p. 112.

36. S/1999/61, Report of the Secretary-General on UNIFIL for the period July 16, 1998 to January 15, 1999, paras. 2–3.

37. A/53/819, UN General Assembly Report on the Financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, February 4, 1999.

38. See John Hillen, "Picking Up UN Peacekeeping's Pieces," *Foreign Affairs* 77, no. 4 (July/August 1998), pp. 96–102.

Securing the South:
Syrian and Lebanese Interests,
Capabilities, and Likely Actions

By Frederic C. Hof

A n Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, whether unilateral or agreed upon in the context of peace treaties, would profoundly affect the interests of both Syria and Lebanon. This chapter begins with a brief summary of the Syrian–Lebanese political relationship, examines Syrian and Lebanese interests engaged by Israel's withdrawal, discusses the capabilities of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in a border-security role, and then speculates as to likely Syrian and Lebanese responses to three Israeli withdrawal scenarios.

THE SYRIAN–LEBANESE POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP

The Republic of Lebanon is the foremost state casualty of the Arab–Israeli conflict. Even in times of peace Lebanon was a precarious enterprise. Its confessional groups (themselves fragmented into competing factions headed by rival feudal politicians) coexisted uneasily, in part by sharing the spoils of an ineffective, corrupt central government. The Lebanese state ultimately failed to navigate the perilous shoals of Arab nationalism and Arab–Israeli violence and foundered in 1975 with the eruption of the Lebanese civil war. For an additional fifteen years, the country bled profusely from episodes of civil violence and armed invasion.

The net result of Lebanon's implosion was that Syria assumed the role of suzerain in Lebanon. Syria had, with the acquiescence of the United States and Israel, entered Lebanon militarily in 1976 to neutralize and control the Palestinian resistance. Palestinian forces under the control of Yasir Arafat were threatening (in league with their Lebanese Muslim and Druze allies) to overcome Lebanon's Christian militias, establish a leftist regime dominated by the Palestinians, and perhaps provoke an untimely Israeli military intervention. Subsequently, Syrian military units, which were obliged to observe Israel's restrictions ("red lines") by staying away from the Israeli–Lebanese border, were active. They sparred with the now-defunct Christian Lebanese Forces militia; held on in the face of Israel's 1982 onslaught, which Syria blamed on the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO); routed Arafat's forces from

northern Lebanon in 1983; outlasted U.S. intervention; broke the 1983 Lebanon–Israel peace treaty; and, in 1990, ousted LAF chief Gen. Michel Aoun. After fifteen turbulent years, Syria was the only contender left standing for power and influence in Lebanon.

Syria's privileged status in Lebanon has been formalized in a series of agreements between the two countries beginning with the October 1989 National Reconciliation (Taif) Accord,[1] which authorized the presence of Syrian forces in Lebanon to "assist legitimate Lebanese forces in reinstating the sovereignty of the Lebanese state within a maximum of two years." The accord also mandated the repositioning of Syrian forces in Lebanon after the two-year period and anticipated the signing of an agreement to determine "the size and duration of the presence of the Syrian forces" after repositioning. It further provided that neither Lebanon nor Syria would allow any act threatening the security of the other.

The "Taif Accord," whose main thrust was to reform, reorganize, and partially "deconfessionalize" Lebanon's political system, also included the following provisions with respect to southern Lebanon: support for the implementation of United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 425; adherence to the Israel–Lebanon General Armistice Agreement of March 23, 1949; and deployment of the LAF "along the internationally recognized borders" to reinforce "international peacekeeping forces in southern Lebanon so as to ensure the withdrawal of Israel and allow for the return of law and order to the border zone." Lebanon's view of these matters has, as will be demonstrated below, evolved in a different direction over the past decade.

Subsequently, the Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination was signed by Syria and Lebanon in May 1991, supplemented by the Defense and Security Agreement[2] concluded in September of the same year. These two undertakings were designed to institutionalize close bilateral relations through the establishment—under the terms of the treaty— of a Higher Council headed by the Syrian and Lebanese presidents and several committees, each headed by the relevant cabinet ministers of the two states. They both also indefinitely extended, subject to bilateral agreement, authorization for the presence of Syrian military forces in Lebanon. The Defense and Security Agreement called upon both parties to "[b]an all military, security, political, and media activity that might harm the other country" and mandated that the Ministries of Defense and Interior in both states "increase the exchange of officers and troops through training courses . . . in order to achieve a high standard in military coordination and adequate familiarity to confront common threats."

Debates as to whether these agreements were imposed by Syria on Lebanon or were entered into freely by both parties are irrelevant. After fifteen years of intermittent warfare, Lebanon was a smoking ruin, and with the violent ouster of General Aoun by Syria, the illusion that Leba-

non would be "saved" by the intervention of a non-Syrian outsider—France, the United States, Israel, Iraq, or even the Vatican—finally died.

Today, Lebanon views a close relationship with Syria as the *sine qua non* of domestic tranquility. In the context of Israel's desire to withdraw from southern Lebanon, this means that any prospective withdrawal will be weighed in Damascus and Beirut within the context of Syrian political interests. These include regime maintenance, preservation of the privileged position Syria enjoys in Lebanon, and reacquisition of the Golan Heights. Damascus seeks to prevent a resolution to the southern Lebanon problem that would come about independently of Syria and in a manner neglectful of, or harmful to, Syrian interests there. Syria has established, and Lebanon has fully accepted, an unbreakable linkage between Israeli withdrawal from the South and Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Both Damascus and Beirut therefore oppose any scheme entailing an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon accomplished outside the context of a prior Israeli–Syrian accommodation. For example, Lebanon rejected the attempt of the Binyamin Netanyahu government in April 1998 to couple implementation of Resolution 425 with bilateral Israeli–Lebanese security talks; the Lebanese claimed that Resolution 425 mandates only the unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces without requiring bilateral negotiations (see Appendices A and E).

More recently, Israel's March 5, 2000, declaration that its forces would deploy on the border with Lebanon by July 2000 (and from there defend northern Israel) earned the following reply from Lebanese president Emile Lahoud: "What will force Israel to find a solution to the Palestinian problem if we were to preserve security on the border after a withdrawal that would take place outside a comprehensive and just peace?"[3] This statement seems to imply that Lebanon would remain aloof from the implementation phase of Resolution 425 if Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon is unilateral.

In fact, Lebanon's policy is clear: if Israel wishes to depart from Lebanon under the provisions of Resolution 425, it must do so unconditionally, without the benefit of talks with or assurances by Lebanon. If Israel desires such talks and assurances, it must be willing to resume the Israeli–Syrian track of the peace process.

SYRIAN POLITICAL INTERESTS IN AN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL

Syria's interests either directly engaged or potentially affected by an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon include the following: (1) regime maintenance, (2) preservation of Syria's privileged position in Lebanon, and (3) return to Syria of the Golan. All go directly to the issue of the legitimacy of the regime in Damascus.

There is no inherent contradiction between President Hafiz al-Asad's

desire to regain the Golan Heights through the signing of a peace treaty with Israel on the one hand, and his preoccupation with regime maintenance and with ensuring a smooth transition to a successor elite grouped around his son, Dr. Bashar al-Asad, on the other.[4] Syria will sign a peace treaty with Israel if it provides for Israeli withdrawal to the "line of June 4, 1967" and contains other terms deemed politically and militarily acceptable. Recognizing that peace probably means the end of the statist national security regime that has prevailed in Syria since the early 1960s, President Asad appears to be preparing his son to oversee the political and economic modernization of a country whose circumstances will fundamentally change with peace.

Within the political system he has dominated for three decades, Asad places great value on caution and consensus among the policymaking elite. Given the impact of the Arab–Israeli dispute on Syria during all but two of its fifty-three years of independent existence, making peace with Israel would be an event of transcendent significance, fraught with real controversy and potential danger. It is reasonable to assume that Asad will want this major reshaping of the Syrian political landscape to occur on his watch with the blessing of Syria's current power elite, so that it can be inherited as a "given" by a new elite—which will face no shortage of its own challenges as it tries to update Syria's political economy to deal with the consequences of peace. Asad will try to mold the consensus for peace and take upon himself the heat from those in Syria who feel most threatened by it.

With regime maintenance and succession factoring into the Syrian calculus concerning peace with Israel, it is hardly surprising that Syria seeks to use Israel's difficulties in southern Lebanon to its own advantage. Syria and Lebanon have, to this end, inextricably linked their own cooperation with Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon to Israel's withdrawal to the June 4, 1967, line on the Syrian front. In Syria's view, an Israeli withdrawal from the South accomplished independently of withdrawal from the Golan could have the following negative consequences:

- **Dividing Lebanon from Syria and isolating Damascus within the region.** Syria's nightmare is a separate Israeli–Lebanese peace treaty, one that increases Israel's status in Lebanon at Syria's expense and which, in combination with successful Israeli–Palestinian "final status" talks, leaves Syria outside the circle of peace, isolated regionally and with no prospect of retrieving the Golan Heights.
- **Loss of leverage over Israel.** A unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon (without an Israeli–Lebanese treaty) could, in Syria's view, eliminate Israel's incentive to retire from the Golan. Damascus wants to ensure that Israel will need Syrian cooperation both to withdraw unscathed from Lebanon and to enjoy a secure, peaceful Lebanese–Israeli border. It also wants to make sure

that Israel pays a price for this cooperation: withdrawal from the Golan to the June 4, 1967, line.
*   **The prospect of war.** Syria and Lebanon have made clear that they will provide no security guarantees or commitments should Israel withdraw from southern Lebanon outside the context of peace treaties. On March 8, 2000, President Lahoud declared that "Israeli hints for security guarantees after a [unilateral] withdrawal and its threats if these guarantees are not secured are totally rejected."[5] But attacks on Israel, regardless of the perpetrator or motive, could provoke Israeli retaliation against Syria that might lead to war.

What Damascus seeks, therefore, is an arrangement with Israel that returns to Syria lands seized in June 1967 and permits Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in a context within which Israel acknowledges Syria's special position in Lebanon. In addition to demanding security-related measures and assurances on the Golan front, Israel will no doubt wish to assure itself of Syria's benign intentions and sensitivity to Israeli security requirements on the Lebanese front.

Syria will seek to strike a balance between two considerations. On the one hand, it may try to deflect the fundamental responsibility for law and order in southern Lebanon toward the LAF and the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), as Syria will wish to avoid blame for any breakdown. On the other hand, Damascus may seek to capitalize on Israel's legitimate security concerns and, above all, Israel's need for a reliable interlocutor in the South by demanding that Israel pose no objection to the presence of Syrian military elements in the frontier region. Syria is likely to accept responsibility only if it is in charge.

If one assumes that there will be a considerable interval between Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon and the completion of its withdrawal from the Golan—implicitly establishing a linkage between the performance of the southern Lebanon security regime and Syria's full reacquisition of its territory—one might further assume that Syria will opt for a "hands-on" role in the South rather than leave matters to pure chance.

Regardless of the arrangements Syria and Israel might reach in connection with southern Lebanon, the notion that Israel might secure the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon in return for the evacuation of its own forces seems not, under present circumstances, to be viable. Syria will maintain that its presence in Lebanon is governed by agreements entered into by Damascus and Beirut. The Lebanese will confirm Syria's position. Syria and Lebanon will both reject any attempt to link Israeli and Syrian withdrawals. Indeed, Syria will view Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon very much in the context of preserving, strengthening, and perpetuating its own political position there. Although Syria may at some point decide to withdraw its military units from Lebanon, such a

decision (absent significant political upheaval) would be based on the Syrian calculation that they no longer serve a purpose.

LEBANESE POLITICAL INTERESTS IN AN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL

Lebanon's current leadership has one transcendent political interest: to permit no "daylight" between itself and Syria on the issue of southern Lebanon, or for that matter, on any issue deemed important to the national security interests of Syria. Lebanese and Syrian interests may not be objectively identical in all cases, but Lebanon's leaders see the closest possible coordination with Syria as the *sine qua non* of political stability in Lebanon.

The close relationship to Syria is not without cost to Lebanon. Resistance operations undertaken by Hizballah against the South Lebanon Army (SLA) and Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the security zone enjoy the explicit encouragement and support of the Lebanese government. When, contrary to the "April 1996 Understanding," military operations spill outside of the security zone into other parts of Lebanon and northern Israel, Lebanese targets unrelated to Hizballah military capabilities sometimes come under Israeli attack (see Appendix D).

Israel's attacks on Lebanon's economic infrastructure during the dying days of the Netanyahu government in June 1999 and again in February 2000 were particularly damaging to Lebanon's economic reconstruction. In both cases, electrical power stations were destroyed by the Israeli Air Force. Attacks during the night of February 7, 2000, "blasted Lebanon's electricity grid, destroying three large transformers and cutting off power to Tripoli, Baalbek, and parts of Beirut. Lebanese officials said it would take a year to repair the damage, which they set at $40m."[6]

An Israeli strategy combining withdrawal with attacks on the Lebanese infrastructure in the event of cross-border attacks would be a continuation of the policy inaugurated during the night of December 23, 1968, when Israeli commandos destroyed thirteen Lebanese civilian airplanes in a raid on Beirut International Airport. Israel's operative theory for the past thirty years has held that violence directed toward official Lebanese targets will induce the Lebanese state either to punish those who would attack Israeli targets or at least beg Syria to impose restraint on the attackers.

Thirty years of experience shows the problems with that theory. Crackdowns by Lebanese security forces on elements hostile to Israel effectively ended in 1973. Although the infrastructure air raids of February 2000 *did not* result in katyusha rockets falling on northern Israel, they *did* result in evacuations from and crowded bomb shelters in Israel's northern cities and villages, thus suggesting that neither Israelis nor their government place much faith in the deterrent or punitive efficacy of destroying Lebanese power plants. Although attacks of this nature no

doubt prompt Lebanese pleas to Damascus for help, Syria has its own interests to consider, which in February 2000 may have centered on preserving the possibility of renewed peace talks with Israel.

Notwithstanding the primacy of the relationship with Syria, Lebanon does indeed have some interests of its own that, while subordinate to Syria's, it would very much like to see addressed in the context of an actual or potential Israeli withdrawal. These may be summarized as follows:

- **Resolve Lebanon's Palestinian problem.** From the point of view of the Lebanese government, resolution of Lebanon's Palestinian problem is the ultimate peace dividend to be derived from the Syria–Israel–Lebanon track of the peace process. Lebanon would like to close the twelve refugee camps and see the vast majority of the 350,000 UN-registered Palestinians residing in Lebanon move out of the country. Lebanese motivation is twofold: first, to solve, once and for all, an issue which has bedeviled the Lebanese political system for more than half a century; and second, to remove potential incubators of cross-border violence. Opposition to the implantation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon unites not only Lebanon's eighteen recognized confessional groups, but the largely Sunni Muslim refugee population as well.
- **Maintain the unity of the LAF.** Lebanon's greatest fear is that it will be maneuvered into playing the role of border guard for Israel without Syrian assistance and without the full cooperation of Hizballah—but with the Palestinian refugee situation still festering. With the assistance and cooperation of Syria and Hizballah, the LAF will be in a position to crack down hard on anyone seeking to use Lebanon for cross-border military operations or acts of terrorism. Without said assistance and cooperation, the LAF, if confronted by Hizballah, could evaporate altogether as a fighting force or lose many of its Shi'i officers and soldiers to desertion. President Lahoud will not place an institution he has patiently rebuilt over the past decade into the maelstrom of confessional fighting. He will not fight Hizballah; neither will he disarm it unless the entire operation is carefully choreographed in advance, with the full cooperation of all concerned.
- **Accelerate economic reconstruction.** A peaceful Israeli withdrawal under the terms of a peace treaty with Syrian support would end the thirty-year Israeli practice of retaliation directed toward Lebanon's economic infrastructure. Indeed, Lebanon would greatly prefer that Israel's departure, under any set of circumstances, not be accompanied by Israeli air strikes on Lebanese infrastructure in retaliation for harassing actions against the departing IDF or for attacks into Israel. Economic reconstruction is a priority for President Lahoud and his government. Maintain-

ing unity with Syria is an even higher priority, but if the infra-
structure "bullet" can be dodged, Lebanon would prefer to get
on with the rebuilding of the economy regardless of what is hap-
pening in the South.

- **Establish the Lebanese state in the South.** The absence of the state
  in an area considered by many of Lebanon's pre–civil war leaders
  to be too Shi'i, too poor, and—because of its water resources—too
  attractive to Israel created a vacuum into which the entire country
  was gradually pulled by Palestinian–Israeli cross-border violence
  and the subsequent participation of the PLO in Lebanon's civil
  war. One consequence of civil war was the rise of Hizballah and
  the fall of the South's traditional feudal elite, which had been happy
  to run matters without the state's interference. Having learned a
  harsh lesson, the Lebanese government may wish to establish itself
  institutionally throughout the South, a process perhaps to be fa-
  cilitated by the continued evolution of Hizballah into a conven-
  tional, though confessionally based, political party.

- **Avoid politically loaded commitments to Israel.** Leaving aside
  normalization measures to be contained within a peace treaty,
  Lebanon will wish to avoid making controversial commitments
  to Israel beyond securing its own side of the boundary. Specifi-
  cally, Lebanon will likely resist Israeli entreaties that SLA militia-
  men be integrated into the LAF or that they be provided, at least
  by means of a public document, privileges likely to provoke sharp
  internal debate. (See the sidebar on the SLA, immediately fol-
  lowing this chapter.) Lebanon is also likely to resist any sugges-
  tion that joint Israeli–Lebanese security patrols be conducted on
  Lebanese territory. Both issues are reminiscent of the ill-fated
  May 17, 1983, Israel–Lebanon Agreement and are therefore
  anathema to the Lebanese.

- **Restore the international boundary.** Unlike Syria, which seeks
  control of about eleven square miles of land beyond the 1923
  Palestine–Syria international boundary, Lebanon is content to
  have its portion of the 1923 boundary restored. The 1949 Israel–
  Lebanon armistice line coincides with the international bound-
  ary, which is not the case with Israel–Syria lines.

Syria's political interests in an Israeli withdrawal obviously come first,
and Lebanon's foremost political interest during and after the negotia-
tion process—for the foreseeable future—is to stay attached to Syria.
The nature of this relationship raises the possibility that some of
Lebanon's desiderata may go unmet. Syria will probably exercise care,
however, to trade away nothing that would compromise its own position
in Lebanon or, in the event of a settlement with Israel, jeopardize the
ability of the LAF to perform its security mission. The one peace process

issue on which Lebanon's political leaders require progress—requiring Syrian support and Israeli cooperation—is the issue of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. This single topic unites virtually all Lebanese in the fear that the peace process will end with hundreds of thousands of Palestinians remaining in Lebanon. Accordingly, although the Lebanese understand regional politics and power relationships, they will not be well disposed toward a government which emerges from talks with Israel empty-handed on the Palestinian issue.

PEACEKEEPING CAPABILITIES OF THE LAF

According to U.S. military officers who have served very recently in Lebanon, the LAF is now capable, with the cooperation of Syria, Israel, and Hizballah and in conjunction with Lebanon's Internal Security Forces (ISF), to execute a peacekeeping mission in southern Lebanon and along the border with Israel without any significant augmentation in terms of personnel, weapons, or equipment.[7] Without the cooperation of these key parties, no reinforcement of any kind would enable the LAF to engage successfully in confessional warfare.

In the Israeli–Lebanese context, the term "peacekeeping mission" has a somewhat peculiar meaning. It implies border patrol activities that would focus—under the assumption of a treaty-based security regime—on keeping people on the Lebanese side from trying to attack Israel. Attacks could take the form of ground infiltration, indirect (artillery or rocket) assaults, or even airborne (hang glider) penetrations. Lebanese security measures—border fences and patrol roads, checkpoints, mobile patrols, and aggressive intelligence work—will be focused inward, on the former security zone and the South in general, including those Palestinian refugee camps still existing in the wake of the peace process.

According to the American officers cited above, the LAF is potentially more capable now than in the past because it was "deconfessionalized" to a significant degree under the command of General Lahoud, a Maronite. Although the new commander in chief, General Michel Suleiman, is also Maronite and the chief of staff still Druze, the LAF's basic combat, combat support, and combat service support structure no longer features confessionally based units stationed in largely homogeneous regions, such as a Sunni Muslim brigade in (Sunni) Tripoli or a Maronite brigade in (Maronite) Kesrawan. The key combat units—eleven mechanized brigades, one commando regiment, five special forces regiments, one airborne regiment, one naval commando regiment, and two artillery regiments—are all confessionally mixed, although Shi'is are by far the largest group represented. This means that—under the right political conditions—General Suleiman may deploy any or all of the LAF's combat units to the South if he wishes, without taking sectarian limitations into account.

If and when it receives the "green light" to deploy south, the LAF will

likely define its mission in terms of three main components: defending the border, establishing and maintaining security in the South, and maintaining the security of Greater Beirut. In the context of peace with Israel, the first of these missions should not prove overly taxing. Indeed, defending the integrity of the border will require, as described above, that the border guards refrain from turning their backs on the Lebanese side. Establishing security in the South will be a military mission presumably undertaken with the cooperation or acquiescence of Hizballah.[8] Maintaining security in the South may initially be a military mission, but one which devolves in due course into the hands of the police. Finally, the presence of a large Shi'i population in the southern suburbs of Beirut will make the LAF very sensitive to the capital's security requirements should there be unsettling incidents in the South and along the border.

Although the abovementioned U.S. officers all maintained that the LAF could now accomplish these missions in a permissive, essentially unopposed environment (and would make an effort not to deploy under any other conditions), they also believe that the LAF will seek increased U.S. and European assistance if and when the prospect of a deployment becomes more realistic. The main problem faced by the LAF is identical to the principal problem facing the Lebanese government: a lack of funds. Attempts by the United States to define the extent of the LAF's needs have been frustrated by the understandable reluctance of the LAF's general headquarters to speak at all about a mission so politically sensitive in content—in terms of its being reliant on the Syrian–Israeli track of the peace process—as to make it virtually taboo in Lebanon.

But it is clear that the LAF faces a daily struggle to pay the troops and take care of their families. Benefits have been cut and still there are insufficient funds for weapons, equipment, and spare parts. For the LAF to perform effectively in southern Lebanon, "big ticket items"—tanks, heavy artillery, and fighter aircraft—are irrelevant. But mobility (helicopters and both tracked and wheeled vehicles), ammunition (for individual and light crew-served weapons), and sophisticated surveillance equipment (including night vision devices)—those categories more appropriate to a border patrol mission—will be in great demand. The LAF will probably make urgent requests for this equipment not only to the United States, but also to other NATO countries. Furthermore, the Lebanese Navy may seek additional patrol boats, having received seven from the United Kingdom.

The criteria usually applied to measure the combat effectiveness of an army—numbers of soldiers, quality of training, leadership, weaponry in the inventory, and so forth—are not necessarily crucial in trying to anticipate the performance of the LAF in the wake of an Israeli withdrawal. The question is really one of political will and intent more than combat capability. Although General Lahoud reformed the LAF and abolished sectar-

ian brigades, his army is still a fragile instrument, one which cannot be used to fight a civil war, least of all a war against the largest of Lebanon's confessions, the Shi'is. The LAF will perform best, ironically, under political conditions that would render its presence almost superfluous.

LIKELY SYRIAN–LEBANESE RESPONSES TO THREE WITHDRAWAL SCENARIOS

Although it is impossible to anticipate all contingencies, this section seeks, in admittedly general terms, to describe how Syria and Lebanon might respond to an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon under these different scenarios.

Scenario One: An Agreed-Upon Withdrawal

All of the principal state actors involved—Lebanon, Israel, and Syria—would prefer that the IDF's withdrawal from southern Lebanon take place under this scenario. From the standpoint of Syria and Lebanon, an Israeli withdrawal in the context of peace treaties would legitimize official Lebanese and Syrian measures—including the killing of recalcitrant elements—aimed at preventing people from crossing into Israel to do violence and from launching indirect fire attacks into Israel from Lebanon. Within the context of peace, the negative implications of Lebanese soldiers and policemen serving as "border guards" for Israel are eliminated, replaced by a willing acceptance of an obligation rooted in international law (and emphasized, most likely, in a treaty of peace) to preclude one's territory being used to mount violent operations against the people and property of a neighbor.

In its calls for the disarmament of Hizballah in connection with an agreed-upon withdrawal, Israel has articulated the concern that official Lebanese security elements may not have the requisite near-monopoly on deadly force. Yet, the Lebanese often see in this Israeli requirement a restatement of what they regard as the same old impossible demand: that the Lebanese government provoke and execute a civil war for the sake of securing Israeli lives and property. Indeed, Lebanon must do some careful political spadework to prepare for its security obligation, a requirement infinitely more important than upgrading the military capabilities of the LAF.

For the Lebanese government to feel secure about shooting and arresting those attempting to attack Israel, certain things must occur:

1. Lebanon must have the total backing of Syria.

The government will want all parties and factions in Lebanon to understand that any attempt to breach the Lebanese border with Israel will be seen by Damascus in the same light as an attempt to breach Syria's border with Israel. To the extent that elements in Iran might wish to encour-

age violations of the Lebanese–Israeli border, it would be Syria's responsibility to see to it that Iranian authorities preclude such activities. Lebanon may want, and Syria may insist upon, the presence of Syrian military officers and intelligence personnel with Lebanese security elements in the frontier zone.

2. Lebanon must have the total cooperation of Hizballah.

This will occur only if Hizballah voluntarily retires from militia and terror activities. The forced disarmament of Hizballah would be militarily difficult and politically perilous, with no guarantee whatsoever of success—even with full Syrian participation. Thus, encouraging the continued evolution of Hizballah as a local and parliamentary political party focused on the welfare of its Shi'i constituents in the South and in the Bekaa Valley is very much in the interest of Lebanon and ultimately of Israel. Accordingly, both parties should look for ways to encourage this outcome.

3. Lebanon must have relief on the Palestinian issue.

Some 200,000 of Lebanon's 350,000 Palestinian refugees remain in refugee camps. Nearly half of the camp dwellers reside in five ramshackle camps located around the southern towns of Sidon and Tyre. To leave this situation festering is to invite trouble, even if Syria and Hizballah are fully on board. Lebanon's young Palestinians provide a pool of potential terrorists for hire by anyone who might want to hit Israel, subvert the Lebanese government, embarrass Syria, or cause trouble for the sake of jeopardizing peace. The range of potential employers is limitless—Iranian operatives, Lebanese opposition elements, Palestinian rejectionists, and even mainline PLO officials upset, perhaps, that Syria and Lebanon made peace with Israel before they did. Demonstrating to Lebanon's Palestinians that their lives will, at long last, change for the better is essential. Ways and means toward that end must be addressed by Lebanon, Israel, and the rest of the international community.

4. Lebanon must have UN assistance.

The withdrawal of the IDF pursuant to an agreement with Syria and Lebanon may be carried out under the provisions of Security Council Resolution 425. UNIFIL's mission would be to confirm Israel's withdrawal, help restore international (cross-border) peace and assist the Lebanese government in restoring control over the South. Lebanon will likely see the deployment of UNIFIL to the border in two related contexts: (1) a political environment in which all Lebanese parties and factions are reminded that there is an international dimension and legitimacy attached to securing the border, one which imposes law-and-order responsibilities on the Lebanese government; and (2) a military context in which the LAF will welcome the presence of international peacekeepers who

can carry some of the security load, take some of the heat for the inevitable mistakes and misunderstandings, and perhaps add to the skills of Lebanese security forces. The timeframe for UNIFIL's mission and subsequent dissolution cannot be easily defined at present. Presumably, the parties and the Security Council will not be anxious to remove the force if they see it as a stabilizing and effective presence in the frontier zone.

5. Lebanon must have Israel's 'green light' to secure the South.

Demilitarization of the Golan may be a big part of the solution in the Syrian–Israeli context. But the lack of an official military presence in southern Lebanon—by virtue of Beirut's lack of interest in the region or the arms and personnel limitations of the 1949 armistice—was a significant part of the Lebanese–Israeli problem, and this scenario must not be repeated. Israel cannot successfully "have it both ways" in the South. It cannot preclude a very sizeable LAF presence (perhaps augmented by Syrians) on the grounds that such a presence would constitute a new conventional threat, and at the same time expect Lebanon and Syria to bring decisive force to bear against actual and potential border violators. It is in Israel's interest for its northern neighbors to have the means to do their duty—and to have no excuse for failing to do so.

A potential difficulty exists here regarding the timeframe of Israeli withdrawals from Lebanon and the Golan. If the Golan withdrawal were to occur over time in phases, would the withdrawal from Lebanon proceed in tandem? Might Israel make Lebanon's security performance both a test of Syrian intentions and a qualifier for further withdrawals from the Golan?

The ramifications of this issue are worthy of study by the parties. Assuming that Israel will prevail in a demand that its withdrawal from Lebanon occur prior to a withdrawal from the Golan, Syria will content itself with the belief that any Israeli attempt to renege on full Golan withdrawal would be deterred by the prospect of renewed violence on the Lebanon front, but with Israel no longer having the benefit of a buffer zone. Under these conditions—full Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon before the conclusion of formal peace between the parties—Israel will insist that Syria do everything within its power to quash any and all attempts to mount attacks on Israel from Lebanon. Indeed, the Israeli government might view Syria's performance in this regard as the most substantive form of confidence building imaginable in the run-up to an Israeli referendum. A quiet, uncodified modification of Israel's red line policy might, under these circumstances, permit Syrian officers to accompany Lebanese army and police units to the border area to supervise security arrangements whose implementation will redound, ultimately, to Syria's credit—or discredit.

If the full recovery of the Golan Heights remains a key Syrian objec-

tive, it stands to reason that Damascus will take its security-related re-
sponsibilities in southern Lebanon very seriously. Unless a sea change
occurs in the nature of the Syrian–Lebanese relationship, the ultimate
responsibility for securing the Lebanese side of the Israeli–Lebanese bor-
der will reside in Damascus, at least in the near term. If the final exclu-
sion of the IDF from the Lebanese arena and the confirmation of Syria's
long-term success in Lebanon were not enough to ensure Syria's perfor-
mance as the guarantor of a peaceful Lebanese–Israeli border, surely
the full recovery of the Golan would be a critical motivator.

But it remains to be seen whether motivation will always overcome
lapses in competence, the efforts of saboteurs, or even sharp differences
between the parties themselves, especially if Lebanon's Palestinian prob-
lem is allowed to fester. But if Israel and Syria have the will to settle the
Golan issue along with associated issues of normalization, they ought to
be able to move the Israeli–Lebanese frontier zone from the "front
burner" and off the stove altogether.

Scenario Two: Israeli Withdrawal with Tacit Agreements

This scenario would involve Israeli withdrawal with tacit understandings
about how security would be maintained in the South. These understand-
ings would center on UNIFIL taking on a greater role in the South but
would also involve some quiet diplomacy regarding post-withdrawal op-
tions for the LAF and Syria. The challenges posed by this scenario are
legion, and include the following two items.

The first is the potential Syrian loss of what it considers valuable le-
verage in return for the prospect of general war, should an atrocity oc-
cur in Israel. Robbed of the essentially painless luxury of seeing Israeli
soldiers die in Lebanon—deaths which have inspired a sizeable "quit
Lebanon now" constituency in Israel—Syria will fear that it may be blamed
by Israel for cross-border violence coming out of Lebanon.

The second is the prospect of Lebanon being forced to play a role
contrary to Syria's interests—or, if Lebanon wishes to play "hardball," its
potential loss of critical infrastructure in retaliation for attacks either on
departing IDF soldiers in the South or on Israel proper. The Lebanese
government would be very hard pressed to explain before the Security
Council its unwillingness to cooperate with a mission sanctioned by the
international community and enshrined in its own National Reconcilia-
tion (Taif) Accord. Yet, cooperation with UNIFIL in securing the border
could put the LAF at odds with Syria and Hizballah, leading the govern-
ment to choose international embarrassment over internal instability.
Should this be the option exercised, anti-Israeli violence in the South
could provoke Israeli attacks on Lebanese infrastructure. Herein, Leba-
non would truly be facing a "no-win situation."

The risks associated with this scenario are great, but disaster is by no

means assured. Syria may make a virtue of necessity, publicly claiming victory, assuring the United States of its full support for the UN and the Lebanese government, and lobbying for the immediate resumption of Syrian–Israeli peace talks. The government of Lebanon would then fear for its infrastructure, adhere to the Syrian line, and try to make the best of a bad situation.

As for UNIFIL, terms of reference and rules of engagement will be important in a scenario involving full but unilateral Israeli compliance with the letter and spirit and Resolution 425. Absent the full cooperation of the Lebanese government and security forces, UNIFIL will be reluctant to engage in combat operations and may limit its roles to observing and reporting incidents.

If LAF units are deployed to the South, they will likely parade through the evacuated areas and take up positions to the rear of UNIFIL, leaving the border guard function to UN forces. The most likely prospect is that there would be an extended "wait and see" period of relative quiet once Israel's withdrawal is completed. Yet, if it becomes clear that nothing is moving on the Syrian–Israeli track of the peace process, UNIFIL itself might become an occasional target of Syrian-inspired violence from the Lebanese side. In effect, such attacks would represent a policy of holding UNIFIL and the UN hostage to renewal of that track—a policy which could serve as an interim alternative to the very dangerous prospect of attacking Israel.

Scenario Three: An Uncoordinated Withdrawal
In this scenario, the IDF would attempt to leave Lebanon without the benefit of a security force replacing it on the Lebanese side of the boundary. A withdrawal of this nature could be attempted either after having failed to acquire UNIFIL's cooperation, or without having tried to coordinate with UNIFIL at all. In either case, the IDF would be crossing back into Israel, knowing that the security zone will be occupied by elements with which it has been engaged in fighting for several years.

Damascus will try to maximize the risks to Israel associated with an uncoordinated withdrawal while trying to avoid a devastating Israeli attack on Syrian military targets. In line with a conservative approach, Syria's most likely responses follow:

* Diplomatic pressure on the United States and the UN to forestall Israel's action and renew direct peace talks;
* Direction to Beirut to keep the LAF out of the South and away from the border until further notice; and
* Pressure on Hizballah (accompanied perhaps, by instructions to Palestinian rejectionist groups) to harass Israeli troops during the withdrawal, declare "perpetual resistance," and prepare—but not execute—cross-border operations.

For its part, Lebanon's most likely response would be to follow Syria's policy lead, coordinate very closely with Syria and Hizballah on the deployment of LAF units to the interior of the South, and avoid at all costs having the LAF closely identified with any cross-border operations. Indeed, it is unlikely that the LAF would deploy to the former security zone, leaving the "liberated area" in the hands of Hizballah with perhaps some ISF (police) presence until Israel makes a strategic decision for peace.

In this scenario, the actual location of the Israeli–Lebanese boundary may become an important issue in determining whether or not the mainstream elements of Hizballah would be willing to place their constituents at risk by perpetuating assaults on Israel. To the extent that the IDF maintains positions on militarily valuable topographical features located a few meters inside Lebanon, it may present Hizballah with a motive to continue the resistance and—in a manner pleasing to Syria—keep up the pressure by focusing not on Israeli population centers, but on IDF units still technically occupying Lebanese territory.

It is also possible that the "seven villages" issue might serve as a pretext for Hizballah harassment in the border area. In 1924, seven Shiʻi villages—located mainly in the Galilee "panhandle" near Metulla—were transferred from French administration to British Mandatory Palestine in accordance with the Anglo–French boundary agreement of the previous year. In 1948, the residents of these villages fled to Lebanon as refugees, where the majority wound up in the Burj el-Shemali camp near Tyre. The survivors of the 1948 uprooting and their descendants were granted Lebanese citizenship long ago, a privilege denied to virtually all other Palestinians, who are predominantly Sunni Muslim. The government of Lebanon has been simultaneously insisting on both the restoration of the 1923 boundary and the "return" of the long-since-disappeared seven villages. The two demands are mutually exclusive, but the issue has some political salience among the Shiʻis of southern Lebanon.

In the end, if all else fails, Syria can fall back on a "no war, no peace" scenario, one in which it seeks to test, in a gradually escalating manner, the limits of Israeli tolerance for harassment. But for Syria to do more in terms of violence, it will need collaborators—which it may well find. And unless it is led by a regime willing to countenance destruction, Damascus must be convinced that the Israeli public does not have the stomach to risk a broader war. One might expect, under these circumstances, that the Israeli government would be obliged to consider options ranging from the reestablishment of a security zone, to war with Syria.

But if the past is any guide to a likely future course of action, Israel's response to a deteriorating security situation during, or in the wake of, an uncoordinated withdrawal would fall most heavily on Lebanon. The policy of pounding the Lebanese landscape and infrastructure has been attractive to Israeli political and defense leaders in the past three de-

cades for political reasons. Leaders have wanted to be seen as responding to provocations—notwithstanding the lack of evidence that this policy actually prevented further attacks.

CONCLUSIONS

On March 5, 2000, Israeli government announced that the IDF "will deploy on the border with Lebanon by July 2000, and from there will secure the safety of the northern towns and villages." Between 1949 and 1967, Israel had the full cooperation of the Lebanese government in this endeavor, until the June 1967 War uncorked the genie of Palestinian resistance and led to the destruction of Lebanon itself. Whether Israel withdraws from Lebanon unilaterally or not, the "safety of the northern towns and villages" will require much more than the IDF standing guard along the border. Celebrations in Israel and Lebanon respectively over the joy of extrication from the Lebanese quagmire and the end of the occupation may be short lived indeed unless a way can be found to bind Israelis, Lebanese, Syrians, and Palestinians alike to the proposition that withdrawal from Lebanon is not a "tactic," but part of a comprehensive peace settlement.

NOTES

1. A text of which is found in Habib C. Malik, *Between Damascus and Jerusalem: Lebanon and Middle East Peace* (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1997), pp. 113–123.
2. Ibid., pp. 125–130.
3. Zeina Abu Rizk, "Israeli Border Will Get No Protection," *Daily Star* (Beirut), March 9, 2000, http://www.dailystar.com.
4. A summation of the view of various skeptical analysts may be found in Daniel Pipes, *Syria Beyond the Peace Process* (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1996), pp. 90–93.
5. Abu Rizk, "Israeli Border Will Get No Protection."
6. "Israel and Lebanon: Back to Bombs and Rockets," *Economist*, February 12, 2000, http://www.economist.com.
7. Interviews conducted by the author on September 3, 1999 in the offices of Armitage Associates, Arlington, Va. The interviews were conducted on a background basis with the identities of the interviewees to be held in confidence.
8. In an interview conducted by Antoine K. Kehdy in February 2000, Hizballah secretary general Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah claimed that, in the event of a peace treaty, Hizballah "will not exercise any security measures [in the South]. This is indisputable, because the region will be under the sovereignty of the Lebanese government." See Antoine K. Kehdy, "Peace Requires Departure of Palestinians," *Middle East Insight* (March–April 2000), p. 30.

cades for political reasons. Leaders have wanted to be seen as respond-
ing to provocations—notwithstanding the lack of evidence that this policy
actually prevented further attacks.

CONCLUSIONS

On March 5, 2000, Israeli government announced that the IDF "will de-
ploy on the border with Lebanon by July 2000, and from there will se-
cure the safety of the northern towns and villages." Between 1949 and
1967, Israel had the full cooperation of the Lebanese government in this
endeavor, until the June 1967 War uncorked the genie of Palestinian
resistance and led to the destruction of Lebanon itself. Whether Israel
withdraws from Lebanon unilaterally or not, the "safety of the northern
towns and villages" will require much more than the IDF standing guard
along the border. Celebrations in Israel and Lebanon respectively over
the joy of extrication from the Lebanese quagmire and the end of the
occupation may be short lived indeed unless a way can be found to bind
Israelis, Lebanese, Syrians, and Palestinians alike to the proposition that
withdrawal from Lebanon is not a "tactic," but part of a comprehensive
peace settlement.

NOTES

1. A text of which is found in Habib C. Malik, *Between Damascus and Jerusa-
   lem: Lebanon and Middle East Peace* (Washington: The Washington Institute
   for Near East Policy, 1997), pp. 113–123.
2. Ibid., pp. 125–130.
3. Zeina Abu Rizk, "Israeli Border Will Get No Protection," *Daily Star* (Beirut),
   March 9, 2000, http://www.dailystar.com.
4. A summation of the view of various skeptical analysts may be found in
   Daniel Pipes, *Syria Beyond the Peace Process* (Washington: The Washington
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5. Abu Rizk, "Israeli Border Will Get No Protection."
6. "Israel and Lebanon: Back to Bombs and Rockets," *Economist*, February
   12, 2000, http://www.economist.com.
7. Interviews conducted by the author on September 3, 1999 in the offices
   of Armitage Associates, Arlington, Va. The interviews were conducted on
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   secretary general Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah claimed that, in the event of a
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   South]. This is indisputable, because the region will be under the sover-
   eignty of the Lebanese government." See Antoine K. Kehdy, "Peace Re-
   quires Departure of Palestinians," *Middle East Insight* (March–April 2000),
   p. 30.

THE SOUTH LEBANON ARMY

The South Lebanon Army (SLA), a 2,500-man militia controlled, trained, and funded by Israel, has been Israel's devoted ally in southern Lebanon since the establishment of the security zone in 1985. SLA forces under the command of General Antoine Lahad have shouldered a major burden of the operational activity in the South: out of forty-five outposts in the security zone, only eight are occupied by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF); the rest are held by the SLA. The SLA's weapons (such as surplus T-55 tanks, 160-millimeter mortars, and towed cannons), though inferior to those employed by the IDF, have enabled the SLA to successfully break most of Hizballah's assaults and inflict many Hizballah casualties. Lahad's troops are exposed daily to both Hizballah and Amal attacks and since 1985 have suffered 420 killed and more than 1,300 wounded. This is a very high casualty rate considering that the total civilian population in southern Lebanon is less than 150,000 people; were the United States to suffer battle deaths at the same rate, it would lose 50,000 per year. If not for the SLA's assistance, Israel would have had to deploy many more troops in Lebanon and surely would have sustained more casualties.

As a reward for their loyalty, Israel allows SLA families to work in Israel and thus enjoy a high income by Lebanese standards. Israel also provides funding for civilian projects to improve the quality of life for the southern Lebanese population. Militarily, the IDF spares no effort in assisting SLA forces under attack, providing them with fire and air support. Despite the close relationship between the two forces, Lahad and his men are anxious about the possibility of an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. Their main concerns are that an Israeli withdrawal will cut them off from their source of income and leave them open to retaliation by both Hizballah and the Lebanese government. Many SLA members have been tried in absentia by Lebanese military tribunals on charges of treason, including Lahad, who was sentenced to death.

The rise of Prime Minister Ehud Barak's government, committed to an Israeli withdrawal by July 2000, means to SLA members that the demise of their organization is nearer than ever. Despite Barak's calming promise in his inauguration speech to "take all necessary measures to guarantee the future of the Lebanese security and civilian personnel who have worked alongside Israel over the years," SLA troops are not convinced that their longstanding loyalty to Israel will ultimately pay off. They are fully aware of the growing support in Israel for unilateral withdrawal if Syrian–Israeli negotiations fail to yield peace. Therefore, most SLA soldiers are occupied in one way

or another with preparations for such a contingency. Some desert, others obtain foreign passports, and the rest observe with growing interest the deliberations in the Lebanese parliament about granting them immunity if they agree to cross the lines prior to a future Israeli withdrawal. Reports in the Lebanese press about mass desertions and resignations of senior officers, including Lahad, have also had a detrimental effect on the fighting spirit of the SLA.

To make things worse, SLA troops have been subjected to an intensive propaganda campaign by Hizballah designed to lower their morale and bring about the SLA's dissolution. According to Israeli press reports, more than 50 percent of SLA members have a first-degree family relation in Hizballah, and these relations contribute to the pressure on SLA troops to change their allegiance.[1] Hizballah is also offering potential SLA deserters high salaries surpassing those provided by Israel.[2]

There is reason to suspect that some SLA members have already volunteered information that has assisted Hizballah in its operations against the IDF and the SLA.[3] In March 1999, while en route to visit SLA outposts, the commander of the IDF's liaison unit in Lebanon, Brig. Gen. Erez Gerstein, was killed by a Hizballah roadside bomb. Around the same time, Hizballah guerrillas wounded the SLA commander of the Jezzine enclave, a Christian town north of the security zone, and subsequently killed his replacement. Incidents like these raise suspicions that Hizballah employs informers in the ranks of the SLA, which creates tension between the SLA and the IDF.[4]

SLA members are likely to accept gratefully any settlement that will ensure their safety and economic welfare, but any Israeli pullout absent such provisions is likely to invoke feelings of betrayal and indignation in the ranks of the SLA. In an interview with Israel's Channel 2, Lahad urged Israel not to withdraw unilaterally from the South, stating that SLA troops are likely to turn their weapons against Israel and join Hizballah. "Others," he said, "will create a new anti-Israeli militia that will oblige Israel to come back to the region in force."[5] Threats like these are often taken lightly in Israel's defense establishment, but the possibility remains that those SLA members most concerned about their fate may cross the line and take extreme measures against Israel in an effort to secure their future in Lebanon; their familiarity with the region and their knowledge of IDF tactics and capabilities would make them an important asset for the anti-Israel guerrilla movements. Other SLA members would prefer to disengage from any form of military activity and adopt a more moderate lifestyle using the compensation received from Israel prior to its withdrawal, while only a small percentage of SLA members are likely to

accept Israel's offer of asylum and establish new lives for their families within Israel's borders.

The most problematic scenario for Israel is the possibility that demoralized SLA soldiers will abandon their positions throughout the security zone prior to an Israeli withdrawal. Such a situation would create a vacuum in the South that Hizballah would rapidly try to infiltrate. This would require the IDF to either increase the size of its deployment in Lebanon to compensate for the loss of the SLA or to restructure the security zone to better suit Israel's operational needs in the interim period (until full withdrawal is implemented).

Israel will try to avoid the above scenarios by convincing Lahad and his men that standing by Israel's side until a political settlement in Lebanon is finalized would be more rewarding than dropping out. This could be achieved by improving the fighting capabilities of the SLA as well as protecting SLA troops by reinforcing their outposts and armoring their vehicles. In addition, Israel may lower the anxiety of SLA soldiers by raising their salaries, offering them asylum in Israel, and promising to compensate them generously as a token of appreciation for their loyalty after the withdrawal takes place.

Notes

1. Ariela Ringel Hoffman, "Protect Me From My Friend," *Yediot Ahronot* Weekend Supplement, March 5, 1999, p. 4.
2. Arieh O'Sullivan and David Rudge, "Fighting Against Time," *Jerusalem Post,* July 31, 1998.
3. Yoav Limor, "It's Hard to Trust the SLA," *Ma'ariv* Weekend Supplement, March 26,1999, p. 22; Ringel Hoffman, "Protect Me From My Friend"; Ronen Bergman, "Fighting Blind," *Ha'aretz* Magazine, May 14, 1999.
4. Limor, "It's Hard to Trust the SLA."
5. Interview with Israel Television Channel 2, October 14, 1997. See also David Rudge, "Lahad: SLA Could Turn Against Israel," *Jerusalem Post,* October 14, 1997.

—Gal Luft

Securing Northern Israel Following an IDF Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon

By Gal Luft

For a small country like Israel, the cost of occupying southern Leba-
non has been significant. More than 850 soldiers in the Israel De-
fense Forces (IDF) have been killed since the summer of 1982, and more
than 3,800 have been wounded.[1] Financially, the occupation has been a
burden on Israel's defense budget. Apart from the cost of its daily opera-
tions in Lebanon, Israel has committed itself to fund both the South
Lebanon Army (SLA) with approximately $32 million per year, and civil-
ian projects for the population in the South with more than $10 million
per year.[2] But even with these costs, most Israelis once considered the
IDF's ongoing presence in Lebanon to be an imposed reality; any alter-
native, they thought, would be worse than the status quo. This consensus
lasted until March 1996, when negotiations between Israel and Syria
ended temporarily without a diplomatic breakthrough. Soon afterward,
with no sign of a Syrian–Israeli agreement on the horizon and a series of
military misfortunes in Lebanon—including a 1997 twin helicopter crash
in which seventy-three soldiers were killed—the support of the Israeli
public for the indefinite occupation of southern Lebanon began to erode
rapidly.

On April 1, 1998, the first sign of change in Israel's Lebanon policy
emerged. On the initiative of then–Israeli prime minister Binyamin
Netanyahu's government, the Ministerial Committee for National Secu-
rity announced that Israel was accepting United Nations (UN) Security
Council Resolution 425 and was willing to withdraw from the five- to ten-
mile-wide security zone, providing the Lebanese government would re-
store effective control over the relinquished territory (see Appendix E).
Although this initiative led nowhere, the notion of leaving Lebanon be-
came firmly embedded in the Israeli consciousness, gaining more sup-
port with each additional Israeli casualty.

The spring 1999 Israeli election campaign brought the Lebanese
imbroglio to the limelight. The three leading prime ministerial candi-
dates—Ehud Barak, Binyamin Netanyahu, and Yitzhak Mordechai—
pledged, each in his own way, to "bring the boys home." Barak, who

subsequently won, went even further, committing himself to a deadline of July 2000 for completing the withdrawal from Lebanon. Barak's deadline reflected his conviction that a comprehensive peace agreement with Syria, as the only possible guarantor of peace in Lebanon, could be drafted within several months, thereafter allowing an Israeli troop withdrawal to take place.[3] His view was based on the common wisdom that Syria is behind the violence in southern Lebanon and that the Lebanese regime is too feeble to enter into a separate agreement with Israel. This school of thought is widely accepted in Israel's security establishment and is based on the reality that Syria has had military and political control over Lebanon since the 1970s and that it provides assistance to anti-Israeli guerrilla groups operating from Lebanese territory. According to this view, therefore, an agreement with Lebanon would be part and parcel of an overall agreement with Syria.

Today, should a deal with Syria remain elusive, Israeli opponents of the withdrawal from Lebanon believe that Israel should maintain the status quo, regardless of the painful price, until a new opportunity for settlement arises.[4] In November 1999, the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University published a report entitled "Israel and South Lebanon: In the Absence of a Peace Treaty with Syria," by Brig. Gen. Shlomo Brom, former head of strategic planning in the Planning Branch of the IDF. The report strongly recommended Israel's continued occupation of the security zone until a peace treaty with Syria is signed. It also concluded that the IDF's vulnerability in Lebanon will be reduced following a unilateral withdrawal, but this will come at the expense of the civilians and towns in the North who will be more vulnerable. The opponents of withdrawal say that redeployment, independent of any diplomatic settlement, will only allow the guerrillas freedom of movement closer to the Israeli border, permitting them to pound northern Israel with artillery fire and commando raids. To be sure, for Israel's formidable military machine, such pin pricks do not constitute an existential threat, but they remain potentially painful for any Israeli government. Moreover, Syrian control over Lebanon could undermine Israel's overall strategic posture in the event of a confrontation with Syria and perhaps additional Arab states; Syria could assign the Lebanese front an important role if a combined Arab offensive against Israel were to take place.

In light of its concerns about such scenarios, much of the Israeli military establishment has been opposed to the idea of a unilateral withdrawal, believing the price of twenty to thirty soldiers killed per year is little compared to the consequences of putting the entire population of northern Israel at the mercy of Hizballah and its partners. Senior IDF commanders who have made public statements on the subject have vehemently opposed the idea of unilateral withdrawal, although some have embraced the idea of conducting an open discussion within the IDF about

the merits of the occupation of Lebanon.[5] Furthermore, the IDF Intelligence Branch has warned that a unilateral withdrawal could lead to an escalation that would end in a military confrontation with Syria.[6] IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz went as far as to define the idea as "an unreasonable risk verging on a gamble."[7]

But proponents of unilateral withdrawal perceive a totally different reality. The Movement for Safe Withdrawal from Lebanon, the founder and head of which is Justice Minister Yossi Beilin, has published a blueprint for withdrawal called "Back to Back." This report recommends a fast, though risky, evacuation of IDF troops from the security zone within the span of several weeks.[8] Proponents believe that, following an Israeli withdrawal, Hizballah will prefer to capitalize on its "victory" over Israel within the arena of Lebanon's domestic politics and will have no real interest in continuing its war against Israel. Furthermore, a unilateral withdrawal will weaken Syria's position in peace negotiations on the Golan because it will deny Syria its main leverage against Israel—the ability to draw Israeli blood in southern Lebanon.

With or without a Syrian agreement, Barak's government seems determined to fulfill its election pledge and end the occupation of Lebanon by July 2000. On December 24, 1999, Barak approved the IDF withdrawal proposal entitled "New Horizon." This plan, which assumes Israeli withdrawal arising from an agreement with Syria, provides for the fortification of Israel's northern border and will enable the IDF to complete all necessary preparations for withdrawal by July 2000. On March 10, 2000, the IDF submitted an alternative plan called "Morning Twilight," which assumes unilateral withdrawal without an agreement with Syria. This plan proposes the continuation of the IDF deployment in bases located inside a several-hundred-yard buffer zone north of the international border (the 1949 armistice line).

Yet, apart from providing security along the border, Israel will have to take precautions and implement measures to prevent southern Lebanon from reverting to its status prior to the Israeli invasion in 1982: a no-man's land and a safe haven for terrorist organizations from which attacks against Israel were launched. It is possible that Israel could unilaterally implement operational, organizational, doctrinal, and technological mechanisms that reduce the risk of continued aggression by anti-Israeli players in Lebanon after handing southern Lebanon to the Lebanese government. But other mechanisms—such as confidence- and security-building measures, verification, and coordination between the IDF and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF)—can be implemented only through mutual agreement between Israel and the governments of Lebanon and Syria. Without such an agreement, even the optimists doubt the IDF's ability to provide a full measure of security to the civilian population of northern Israel.

THE VULNERABILITY OF ISRAEL'S
NORTHERN CITIES AND VILLAGES

The Galilee, Israel's northern district, could have been one of the most promising regions in the country economically, if not for its proximity to the long-standing turmoil in neighboring Lebanon. With a scenic terrain, mild climate, fertile soil, heterogeneous population, and a large variety of tourist attractions, the region offers great potential for economic development. In fact, in the last decade, tourism has become the main source of income for many of the kibbutzim and communal villages of the Galilee. Hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, sporting facilities, and other services for rest and recreation have flooded the region, attracting thousands of Israeli and foreign travelers. Nevertheless, the tourist industry is quite vulnerable to changes in the security situation on the border area. Security incidents such as katyusha rocket attacks or cross-border terrorist incursions are major deterrents for potential visitors to the region. The mere siren of an ambulance delivering injured soldiers from the border to a nearby hospital or the sight of an army convoy rushing through Kiryat Shmona's main streets are disruptions to the region's serenity.

In a region where between 15 and 20 percent of the breadwinners are employed in trade- and tourism-related jobs, the consequences of instability on the Israeli–Lebanese border are grave. Often, after punitive IDF attacks against Hizballah, katyusha alerts force the residents of the North to spend days and nights in bomb shelters and security rooms. Unable to go to work or open their businesses, they also incur considerable financial losses. Vacationers who happen to be in the region abruptly shorten their stay, and the rate of hotel cancellations often approaches 100 percent. For this reason, industrialists and investors—despite generous financial incentives granted by all previous governments—are reluctant to place their capital in such a tumultuous environment.

Kiryat Shmona, a city of 24,000 people in the western Upper Galilee, offers a good example of the effect of security problems on the welfare and economic development of northern Israel. In the last thirty years, Kiryat Shmona has been hit by more than 4,000 katyusha rockets and suffered more than 380 civilian casualties. The city experienced a period of great hope at the beginning of the 1990s with the influx of thousands of immigrants from the former Soviet Union, but security problems brought economic stagnation, and many of the new immigrants found themselves unemployed and frustrated. In a survey commissioned by the municipality after a serious katyusha attack in June 1999, one out of every four residents of the city indicated their readiness to relocate in order to distance themselves from the perils of living in the North.[9]

No less threatening to the sense of personal security experienced by Israel's northern population is the fear of terrorist activity. Although more

than ten years have passed since the last successful terrorist infiltration from Lebanon into Israel, residents still live with the traumatic memory of the murderous attacks that took place in the 1970s and 1980s. Naturally, the twenty villages located within two miles of the border are the most susceptible to terrorist border crossings, though the IDF presence in the security zone has significantly reduced the anxiety of residents there. With the possibility of a future IDF redeployment to the Israeli side of the international border, however, in addition to the uncertainty regarding Hizballah's next course of action, these residents are likely to be more vulnerable physically as well as psychologically.

THREATS AND CHALLENGES
Following its withdrawal from southern Lebanon, Israel could face a wide array of threats and challenges. In addition to the immediate threat of terrorist activity, the IDF's primary concern is the significant reduction in Israel's ability to conduct counter-guerrilla operations against Lebanese militias. Some senior IDF commanders have expressed doubts about Israel's ability to provide the maximum level of personal security to the civilians of the Galilee if the IDF deploys along the international border. Their main argument is that during the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, the IDF failed to prevent Hizballah both from launching rockets at the Galilee and from operating in proximity to the border; with the elimination of the security zone, Hizballah would be able to conduct these operations more easily.

Conventional warfare against Lebanon and Syria is a scenario about which the IDF has been less explicit, but the fact that such scenario was the focus of the January 2000 annual IDF war game shows that, despite the ongoing peace process with Syria, the IDF still has not excluded the possibility of such a development. Although there is a consensus among defense analysts about the weakness of the LAF, a sharp dispute has emerged regarding Syria's present capability to wage war against Israel.

The Reduction of Israel's Intelligence Capabilities in Lebanon
Nothing is more essential to an effective counter-guerrilla operation than accurate, detailed, continuous, and timely intelligence. Inside information about the structure, organization, leadership, tactics, and operational capabilities of a guerrilla organization is the raw material for planning and executing successful operations against it. The quest for inside information is extremely complicated and sensitive; it involves recruiting informers and agents and planting them as deep as possible inside the organization's command echelon. Additional valuable information can be gleaned from signals intelligence (SIGINT) units specializing in wiretapping and intercepting hostile communications. Observation and surveillance of the environment in which the guerrillas conduct their training

and daily activities also provide crucial information.

Hizballah is one of the most secretive and complex guerrilla movements in existence. But the discreet makeup and small size of its military arm, the Islamic Resistance (IR), makes penetration of its ranks difficult (for more on the IR, see Steven Hecker's chapter, "Hizballah's Response"). The assassination of Hizballah leader Abas Musawi in an Israeli missile attack in February 1992 was a traumatic event that led to a change in Hizballah's organizational behavior. Its military commanders became extremely cautious, leaving few traces of their whereabouts; restricting information about operational planning to small groups of confidants; and recruiting new members more selectively. Hizballah squads now maintain strict radio silence, which prevents Israel from monitoring their actions. Furthermore, to prevent Israeli wiretapping, the Iranian Ministry of Communications has provided Hizballah with two internal telephone exchanges to serve its headquarters in Beirut and Jibshit.[10]

For these reasons, the IDF's counter-guerrilla war against Hizballah is a challenging endeavor. But despite the difficulties, Israel's intelligence services have been successful in detecting Hizballah's main training bases, headquarters, and logistics. In some cases, early warning of Hizballah attacks supplied by the Intelligence Branch enabled IDF and SLA forces to preempt and repel the attackers; in others, information about guerrilla whereabouts allowed for the planning and execution of counter-guerrilla operations.

How does Israel maintain such an up-to-date intelligence picture? In 1989, a decision was made to improve Israel's intelligence work in Lebanon by setting up an intelligence service within the SLA called Mabat (an abbreviation of *mangenon habitachon*, or "security apparatus").[11] Mabat has become a prolific intelligence apparatus that works directly under the supervision of the Israeli General Security Service (GSS).[12] One of its activities has been to identify and recruit Lebanese civilians to serve as informers and gather valuable information about Hizballah. The July 1999 report by Human Rights Watch on human rights violations against Lebanese civilians in the security zone shed some light on intelligence activities there. The report claimed that "GSS and Mabat monitored and harassed civilian residents of the occupied zone, summoned them for interrogation, pressed them to serve as informers and carried out expulsions."[13] If true, this would illustrate the strong grip Israel and the SLA exercise over the civilian population of southern Lebanon and its utilization as a source of intelligence.

A withdrawal from the security zone will greatly reduce Israel's intelligence gathering capabilities. First, it will lead to the dissolution of the SLA and deny Israel its most valuable source of information in Lebanon. SLA intelligence agents, bitter about Israel's "betrayal," will likely be reluctant to continue their cooperation with Israel. To protect themselves, some

may cross the lines and cooperate with the Lebanese intelligence services, with Hizballah, or with any other non-Israeli player. Even if Israel does succeed in recruiting several former SLA agents—possibly in return for generous sums of money—their reliability will be questionable.

A good predictor of what could happen in Lebanon following an Israeli withdrawal may be seen in Israel's experience withdrawing from territories in the West Bank and Gaza. Before the withdrawal, the presence of Israeli security services on the ground there had provided a continuous inflow of intelligence that proved invaluable in the war against terrorism. But the redeployment of IDF troops narrowed the territory in which the IDF and the GSS were allowed to operate. Over time, most of the Palestinian collaborators who worked with Israel through the years of the occupation began to switch their loyalties to avoid reprisals. Thus detached from their traditional sources of information, the Israeli security services, according to former GSS chief Yaakov Perry, became dependent on the cooperation and goodwill of the Palestinian Security Services.[14]

Cross-Border Incursions

The decade prior to Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon is remembered as a horrific period in the lives of many residents of the Galilee. It started in May 1970 with a brutal attack by Palestinian terrorists that crossed the Lebanese border on an Israeli school bus, killing twelve children from Moshav Avivim. Two more bloody cross-border incidents in 1974 shocked Israelis even further when Palestinian terrorists killed eighteen people in Kiryat Shmona, then murdered twenty-one school children in Ma'alot. No less traumatic was the drama of the hostage taking in the nursery of Kibbutz Misgav Am in July 1980. These events and others exposed the vulnerability of the border cities and villages to cross-border infiltration and were the main triggers for the decision by the Israeli government to establish the security zone.

The zone has proven to be a success in preventing infiltration. Guerrillas prefer to operate at night and in bad weather, when poor visibility reduces the chances of being seen. But the IDF has worked indefatigably to counter the guerrillas by sending night patrols, laying ambushes, mining prospective passage points, and illuminating the night with flares. IDF and SLA troops in the security zone are positioned on outposts, hilltops, and vantage points overlooking creeks and trails where guerrillas are likely to move. Surveillance equipment based on thermal imaging technology installed in security zone outposts and tanks provides the troops with clear, all-weather night vision. When suspicious looking objects are detected, anti-personnel tank munitions can be fired with great precision up to a range of two miles, leaving only a slight chance of survival for the targets.

Since the establishment of the security zone in 1985, only nine guerrilla squads have succeeded in reaching the border; of those nine, two were successful in crossing. The first instance occurred in November 1987 when two hang gliders operated by terrorists from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command (PFLP–GC) flew over the border, landed near a military base, killed six soldiers, and wounded ten. A year later in a second attempt, three terrorists en route to Kibbutz Dan were killed by IDF forces before reaching their target. Indeed, the deployment of the IDF in the security zone has posed a great challenge to terrorist groups planning to attack Israeli targets, in that their motivation was significantly reduced once they saw that all of their attack squads were eradicated long before they reached the border. The Oslo peace process also helped to reduce the threat of infiltration; pro-Oslo Palestinian organizations like Fatah ceased all military operations against Israel upon the signing of the accords and did not attempt to cross the border again.

For its part, Hizballah's attitude toward infiltration into Israel has been enigmatic. Despite its hostile approach toward Israel and its support of terrorist attacks carried out in Israel by the Palestinian groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad, Hizballah has never been involved in any attempt to cross the border. This does not mean that the organization lacks the capability of doing so; on the contrary, Hizballah guerrillas have penetrated the security zone and ambushed IDF troops only a short distance from the fence. One example occurred in October 1997, when a Hizballah squad reached the village of Hule, one half-mile from the border, and attacked an IDF convoy, killing two soldiers. On several occasions, Hizballah squads have also reached the border and planted explosive devices near the fence. The bombs, activated by remote control, exploded near military vehicles that were carrying soldiers to their outposts. It is possible that Hizballah has made these efforts to signal its intentions to continue the struggle against Israel after the withdrawal and to demonstrate its capability to reach—maybe even cross—the Israeli border. How loyal Hizballah will be to its noninfiltration strategy when the IDF is out of Lebanon is a subject for speculation, but the fact that the guerrillas have proven their ability to overcome a wide array of obstacles in the security zone should indicate that, without an Israeli presence there, the IDF will need to strengthen its defense deployment significantly along Israel's side of the border.

In sum, a murderous attack in the style of the "terrorist spectacular" of the 1970s would have a devastating effect on the morale of Israeli residents in the North. It would be a realization of the Israelis' greatest fear: that their personal security had regressed to the reality of the pre-1982 period and that the heavy price paid by Israel during the years of the occupation of southern Lebanon had been in vain.

The Katyusha Risk Factor and Difficulties Avoiding It

Despite the IDF's tactical and technological sophistication in its operations in southern Lebanon, it has been unable to produce an absolute remedy to one of the most frustrating military threats: katyusha attacks.[15] In the struggle between twenty-first-century technologies and a primitive World War II weapon, the latter has often prevailed. The best example took place in April 1996, when Hizballah's provocations had become intolerable and Israel launched Operation Grapes of Wrath, a sixteen-day campaign against Hizballah with the objective of terminating the organization's katyusha-launching capabilities. IDF artillery fired 20,000 shells while the Israeli air force launched thousands of sorties; unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and other state-of-the-art intelligence gathering systems were employed, but all of these technologies combined were not sufficient to prevent Hizballah from launching almost 700 rockets at the Galilee, damaging and in some cases destroying more than 1,500 buildings in the process. Months after the operation, the commander of the IDF's Northern Command, Maj. Gen. Amiram Levine, conceded that "ending the katyusha attacks is an impossible mission."[16] Indeed, despite the attacks on Hizballah's infrastructure and the understanding achieved after Grapes of Wrath, the organization has continued to bombard Israel with katyushas in dozens of subsequent incidents.

"Katyusha" is the generic name for a family of 107 (millimeter) mm and 122mm rockets with a top range of 12.7 miles and a warhead loaded with up to forty-one pounds of explosives. The 122mm BM-21 round is normally launched from a truck-mounted BM-21 launcher, which can deliver up to forty rockets within a few seconds. The katyusha is a rocket (i.e., it is unguided), and therefore lacks pin-point accuracy. Like all free-flight projectiles, the rocket is subject to the influence of winds, and its accuracy decreases as the range increases. For this reason, attacking large targets like the cities of Kiryat Shmona, Nahariya, or Ma'alot ensures a higher probability of causing damage than does attacking small villages or outposts. Therefore most of Hizballah's katyushas are aimed at these cities. As trucks are relatively easy to spot from the air, Hizballah guerrillas often improvise crude wood launchers, position them next to a road, and launch individual projectiles by means of timers so there is no one standing near the source of fire during the launch.

Aware of the IDF's target-acquisition technology, which enables high-speed and accurate detection of launch sites, Hizballah guerrillas also use "shoot and scoot" tactics, making the hunt for the launchers by Israeli pilots highly challenging. Because of the topography of southern Lebanon, however, Hizballah guerrillas are unable to position forward observers to look into Israeli territory and adjust their fire. As a result, scores of rockets fall in open, uninhabited areas causing minimal damage. An Israeli withdrawal from the security zone would change this situ-

ation; it would allow Hizballah to improve its fire accuracy by position-
ing forward observers in vantage points along the border.

In short, continuous aggression against Israel by Hizballah following a
withdrawal from southern Lebanon would intensify the problem of accu-
rate katyusha attacks, because perpetrators would have easier access to
launch sites closer to the borderline. This would provide Hizballah with a
wider variety of targets in northern Israel and improve the accuracy of fire
as the range would be considerably reduced.

The facing map shows the locations of the main launch sites used by
Hizballah and PFLP–GC since 1996. A close examination reveals that all
of the katyusha attacks were carried out from positions outside the secu-
rity zone, a fact that emphasizes the effectiveness of the security zone doc-
trine. At almost no point were the guerrillas able to launch rockets at a
range shorter than 7.5 miles (out of the maximum range of 12.7 miles for
the BM-21 round), and this could explain the lack of precision in so many
attacks (see map, next page). Zone A on the map shows Israeli territory in
range of katyushas prior to the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. Out of a
total of eighty-one localities with a total population of 200,000, eight cities
and villages in Zone A are inhabited by more than 5,000 residents. The
largest cities in this category are Kiryat Shmona (24,000 residents), Nahariya
(35,000 residents), and Ma'alot (35,000 residents). The majority of the
civilian targets in Zone A are agricultural collectives and Arab villages with
an average population size of 700–1,000 residents each. Because of their
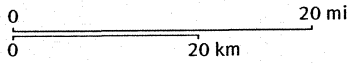small size, these population centers are more difficult to target.

Zone B on the map represents the additional territory that would be
within range of the katyushas should Israel pull out of Lebanon and
Lebanese guerrillas seize launch positions adjacent to the international
border. Under this scenario, sixty-four additional localities with a total
population of approximately 150,000 would become potential victims of
rocket attacks. Ten residential areas in Zone B are inhabited by more
than 5,000 people; the largest is Safed, with 23,000 residents.

Despite the grave implications that rocket attacks have on the wel-
fare, economy, and morale of Israel's northern residents, the Israeli de-
fense establishment has never treated the katyusha threat with the same
awe and seriousness as it did the Iraqi Scud missile attacks launched on
Israel in the 1991 Gulf War. This disparity in threat perceptions deserves
investigation in light of the fact that a volley of katyushas is capable of
delivering explosive material equivalent to four al-Hussein Scud missiles,
like those launched at Israel during the Gulf War. In fact, kaytushas are
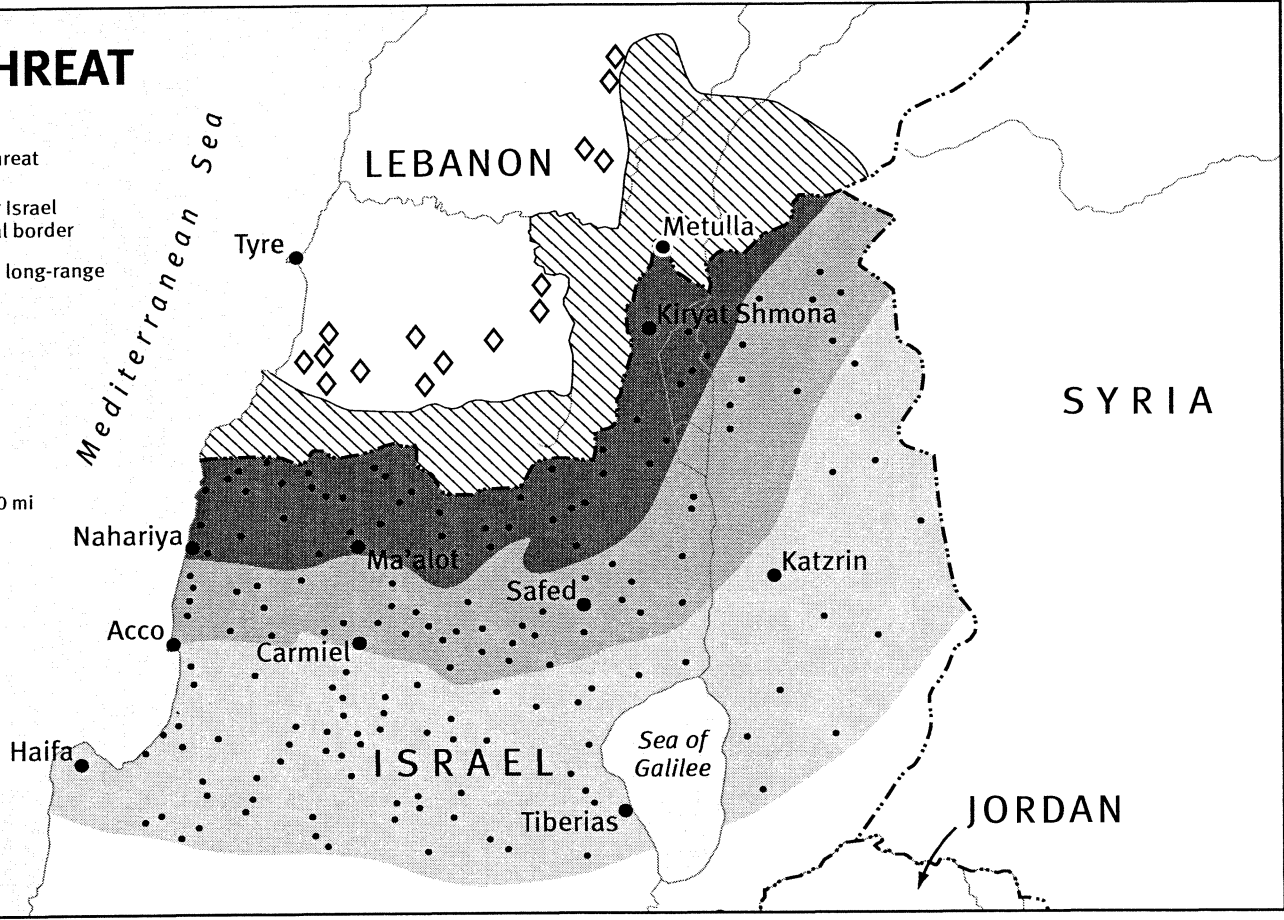more precise.

Two explanations can be offered concerning the disparity of threat
perception. First, short- and intermediate-range, surface-to-surface mis-
siles, such as the Scud and the al-Hussein, are capable of carrying chemi-
cal and biological warheads and can inflict massive destruction in terms of

KATYUSHA THREAT

Area A: Currently under threat

Area B: Under threat after Israel withdraws to international border

Area C: Under threat from long-range katyusha rockets

Security Zone

◇ Rocket launch site

● Cities

• Villages

0 _____ 20 mi

0 _____ 20 km

Map: D. Swanson/Equator Graphics, Inc.

N

Mediterranean Sea

LEBANON

Tyre

Metulla

Kiryat Shmona

SYRIA

Nahariya

Ma'alot

Safed

Katzrin

Acco

Carmiel

Haifa

ISRAEL

Sea of Galilee

Tiberias

JORDAN

human life. The rockets in possession of the guerrillas are armed only with conventional explosives, limiting their potential damage. Second, the al-Hussein missiles were aimed and launched at Israel's largest population centers and their suburbs in Tel Aviv and Haifa, where Israel's economic and industrial complexes are located. Whereas katyusha attacks have threatened only 3 percent of Israel's population of 6 million so far, the Iraqi attacks threatened and demoralized the entire population of Israel. The al-Hussein missile is, therefore, a strategic threat, while katyushas are merely a "strategic nuisance."

Nevertheless, the above perception could be changed by the introduction of two developments in the field of rocket weaponry. First, 122mm rockets armed with chemical warheads have been developed and are being produced by Arab countries like Syria and Iraq. If acquired by Hizballah, these weapons could be installed and launched by the organization's own personnel, thus affording a non-conventional capability. The second development may be the introduction of the Iranian-developed Fajr-3, a 240mm rocket with an extended range of up to twenty-five miles. According to some reports, Hizballah has already been supplied with scores of these long-range rockets, airlifted from Iran through the Damascus airport.[17]

The deployment of long-range rockets is likely to transform the nature of the katyusha threat. By doubling its reach, Hizballah in Lebanon will be able to add to the "katyusha club" 107 additional Israeli cities and villages. The total population of Zone C (see map) is almost 950,000 people, including the city of Haifa and its suburbs. Upgraded rockets could, therefore, raise the percentage of Israelis exposed to risk to almost 15 percent of the total population, constituting an indisputable strategic threat. But the danger to Israel's population is not the only concern. The Gulf of Haifa is Israel's biggest industrial complex, housing Israel's steel and petrochemical industries, oil refineries, Israel's largest harbor, Haifa airport, and many other strategic and economic targets. Any attempt to disrupt the economic activity of the region would be unbearable, perceived by Israel as a serious escalation likely to invite harsh countermeasures.

Katyusha rockets are not the only artillery weapons used by Hizballah. Other equipment in the organization's arsenal includes mortars of different sizes and light towed canons. In the mountainous terrain of Lebanon, mortars are very effective weapons. Their high trajectory enables them to overcome topographic obstacles and hit their targets with great accuracy. Because of their relatively short range (five to six miles), however, they have been used mainly against IDF and SLA forces in the security zone. Should Hizballah gain access to the border region, it could put these pieces into action against Israeli targets south of the border, significantly increasing the overall number of artillery pieces capable of firing into Israel.

Cross-Border Direct Fire

The Israeli–Lebanese border runs through terrain that favors the Lebanese side. In the event of a redeployment, this will allow Lebanese guerrilla squads to occupy positions overlooking the patrol road on the Israeli side and ambush Israeli forces on routine missions. IDF troops will be vulnerable to cross-border fire from light weapons, short-range RPG-7 rocket-propelled grenade launchers, medium-range anti-tank guided missiles like the AT-3 Sagger, the more sophisticated AT-4 Spigot missile, and the U.S.-made tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided (TOW) missile.[18] During the years of occupation, Hizballah gained proficiency in attacking Israeli tanks and convoys in the security zone by using anti-tank guided missiles from a distance of one to two miles. In some cases, state-of-the-art tanks like Merkava II-B and Merkava III were severely damaged by Hizballah's accurate fire. These hit-and-run and sniper operations generally take their targets by surprise; with almost no time to respond, defending against such an assault proves difficult. The duration of these attacks is usually quite short, from seconds to a few minutes, so the victims often fail to detect the source of fire precisely. Along much of the borderline, IDF patrols have no cover from nearby outposts, and valuable time elapses between an attack and the arrival of reinforcements and rescue forces. Cross-border direct fire attacks are easy to plan and execute—they require small teams, portable weapons, and little intelligence—and the likelihood of inflicting Israeli casualties has made them popular for guerrilla groups active along Israel's borders.

Cooperation with Palestinian Terrorist Organizations and Involvement in International Terrorism

The above scenarios describe the means by which Hizballah and Palestinian opposition groups could attack Israel across the Lebanese–Israeli border. Each of these forms of aggression require that Hizballah be allowed freedom of action and movement in southern Lebanon, as well as access to the border, by the Lebanese and Syrian governments.

But guerrilla movements determined to attack Israel after an IDF withdrawal from Lebanon will not necessarily have to initiate their attacks from Lebanon, and these organizations may not concentrate their military operations specifically against northern Israel. On the contrary, the entire state of Israel could become a target, and Israeli and Jewish targets overseas might also be hit.

Hamas has expanded its activities in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, in effect founding a new political Islamic body to strengthen Islamic activity among Palestinians there (see Nicole Brackman's chapter). Unlike most of the Palestinian rejectionist groups operating in Lebanon under Syrian patronage, Hamas is independent of Damascus's support, and there are consequently fewer limitations on its activity.

Should Hamas be unable to initiate attacks on Israel from the West Bank and Gaza because of security cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA), it is possible that Lebanon might be used to stage attacks on Israel or Israeli interests overseas.

For its part, Hizballah has undertaken terror attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets outside of Israel; it is suspected of having carried out the bombings of the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires in March 1992 and of the Jewish community center there in July 1994. These, however, are considered rather exceptional events. Hizballah has generally limited its activities to Lebanon, and Hizballah chairman Hassan Nasrallah has promised in   interviews that the organization has no interest in targets abroad. But with cells in Europe and Africa as well as in North and South America, and in light of new developments in the Middle East, Hizballah could be tempted once again to execute terrorist attacks internationally.[19]

Conventional Threats

The above possibilities, disturbing as they may be, share one thing in common: they are all local, low-intensity threats, by no means a threat to Israel's *national* security. Deadly terror attacks enrage citizens, deflate national morale, create a sense of insecurity, and sometimes invite harsh countermeasures. They cannot, however, upset Israel's strategic posture vis-à-vis its neighbors in the Middle East, nor can they change major political trends in the region. But unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon combined with a failure to reach a peace agreement with Syria and Lebanon could also, according to the assessment of the IDF Intelligence Branch, bring about Syrian-sponsored anti-Israeli aggression that might end up in a major clash between Israel and Syria.[20] If such escalation occurs, war could break out, and Israel could face a degree of adversity it has not faced since 1973, involving simultaneous attacks on the Golan and from the Bekaa Valley. In a more distant scenario, the collapse of an Israeli–Syrian peace agreement in which Israel has relinquished the Golan could confront Israel with a three-pronged attack by Syrian forces descending from the Golan westward, Lebanese forces attacking Israeli targets in the Galilee, and forces based in the PA wreaking havoc along the roads leading from central Israel to the North.

This scenario has been presented and discussed in several works that have foreseen the Syrian army as the pivot in a campaign wherein other neighboring Arab states would carry out attacks supporting the main Syrian aggression against Israel.[21] There is a sharp dispute among military analysts concerning the time period required for Syria and its potential allies to prepare such an offensive and as to how much advanced warning Israel can expect to receive from the surveillance systems stationed in the Golan. Pessimists talk about twenty-four hours warning, assuming that Syria could move two to three mechanized divisions over-

night into a demilitarized Golan. Optimists, on the other hand, believe that early signs of an offensive could appear as early as a few days in advance, allowing Israel to mobilize its reserve units and perhaps launch a preemptive strike.

The role of the LAF in a Syrian-led coalition would be secondary, though significant. It is widely accepted that the limited size and capability of the Lebanese army, even after a major modernization process, will not allow Lebanon to open an independent front against Israel; therefore, most military experts view the LAF as a player in a wider Syrian-led coalition. One scenario is that Syria and Lebanon could launch a joint diversionary action from the Bekaa Valley toward the Israeli border; Syria would send one or two mechanized divisions on a flanking movement, assisted by Lebanese fire support. Such a maneuver could force the IDF to devote valuable ground and air assets to stopping the attack instead of sending these forces to confront the main attack from the Golan. Nevertheless, the chances of success for an offensive via Lebanon are slim. The terrain in southern Lebanon provides tactical opportunities for the defender. Movement of heavy formations is confined to narrow corridors running between mountain ranges where the attacker enjoys no space to maneuver. Israeli ground-launched precision-guided weapons and air-launched missiles would be able to annihilate many Syrian and Lebanese targets en route to the border, thus blocking the narrow corridors and disrupting the offensive in its early stages. Narrow bridges on the Litani and Hasbani Rivers pose another problem for the attacking forces in Lebanon. Israeli aircraft could easily destroy these bridges early on, making it difficult for any of the forces to reach the vicinity of the Israeli border.

Forces in Lebanon would be best utilized to attrite and suppress Israeli targets by means of heavy artillery bombardments. The effect of Lebanese artillery attacks on the North could be detrimental to the mobilization and organization of Israeli forces. Among the targets in Israel's Zone B that are likely to be bombed are emergency armories, in which mobilized reserve formations are dispatched to the front; command posts (the Northern Command headquarters in Safed, for example); arming and refueling points; supply depots; and important road junctions. Silencing Lebanese fire would be difficult, and judging from the unsuccessful Israeli attempt to silence a handful of Hizballah rocket launchers during Operation Grapes of Wrath, the Lebanese army could provide effective support in a Syrian military campaign if utilized effectively—despite the LAF's weaknesses.

RESPONSES AND SOLUTIONS

It is impossible to predict whether Israel will ultimately remove its forces from Lebanon unilaterally, as part of an explicit agreement, or in accordance with some tacit understandings. But security arrangements of various kinds, as well as operational measures and technological innovations

to improve Israel's defenses along the border, will have to be implemented under any contingency.

Security Arrangements for Peacetime

Israel shares a common border with four Arab states—Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon—and with a state-in-the-making in the West Bank and Gaza. With the exception of Lebanon, all the security arrangements between Israel and its neighbors as part of an armistice, ceasefire, or peace agreement have yielded a relatively high level of border security. It is, therefore, worth studying the advantages and shortcomings of each security system to identify the most advantageous regime for the Israeli–Lebanese case.

The security arrangements adopted by Israel and each of its Arab neighbors are not uniform. Each arrangement was carefully drawn to suit the topography of the border area, the perception of threat, and the level of trust and cooperation between the sides. In the case of Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinian areas, security arrangements allow for direct coordination between the neighboring armed forces whenever security incidents occur. This has proven to be an effective safety valve helping to reduce unwanted tension, but the model cannot be applied to the Lebanese case. For instance, nature itself has provided effective physical barriers between Israel, Jordan, and Egypt: the Jordan River valley on Israel's east and an extensive obstacle of sand dunes along its southern border with Egypt have provided Israel with defensible security borders that take relatively little effort to maintain. The same cannot be said about the Israeli–Lebanese border, which lacks such distinct natural barriers. In addition, though this borderline is the shortest of all those that Israel shares with her neighbors, it is also more heavily populated than any of the other border areas.

1. Demilitarization

In the absence of natural barriers, demilitarized zones have proven to be highly effective mechanisms to reduce the sense of threat experienced by either side. Precedents of demilitarization in the Arab–Israeli context can be found, for example, in the Israeli–Egyptian peace treaty as it pertains to the Sinai Peninsula. But the more applicable case of a demilitarization regime in an environment lacking natural obstacles is the 1974 Syrian–Israeli Disengagement Agreement. Despite the absence of a peace agreement, Israel and Syria reached a modus vivendi through an agreement that provided for a demilitarized buffer zone one- to five-miles wide between the two countries, as well as force limitation zones to the east and west of the demilitarized area.

In the case of a peace deal between Israel and Lebanon, demilitarization is an undesirable option. It is unlikely that the Lebanese govern-

ment will agree to relinquish its right to assert sovereignty in the South and deploy its military forces there; and from Israel's point of view, leaving the security zone unattended by a proper military force would be unsafe. Complete demilitarization of the South would create a vacuum likely to be filled by hostile guerrilla groups, and denying the Lebanese military access to the border would be counterproductive to efforts to establish security cooperation on the operational level between the two sides—cooperation that would be crucial to the security of Israel's northern population. Therefore, a demilitarized buffer zone in southern Lebanon would not necessarily be an effective means of enhancing peace and security.

Force limitation zones, on the other hand, could be far more effective. In a more peaceful environment, the IDF's primary objective would be to protect the civilian population along the border. This kind of operation would mainly require infantry forces armed with light weapons, three to four artillery batteries mainly for firing flares, anti-aircraft artillery to prevent air infiltration, and target acquisition radar systems to detect sources of artillery fire in southern Lebanon. Heavy weapons such as tanks, multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS), and heavy engineering equipment would not be required for the purposes of daily security; their deployment in bases along the border would also be unnecessary in this scenario and would likely be perceived as offensive—and thus potentially detrimental to nascent relations between the two sides.

2. Verification

No limitation on armaments can be effective without a strict verification regime. To accomplish this, a peacekeeping force will have to be deployed in the region south of the Litani River with a mission to observe, verify, and report on the implementation of the agreement. Since peacekeeping has become the domain of the UN, it is likely that the role of peacekeeping in southern Lebanon will continue to be fulfilled by the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which has been deployed there since 1978. A non-UN peacekeeping body similar to the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in Sinai—a mission of ten states established in 1979 as part of the Israeli–Egyptian Peace Treaty—is also possible though unlikely.

In its present size and shape, UNIFIL's effectiveness is likely to be reduced even further upon a unilateral Israeli withdrawal. But in the context of an Israeli peace agreement with Lebanon, UNIFIL could be assigned a new, permanent mandate—unlike the six-month renewable mandate under which it currently operates—which would put more emphasis on verification rather than on the restoration of peace and security. The positive experience of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), which has instilled a degree of mutual confidence between

Israel and Syria in the Golan Heights, proves that UN forces can perform more complex verification missions than are required in southern Lebanon. Like UNDOF, UNIFIL could also potentially facilitate dialogue between the IDF and the LAF in the first few years of an agreement, until such mediation becomes unnecessary.

In his book *A Guide to an Israeli Withdrawal from Lebanon,* Yossi Beilin presents a blueprint for the reconstruction of UNIFIL and its conversion to a formidable fighting force with a broad mandate to use weapons against armed forces in Lebanon (not including the LAF). The plan would require an increase in UNIFIL personnel from 5,000 to 9,000 UN peacekeepers deployed in nine battalions (as opposed to six under the present mandate), and supplied with superior weapons. Such a plan is unrealistic considering the huge expense involved and the heavy burden that fifteen peacekeeping missions worldwide already impose on the UN. As it is, the UN is overextended, and any attempt to expand UNIFIL's mission in Lebanon will lead to additional casualties.

3. Military-to-Military Relations

Even the most effective security measures can occasionally be defeated by the determined individuals who wish to sabotage relations between the parties. The Egyptian border, for example, proved to be penetrable in March 1988 when three Palestinian terrorists crossed it to hijack a military vehicle and later a bus carrying employees of the Dimona nuclear reactor. Naturally, the Israeli–Lebanese border will not be immune to such attempts, and the two sides must assume that incidents will occur. The durability of Israeli–Lebanese relations will be put to the test whenever blood is drawn along the border, however, and the two sides must build a mechanism to handle such misfortunes. Personal acquaintance between the men on either side of the fence has proven to be a mitigating factor during times of tension. But experience shows that military-to-military relations, especially on the operational level, must be cultivated on a routine basis to include joint exercises, tours, social visits, and a reasonable level of transparency. These kinds of relations can also be institutionalized by means of qualified liaison officers, hotlines, and mutually approved contingency plans, printed and distributed to the forces on the ground.

An Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon followed by the deployment of the LAF on the international border will saddle the Lebanese army with the challenge of defining and constructing new border defenses. Following the principle of "good fences make good neighbors," it is likely that Lebanon would favor building a mirror-image defense layout along the border, in order to lay another obstacle in the way of terrorists attempting to cross the border on their way south. Naturally, Israel would encourage any step that promotes its own security, and it

might even supply knowledge and assistance. But for a country of meager resources, the price of peace could be significant. Therefore, because the construction of an adequate defense system on the Lebanese side of the border is in Israel's interest no less than it is in Lebanon's, it is not inconceivable that the United States, Europe, and even Israel may contribute financial assistance to this project.

4. Borderline Corrections

Of all Israel's borders with its Arab neighbors, the border with Lebanon—though the shortest at only sixty-five miles in length—is the most problematic to maintain. In light of possible negotiations between Israel and Lebanon, it may be useful to examine the reasoning behind the original border demarcation. Who made this decision, what were the interests and considerations involved, and do the same considerations apply today?

International boundaries between states are usually delineated on the basis of international, multilateral, or bilateral agreements. In some countries, however, especially in Africa, borders have often been drafted arbitrarily. Many are remnants of the colonial period, the result of very detailed work by diplomats and military experts who took into account political, strategic, demographic, historical, and economic considerations. Similarly, the demise of the Ottoman Empire after World War I opened a new phase in the struggle of the European powers to exercise control in the Middle East. Two victorious powers, Britain and France, both claimed rights respectively to the territories known today as the Galilee and southern Lebanon. The deliberations in the 1920 Paris Peace Conference over the borders between the two areas yielded an agreement between France and Britain, and in March 1921, a joint committee—the Newcombe–Paulet Committee, named after the chief representatives of both sides—was established and worked almost a year to determine the actual delineation of the border.

A central principle guiding the work of the joint committee was preserving rights of the Arab villagers to the land they owned, since it was their main source of income, and neither side wanted to face the unrest resulting from detaching people from their property. But throughout their negotiations, France and Britain also both tried to maximize their territorial gains by insisting on water resources, cultivated lands, and strategically important transportation routes within their respective territories (France wanted control of Lebanon; Britain, the Galilee as part of Mandatory Palestine). The committee was also responsible for choosing distinct physical landmarks in order to mark the path of the border. Yet, many of these points were temporary features like buildings, ancient foundations, trees, and piles of stones, and the disappearance of some of these markers over time caused frequent confusion and quarrels.

The March 1923 agreement that finalized what became the officially

recognized border between the French- and British-controlled areas ultimately disregarded military requirements in favor of political and economic considerations, which at the time made good sense. But two and a half decades later, with the independence of Lebanon, Syria, and Israel having been achieved, a peaceful border between two friendly colonial powers became a border of confrontation in which security concerns came to overshadow all others.[22]

In the aftermath of the 1982 war, Israel built along its Lebanese border a sophisticated defense system consisting of electrified fences, antipersonnel mine fields, patrol roads, and barbed wire. Because of the problematic nature of the terrain, however, this fence does not exactly follow the borderline. Erosion, floods, sharp curves, and steep slopes are just some of the problems in the topography of the border area. These geographical complications have hindered security activities along the border and have made alterations in the location of the fence and the patrol road necessary. As a result, on some parts of the border the security fence retreats into Israeli territory while on others, it protrudes into Lebanese territory. The lack of correspondence between the "military border" and the "political border" leaves Israel with approximately 500 acres of Lebanese land; for its part, Lebanon holds almost 1,000 acres of Israeli land.[23] This means that in the case of an Israeli redeployment to the "military border" (as called for in the IDF's Morning Twilight plan for a unilateral withdrawal), Israel will still retain Lebanese territory. This could supply a pretext for Hizballah to continue its armed struggle against Israel.

Even minor border corrections are far from sufficient to transform the Israeli–Lebanese border into an effective security line. As discussed in the previous section, the rugged topography of the region forces IDF troops to operate in the low ground where they are exposed to guerrilla ambush attacks from short distances. In some sectors of the border, the terrain prevents Israeli forces from looking into Lebanese territory; in others, the border is contiguous with Israeli towns and villages, exposing them to possible terror attack. With all these disadvantages, both parties may have an interest in bilateral border corrections to improve the functioning of their forces and the security of the region's residents.

The beginning of a security dialogue between Lebanon and Israel as part of a peace process between them would be a golden opportunity during which to reopen the border issue. This could benefit both sides by providing them with a more secure, defensible border. Three rationales for border corrections follow:

• **Providing the border population with security margins.** The Israeli–Lebanese border is the most densely inhabited of all of Israel's border regimes. On Israel's side, fifteen to twenty population centers lie within two miles of the line; nine are actually contiguous with the fence and left without any security margin at all. Because well-estab-

lished cities and villages cannot be easily relocated, it would be more advantageous, from Israel's perspective, to distance them from the border by implementing a land-exchange plan in which the border-line would move away from the populated areas to provide them with some security margin. As it would be unrealistic to expect Lebanon to give up land unilaterally, Israel could, in exchange, relinquish territory it controls north of the present-day border and transfer to Lebanon agricultural land from the Galilee. Furthermore, it could ask the Lebanese government to lease Lebanese land adjacent to Israeli towns and villages on a long-term basis.[24]

- **Adjusting the border to the terrain.** Some sectors of the border lack military logic (e.g., when the border runs through low ground and creeks), and they expose troops on patrol to unnecessary risks. In these cases, the borderline could be "lifted" to higher ground. Eliminating or significantly reducing the risk of guerrilla attacks on IDF troops on routine missions would be beneficial to the Lebanese army as well as to the IDF; it could eliminate a major source of tension and confusion between neighbors unaccustomed to communicating directly with one another.

- **Fighting drug transfers.** Despite its official removal in 1997 from the U.S. list of state drug suppliers (the "Drug Majors List"), Lebanon is still the origin of the larger part of the inflow of illicit drugs into Israel. Major drug transactions are conducted between Lebanese and Israeli dealers simply by tossing packages over the fence. The border sectors most susceptible to this kind of activity are those where the Lebanese side overlooks the Israeli side—such as the area between Metulla and Misgav Am in the western Upper Galilee—and in areas where there is easy access by Lebanese civilians to the fence. If Lebanon wishes to shed its image of being a drug supplier and thus improve its political and economic ties with the international community, it must demonstrate determination and apply harsh measures against its local drug industry—and this must include preventing the illegal export of drugs to Israel via the border between the two. To this end, Lebanon might be willing to consider border corrections that would make drug transactions on the ground much more difficult.

In sum, no border should be seen as sacrosanct; rather, it should be seen as a means to providing neighboring countries better control over their territory, allowing them to regulate trade and tourism and provide security to their residents. In the case of the Israeli–Lebanese border, the two sides should examine the effectiveness of the current line and look into ways to adapt it to their changing needs. Peace talks will provide a rare opportunity to raise the possibility of border alterations. Failing to deal with the issue while establishing bilateral relations will leave both Israel and Lebanon with a penetrable, imperfect border for generations to come.

Confidence- and Security-Building Measures:
Solutions for a Nonpeaceful Environment

Confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) consist of various physical and psychological steps, in the context of diplomatic negotiations or an agreement, designed to diminish both the possibility and fear of military action initiated by either party against the other. As would be necessary in the case of Israel, Syria, and Lebanon, CSBMs may include measures that could help prevent local hostilities from developing into a crisis and war. Should Israel unilaterally withdraw from the security zone, for example, it could be years before it signed a formal peace treaty with Lebanon or Syria. During this period, CSBMs could reduce the danger of escalation.

For CSBMs to be effective, both sides must fear the potential consequences of unrestricted violence and want to avoid a full-scale war between them. CSBMs can either be formalized as part of an explicit agreement or take the form of an informal tacit understanding. In most cases, CSBMs are not negotiated directly but rather are mediated by a third party. Most studies dealing with CSBMs in the Middle East have concentrated on measures established between Israel and Syria in the Golan Heights,[25] and consequently little attention has been given to applying CSBMs to the Israeli–Lebanese context. Of course, not all forms of CSBMs are applicable to the Israeli–Lebanese case; for instance, a surprise attack carried out by the LAF against Israel seems highly unlikely in today's reality.

The first family of CSBMs is known as "red lines." Red lines are drawn to place limitations on military activity by the opposing side. Red lines can be either physical lines on maps, or limitations placed on activities or certain types of weapons. Both types have been used in Lebanon. For example, on the eve of the Syrian military intervention in Lebanon in June 1976, Israel communicated a number of red lines to Damascus via Washington that placed limits on the scope and nature of the Syrian armed presence. Twenty years later, in April 1996, Israel, Syria, and Lebanon drew another red line in the form of the Operation Grapes of Wrath understanding, prohibiting the attack of civilian targets on both sides of the border.

Following a unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon, Israel might want some of these red lines to be preserved and others added. A prohibition on the deployment of Hizballah or LAF long-range artillery and rockets capable of hitting Israeli population centers in Zones B and C would go a long way toward building confidence in this regard. Furthermore, as long as there is no agreement with Lebanon, Israel would want to preserve the right to conduct unrestricted air activity in Lebanese airspace, mainly for the purposes of aerial photography, deterrence, and surgical strikes against

select Hizballah targets. Finally, Israel would want to reserve the right of "hot pursuit" into Lebanese territory in the event that guerrillas are detected near the border. Lebanon and Israel could reach an understanding on a specified contiguous zone in which IDF troops would be able to conduct these pursuits without prompting the LAF to respond.

The second family of CSBMs provides for communication channels between the sides. Communication in any form is crucial for reducing tension and preventing misinterpretation of signals and intentions, but miscommunication is common in an environment like the Middle East where there is limited dialogue. Despite all the criticism about the ineffectiveness of the Israel–Lebanon Monitoring Group established by the April 1996 Understanding, it is still the only forum that provides for meetings between military representatives from Israel, Syria, and Lebanon (see next page). This dialogue, even if at times futile—and despite Israel's temporary boycott in June 1999—should continue. It is the only mechanism that can prevent uncontrolled escalation when serious hostilities erupt.

Even in the absence of an agreement with Israel, the Lebanese army, upon its arrival in southern Lebanon, will find that the establishment of communications links with the IDF is essential. Vigilant Israeli soldiers, for example, might occasionally mistake Lebanese soldiers for Hizballah guerrillas and fire on them. This could escalate tension and cause casualties on both sides. To avoid this predicament, it would be in the interest of both sides to establish military-to-military relations to exchange information about changes in deployment, exercises, and out-of-the-ordinary developments. Apart from direct dialogue, communication can also be facilitated by third parties like the United States, France, and the UN.

An additional type of CSBM is the establishment of a committee to compensate the innocent victims of military actions on both sides. On many occasions, the fighting in Lebanon has resulted in damage to life and property. Under the present rules of engagement, none of the parties are held accountable for damage caused by their actions. Nevertheless, when an allegedly deranged Jordanian soldier opened fire and killed seven Israeli schoolgirls in 1997, King Hussein of Jordan offered to pay damages to the families of the deceased. This standard should be upheld and applied in the case of Lebanon as well. Forcing both sides to compensate one other for injuries they have caused would not only build confidence, but also increase the parties' sense of accountability and responsibility. For the Lebanese government this would mean a further incentive to cap hostilities originating from its sovereign territory—including any aggression by Hizballah. Knowing it will have to foot the bill for Hizballah provocations, Lebanon might be more reluctant to permit such attacks to be carried out from its territory.

THE ISRAEL–LEBANON MONITORING GROUP

The Israel–Lebanon Monitoring Group (ILMG) was created to help implement the April 1996 Understanding between Israel and Lebanon, which was arranged in the aftermath of Israel's Operation Grapes of Wrath to help prevent military escalations as a result of the protracted war of attrition between Israel and Hizballah (see Appendix D). The understanding specified that, collectively, the members of the ILMG—the United States, France, Lebanon, Israel, and Syria—would monitor the ceasefire understanding and hear claims of violations filed by the parties concerned.

The chairman of the ILMG is always a member of either the French or the U.S. delegations; the chairmanship rotates every six months. When either Israel or Lebanon believes that the other country has violated the April 1996 Understanding, it submits a report to the chairman, who then disseminates the complaint to the other members of the group. The delegations of the five countries then meet at UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura, Lebanon, to review the complaint(s), after which they are "entitled to dispatch investigating teams [to the site of the alleged violation] to verify information and submit a report specifying the responsibility of the parties."[1]

The ILMG has no enforcement mechanism to punish the party responsible for violating the ceasefire understanding; it can only issue statements that identify the responsible party. Given the composition of the group and the fact that all its statements must be unanimous, it is understandably difficult to put out a report that harshly condemns one country or the other, regardless of the realities on the ground. The main purpose of the ILMG's reports, therefore, is to call attention to the violations and instill a sense of accountability in the parties for their actions.

Although the ILMG has not managed to bring a halt to the violence in southern Lebanon, it has prevented an escalation of the conflict, reduced the number of incidents involving civilians, and provided a link between Israel and Syria during a time (until recently) when the two countries were not officially talking.

NOTE

1. "Lebanon: Buwayz on Friends of Lebanon Meeting, ILMG," *al-Safir* (Beirut), December 12, 1996, p. 3, in FBIS-NES-96-242, December 17, 1996.

—*Adam Frey*

Operational Responses

The IDF will have to adopt a broad range of tools and mechanisms, at considerable expense, to minimize the threats discussed above. The desired mix of operational responses must contain both technological and

tactical solutions to deter guerrillas from approaching the border zone and prevent them from infiltrating into Israel. In the event that these precautions fail and the guerrillas succeed in crossing the border, special measures must be taken to minimize risk to the lives of civilian residents. Even against rocket attacks, which still pose an insoluble problem, the miracles of technology might soon offer a solution.

1. Early Warning and Deterrence
This category encompasses all surveillance systems that detect guerrilla movements, provide early warning, and obstruct anti-Israel operations in the territory north of the Israeli–Lebanese border. Surveillance systems are usually located in outposts along the border where the terrain allows observation deep into Lebanese territory. In places where topography denies visibility north of the border, the handiest solutions are aerial platforms such as UAVs or alternatively aerostats (hot-air balloons) mounted with sophisticated high-resolution video equipment. These devices can provide a detailed picture of human movement north of the border without infringing upon Lebanese territory. The effectiveness of surveillance systems is usually dependent on good weather and clear visibility. Poor weather conditions such as fog, low clouds, and rain can degrade the performance of such equipment and increase the chances of success for guerrilla squads planning to cross the border. Therefore, nights with bad weather require heightened vigilance on the outposts along the borderline. Night vision equipment is crucial, as most movement takes place under the cover of darkness. The IDF has a wide variety of surveillance equipment based on the technology of thermal imaging, which provides a twenty-four-hour surveillance capability that overcomes hazards like dust and precipitation.

In the scenario of a withdrawal accompanied by some form of military-to-military contacts, once a suspicious individual or activity is detected, an alert would be issued to all the forces in the region including the UN, the LAF, and neighboring border towns and villages on both sides. The force with jurisdiction in the region where the target is spotted would then be responsible for responding. Today, suspicious activities in the security zone draw fire almost automatically. As a result, very little night activity or movement occurs around the villages of the security zone. With the IDF having exited southern Lebanon as part of an agreement, Israelis would be prohibited from firing into Lebanese territory. This change in the rules of engagement would also change the behavior of the local population in the South, who would be able to move more freely at night without fear of being mistakenly identified as Hizballah guerrillas. But this new reality would also make the IDF's work much more difficult and sensitive; Israeli troops would have to confirm beyond a doubt that a target is attempting to cross the border before

opening fire. Furthermore under this arrangement, the IDF would be dependent on the efficiency, cooperation, responsiveness, and goodwill of the Lebanese forces.

Another class of surveillance systems is designed to assist in the war against katyushas. The American "Firefinder" family of artillery-locating radar can detect the precise location of active enemy artillery and rocket systems to permit rapid counter-fire engagement and to determine the proximity of enemy artillery to civilians. Using this kind of radar, Israel would be able to identify rapidly and precisely the LAF areas or villages used to stage anti-Israel artillery strikes, and then to demand vigorous Lebanese action in these locations. The model of artillery-locating radar currently in use by the IDF is the U.S.-made TPQ-37, which played a major role during Operation Grapes of Wrath. But an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon will demand an increase in the IDF's fire-finding capabilities. This will entail the procurement of more radar systems and, from the year 2002, an upgrade of the existing TPQ-37 to the more technologically advanced TPQ-47, which will provide more rapid and improved target location, improved accuracy, and target classification. The program will also improve system mobility, maintainability, and reliability for increased effectiveness on the battlefield.

2. Counter-Mobility Obstacles

Counter-mobility obstacles are natural or man-made features intended to obstruct, delay, divert, or channel advancing military forces. The current array of obstacles along the Israeli–Lebanese border consists of a sensitive electrified fence, minefields, and several layers of barbed wire. Outposts and observation points are located every few miles on the high ground, and armed patrols assigned to specific sectors of the border attend to any suspicious movement. Although Israel's defense system has been modified over the years, it is still penetrable. Without the depth provided by the security zone, Israel will have to upgrade its defenses further to minimize the chances of infiltration, especially in the vicinity of border populations.

Several measures will have to be considered in this scenario. The IDF will have to narrow the gaps between existing outposts by building new ones in appropriate locations. Furthermore, the defense line must be deepened with the addition of a security belt—approximately 100-yards deep—consisting of minefields, moving-target-indicator radar systems, acoustic sensors, spotlights, and additional layers of barbed wire. These measures will not only make infiltration extremely difficult but will also delay potential infiltrators and buy time for those defending the border.

3. Protection

A unilateral Israeli pullout will require a major investment of capital to enhance the level of protection afforded the civilian population of the

North from hostile artillery fire. The standard forms of protection currently are home bomb shelters and security rooms built with reinforced concrete. Public buildings and offices are also required by law to offer adequate protection. But there is still much room for improvement. Although population centers in Zone A have been subjected for years to katyusha attacks, there is still a shortage of 430 bomb shelters and security rooms in towns along the northern border (each household is required to have one).[26] If the eighty-one cities and villages in Zone A are not fully prepared for an attack, one can infer that the readiness of the sixty-four population centers of Zone B—not to mention that of the one hundred seven in Zone C—is less than satisfactory.

A widescale program to provide shelter facilities to so many localities at once will cost millions of dollars and will inevitably extend over several years. In the interim, the resumption of artillery attacks from the Lebanese side of the border may find many cities and families unprepared.

4. Counter-Guerrilla Air Warfare

The growing intolerance of the Israeli public to military casualties in Lebanon has caused the IDF to adopt an operational doctrine designed to minimize losses. Until a withdrawal takes place, the main tenet of this doctrine is the extensive use of artillery and air power against Hizballah targets north of the security zone. In more extreme cases, air strikes against strategic targets in Lebanon are carried out to send a signal to the Lebanese government that its support for Hizballah aggression will not go unanswered. Whereas the effective range of Israeli artillery is only twelve miles—which is insufficient to cover the area where Hizballah fighters are recruited and trained[27]—the Israeli Air Force (IAF) can cover the full spectrum of targets throughout Lebanon. As a result, the IAF is likely to become the main deterrent against the Lebanese government if cross-border aggression persists after an Israeli pullout.

Proponents of unilateral withdrawal claim that the risk-averse policy of the IDF in Lebanon has minimized the effectiveness of the IDF's ground forces deployed in outposts in the security zone. Consequently, they believe air strikes could substitute for ground operations in obstructing Hizballah activity in southern Lebanon after a pullout. This view has gained popularity in Israel; recent public opinion polls show that more than 60 percent of Israelis believe that air raids and pinpoint air strikes against terrorist bases would constitute an effective answer to terrorist aggression. But this view fails to appreciate the limitations of air power exposed during recent air campaigns against Iraq and Serbia. Among the problems that emerged were the limited effectiveness of air power in an urban environment, collateral damage to civilian targets, the inability to operate in adverse weather conditions, and the vulnerability of aerial platforms—particularly attack helicopters.

But the biggest limitation on Israel's counter-guerrilla air war in Lebanon following a withdrawal and the loss of the SLA is likely to be the scarcity of high-quality enemy targets because of the IDF's reduced intelligence capability. Without the ability to pinpoint enemy targets with great accuracy, the IAF will be unable to realize its full potential. Even today, despite the April 1996 Understanding, Hizballah still operates and launches rockets from local villages, and Israeli retaliation endangers the civilian populations there. Lacking suitable targets, the IAF will have to resort to punitive pinpoint air raids against Lebanon's economic infrastructure. But Israel is likely to face negative political repercussions in the international arena as a result, as well as possible escalation with Syria.

5. Cross-Border Incursions of IDF Commando Units

The IDF has acquired vast experience in the execution of commando raids deep into the territories of Arab states. The bold retaliatory operations carried out in the 1970s against Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) targets in Lebanon by some of the IDF's elite units have contributed to Israel's deterrent image. But the improvement of Hizballah's tactical sophistication forced the IDF to adapt itself to the new threat by establishing in 1995 an elite unit, Egoz, that specializes in cross-border incursions into Lebanese territory with the objective of destroying Hizballah's training and recruiting infrastructure.

Continuous attacks on Israel by Hizballah will require an offensive response beyond traditional air strikes. Elite IDF units could land in almost any part of Lebanon and carry out retaliatory raids. These raids, however, are extremely risky and require careful planning and accurate intelligence. As mentioned before, the loss of the support of the local population of southern Lebanon is likely to deny the IDF the intelligence that it requires to launch ground counter-guerrilla operations. Furthermore, IDF commando incursions carry the risk of Israeli soldiers being captured by Hizballah and possibly transferred to Syria or Iran. Israel is very sensitive to the welfare and safety of its prisoners of war, as can be seen by the relentless attempts to uncover the whereabouts of the IAF navigator Ron Arad, who was captured in 1986. The possibility that Israeli troops could fall into the hands of Hizballah might discourage Israeli decision makers contemplating the dispatch of IDF units deep into Lebanese territory.

Finally, Israeli cross-border commando raids will be much more difficult to execute after a withdrawal because of the presence of the LAF in southern Lebanon, which is better equipped than Hizballah to resist the infiltration of Israeli commandos. Furthermore, IDF troops, in most cases, will have to be carried to their destinations via helicopter. This will make them vulnerable to anti-aircraft fire by Lebanese air defense systems that the LAF is likely to deploy in the South following an Israeli withdrawal.

6. The Tactical High Energy Laser: A Technological Panacea?

The scores of katyusha barrages that showered northern Israel in April 1996 were a source of great frustration for Israel's military brass because they proved that modern technology has still not produced a counter for an anachronistic weapon system which saw its heyday in World War II. But the aftermath of Operation Grapes of Wrath brought about a positive development that could be viewed as an important landmark in U.S.– Israeli strategic and technological cooperation. The fighting during this conflict demonstrated to the United States that a successful technological response to the katyusha threat could improve the conditions for an Israeli implementation of Security Council Resolution 425. Consequently, on April 28, 1996, Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres and U.S. secretary of defense William Perry agreed on a joint U.S.–Israeli project to develop a high-energy laser that would be able to intercept rockets in flight. The principle of the Tactical High Energy Laser (THEL) is that once the target has been located, a focused laser beam is directed at the approaching rocket and destroys it.

This vehicle-mounted system will use the Israeli Green Pine surveillance radar, which was originally developed for the Israeli Arrow ballistic missile defense system. THEL's precursor, the Nautilus, destroyed a short-range rocket in flight during testing in February 1996 at the U.S. Army's High Energy Laser Systems Test Facility at White Sands, New Mexico, nine months after the project was launched. This was the first time a laser had ever destroyed a ballistic missile. But it was only a preliminary achievement, and many tests remain. If successful, the project will provide a tactical solution to rocket attacks and will perhaps be the harbinger of a new generation of anti-aircraft weapons. The system will be able to engage multiple targets at the relatively low cost of a few thousand dollars per round. Furthermore, the THEL is designed to intercept rockets long before they hit the ground. In such cases, rockets launched from southern Lebanon are likely to explode above Lebanese territory, possibly causing damage and casualties to civilians there. This would invite pressure on the Lebanese army to take severe measures against the perpetrators.

But the THEL project has faced some serious obstacles, both technological and financial. The primary technological problem is that the laser beam loses its focus—and hence its effectiveness—at long range. To operate at longer ranges, the system requires truly massive amounts of energy. Developers are currently looking for ways to build a field-deployed generator to produce enough energy to make the system viable.

Financially, the project experienced a serious setback in June 1999 when the prime contractor, TRW, had cost overruns of $30 million. Since then, the U.S. Army and the Israeli Ministry of Defense reached an agreement with TRW to cover half of the cost overruns, thus allowing the

project to proceed as planned.[28] Promising as it is, THEL has not yet reached maturity, and more problems may yet arise. The future of THEL was discussed during the July 1999 Washington visit of Ehud Barak, as newly elected Israeli prime minister and minister of defense. Barak's promise of a forthcoming withdrawal from Lebanon has given the project increased relevance and a boost that could bring it to the threshold of success.

But even with the assumption that THEL will eventually become operational and that within the next few years two to three systems will be deployed along Israel's northern border, katyusha rockets will not become obsolete. The THEL system is designed to protect an area the size of a small city, and it would therefore not cover most of the popula- tion centers in the Galilee. Furthermore, the radar is not designed for around-the-clock operation. It has to be activated either after a katyusha alert is received or after the first volley hits the ground. This would allow guerrillas in Lebanon to launch sporadic rocket attacks when the system is not operating.

CONCLUSIONS

Unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon without a peace agreement could constitute a huge political risk for Barak and a serious strategic gamble for Israel. With Syria raging over yet another missed opportunity to re- cover the Golan, coupled with a reinvigorated Iranian effort to support Hizballah in undermining Israel's security, it would only be a matter of time before one of the anti-Israeli players in Lebanon succeeded in car- rying out a bloody terrorist attack against Israel. The images of civilian terror victims in the North would be a realization of the deep-seated Israeli fear that two decades of bloody Israeli involvement in Lebanon had been in vain.

Furthermore, contrary to the common wisdom, unilateral withdrawal will be an irreversible move. Israel will not be able to reoccupy the secu- rity zone, because the dissolution of the SLA and the betrayal felt by the southern Lebanese population will deny Israel the local cooperation that would be so crucial to reoccupation. Without local intelligence sources and the option to deploy ground forces in the South, Israel's only mili- tary option would be to retaliate by means of intensive air strikes and artillery fire. Cross-border incursions of IDF commando units may also be applied at high risk and with limited results. But the lessons of the wars in Kosovo and Iraq show the limitations of air power against camou- flaged ground forces, let alone against small guerrilla units intermingled with a hospitable civilian population, as in Lebanon.

Even the most precise fire will not suppress the anti-Israel militia groups in Lebanon, and Israel is likely to find itself adopting a strategy of punitive air attacks against Lebanese, and maybe even Syrian, infrastruc-

ture. Many Israeli defense experts believe that Israel's air attacks against Lebanese bridges and power plants in June 1999—in retaliation for Hizballah katyusha attacks—were useful in sending a clear message that Syria and Lebanon will not remain unharmed if they continue to host and support anti-Israel militias. If such a strategy proves successful in deterring Syria from allowing or encouraging attacks on Israel, then a delicate balance may be achieved along Israel's northern border. With the IDF deployed along the international line, Hizballah and its allies will engage mostly in border clashes with the IDF but will refrain from attacking civilian targets.

If all fails and life in northern Israel becomes unbearable while a Syrian–Israeli agreement remains elusive, though, Barak will have to look for a more drastic solution. A seminal event in Barak's life as an IDF general could shed some light on his inclination in such a situation. In 1982, when Israel was overwhelmed by a wave of terrorism, Barak was head of the IDF Planning Branch and the youngest major general in the General Staff. On the eve of the Lebanon invasion, he sent then–Defense Minister Ariel Sharon a secret memorandum presenting a unique solution to Israel's Lebanon problem. Contrary to the IDF's operational plan to invade forty kilometers into Lebanese territory, destroy the PLO infrastructure there, and install a Phalangist president, the Barak plan proposed to shift the focus of the war plan from Lebanon to an Israeli-initiated attack on Syria. Barak believed that confrontation with Syria in the event of an Israeli invasion of Lebanon was inevitable. Therefore, it would be best to expand the war effort to destroy the Syrian army with a massive offensive from the Golan Heights or by a deep, flanking thrust into the Lebanese Bekaa Valley.[29] If a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon fails to stop katyusha and other attacks from north of the border, frustrating Barak's ambition to achieve peace in the region, the prime minister might ultimately find occasion to implement his 1982 plan after all.

NOTES

1.   This figure does not include the South Lebanon Army's share of casualties—410 killed, 1,300 wounded since June 1985.

2.   Arieh O'Sullivan and David Rudge, "Fighting Against Time," *Jerusalem Post,* July 31, 1998; David Rudge, "IDF Boosts Funds to Security Zone," *Jerusalem Post,* June 19, 1999.

3.   Barak's view is spelled out in articles 2.8 and 2.9 of his government's guidelines specifying that "the Israeli government will resume the negotiations with Syria with a view toward concluding a peace treaty therewith—a full peace that bolsters the security of Israel, grounded in UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and on the existence of a normal relationship between two neighboring states living side by side in peace. The peace treaty with Syria will be submitted for approval in a referendum. The gov-

ernment will act toward bringing the IDF out of Lebanon, while guaranteeing the welfare and security of the residents of northern Israel and aspiring to conclude a peace treaty with Lebanon." From IsraelWire News Service, *15th Knesset Watch*, no. 32, July 6, 1999.

4. Aluf Benn, "Jaffee Center Study: No Lebanon Withdrawal without Syria Treaty," *Ha'aretz*, August 19, 1999.

5. See Avihai Beker's profile story on Brig. Gen. Efi Eitam, commander of the IDF forces on the Lebanese border, "Aluf," *Ha'aretz* Magazine, November 6, 1998, pp. 16–22; see also Alex Fishman and Tomer Shadmi, "Interview with Director of IDF Military Intelligence, Maj. Gen. Amos Malka," *Bamachane*, no. 14, July 9, 1999.

6. Yoav Limor, "AMAN: Unilateral Withdrawal from Lebanon Could Lead to a Confrontation with Syria," *Ma'ariv*, November 30, 1999.

7. Yaakov Erez, "Interview with Shaul Mofaz," *Ma'ariv*, September 20, 1998, p. 16.

8. See Yossi Beilin, *A Guide to an Israeli Withdrawal from Lebanon* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1998). Leading figures in Israel's defense establishment have also expressed similar opinions, among them Maj. Gen. (ret.) Israel Tal, assistant minister of defense; Maj. Gen. (ret.) Amiram Levine, deputy head of the Mossad; Member of Knesset Gideon Ezra, former deputy head of the General Security Services (GSS); and Brig. Gen. (ret.) Giora Inbar, former commander of the IDF Liaison Unit in Lebanon. Maj. Gen. (ret.) Ariel Sharon, opposition leader in the current Knesset, supports a phased unilateral withdrawal combined with harsh response against infrastructure targets in Lebanon in the case that Hizballah continues its aggression.

9. "Twenty-Five Percent of Kiryat Shmona Residents Ready to Relocate," *IsraelWire* 1, no. 529 (July 15, 1999), http://www.Israelwire.com.

10. Ronen Bergman, "Hizballah's War of Independence," *Ha'aretz*, March 5, 1999, p. B3.

11. For published information about Mabat, see Andrew Rathmell, "The War in South Lebanon," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, April 1, 1994; see also Ronen Bergman, "Fighting Blind," *Ha'aretz* Magazine, May 14, 1999.

12. The former head of the GSS describes the working relations that evolved between the GSS and Mabat in Yaakov Perry, *Strike First* (Tel Aviv: Keshet, 1999), pp. 115–116.

13. "Persona Non Grata: The Expulsion of Civilians from Israeli Occupied Lebanon," *Human Rights Watch Report*, July 1999, http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/lebanon. The IDF spokesman refused to comment on the report.

14. Perry, *Strike First*, p. 267.

15. For more on this problem, see Ami Ettinger, "Who Will Subdue the Katyusha?" *Ma'ariv*, April 30, 1996, pp. 6–7.

16. Amit Navon, "The Missing Card," *Ma'ariv* Weekend Supplement, March 31, 1999, p. 16.

17. James Bruce, "Israel: Hizballah Could Have 240mm Rockets," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, August 21, 1996, p. 3; Amit Navon, "The Missing Card," *Ma'ariv*, March 31, 1999, p. 16; Ze'ev Schiff, "Missiles in Lebanon Can Hit Haifa," *Ha'aretz*, February 27, 2000, online in English at http://www.haaretz.co.il.

18. For a report on Hizballah's obtaining TOW missiles, see Nicholas Blanford, "Hizballah Targets Israelis with U.S. Anti-Tank Missiles," *Daily Star* (Beirut), November 19, 1997.

19. Hasan Haider Diab, "Interview With Hasan Nasarallah," *Zagreb Jutarnji List,* January 16, 1999, pp. 32–33.

20. Yoav Limor, "AMAN: Unilateral Withdrawal from Lebanon Could Lead to a Confrontation with Syria," *Ma'ariv,* November 30, 1999.

21. Anthony H. Cordesman, *Perilous Prospects: The Peace Process and the Arab–Israeli Military Balance* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1996), pp. 169–171; Aryeh Shalev, *Israel and Syria: Peace and Security on the Golan* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1994), pp. 144–165.

22. For detailed account of the evolution of the Israeli–Lebanese border, see Moshe Brawer, *Israel's Borders: Past–Present–Future* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Yavne, 1988), pp. 103–125; and Patricia Toye, ed., *Palestine Boundries 1833-1947,* vol. 3 (Oxford: Archive Editions, 1989). See also Fredrick C. Hof, *Galilee Divided: The Israel–Lebanon Frontier, 1916–1984* (Boulder, Colo., and London: Westview, 1985).

23. Most of the points at which Israel moved the military border into Lebanese territory are between Biranit and Mount Dov. Due to security considerations, Israel also moved this line away from cities and villages contiguous to the border like Manara and Misgav Am.

24. The Israel–Jordan peace treaty of October 1994 made special provisions for allowing Israeli landowners with private ownership rights access to their property in territories that came under Jordanian sovereignty as a consequence of the treaty. These provisions show that negotiating parties with mutual goodwill can reach a just and effective border agreement that preserves the rights of both sides.

25. See, for example, Alan Platt, ed., *Arms Control and Confidence Building in the Middle East* (Washington: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1992); Gabriel Ben-Dor and David B. Dewitt, *Confidence Building Measures in the Middle East* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1994); and Shai Feldman, ed., *Confidence Building and Verification: Prospects in the Middle East* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview; Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Post, 1994).

26. David Rudge, "Northerners Take Shelter on Their Own," *Jerusalem Post* Internet Edition, June 3, 1999, http://www.jpost.com/com/archive/05.jul.1999.

27. David Rudge, "IDF Artillery Fires 1,200 Rounds a Month in Lebanon Fighting," *Jerusalem Post,* November 30, 1999.

28. Barbara Opall, "Israel, Congress Press Pentagon for Added THEL, Arrow Funding," *Defense News,* March 30, 1998, p. 52; David Eshel and Duncan Lennox, "Israeli High-Energy Laser Project May Face More Delays," *Jane's Defence Weekly,* April 7, 1999, p. 21; Bryan Bender, "Future of US–Israeli Laser Project in Doubt," *Jane's Defence Weekly,* June 2, 1999, p. 6; and Bryan Bender, "US and Israeli Governments to Bail Out THEL," *Jane's Defence Weekly,* June 16, 1999, p. 6.

29. Amir Oren, "Barak Urged Attack on Syria in 1982," *Ha'aretz,* January 8, 1999, p. B1.

U.S. Interests Following an Israeli Withdrawal from Lebanon

By Patrick Clawson and Michael Eisenstadt

An Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon creates both risks and opportunities. In the worst case, a withdrawal from the security zone could lead to renewed attacks on northern Israel, Israeli retaliation, further damage to Lebanon's civilian infrastructure, and a confrontation between Israel and Syria over the latter's toleration—if not encouragement—of new attacks from Lebanon. In the best case, an Israeli withdrawal could lead to the emergence of a quiet, if not peaceful, border between Israel and Lebanon, the disarming of Hizballah and Palestinian rejectionist groups, and the reassertion of control by the Lebanese government over the South.

What does happen after an Israeli withdrawal is contingent upon two factors: the circumstances under which the withdrawal occurs, and the response of key regional and international actors, including the United States. In this study, we have identified three possible scenarios for an Israeli withdrawal:

- Unilateral withdrawal absent any coordination with the actors on the ground regarding contingencies during and after a withdrawal.
- Withdrawal with tacit or informal understandings about who will assume security responsibility for areas vacated by Israel.
- Withdrawal in the context of agreements—if not formal peace treaties—between Israel and Lebanon, and between Israel and Syria.

The possible responses of various regional actors—Hizballah, Lebanon-based Palestinian rejectionist groups, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), Syria and Lebanon, and Israel—have been examined in earlier chapters. This chapter will look at U.S. options.

During most of the 1980s, Lebanon was treated with benign neglect by American policymakers. Burned after a peacekeeping operation went sour in 1983 with the loss of 241 U.S. Marines and a humiliating U.S. withdrawal, the subsequent seizure of American hostages, and the torture and murder of a kidnapped U.S. Marine colonel and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) station chief, American policymakers tended to see dealing with Lebanon as more trouble than it was worth. By the early to mid-1990s, this perspective had changed, with the U.S. government

providing arms and training to the LAF and promoting international aid for reconstruction, culminating in official visits by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to Beirut in 1997 and 1999. Still, Lebanon has generally remained a sideshow for U.S. policymakers focused on the Middle East peace process.

But Lebanon is likely to become a major preoccupation for Washington once again, following an Israeli withdrawal. Violence is possible, whether Israel withdraws unilaterally or within the context of informal understandings or formal agreements with Lebanon and Syria. Such post-withdrawal violence could lead to civilian casualties on both sides, an intensification of Israeli military activity in Lebanon, and perhaps even a military confrontation between Israel and Syria. In such circumstances, it will no longer be possible for American policymakers to relegate Lebanon to the sidelines of Arab–Israeli peacemaking.

LEBANESE INDEPENDENCE AND ARAB–ISRAELI PEACE

Declaratory U.S. policy has defined the restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty as a U.S. objective. In practice, however, Washington has done little to press Syria to reduce its military presence and its heavy-handed interference in Lebanese affairs. In the October 1989 Taif Accords that ended the Lebanese civil war, Syria agreed to redeploy its forces in Lebanon to the Bekaa Valley within two years after implementation of the accord's various provisions. Thus far, this redeployment has not occurred, and there are no signs that Syria intends to carry it out, much less end its military presence or its intervention in Lebanese affairs. Nor does there appear to be much interest among U.S. (or, for that matter, Israeli) policymakers in actively challenging this state of affairs.[*]

It would, however, be unwise and inappropriate to predicate peace between Israel and Lebanon on an open-ended Syrian presence and the indefinite curtailment of Lebanon's independence. Here, prudence, principle, and realpolitik mesh. After all, Syria could face a period of instability after the death of President Hafiz al-Asad, and it is not implausible that a succession struggle might produce widespread unrest or even a civil war. Under such circumstances, Syria might no longer be able to exercise dominion over Lebanon; therefore, post-withdrawal arrangements for Lebanon should exploit opportunities offered by the Syrian presence, but they should not be predicated on it. Arrangements

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[*] It should be mentioned, however, that during her first visit to Beirut, Secretary of State Albright stressed U.S. support for "a Lebanon that is fully independent, unified, and sovereign, [and] free from all foreign forces." And on her second visit, she reportedly asked Prime Minister Selim Hoss point blank why Syrian forces were still in Lebanon. See Habib C. Malik, *Between Damascus and Jerusalem: Lebanon and Middle East Peace* (Washington: The Washington Institute, 2000), pp. 132–133.

between Israel and Lebanon should be robust enough to stand alone if need be, and not be contingent on a continued Syrian presence in Lebanon.

U.S. INTERESTS IN LEBANON

In the near term, the key post-withdrawal U.S. interests vis-à-vis Lebanon are preventing and containing possible post-withdrawal violence and restoring peace and stability to Lebanon and the Lebanese–Israeli border. One concern here is that cross-border attacks on Israel could spur renewed Israeli strikes on Lebanon's civilian infrastructure. This could result in more death and destruction in Lebanon, create conditions conducive to the expansion of Hizballah's influence, and further hinder national development and reconstruction there. Cross-border attacks could also hinder, if not effectively end, Israeli–Syrian peace talks, and perhaps even lead to an Israeli–Syrian war on Lebanese territory. Other U.S. interests include ending Lebanon's role as a safe haven for terrorists and as a key node in the international drug trade.

POST-WITHDRAWAL IMPERATIVES FOR U.S. POLICY

Whether Israel withdraws from Lebanon unilaterally or in the context of informal understandings or formal agreements, Lebanon and Syria might have an interest in encouraging continued anti-Israel violence by various militant groups in Lebanon. The immediate challenge for U.S. policy is to prevent such violence from occurring. To do so, the United States should pursue a policy that (1) bolsters Israeli deterrence, (2) ensures that Lebanon and Syria reap benefits for preventing—or pay a heavy price for tolerating or encouraging—post-withdrawal violence, (3) stabilizes any post-withdrawal status quo through support for security arrangements and confidence building measures, and (4) preempts and defuses potentially explosive issues that could result in renewed violence.

Following an Israeli withdrawal, the United States should also publicly confirm Israel's fulfillment of its obligations under United Nations Security Council Resolution 425 and reiterate U.S. commitment to the resolution's full implementation—especially Lebanon's responsibility to "ensur[e] the return of its effective authority in the area" vacated by Israel. The United States should impress upon Damascus that as long as Syrian troops control Lebanon, Syria will be held responsible for any attacks on Israel emanating from Lebanon. Washington should also mobilize international support for the principle that Lebanon and Syria have a duty to prevent attacks on Israel from Lebanon, and that Israel retains the right of self-defense should they fail to do so.

Each of the aforementioned policy steps will now be described in greater detail below.

Bolstering Deterrence

Whether Israel withdraws from Lebanon unilaterally or in the context of tacit arrangements or formal agreements with Lebanon and Syria, deterrence will be key to preventing new flare-ups of violence along the Israeli–Lebanese border. Bolstering Israel's deterrent capability will entail enhancing Israel's ability to preempt and retaliate for attacks by providing political and military–technical support.

On the political level, Washington should make clear that Israel would be well within its rights should it decide to launch preemptive or retaliatory strikes in response to attacks emanating from Lebanon, and the United States should work vigorously to strengthen international acceptance of this principle. Garnering support for such actions will be difficult, no matter how justified they may be. In the event of attacks on Israel by groups based in Lebanon, the United States should at the very least urge its allies—including those in the Arab world—to aid in arranging a ceasefire and a return to peace talks.

But Israel's policy of hitting civilian infrastructure targets in Lebanon (such as electrical power stations), for lack of suitable military targets related to Hizballah, poses problems for the United States—at the very least on political grounds. Accordingly, Washington should discourage Israeli strikes against civilian targets if retaliation becomes necessary. Better that Israel retaliate against Lebanese or Syrian security and military targets—thereby punishing the parties responsible for not preventing the ongoing violence—than to harm Lebanese civilians indirectly by targeting the infrastructure that serves them.

Since peace negotiations began in Madrid in 1991, Israel has not retaliated against Syrian targets in Lebanon—much less in Syria proper—for fear that retaliation would hinder, if not preclude, Israeli–Syrian peace talks. A unilateral Israeli withdrawal would change all that. Attacks on Israel after a unilateral withdrawal would almost certainly mark the demise of current peacemaking efforts between Israel and Syria, while attacks on Israel after the signing of peace treaties would constitute a blatant violation of treaty commitments. Washington should not in either case restrain Israel from lashing out in self-defense against Syrian targets.

Finally, on the military–technical level, the United States might take steps to strengthen the IDF's deterrent image through closer intelligence cooperation concerning terrorist groups based in Lebanon, joint development of border security technologies and systems, an enhancement of Israel's ability to rapidly deliver precision fire (through the provision of systems such as the advanced AN/TPQ-47 Firefinder artillery radar system), and, perhaps most important, accelerated development of the Tactical High Energy Laser system (THEL), which is intended to shoot down katyusha-type rockets. THEL is expected to demonstrate an initial operational capability sometime in the next year or two.

Rewards and Penalties

The United States should seek to ensure that Lebanon and Syria reap benefits for keeping the peace on the Israeli–Lebanese border and pay a price for tolerating or encouraging post-withdrawal violence. The benefits (beyond those intrinsic to peace and stability) might include increased U.S. investment in both countries, greater diplomatic cooperation and political engagement, and a commitment to support Asad's chosen successor. Conversely, the costs should include adding Lebanon to the State Department's list of countries that sponsor terrorism, halting U.S. investment in Lebanon and Syria in tandem with efforts to discourage European Union (EU) and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) investment in these states, ceasing U.S. assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), shunning Beirut and Damascus diplomatically, and making pointed public comments that, because of Damascus's harmful policies, Washington does not believe that it has a stake in the survival of the Asad regime.

Following a unilateral Israeli withdrawal, Washington should press Lebanon and Syria to disarm Hizballah, since, with Israel out of Lebanon, there could no longer be any justification for the carrying of arms by anyone except the LAF and Lebanese security forces. This would be an early test of Lebanese intentions, and the United States should therefore make assistance to the LAF contingent on the disarming of Hizballah. Failure to do so would be grounds for adding Lebanon to the list of state sponsors of terrorism. If withdrawal occurs in the context of tacit arrangements or formal agreements, the United States should make financial aid and investment to Lebanon as well as aid to the LAF contingent on Beirut's cooperation in implementing the provisions of such agreements.

Either way, the United States has no interest in arming and training a Lebanese army that facilitates the Syrian occupation of Lebanon without serving the cause of peace by securing the Lebanese–Israeli border. Conversely, should the LAF play a lead role in supporting an Israeli–Lebanese peace treaty, the United States should provide the LAF with additional training and equipment to better enable it to fulfill its peacekeeping mission.

ENSURING STABILITY: SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, MONITORING, AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING

The United States could take a number of steps to foster stability following an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. Although most of these are relevant to a withdrawal in the context of informal arrangements or formal agreements, some may be applicable in the case of a unilateral withdrawal as well.

Militarily, Lebanon and Syria constitute a single theater of operations; security arrangements should reflect this reality, even if the nature

and scope of U.S. security commitments in southern Lebanon and Syria differ. The United States will probably be asked to help monitor the peace between Israel and Syria by providing funding, technology, and possibly civilian monitors. Assets deployed to monitor an Israeli–Syrian peace (i.e., listening/observation posts on Mount Hermon, and manned/unmanned airborne intelligence and early warning systems) could also monitor developments in southern Lebanon. (In fact, one of the missions of the Israeli observation post on Mount Hermon is to do just that.) Indeed, any deployment of airborne systems to monitor an Israeli–Syrian peace would be facilitated by the free access of the aircraft to Lebanese airspace. Likewise, technical assets tasked to monitor southern Lebanon or Syria should be available, as needed, for use on either front.

Israel is likely to demand limitations on the deployment of heavy Lebanese or Syrian forces in southern Lebanon (though it will probably want gendarme and light-infantry-type forces there, in order to maintain internal security). The United States will likely be called upon to help monitor compliance with such force limitations, and it should be willing to do so.

Another means by which Washington could assist in monitoring limitations and improving security would be to help UNIFIL fulfill its mission, defined in Resolution 425 as "confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area" (see Appendix A). For UNIFIL to accomplish its mission, it will need the cooperation of the Lebanese and Syrian governments, as well as the assistance of the security services and armed forces of those countries, in order to augment its own limited means.

Conversely, if Lebanon and Syria are not committed to stopping terrorist attacks against Israel, UNIFIL alone will be unable to do so. Under these circumstances, UNIFIL could become a shield behind which terrorists can hide to avert retaliation by Israel. Should this be the case, it would be better for the United States to encourage the withdrawal of UNIFIL than for the latter to remain in place and risk additional casualties.

At any rate, in light of Israel's declared intent to withdraw from Lebanon by July 2000, there is not enough time to augment UNIFIL before a unilateral Israeli withdrawal. It would be desirable to reinforce UNIFIL (increase its size, provide heavier armaments, broaden its mandate, loosen rules of engagement) only if the post-withdrawal environment were conducive to its success. This would almost certainly require an arrangement or agreement (informal or formal) between Israel and Lebanon (supported by Syria) regarding post-withdrawal security arrangements.

Finally, the United States should seek to revive or create some kind of framework for confidence building and information sharing, along the lines of the defunct mixed armistice commissions (MACs) that were

established in the aftermath of the 1948–49 Arab–Israeli War. For a time, the MACs served a useful purpose in ensuring that border incidents did not become major crises. Such an organization, comprising civilian and military personnel, might be useful as a means of maintaining an open line of communication between the parties and ensuring that possible sporadic border violence following an Israeli withdrawal is contained. There are limits to the utility of such arrangements, however; systematic violence will have to be dealt with through preemptive and/or retaliatory strikes and punitive action.

PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY

The United States should also seek to engage in preventive diplomacy to defuse potentially explosive issues that could result in renewed violence. This diplomacy should aim to ensure the safety of former South Lebanese Army (SLA) members and the stability of southern Lebanon, seek the expulsion of international terrorists in Lebanon, and resolve the problem of the more than 350,000 Palestinian refugees in that country.

1. Encourage Stability, Reconstruction, and Development in Southern Lebanon.

The United States has an interest in averting retribution against former SLA personnel, which could undermine the stability of southern Lebanon and result in a new cycle of violence there. The United States might be able to help resettle those SLA members who no longer feel safe living in Lebanon, and it should indicate to the Lebanese government that failing to ensure the safety of former SLA members will effect bilateral ties.

The most effective means of ensuring stability in southern Lebanon will be to provide incentives for reconciliation among the residents of the region, as well as for continuing economic ties with Israel. The United States could drum up substantial international aid for southern Lebanon tied to the extent to which groups are disarmed and amnesty is offered to past combatants. The numbers required would be small, given that the South has a population of about 150,000 and that the total number of those locals who work for Hizballah, the SLA, and UNIFIL is perhaps 6,000. It would seem that $100 million per year from all sources would be ample to replace the lost income from Iran, Israel, and the UN. The aid could be used to create the infrastructure for private-sector employment to end what is now the region's main industry, namely warfare and peacekeeping funded by others (Iran, Israel, and the UN). This aid could also provide both the former security zone and the nearby mainly Shi'i areas with schools, hospitals, and public utilities to make up for years of social neglect during the conflict.

2. Undercut Support for International Terrorism.

The United States has an interest in preventing southern Lebanon from becoming a safehaven and training ground for international terrorist groups that might be motivated to attack Israeli or American interests around the world. These include independent groups such as the Usama bin Ladin network and state-sponsored organizations such as Hizballah's Islamic Jihad Organization.

The extent to which Lebanese territory is used as a launch pad for terrorism depends primarily on Syria's attitude, because such terrorism can be effectively ended if the Syrians were to cut off the flow of money, material support, and protection that makes such terrorism possible. Syria should be expected to take steps like closing down terrorist camps throughout Lebanon and Syria, turning over for prosecution terrorists with American blood on their hands, and expelling senior terrorists from both Lebanese and Syrian territory (as the Syrians did with Turkish Kurdish Workers' Party [PKK] chief Abdullah Ocalan). If Syria fails to take such steps, the United States should refuse to normalize relations with Syria by keeping it on the list of state sponsors of terror. Furthermore, if groups in Syria—or in the Bekaa, as long as Syrian troops remain there—commit terrorist acts in other countries, the United States should uphold the right of the target country to retaliate, while working to impose international penalties on Syria.

Although the degree to which Iran is able to support those attacking Israel will depend almost entirely upon Syria, Iran's desire to support those attacking Israel could depend on Iranian domestic politics and the future direction of relations between the United States and Iran. It is possible that Iranian support for anti–peace process terrorism would wane were reformists to gain the upper hand in the Iranian political scene. There are indications that the reformists want a less confrontational stance vis-à-vis the United States and place a lower priority on the struggle against Israel. On the other hand, there are also indications that this issue is not a priority for the reformists and that they would be willing to accommodate the hardliners on foreign policy issues if the reformists could have their way on the domestic issues that matter most to them. Be that as it may, there is little Washington can do to influence Iranian domestic politics: too warm an embrace of the reformists could well be counterproductive, while sanctions and other pressures against hardline stances have had little impact to date on Iran's policy in this particular area (though such pressures have certainly influenced Iran's ability to finance and implement its weapons modernization and proliferation programs). Should the United States and Iran make progress toward improving relations and toward addressing issues of mutual concern, the Lebanon file should be near the top of the agenda.

3. Address the Fate of the Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon.

There is broad popular agreement in Lebanon that the more than 350,000 Palestinian refugees there cannot be allowed to stay because they threaten the country's stability. Given that reality, if the situation of the refugees is not addressed, Syria and Lebanon will use the issue to justify and generate sympathy—in Lebanon and around the region—for continued attacks on Israel. Accordingly, the United States must find a way to defuse the issue. There are several ways to advance this goal.

The United States should address humanitarian and political problems directly. The current *de facto* policy—under which the United States and the international community ignore the plight of the refugees while Lebanon makes their situation so intolerable that they do not want to stay—feeds the cycle of desperation, a radicalizing factor that will make it more difficult for them to integrate into any society. Alternative approaches would include accelerated talks regarding the departure of most of the refugees from Lebanon (including emigration to industrial and Arab countries as well as resettlement in the Palestinian territories and—where appropriate—family unification in Israel); looser Lebanese restrictions on Palestinians in the camps (e.g., allow employment); and increased international funding for refugee schools and hospitals.

Washington should also seek to cut off material support for rejectionists. Syria continues to provide aid for Palestinian radicals based in Syria and the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley, but as part of its efforts to achieve a comprehensive settlement to the Arab–Israeli peace process, the United States should make clear that until such assistance is ended, it will oppose the reintegration of Syria into the community of nations and block efforts to lift sanctions and normalize commercial and financial ties with Damascus.

CONCLUSIONS

A unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon is likely to produce Syrian–Israeli tensions that could significantly set back the peace process, if not lead to open conflict. Under such circumstances, the main instruments of U.S. influence may be the fear of Israeli retaliation and escalation, and the desire of the Lebanese and Syrian governments to fully normalize relations with United States. For Lebanon, such a normalization would increase its attractiveness to international investors.

The United States should therefore generate international support for the principle underpinning Resolution 425, that each side is responsible for the security of its own side of the Israel–Lebanon border. In the event of post-withdrawal cross-border attacks, Israel will be fully within its rights to defend itself through preemptive and retaliatory strikes. Washington should support that right.

Furthermore, a variety of potential problems could even follow an

Israeli withdrawal in the context of simultaneous Israel–Lebanon and Israel–Syria agreements or peace treaties. The status of the Palestinians in Lebanon is likely to remain a thorny issue; many Lebanese are deeply hostile toward Israel and would support terrorists attacking that country. Likewise, the governments of Lebanon and Syria might have reasons of their own to preserve a degree of tension on the Israeli–Lebanese border. Unfortunately, the key to keeping the peace between Israel, Lebanon, and Syria may well be deterrence. For this reason, upholding Israel's right of self-defense and retaliation will have to remain a cornerstone of U.S. policy toward Lebanon, even after the signing of peace treaties between Israel and Lebanon.

Appendix A

Security Council Resolution 425 (1978), adopted March 19, 1978

The Security Council,

Taking note of the letters from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon and from the Permanent Representative of Israel,

Having heard the statements of the Permanent Representatives of Lebanon and Israel,

Gravely concerned at the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East and its consequences to the maintenance of international peace,

Convinced that the present situation impedes the achievement of a just peace in the Middle East,

1. *Calls* for strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries;

2. *Calls upon* Israel immediately to cease its military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese territory;

3. *Decides,* in the light of the request of the Government of Lebanon, to establish immediately under its authority a United Nations interim force for southern Lebanon for the purpose of confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area, the force to be composed of personnel drawn from Member States;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Council within twenty-four hours on the implementation of the present resolution.

Adopted at the 2074th meeting by 12 votes to none, with two abstentions (Czechoslovakia, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).

Appendix B

*Security Council Resolution 426 (1978),
adopted March 19, 1978*

The Security Council,

    1. *Approves* the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), contained in document S/12611 of 19 March 1978;

    2. *Decides* that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon shall be established in accordance with the above-mentioned report for an initial period of six months, and that it shall continue in operation thereafter, if required, provided the Security Council so decides.

> *Adopted at the 2075th meeting by 12 votes to
> none, with 2 abstentions (Czechoslovakia,
> Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).*

Appendix C

Security Council Resolution 520 (1982),
adopted September 17, 1982

The Security Council,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 15 September 1982,

Condemning the murder of Bashir Gemayel, the constitutionally elected President-electof Lebanon, and every effort to disrupt by violence the restoration of a strong, stable government in Lebanon,

Having listened to the statement by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon,

Taking note of Lebanon's determination to ensure the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese forces from Lebanon,

1. *Reaffirms* its resolutions 508 (1982), 509 (1982) and 516 (1982) in all their components;

2. *Condemns* the recent Israeli incursions into Beirut in violation of the cease-fire agreements and of Security Council resolutions;

3. *Demands* an immediate return to the positions occupied by Israel before 15 September 1982, as a first step towards the full implementation of Security Council resolutions;

4. *Calls again* for the strict respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon through the Lebanese Army throughout Lebanon;

5. *Reaffirms* its resolutions 512 (1982) and 513 (1982) which call for respect for the rights of the civilian populations without any discrimination, and repudiates all acts of violence against those populations;

6. *Supports* the efforts of the Secretary-General to implement Security Council resolution 516 (1982), concerning the deployment of United Nations observers to monitor the situation in and around Beirut and requests all the parties concerned to cooperate fully in the application of that resolution;

7. *Decides* to remain seized of the question and asks the Secretary-General to keep the Council informed of developments as soon as possible and not later than within twenty-four hours.

Adopted unanimously at the 2395th meeting.

Appendix D

Israel–Lebanon Ceasefire Understanding

The following is the text of the "April 1996 Understanding" reached on Friday, April 26, 1996, for the ceasefire in Lebanon:

The United States understands that after discussions with the governments of Israel and Lebanon, and in consultation with Syria, Lebanon and Israel will ensure the following:

1. Armed groups in Lebanon will not carry out attacks by Katyusha rockets or by any kind of weapon into Israel.

2. Israel and those cooperating with it will not fire any kind of weapon at civilians or civilian targets in Lebanon.

3. Beyond this, the two parties commit to ensuring that under no circumstances will civilians be the target of attack and that civilian populated areas and industrial and electrical installations will not be used as launching grounds for attacks.

4. Without violating this understanding, nothing herein shall preclude any party from exercising the right of self-defense.

A Monitoring Group is established consisting of the United States, France, Syria, Lebanon and Israel. Its task will be to monitor the application of the understanding stated above. Complaints will be submitted to the Monitoring Group.

In the event of a claimed violation of the understanding, the party submitting the complaint will do so within 24 hours. Procedures for dealing with the complaints will be set by the Monitoring Group.

The United States will also organize a Consultative Group, to consist of France, the European Union, Russia and other interested parties, for the purpose of assisting in the reconstruction needs of Lebanon.

It is recognized that the understanding to bring the current crisis between Lebanon and Israel to an end cannot substitute for a permanent solution. The United States understands the importance of achieving a comprehensive peace in the region.

Toward this end, the United States proposes the resumption of negotiations between Syria and Israel and between Lebanon and Israel at a time to be agreed upon, with the objective of reaching comprehensive peace.

The United States understands that it is desirable that the negotiations be conducted in a climate of stability and tranquility.

This understanding will be announced simultaneously at 1800 hours, April 26, 1996, in all countries concerned.

The time set for implementation is 0400 hours, April 27, 1996.

Appendix E

Decision of the Israeli Ministerial Committee for National Security from April 1, 1998, regarding the implementation of Security Council Resolution 425

The full text of the announcement reads as follows:

"The Ministerial Committee for National Security today (1.4.98) adopted the following decision:

1. Israel is accepting UN Security Council Resolution 425, so that the IDF will leave Lebanon with appropriate security arrangements, and so that the Lebanese government can restore its effective control over southern Lebanon and assume responsibility for guaranteeing that its territory will not be used as a base for terrorist activity against Israel.

2. The government expresses its appreciation to the IDF soldiers and commanders who are engaged in the defence of the inhabitants of northern Israel. The IDF will continue its activity against terrorist threats in the "security zone," until the necessary security arrangements are effected.

3. The government of Israel calls on the Lebanese government to begin negotiations, on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 425 to restore its effective control over territories currently under IDF control, and to prevent terrorist activities from its territory against Israel's northern border.

4. Israel views the guaranteed security and safety of the residents of the "security zone" in southern Lebanon and the soldiers of the Southern Lebanese Army as an integral part of the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 425 and of any other arrangement for the restoration of security along our border with Lebanon.

5. Israel will continue its efforts to achieve peace agreements with all its neighbors.

Nicole Brackman, a Soref Fellow at The Washington Institute, focuses on Palestinian refugee issues.

Patrick Clawson is the director for research at The Washington Institute and senior editor of *Middle East Quarterly*.
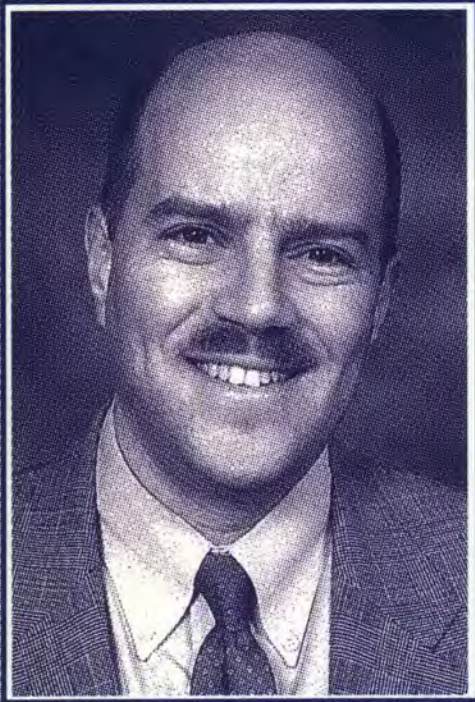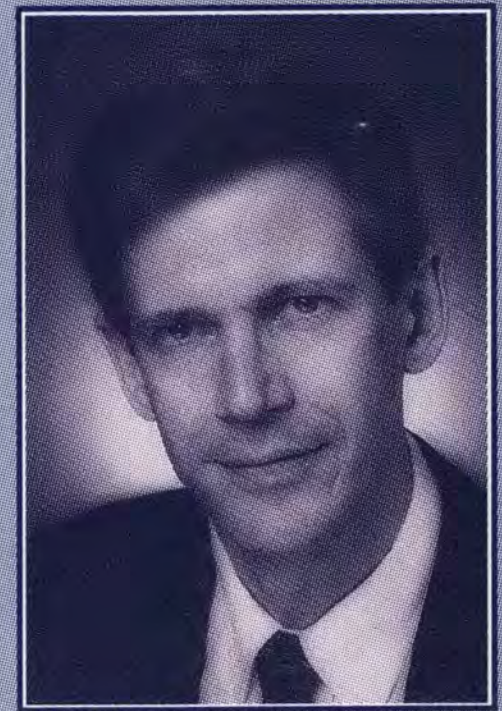
Michael Eisenstadt, a senior fellow at The Washington Institute, specializes in military affairs.

Steven Hecker has worked on Middle East-related issues for the Department of Defense since 1987.
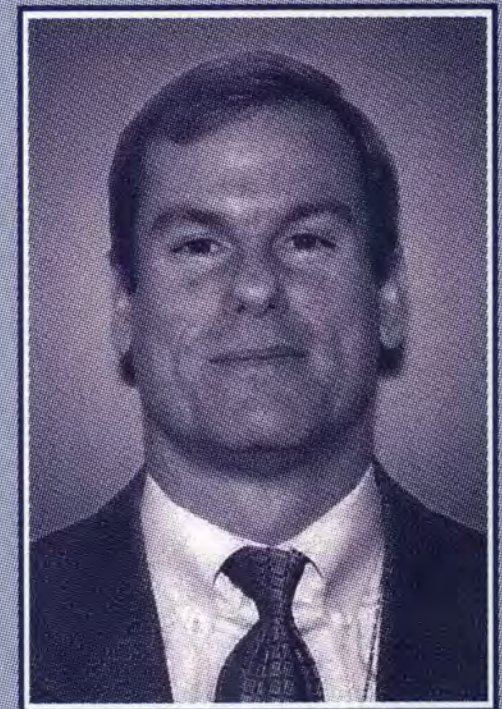
John Hillen is a member of a bipartisan advisory committee, the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century.

Frederic Hof, a former U.S. defense attaché in Lebanon, is a partner with Armitage Associates, a consulting firm.
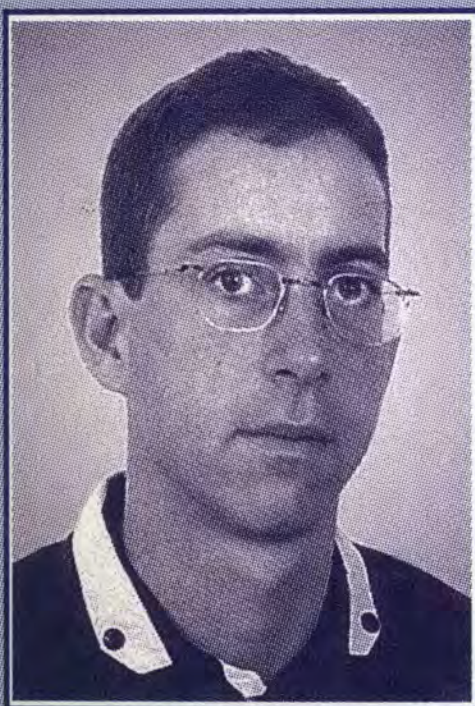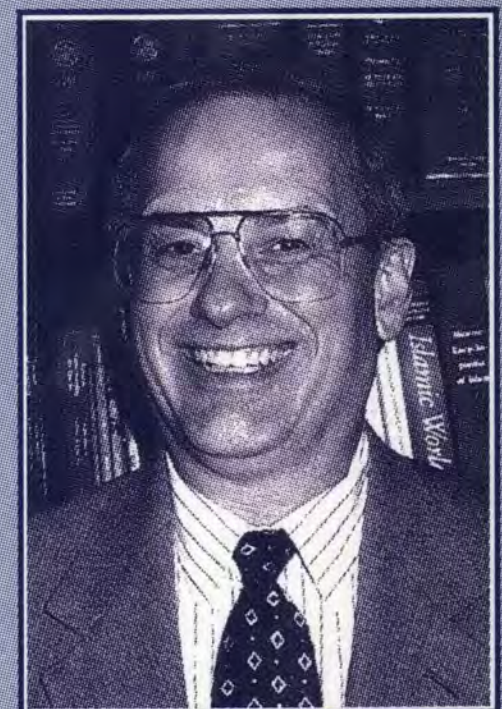
Gal Luft, a lieutenant colonel in the reserves of the Israel Defense Forces, is a research associate of The Washington Institute.