

Hizbullah Precedent II - Demilitarization Arrangements

Israel may not settle only for a cease fire and new security mechanism on the Lebanese side of the border, but may also demand a demilitarization arrangement that would prevent Hizbullah from renewing its military ability (Benn and Harel, [Ha'aretz](#), 7/18/06). **The Re'ut Institute contends** that such an arrangement on the Lebanese border may serve as a precedent for future security arrangements in Gaza and the West Bank.

What is the Issue?

Demilitarization in Lebanon

- According to statements made by Israeli Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Israel's initial goal in the current conflict was to remove Hizbullah away from its northern border.
- Over the past couple of days an additional demand has been mentioned to demilitarize Hizbullah in order to prevent it from stocking strategic weapons such as rockets and missiles. Currently, the arrangements discussed do not rely on an Israeli-Lebanese agreement and do not require reciprocity on Israel's side.

Demilitarization in Gaza and the West Bank

- The idea of a demilitarized Palestinian entity accompanied by monitoring mechanisms (hereinafter: "Demilitarization Principle") is one of the mainstays of Israel's policy vis-à-vis the Palestinians.
- The demilitarization principle has so far been manifested in the security arrangements provided by the Interim Agreement (9/95) and enforced through Israel's control over the external perimeter. Israel has expected that within the framework of the Permanent Status Agreement, the Palestinians will officially accept the demilitarization principle.
- The demilitarization principle has been eroded to the point of collapse following Israel's withdrawal from the border between Gaza and Egypt (11/05) and Hamas' electoral victory. The combination between Israel's insistence on the Roadmap and the Palestinians' fundamental objection to the establishment of a Palestinian State with Provisional Borders, has further eroded the principle (see: Militarized Palestinian State)

Why is This Important? Why Now?

- One of the working assumptions that supported the withdrawal from Lebanon (5/00) and the Disengagement (8/05) was that the establishment of an internationally-recognized border would create a "legitimacy barrier" which would prevent an attack on Israel, or at least allow Israel to respond forcefully if it should be attacked.
- The recent events in Gaza and Lebanon require re-evaluating this assumption and reconsidering the existing security arrangements in Gaza and Lebanon and the ones to be created in the West Bank following the Convergence.
- It appears that there would be a need for an arrangement that would assure the absence of "strategic weapons" in Lebanon and establish international mechanisms of enforcement and monitoring.

Policy Options

- A demilitarization arrangement in Lebanon – with or without Hizbullah's consent – may create a new model for similar arrangements between Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza and in the future along the Convergence line. Such a model may allow Israel to cease the erosion of the principle of Palestinian demilitarization.

End.