

## Point of View No. 45

### International Involvement Predicament (4) - The Interim Period

8.3.2006

During talks held between France and the US in preparation for the upcoming discussion in the UN Security Council, France required that any arrangements regarding the deployment of an international force will be reached only *after* the declaration of a ceasefire (**Ha'aretz**, 8/3/06).

**The Reut Institute forewarns** that there may be a substantial time gap from the declaration of a ceasefire until the IDF withdraws its forces and until an international force is deployed. This time gap may undermine the deployment of the international force and erode Israel's political and military achievements.

#### What is the Issue?

Israel wishes to synchronize the ceasefire and its withdrawal from Lebanon with the deployment of an effective international force.

However, several dynamics may prevent this synchronization:

- **Scope of the mandate** – The more Israel insists that the mandate of the international force will be extensive, the dimmer are the prospects for the deployment of such a force, and higher is the chance that Israel would remain in Lebanon for an extended period of time (see: International Involvement Predicament (1) – Scope of Mandate).
- **Comprehensive or partial arrangement** – While Israel and the US strive for a comprehensive political arrangement, Hizbullah will support only temporary, local and conditional arrangement that would allow it to continue the struggle against Israel (see: International Involvement Predicament (3) – Finality of Claims?)
- **Disarmament: now or later?** – Insisting on dismantling Hizbullah prior to a resolution of the outstanding issues between Israel and Lebanon contradicts the resistance rationale, and may lead to a deadlock (see: International Involvement Predicament (2) – Inverse Sequence of Actions)

Therefore, it is likely that Israel will not achieve the aforementioned synchronization, and may be forced into ceasefire (1) prior to the deployment of an international force; (2) while maintaining military presence in Lebanon; and (3) while it is exposed to attacks by Hizbullah.

#### Why is This Important? Why Now?

During the interim period between a ceasefire, the withdrawal of IDF forces and the deployment of an international force, Hizbullah may be able to restore its military abilities, gain legitimacy and even create a reality in which the deployment of the international force will not be feasible and Israel's military and political achievements will be eroded.

#### Policy Options

The Government of Israel should address the following questions:

- How can it minimize the time gap between a ceasefire and its withdrawal?
- To what degree, if at all, should Israel maintain its presence in Lebanon during the interim period until the deployment of an international force?
- In light of the evolving circumstances, is Israel interested in the deployment of an international force?
- What part can the Lebanese government and other international actors play in the new arrangement?

- What would be the future border regime between Israel and Lebanon? The nature of this regime would constitute a reference point for Israel's conduct during the ceasefire.

For additional sources see the Reut Institute website: [www.reut-institute.org](http://www.reut-institute.org)

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