



## **Israel's Policy in Lebanon:**

### **The Initiative for the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 425**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of Israel's present policy in Lebanon is to maximize the security of Northern Israel, while disengaging itself from Lebanon's internal affairs and the political aspirations that were part of the Israeli policy before and during the Lebanon War.

\* The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT).

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ISRAELI POLICY IN LEBANON**

The aim of Israel's present policy in Lebanon is to maximize the security of Northern Israel, while disengaging itself from Lebanon's internal affairs and the political aspirations that were part of the Israeli policy before and during the Lebanon War .

This policy was expressed in the decision of the National Unity Government of 14 January 1985, which stated that “the government will do everything necessary to ensure the peace of the Galilee”. In addition the decision determined that peace in the Galilee would be achieved by a redeployment of IDF forces along the international border creating an area in South Lebanon in which local forces (the South Lebanese Army - SLA) would operate with the active support and backing of the IDF. This region later came to be known as the “Security Zone .”

This policy - supported over the years by all the Israeli governments, regardless of their political leanings - has allowed the residents of Northern Galilee to live for long periods a more or less normal life from the Lebanon War up to the present. However, it cannot wholly solve the problem of terrorist attacks from Lebanese territory. The heavy and painful price paid for the security of Israeli citizens is the loss of lives of IDF soldiers in the “security zone .”

The preferred alternative to the “security zone” strategy would be a peace agreement between Israel and Lebanon, which would settle the pending problems between the two sides. However, due to the lack of progress towards a peace agreement caused by Lebanon's total dependence on Syria, and the prevalent potential for escalation in South Lebanon, Israel strives for agreements strictly on the basis of security even before arriving at the peace agreements with Syria and Lebanon. These security arrangements, worked out through negotiation between Israel and Lebanon in the framework of Security Council Resolution 425, should stop the bloodshed in South Lebanon, thus paving the way for negotiations between Israel, Syria, and Lebanon in the framework of the Madrid peace-process .

## **WHAT SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 425 STANDS FOR**

Security Council Resolution 425 was adopted on 19 March 1978, under American auspices, towards the end of the IDF “Litani Operation” in Southern Lebanon. The resolution is based on chapter 6 of the UN Charter, which deals with the conclusion of disputes by peaceful means and by negotiation. Its goal was the end of the “Litani Operation” and the withdrawal of IDF forces from Lebanon. However, the resolution took into account the circumstances that forced Israel to carry out the “Litani Operation”, and called for the implementation of measures to put an end to the anti-Israeli terrorist activity from South Lebanon and to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure .

The resolution consists of two parts :

The first part of the resolution calls for the respect of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries. The resolution calls for Israel to immediately cease all military action in the framework of the “Litani Operation” and to withdraw its forces from Lebanon .

In the second part of the resolution, the Security Council calls for the establishment of a United Nations Interim Force (UNIFIL) in South Lebanon in order to meet three objectives :

To confirm the withdrawal of the IDF forces .

"To restore international peace and security ."

"To assist the government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area ."

According to a juridical interpretation, these aims are not interchangeable but must be considered as a whole. This means that without the restoration of international peace and security and an efficient and effective control by the Lebanese government over its own territory, a unilateral IDF withdrawal from Lebanon is neither possible nor profitable, since it would upset the balance between these three objectives .

It should be mentioned here that this point was emphasized at the time (19 march, 1978) by the late Haim Hertzog, then Israeli ambassador to the UN. He advised Prime Minister Menahem Begin to accept the resolution. Hertzog, with the Prime Ministers approval, delivered the following speech in the Security Council: “Israel understands the spirit of the resolution as indicating a clear link between the withdrawal of our troops and the establishment of an effective deterrent force against future terrorist attacks. Israel has created conditions in which the government of Lebanon can establish full control and sovereignty ”.

From the above we see that Security Council Resolution 425 deals only in part with the IDF withdrawal from Lebanese territory. Clearly those elements of the resolution concerning the restoration of Lebanese government control and the restoration of peace and security in the region are necessary conditions in filling the vacuum that would be created by the IDF pullout .

## **WHAT SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 425 DOES NOT SAY**

There is no obligation for a unilateral and unconditional withdrawal of the IDF from Lebanon, as is often maintained by the Syrians and Lebanese officials. Rather, what is proposed is a “package deal”, of which the IDF pullout is only one component .

The resolution is not a “court ruling” of an operative nature, as the Syrians and Lebanese claim. It is, rather, a recommendation, whose implementation should be the result of negotiations between Israel and Lebanon. The resolution is based on Chapter 6 of the UN Charter, which calls for the resolution of disputes by discussions and negotiations .

The resolution makes no mention of, nor does it have any connection with, Syria. Thus the Syrian-Lebanese demand for linkage between Resolution 425 and the Syrian-Israeli track are political arguments, not based on resolution 425, and actually in conflict with it .

### **Security Council Resolution 426**

As stipulated by resolution 425, the Secretary General of the United Nations submitted a report to the Security Council on the implementation of the resolution, and this report was adopted by the Security Council as resolution 426 (19 march, 1978 .(

Resolution 426 stipulates the creation of UNIFIL in order to implement resolution 425, on the basis of Secretary Generals report. In his report the Secretary General asserts that in order to enable UNIFIL to fulfill its mandate “it may be necessary to work out arrangements with Israel and Lebanon as a preliminary measure for the implementation of the Security Council Resolution”. Clearly, the reference here is to security arrangements .

In addition, the Secretary Generals report states that UNIFIL, as part of its mandate, must ensure the cessation of all hostile activity, by either side, in the area under its jurisdiction. In other words, the area in which UNIFIL and the Lebanese army will deploy will not be used for terrorist activity of any kind .

The Lebanese, for their part, claim that Security Council Resolution 426 calls for separate discussions - between Israel and the UN, and between Lebanon and the UN, and that negotiations between Lebanon and Israel are superfluous. This assertion is contrary to the spirit of resolutions 425 and 426 (as well as to Chapter 6 of the U.N. Charter, on which the resolutions are based) and to the precedent set by the military talks between Israel and Lebanon in Nakoura .

## **THE OBSTACLES TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTION**

### **Why has the resolution not been implemented during the twenty years of its existence ?**

The main obstruction to the immediate implementation of the resolution was the total collapse of the Lebanese government and army during the civil war. While the resolution stipulates the effective restoration of the Lebanese government control over Southern Lebanon, the lack of a competent central government in Lebanon left a vacuum. This void was filled by Palestinian terrorist organizations (prior to 1982) and by Lebanese terrorist organizations, mainly Hizballa (after the Lebanon war). UNIFIL, originally intended as an important tool in the Resolution's implementation, proved ineffective, operating under a mandate that precluded an effective fight against terror .

The military talks in Nakoura between Israel and Lebanon (8 November 1984- 24 January 1985) to work out the “security arrangements” for the implementation of resolution 425 failed because of this main problem, and because Syria's tough stance, while enabling the Lebanese to participate in the talks, at the same time encouraged them to stick to a inflexible stance. Neither party was willing to consider Israel's legitimate security requirements. During the Washington talks that took place within the framework of the Madrid Peace process (1991-1993) the accent transferred towards peace agreements. As far as Israel was concerned, these talks were not concerned with the implementation of Resolution 425, which is, by nature, a security issue .

It should be emphasized that the military talks in Nakoura between Israeli and Lebanese military delegations dealt from the Lebanese point of view with the implementation of Security Council Resolution 425. On the 31st of October 1984, eight days before the opening of the talks, after consultations with Syria, Lebanon and Israel, UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar sent a letter to the president of the Security Council, which served as a conceptual basis for the talks. From this letter it is clear that the UN Secretary's position is that the talks should deal with the IDF withdrawal and the working out of security arrangements. Thus, peace and security may be restored to the area and the control of the local government re-established, as was stipulated by Resolution 425 (for UN secretary's letter see appendix .(

### **What has Changed Today ?**

The Lebanese Army has in the past few years gone through a process of reconstruction, and has proven itself in the fight against the Palestinians, the Lebanese militias disbanded according to the “Taif Agreement” (1989), and against Shi'ite supporters of Subhi al-Tufeyli in the Beka'a Valley. The Lebanese army, assisted by UNIFIL and with international backing could, in our opinion, successfully fill the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the IDF, conditional on receiving the "green light" from the Syrian government, which has not yet been given .

## **What are the Security Arrangements Demanded by Israel ?**

In an interview to the “al-Watan al-Arabi” (2 January, 1998) in which the Israeli Defense Minister first presented the initiative dealing with Security Council Resolution 425, he was asked if he had any concrete ideas about what the security arrangements demanded by Israel should include .

The minister did not go into the details of the arrangements, but he clarified the leading principles: these arrangements must include a complete cessation of terrorist activities against Israel from Lebanese territory; they must dismantle the terrorist organizations' military infrastructure, thus ensuring the safety of the South Lebanese Army and of the citizens living in the “Security Zone” and Jezzine; and they must include the effective deployment of the Lebanese Army with both the responsibility and the authority to take action in South Lebanon. Fulfillment of all these conditions will enable the restoration of Lebanese government control in South Lebanon, and the withdrawal of the IDF .

## **IN CONCLUSION**

The initiative to implement Security Council Resolution 425 made it clear to public opinion in Israel, Lebanon, the Arab world and the International Community that Israel truly wishes to stop the bloodshed in Lebanon, and that it is ready to withdraw the IDF from Lebanon, with the necessary security arrangements required by the Resolution. At the same time the initiative also showed the conflict between the Lebanese national interest that asks for the implementation of the Resolution, and the Syrian particular interest, which attempts to use the “Lebanese card” to put pressure on Israel to meet its demands on the Golan Heights. We have no doubt that if it were up to the Lebanese their response would be quite different. The Israeli initiative has thus placed both Lebanon and Syria in a politically defensive position, and sent Syria into a frenzy of diplomatic activity, in order to make sure that Lebanese government officials "toe the line ."

At this stage the initiative is still in its initial phase, and needs a great deal of patience from all the parties concerned. The initiative will need intensive political activity and creative thought in order to overcome the difficulties ahead, and first and foremost that presented by Syria's tough stance. There are no guarantees, of course, that this political activity will bring the hoped-for results but it must be remembered that the alternatives look less promising and more dangerous.

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Appendices :

Security Council Resolution 425

UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar's document of the 31 October, 1984