

Point of View No. 44

International Involvement Predicament (3) - Finality of Claims?

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Secretary of State Rice declared this morning that there is a regional consensus regarding the need to reach a **comprehensive settlement** of the current conflict ([US Department of State Website](#), 7/31/06).

The Reut Institute forewarns that the rationale of the resistance contradicts the aspirations of the international community to reach a comprehensive political settlement. Therefore, any settlement reached in Lebanon may be fragile.

This predicament may be solved by **requiring the Lebanese government to present a comprehensive and final list of the outstanding issues between Lebanon and Israel.**

What is the Issue?

- **Comprehensive settlement rationale = finality of claims** – The international community, the US and Israel aspire to reach a comprehensive and lasting political settlement in Lebanon, which will include the full implementation of Resolution 1559 and the resolution of all outstanding issues between Israel and Lebanon, such as the control over Shebaa Farms, disarmament of Hizbullah and release of prisoners. This means that such a settlement will rely on the finality of claims between Israel and Lebanon, which will preclude any justification for future conflict.

- **Permanent resistance rationale = no finality of claims** – Hizbullah is one of the forces of permanent resistance that work to de-legitimize Israel and oppose any political settlements that are based on finality of claims.

These forces wish to sustain the struggle against Israel by raising existing claims, or by creating new ones (as in the case of the Shebaa Farms)

Why is This Important? Why Now?

- Due to these contradicting rationales, the permanent resistance will attempt to undermine any future arrangement in Lebanon which would attempt to resolve the outstanding issues between Israel and Lebanon.
- Therefore, the prospects for a sustainable and comprehensive settlement seem dim.
- Hizbullah and the permanent resistance forces will attempt to reach local, temporary and conditional arrangements that would enable them to continue the resistance in other locations, during different periods of time and under other circumstances.

Policy Options

- Hizbullah is trying to balance its commitment to Syria and Iran with its Lebanese identity. One way of dealing with Hizbullah is to underline the tension and contradictions between these two loyalties.
- Hence, Israel and the US should demand that the Lebanese government present a comprehensive and exhaustive list of the outstanding issues between Lebanon and Israel.
- This step may undermine Hizbullah's efforts to renew the struggle against Israel based on claims that are not included in the list.

For additional sources see the Reut Institute website: www.reut-institute.org

End.