



August 1, 2012

The Road to the First Lebanon War by Dr. Reuven Erlich (Col. Ret.)¹

Overview

1. **The aim of this paper** is to examine **the processes that led to the First Lebanon War**, the role played by Lebanese domestic and foreign actors in the road to war, and the unique nature of the war. At the end of the paper I will attempt to provide a brief commentary on the aims, results, and lessons of the war from my own point of view.

Dating and naming

2. The formal name given at the time to the war, on which the Israeli government decided on June 5, 1982, two days after a terrorist from the Abu Nidal Organization had seriously wounded Israel's ambassador in London, was **Operation Peace for the Galilee**. The name reflected the expectations that the "operation" would be **limited in objectives and time**.

3. In practice, the "operation" turned into a **drawn-out war** whose ending date (as well as many other issues surrounding the war) continues to be controversial. However, there were **three interconnected phases** to the war and its reverberations:

A. **First, the offensive phase, which began on June 6, 1982, initiated by the IDF**. This phase ended on **August 31, 1982**, when the Palestinian terrorists and the Syrian army left western Beirut after IDF siege.

B. **The second phase, during which the IDF remained in Lebanon**, was essentially intended to make political achievements that would allow the war to end by signing a peace treaty over Lebanon. This phase **began in September 1982 and ended in early 1985** when a decision was made by Israel to withdraw unconditionally from Lebanon and establish a "security zone". During this phase **the IDF was on the defensive** against terrorist and guerilla attacks, and became

¹ This paper is based on several lectures given by Dr. Reuven Erlich to mark the 30-year anniversary of the first Lebanon war. The lectures are in turn based on the books and articles written by Dr. Erlich on the issue, and on examination of the first Lebanon war and its results in a thirty-year perspective.

embroiled in a wide variety of internal Lebanese disputes brought to the surface by the war (such as the violent struggle between the Druze and Christian militias). **On January 14, 1985** the Israeli national unity government made a decision that the way to achieve peace in the Galilee was to **redeploy the IDF along the international border** while maintaining a security zone along the Israeli-Lebanese border where local forces would operate with the backing of the IDF.

C. **The third phase:** the Israeli government's decision was supposed to put an end to the war that had begun on June 6, 1982. In practice, however, **the fight for the existence of the security zone**, perceived by Israel as the preferred method of achieving peace in the Galilee, continued even after the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon. This fight, led by **Hezbollah**, began in the first half of 1985. It ended on **May 24, 2000** with the IDF's unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon and its deployment along the international border ("the U.N. blue line"), **as stipulated by U.N. Security Council Resolution 425**. The withdrawal of the IDF led to the collapse of the security zone and the disbandment of the South Lebanon Army (SLA).

4. **The first phase of the war** was referred to by the Israeli government as Operation Peace for the Galilee and could still be thought of as a large-scale military operation. However, the longer the IDF remained in Lebanon, the clearer it became that **the name did not reflect the actual reality**, which was anything but a short, time-limited operation. Some closure was achieved in 2006, when the war against Hezbollah was officially dubbed "**the Second Lebanon War**". Thus, the State of Israel recognized, retrospectively and indirectly, that the war that had preceded it was in fact **the First Lebanon War**.

5. **At any rate, the First Lebanon War, whether it lasted three or eighteen years, was the longest and most controversial in the history of the State of Israel.** Even now, thirty years later, after the dust has settled, **there are still serious disagreements in Israel surrounding the war** and the assessment of its results and implications. However, the thirty years that have passed can provide us with a better **historical perspective** of the processes that triggered the war and its **strategic results**.

The nature of the war – a retrospective

6. Thirty years after the First Lebanon War broke out, it can be asserted that it was a **different kind of war** than any other **Israel had experienced since the War of Independence in 1948**. It was the IDF's **first asymmetrical war**, and it was fought mostly against **terrorist organizations** rather than regular armies.

7. **Prior to 1982, the IDF had fought against regular armies:** the Egyptian, Syrian, Jordanian, and other armies (1948); the Egyptian army (1956); the armies of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria (1967); and the armies of Egypt and Syria (1973). **1982 was the first time** that most of the battles were fought against terrorist and guerilla organizations, some of them organized into paramilitary structures. The frontal regular warfare against the army of Syria took place mostly on June 8 – 11, in the Bekaa Valley; in addition, there were local clashes between the IDF and the Syrian army on the Coastal Road and in the Chouf Mountains.

8. The year 1982 **saw the beginning of a new era of asymmetrical warfare against Hezbollah and the Palestinian organizations**, which maintain semi-regular military structures. They were **supported by Iran and Syria**, which preferred staying behind the scenes and conducting terrorist and guerilla warfare against Israel **through their proxies**. Examples of such wars may include **the First Lebanon War, the Second Lebanon War, the first and second intifadas, Operation Defensive Shield, and Operation Cast Lead. Tanks and fighter jets**—the weapon of decision in conventional army-versus-army warfare—gave way to **rockets and suicide bombers**, effectively used by terrorist organizations against Israel's civilian population.

The roots of the First Lebanon War

9. **Three important, mutually-connected processes** that needed to be tackled by Israel were occurring in Lebanon in the 1970s and the early 1980s. These processes led to **Israel becoming increasingly dragged into the Lebanese quagmire**.

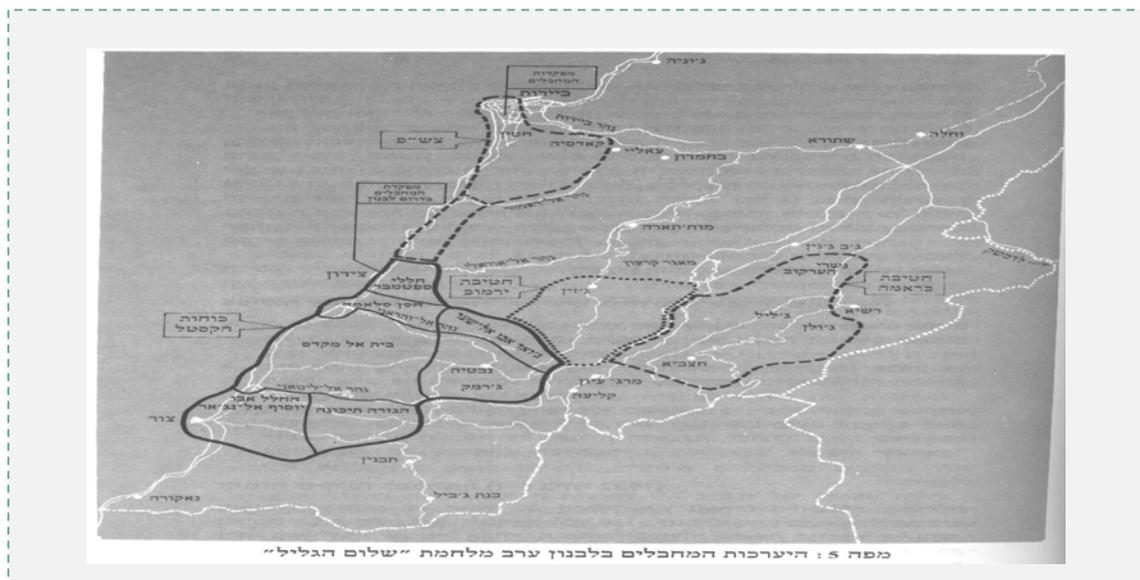
10. The following are the main characteristics of these three processes, **some of which persisted after the Lebanon war:**

A. **Process no. 1 (1976 – 1982): the establishment of the military and political Palestinian autonomous stronghold in Lebanon, and the transformation of Lebanon into a hotspot of Palestinian terrorism against Israel.**

B. The process of Fatah's entrenchment in Lebanon began in 1968, on the southwestern edge of Mount Hermon's slopes, an area referred to as Fatahland. However, after the Palestinian terrorists were driven from Jordan in 1970 and 1971, Lebanon turned into **the main stronghold of Palestinian terrorist organizations in the Middle East** and the staging ground of deadly terrorist attacks against Israel (i.e., the terrorist attacks in Shamir, Ma'alot, Avivim, Nahariya, Kfar Yovel, and the Coastal Road).

C. In the 1970s and early 1980s **a military infrastructure consisting of about 15,000 – 20,000 terrorists** was created in Lebanon. Most of the terrorists belonged to **Fatah**, and some to other terrorist organizations. The terrorists were organized into paramilitary formations, of which the Castel Brigade in southern Lebanon was the most significant (see map).

D. **Politically**, the PLO created a state-within-a-state in Lebanon, with its political and military headquarters in Beirut, controlled by Fatah and the PLO and led by Yasser Arafat. Fatah and the PLO becoming the main military and political power in Lebanon had an **insidious impact on Lebanese politics and society**, and played an important part in the processes that led to the Lebanese civil war and in Israel and Syria becoming dragged into the Lebanese quagmire.

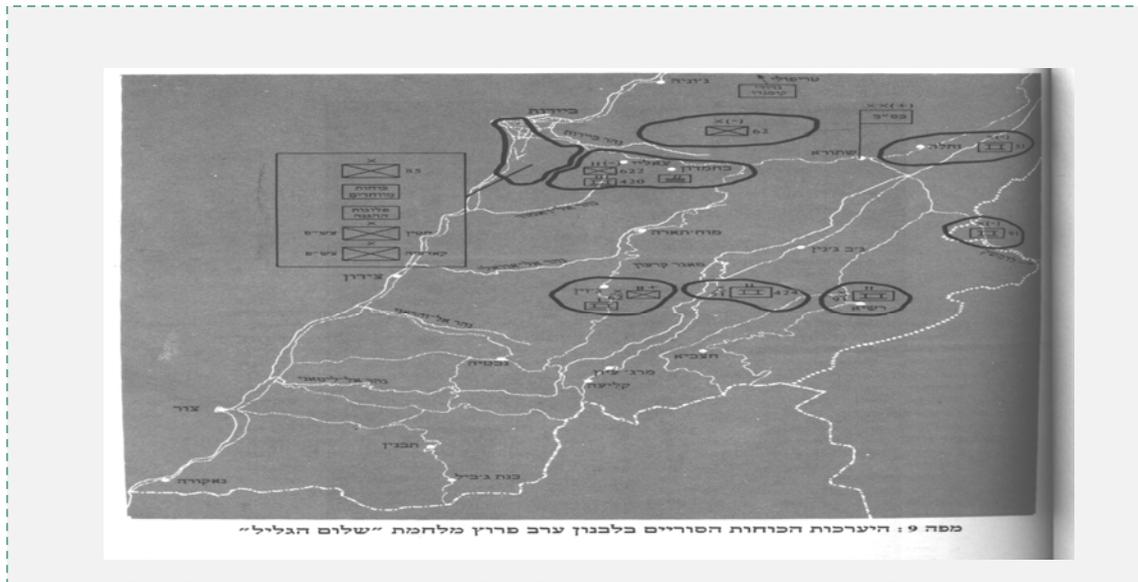


The deployment of Palestinian terrorist organizations in Lebanon on the eve of the First Lebanon War

E. **Process no. 2: the escalation of inter-sectarian tensions in Lebanon, leading up to a bloody 14-year-long civil war** that lasted until the signing of the Taif Accord (1975-1989). The war broke out as a result of a local clash in Ain el-Rummaneh, a Christian neighborhood in eastern Beirut, between Phalangist militia and terrorists from the PFLP-GC. The civil war was fought between two main camps: **the Christian camp** (led by former President Camille Chamoun and Bachir Gemayel, commander of the Lebanese Forces), **and the coalition of terrorist organizations and left wing militias** (led by Arafat). The war resulted in **the collapse of the Lebanese army and the Lebanese administration**, creating a physical threat to the Christian population and a political threat to the Christian political hegemony in Lebanon's traditional system. As often occurs in history, the embattled Christian camp turned to external powers seeking for **military and political assistance**. This time the sources of such assistance were **Syria and Israel**.

F. **Process no. 3 (1975 – 2005): the imposition of the “Syrian order” on Lebanon**. Since gaining independence—in fact, since the early days of the French mandate—Syria aspired to bring Lebanon, perceived as “Western Syria”, under its wing. The roots of Syria's desire to take over Lebanon lay in its pan-Syrian aspirations of a union between Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine (Bilad al-Sham), and in a wide variety of military, political, and internal Syrian interests. Under the Hafez al-Assad regime, Syria took advantage of the civil war in Lebanon to entrench its influence over that country and, later on, to occupy most of its territory. **The key date** of imposing the “Syrian order” was **June 1, 1976, when a reinforced Syrian division invaded Lebanon at the invitation of the Christian camp leadership** to impose the “Syrian order” and force the surrender of terrorist organizations and left-wing militias. Even though it encountered many difficulties along the way, by late 1976 the Syrian army managed to force the Palestinians and the left wing into submission, enter their strongholds in Beirut and Sidon, and temporarily end the fighting between the factions in the civil war. However, once Syria had swallowed a considerable portion of Lebanon, it began **a process of “digestion”** which would prove highly difficult and problematic later on.

Israel in the face of the challenges in Lebanon



The deployment of Syrian forces in Lebanon on the eve of the First Lebanon War

11. The three processes that took place in Lebanon in the years prior to the First Lebanon War brought the State of Israel face to face with **a series of security and political challenges**. Israel was forced to **move the Lebanese issue, with all its complexities, to the top of its national strategic agenda** (until the early 1990s). During this period, Israel dealt intensively with the Lebanese problems at the expense of the Israeli-Arab conflict.
12. In the years leading up to the First Lebanon War, **the State of Israel attempted to provide an appropriate response to these three challenges**. However, the answers found by Israel proved to be **problematic and short-lived**. The following provides an overview of Israel's response to the various challenges:

A. **The response to the challenge of terrorism:** the IDF attempted to deal with the challenge of terrorism using **a variety of military operations**: from large-scale armored raids to target-specific attacks. **A dynamic of terrorist operations and escalating Israeli responses was established in Lebanon**, which reached its peak with **Operation Litani** in 1978 and a large-scale military confrontation between Israel and the terrorists (called by the Palestinians the "two-week war" in July 1981). The military response had **limited** results, which led the IDF and Israel's political leadership to conclude **that the problem of terrorism in Lebanon needed to be solved at the root**; and that there were no localized, temporary solutions to be found (particularly after July 1981). In

addition, in the years leading up to the First Lebanon War, Israel provided humanitarian and military assistance to physically-threatened Christian villages near its border. These villages, and their militias under the command of Major Saad Haddad of the South Lebanon Army, **formed the basis of the security zone established after the IDF's withdrawal in 1985.**

B. **The response to the Syrian challenge:** Israel wished to neutralize the military threats that emerged after the Syrian army invaded Lebanon without getting dragged into an overall military conflict with Syria. At the first stage, the Syrian military threat was **neutralized by indirect U.S.-brokered talks with the Syrian regime, held in March – May 1976. The tacit understanding** achieved during the indirect dialogue was **founded on the drawing of a virtual “red line”** (the Sidon – Khuneh - Rashaya al-Wadi line). The line, which was agreed upon by both sides, divided Lebanon into a zone of Syrian activity in the country's north and middle, and the zone of IDF activity in its south, where the Palestinian terrorist organizations had the core of their military forces. **The indirect understanding provided freedom of action to the Syrian army north of the red line, and the IDF could operate to its south, which prevented direct contact and military confrontation between the two sides** (until the “missile crisis” in spring 1981).

C. **The response to the internal Lebanese challenge:** Israel **extended the scope** of its assistance to its natural allies in the Christian camp, with which it had maintained a covert relationship since before the establishment of the State of Israel. The assistance included **weapons and training, as well as military and humanitarian aid to Christians who lived in the vicinity of the border** and were pressured by the coalition of the terrorists and the left-wing militias. Israel's main partner was **the Lebanese Forces**, led by Bachir Gemayel, the son of Lebanese Phalanges founder Pierre Gemayel, who had the political backing of Camille Chamoun, Lebanon's former president and leader of the National Liberal Party. The Christian camp was (mistakenly) viewed by some in Israel's political and security leadership as having the ability and desire to **help Israel fight the Palestinian terrorists and draw Lebanon into a peace treaty with Israel.**

The road to war: the countdown (1981 – 1982)

13. In 1978, about three years before the war, the Christian militias (i.e., Lebanese Forces) led by Bachir Gemayel launched **a military struggle to expel the Syrian forces from Lebanon**. As far as the Christian camp was concerned, the significance of this objective at least temporarily outweighed the struggle it was waging against its traditional enemies—the Palestinian terrorist organizations—during Lebanon’s civil war. The main clash sites between the Lebanese militias and the Syrian army were **the city of Beirut and the Christian town of Zahlé in the central Bekaa Valley**. In addition to maintaining the Christian character of the town of Zahlé (located in an area that is populated by Shi’ite Muslims), it appears that Bachir Gemayel and the Lebanese Forces **sought to establish territorial continuity from the town of Zahlé, through the Sannine mountains, to the Christian enclave in Mount Lebanon**. The Christian militias falsely and deceptively portrayed to Israelis the Syrian military response against them as “genocide”, **expecting it would encourage Israel to become directly involved in their struggle to free Lebanon from the Syrian occupation**.
14. Israel, which abandoned its former cautious policy, was **dragged** into the Christian-Syrian conflict, **and gradually set on a course that would sink the country into the Lebanese tangle for many years**. In the years following the Lebanese civil war, Israel’s Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin argued that Israel’s involvement **needed to be indirect, i.e., “to help the Christians help themselves”**, which was indeed the foundation of Israeli policy during his (first) term as prime minister. However, Menachem Begin’s Likkud government, which won the elections in **May 1977** and won for the second time in the 1981 elections, abandoned the cautious policy pursued by its predecessor. It was willing to directly address the challenges posed by the dramatic developments in Lebanon, **investing a great deal of military force and political efforts, thus taking greater risks**.
15. **In the spring and summer of 1981, two major events took place in Lebanon** which, as far as Israel was concerned, brought together **the Syrian challenge, the internal Lebanese challenge, and the terrorism challenge**. Looking back, there is no question **that the countdown to the First Lebanon War can be said to have started with these two events:**

A. The “missile crisis”: on April 28, 1981, the Israeli air force shot down two Mi-8 Syrian transport helicopters near Riyaq (to the east of Zahlé). They were mistaken for attack helicopters on their way to attack the so-called “French Chamber” (an important Christian position on Mount Sannine). That came as the result of Prime Minister Menachem Begin’s promise to Christian leaders Camille Chamoun and Bachir Gemayel that Israel would not let the Syrian air force attack the Christian militias. In response, the Syrians brought on April 29, 1981, three batteries of SA6 anti-aircraft missiles into the Bekaa Valley, which were followed by others. The missiles **threatened the Israeli air force’s freedom of flight in Lebanon**, and their deployment **broke the unwritten understanding** established between Israel and Syria in 1976. The Syrians refused to comply with American mediation efforts to pull the missiles out of Lebanon; however, the IDF did not attack them until the First Lebanon War.² Be that as it may, the missile crisis threw Israel and Syria into **a pattern of confrontation in Lebanon**, whose peak was **a limited military conflict at the first phase of the First Lebanon War and, later in the war, Syria’s fight against IDF forces in Lebanon through its proxies.**

B. The “two-week war” (July 10 – 24, 1981): the process of escalation between Israel and the Palestinian terrorists led to an intensive clash in the summer of 1981. For the first time, the terrorists **heavily shelled Kiryat Shmona with artillery and Katyusha rockets, taking advantage of the military capabilities they had built up in southern Lebanon. The reactions of both sides escalated** during the clash: the Israeli air force raided terrorist headquarters located in the middle of populated areas in Beirut, while the terrorists intensively shelled populated areas in the Galilee Panhandle, **leading to the abandonment of Kiryat Shmona** and a severe disruption of normal life in northern Israel. Looking back, this event was **the first inkling in what was to become a strategy of targeting Israel’s civilian population with rocket attacks. This strategy was employed by terrorist organizations** (Lebanon’s Hezbollah, Hamas, and other Palestinian terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip) **in the three decades after the First Lebanon War broke out.**

16. **The fighting ended on July 24 with a controversial ceasefire agreement between Israel and the PLO** brokered by Philip Habib, the American envoy. The agreement called for the cessation of hostilities directed at Israel from Lebanon.

² Several weeks after the missiles were brought in, on June 9, 1981, the IDF attacked and destroyed the nuclear reactor in Iraq.

The PLO interpreted the agreement in its strict sense, claiming that it required the Palestinian organizations to refrain from launching attacks against Israel from Lebanon, but not from other sectors (and such terrorist attacks did, in fact, continue). Israel, on the other hand, interpreted the agreement as a total commitment to the cessation of Palestinian terrorism, and was unwilling to sit idly by while it continued to suffer terrorist attacks in other sectors, initiated and planned by the terrorist headquarters in Lebanon. Thus, the controversial agreement created a volatile situation where a terrorist attack outside of Lebanon could have ignited the Lebanese powder keg. **The countdown to the First Lebanon War began.**

17. In retrospect, the battles of July 1981 were therefore a **point of no return** on the path to the First Lebanon War. After the battles against the terrorists in August 1981, **Ariel Sharon was appointed Israel's defense minister**. Preparations for a war in Lebanon, based on the so-called Oranim Plan (Pines Plan), **shifted into high gear**. Thus, **"Little Oranim", a plan with limited objectives, became the "Greater Oranim", a plan with far broader objectives** that went beyond the destruction of the terrorists' military infrastructure in southern Lebanon.
18. On their part, the **Palestinian terrorist organizations** considered the July battles to be a considerable achievement and an important milestone in the history of their struggle. Even so, they were well aware that **Israel would not let the matter slide**, estimating that their strongholds in southern Lebanon would become the target of an Israeli attack. Similarly, the assessment in **Syria** was that Israel was making attack plans against limited military targets in southern Lebanon. Once the war began, however, **both the terrorists and the Syrians were surprised** at the extent and objectives of the war.

The First Lebanon War: objectives, results, and lessons

19. According to Israeli perspective, the First Lebanon War was **intended to advance a number of far-reaching military and strategic-political objectives**. It is my opinion that the stated and unstated objectives of the war, which are still a controversial subject in Israel's public discourse and politics, were the following:
 - A. **Destroying the Palestinian military and political infrastructure in Lebanon** (and not only in the southern part of the country) **and keeping the**

inhabitants of northern Israel away from the range of the terrorists' artillery.

In the political sphere, top Israeli officials sought to **take the edge off the Palestinian problem** by hitting the state-within-a-state established by the PLO in Lebanon.

B. Undermining Syrian influence in Lebanon by striking a military blow against the greater portion of the Syrian army in the Bekaa Valley (the Syrian armored forces and the Syrian missile batteries). However, Israel **had no strategic objective to destroy the Syrian army in Lebanon or expel it from the country**, and it was careful not to become dragged into an all-out war with Syria (a scenario which Israel's political leadership sought to avoid due to domestic, regional, and international considerations).

C. Establishing a "new political order" in Lebanon by supporting a Lebanese administration where the Maronite Christians would be the dominant camp, under the leadership of Bachir Gemayel as Lebanon's president.

D. Signing a peace treaty between Israel and Lebanon, which was to be the second U.S.-brokered peace treaty between Israel and an Arab country (after Egypt).

20. **From a purely military perspective, the IDF made achievements** in the first stage of the war. Such achievements included mainly destroying the Palestinian military infrastructure in Lebanon, eliminating the PLO's state-within-a-state, striking a severe blow against Syrian armored forces in the Bekaa Valley, and destroying the Syrian missile batteries. However, in the second phase of the war, beginning on August 31, 1982, the IDF conducted a fighting retreat in which it sustained multiple casualties without making any more achievements. The cost of the two phases was high and painful: they claimed the lives of 670 soldiers (until 1985), a number which nearly doubled by the time the IDF withdrew from Lebanon in May 2000 (1,216).

21. However, Israel's political leadership learned the hard way that **the military achievements in Lebanon, attained in what was essentially asymmetrical warfare in a theater rife with difficulties and problems, were difficult if not impossible to translate into sustainable political achievements.** Indeed, looking at the results of the war in a **thirty-year retrospective** shows that **Israel was unable to attain its strategic objectives outlined above:**

A. **The military infrastructure of the Palestinian terrorist organizations was destroyed and they were driven out of Lebanon, but the threat of terrorism from Lebanon was not removed.** The IDF took over southern Lebanon in ten days, destroyed the Palestinian **military infrastructure**, and had the Palestinian terrorists expelled from Lebanon. **However**, the new military and political void was filled by **Hezbollah**, an organization established during the First Lebanon War by **Iran's Revolutionary Guards, which settled in the Bekaa Valley starting in June 1982.** The residents of northern Israel and the IDF found peace neither after 1985 nor after 2000. Palestinian terrorism gave way to **Iran-sponsored Shi'ite terrorism**, which poses an even greater threat to Israel's home front and to the entire region.³ Six years after the unilateral withdrawal to the international border in May 2000, **the IDF was dragged into Lebanon once again** to attack Hezbollah's military infrastructure (the Second Lebanon War). Since then, Hezbollah, with the assistance of Iran and Syria, has improved its military capabilities, and Lebanon still holds a potential for igniting an armed conflict.

B. **During the first phase of the fighting, the Syrian army suffered a blow at the hands of the IDF during the tank-to-tank fighting in the Bekaa, and its SAM anti-aircraft missile system was wiped out. However, during and after the second phase of the war, Syrian influence in Lebanon increased due to the achievements of the proxy warfare** and the Christian opponents of the "Syrian order" were weakened. The Syrians were able to subdue the anti-Syrian rebellion of General Michel Aoun (who has since shifted his allegiance) and force the rival camps into accepting the **Taif Accord** in 1989. Under the accord, which marked the end of the civil war, the **rival militias were disarmed—with the exception of Hezbollah, which turned into the main force on the internal Lebanese scene. The "new order" Israel sought to establish in Lebanon was succeeded by the "Syrian order", which survived until 2005** (when Syrian forces pulled out from Lebanon during the Bashar Assad regime).

C. **As for Israeli-Lebanese bilateral relations**, a U.S.-brokered agreement was signed between the two countries on May 17, 1983. However, **under the pressure of guerilla and terrorist attacks sponsored by Syria and Iran**, the

³ On the eve of the first Lebanon war, the terrorists had several hundred 130-mm artillery pieces and various kinds of rockets whose range covered Kiryat Shmona, Nahariya, and Safed (all of them cities in northern Israel); in the second Lebanon war Hezbollah had about 20,000 rockets capable of reaching Hadera (south of Haifa). Hezbollah currently has about 60,000 rockets and missiles that can reach central Israel.

agreement was not ratified by President Amin Gemayel and the Lebanese administration. An Israeli attempt to achieve a **security agreement** with the Lebanese administration (the Naqoura talks) came to nothing due to the pressure exerted by Syria and the weakness of the Lebanese administration. **Thus, in 1985 Israel was forced to pull out from Lebanon unilaterally, without a political or security agreement.** This set a **negative precedent** which the Palestinians and Arab countries learned well. The IDF's withdrawals under pressure and terrorism also **formed an image of Israeli political and social weakness**, which contributed to the rise of Hezbollah's power **and encouraged the first Palestinian intifada.** This image was significantly shattered during the second Palestinian intifada, **when Israel's civilian home front showed commendable stamina in the face of the suicide bombing campaign conducted by the Palestinian terrorists.**

D. **The Palestinian problem was not pushed aside when the terrorist stronghold in Lebanon was lost. Instead, it reappeared on the international agenda:** while the First Lebanon War did destroy the autonomous Palestinian stronghold in Lebanon, it then **brought the Palestinian issue to the international agenda. In a circular process that went on for about ten years, many of the terrorists and their commanders who had been expelled from Lebanon** found themselves moving to Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip after the Oslo Accords, and fulfilling key roles in the newly established Palestinian Authority security services. **Perhaps surprisingly, Fatah and the PLO, which hit a low point in the summer of 1982, were back at the center of regional and international stage after their military infrastructure in Lebanon had been destroyed and they had been expelled from Lebanon.**

22. From Israel's point of view, there are many military, political, and internal lessons to be learned from the First Lebanon War. This is not the place to go into detail about the whole spectrum of the lessons; however, I will try to cover some of them—**those that are relevant to the Israeli-Lebanese issue:**

A. **Lesson no. 1: limitations of military force. "The more I thought about the historical experience, the more sure I became that the solutions obtained by force were extremely shaky and even to suspect those cases where it seemed that the use of force had seemingly solved the difficulties"** (Liddell Hart, in the foreword to his book, *Why Don't We Learn From History*, page 83 in the Hebrew translation). The decision-makers in Israel,

who expected to translate the IDF's achievements into political assets, learned the hard way **the limitations of the use of military force in such a politically and socially complex scene such as Lebanon**. The United States, too, learned this lesson from the brief period of its direct involvement in Lebanon and the longer periods of its military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan. **It was proven that, while it is possible to destroy terrorist infrastructure by military victories, it is more difficult—and perhaps impossible—to establish a new political order by forming a Lebanese central government that is in line with Israel's expectations.**

B. Lesson no. 2: the difficulty of finding a sustainable solution to the problem of Lebanese-based terrorism. Lebanon was and remains an ideal arena for the activity of terrorist organizations. This is due to its geography, as well as political and demographic fundamental features. The existence of impoverished Shi'ite population living side by side with Palestinian refugees near the border with Israel **create a human infrastructure that is a hothouse for terrorism, encouraging external actors to help the terrorist organizations in Lebanon**. These fundamental factors still exist. **Instead of being removed in the First Lebanon War, the threat of terrorism has taken on a different form.** Today, the threat of terrorism mostly consists of **the huge arsenal of tens of thousands of rockets and missiles amassed by Iran and Syria for Hezbollah**, which may eventually be used against Israel, whether as a result of an Iranian decision or escalation on the ground. **It is my opinion that a comprehensive solution to the problem of terrorism from Lebanon will only be achieved in the context of regional peace treaties** (which do not seem to be forthcoming), **which would make it more difficult for terrorist organizations to exist in Lebanon, strengthen the Lebanese central administration and undermine the motivation of the external actors to employ the “weapon of terrorism” on the Lebanese scene.**

C. Lesson no. 3: limitations of the power of sectarian actors in Lebanon. For decades, Israel has attempted to cooperate with the Christian camp. For short periods of time, there were (insufficiently effective) attempts to establish channels of cooperation with the Shi'ites and the Druzes. However, the Lebanese political system is precariously balanced between the various communities, each of which seeking support from external powers. **Thus, it has become apparent that these sectarian actors cannot be considered stable**

supporters of Israel's policy in Lebanon (this is supported by past experience, which has shown that no significant political objectives can be achieved with the help of minorities in the Arab countries which were supported by Israel). **A strong, independent Lebanese administration** (which, as of yet, does not exist) **would be the preferred party with which Israel would have to try and reach agreements and settlements in the long term.**

D. Lesson no. 4: limitations of the abilities of world powers and the U.N. on the Lebanese scene.

1) The world powers and the U.N. have had difficulties effectively monitoring the implementation of internationally-sponsored agreements and resolutions. For example, **the U.S.-brokered Israeli-Lebanese agreement** collapsed due to pressure exerted by proxies handled by Iran and Syria; the U.S. and French multi-national force pulled out under Iranian-sponsored terrorist pressure in 1983; **UNIFIL**, in 1978, was unable to prevent the entrenchment of Palestinian terrorists in its area of deployment as well as the rehabilitation of Hezbollah's military infrastructure after the Second Lebanon War.

2) **Notwithstanding the above, international legitimacy is of considerable importance**, which could be seen during Israel's withdrawal to the international border ("the blue line") in May 2000. Israel was wise to build **an international legitimacy** by carrying out the withdrawal under U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, passed in 1978. While this legitimacy did not prevent the rehabilitation of Hezbollah's military infrastructure after the Second Lebanon War, **it helped Israel's political and publicity case on the issue of Lebanon become clear and solid.**

3) The international community recognized Israel's fulfillment of Security Council Resolution 425, opposed the Lebanese government's attempts to question the acceptability of the "blue line", opposed Hezbollah's attempts to flaunt the Shabaa Farms issue as a means of continuing the terrorist attacks against Israel, and led to Security Council Resolution 1701 at the end of the Second Lebanon War (which states that the government of Lebanon must exercise its authority and control over southern Lebanon and prohibits the presence of terrorists and weapons that do not belong to the Lebanese government). Thus, **the support of the international**

community has become part of Israel's deterrence in that it backs the unprecedented calm that settled over the Israel-Lebanon border **and gives Israel greater freedom of action against any future aggression by Iran and Hezbollah.**