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**Agreements, arrangements and understandings concerning
Lebanon to which Israel was involved during the past 30 years –
background, data, lessons and conclusions.**

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Summary, conclusions and lessons learned from thirty years of agreements, arrangements and understandings in Lebanon

1. This report examines the agreements, arrangements and understandings in which Israel was involved during the past 30 years and as they relate to the diplomatic efforts currently being made to end the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah.

2. Most of the agreements and arrangements examined were reached after military actions taken by Israel during its war against Lebanese-based terrorism, whether Palestinian or Shi'ite. Some relate to Israel's relations with **Syria and the Lebanese government**, whether in the context of Syrian involvement in Lebanon or a peace treaty or security agreements Israel unsuccessfully tried to reach in Lebanon.

3. **Three periods were examined:** the period before the Lebanon War, during which Israel battled Palestinian terrorism in Lebanon (1975-1981); the period of the Lebanon War itself (1982-1985) and the period of the so-called "security zone" (1985-2000). This document ends with the **lessons learned and conclusions drawn from agreements reached in the past**, which are, in our assessment, relevant to the current situation.

4. The history of terrorist attacks against Israel originating in Lebanon clearly illustrates that **Lebanon was and remains the ideal arena from which to use terrorism** – whether Shi'ite or Palestinian – **as a weapon against Israel**. The fundamental reasons for that are independent of the current crisis:

A. The **topography** of the area makes it ideal as a location from which to attack populated areas in Israel.

B. There is a downtrodden, economically and socially deprived **Shi'ite population** living near Israel's northern border, with terrorist organizations working within its midst.

C. The **Palestinian refugee camps** in south and north Lebanon are a hotbed of Palestinian terrorist organization activity.

D. The **delicate Lebanese internal sectarian balance** and the Lebanese government's inherent weakness hamper the government and army's ability to enforce their authority in south Lebanon.

E. More than any of the above, there is the **influence of the Middle East states' sponsorship for terrorism**. They view Lebanon as a convenient springboard for terrorist activities against Israel which will promote their own strategic interests. That was true of Nasser's Egypt in the 1950 and has been true for Syria and Iran during the past decades.

2. At no time during the past two decades did Israel manage to achieve a lasting peace agreement or other arrangement with Lebanon. That was chiefly because of internal factors in Lebanon and its overwhelming dependence on Syria as well as Hezbollah's close relations with Iran. Israel has had no choice but to use force, and during the past 30 years it has undertaken a wide range of military actions, beginning with targeted attacks on terrorist bases, through comprehensive operations (Litani, Accountability and Grapes of Wrath) and ending with Operation Peace for the Galilee, in which Israel remained in Lebanon for three years. **Those operations yielded at best meager fruits in the form of partial, temporary and feeble agreements which did not solve the basic problem of Lebanon-based terrorism.**

3. Despite their temporary nature, the agreements, arrangements and understandings reached were, for Israel, **absolutely essential**, because they provided a breathing space and periods of relative quiet for the populated areas of the north. They were the necessary replacement for the permanent agreements which were not forthcoming, **but their life expectancies were short and they quickly dissolved**. Israel learned that the hard way after Operation Litani (1978), two weeks of fighting against the Palestinian terrorist organizations (1981), and Operations Accountability (1993) and Grapes of Wrath (1996). That was also true when Israel took unilateral actions, and the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon (1985) and from the "security zone" (2000) did not bring about a long-term cessation of terrorist activity.

4. An analysis of 30 years of Israeli policy in Lebanon shows that all the agreements, arrangements and understandings reached had three central weaknesses which led to their erosion and eventual collapse:

A. The basic discrepancy between Israeli and terrorist organization worldviews:

Israel regarded the agreements and arrangements as a means of stopping terrorist attacks from Lebanon to enable the residents of the north to live normal, routine daily lives. The terrorists, on the other hand, both Palestinian and Lebanese, regarded them as a response to political and military pressures and a way of getting time to reorganize and improve their preparedness for a renewal of terrorist activities, their only justification for existence.

B. The absence of any binding arrangement leading to effective inspection and enforcement: Because of the basic discrepancy between Israel and the terrorist organizations, **effective inspection and enforcement mechanisms had to be created, extremely problematic given the conditions in Lebanon:**

1) **The Lebanese government:** The partner in most of the agreements and the side which was supposed to be focal in enforcing them was **unable to do so**. That was because of the Lebanese government's (and army's) basic weakness versus internal Lebanese sources of power, versus the terrorist organizations (Hezbollah among them) and versus their sponsoring countries (primarily **Syria and Iran**). That situation exists despite the fact that in principle, the Lebanese government and the anti-Syrian coalition have a strong interest in enforcing the government sovereignty in south Lebanon and in weakening Hezbollah and the terrorist organizations.

2) **Stationing international forces:** In the absence of the Lebanese government's ability and desire to enforce its authority, attempts were made support it by stationing international forces. To this day they have been a resounding failure, whether because the United States and France were unwilling to shed the blood of their own soldiers in Lebanon (and therefore, under terrorist pressure, removed their units from the multi-national force) or whether from the beginning, UNIFIL was not given a mandate to take effective action against the terrorist organizations (as a result of the understanding that should such a mandate be given, it might involve the UN soldiers in unending clashes with the terrorist organizations).

3) **IDF activity supported in the security zone north of the international border supported by friendly Lebanese militias:** In the absence of effective Lebanese or UN enforcement apparatuses, the IDF had no choice but to remain in the area north of the Israeli-Lebanese border for long periods of time (the “security zone” after the Lebanon War and the Christian militias headed by Major Hadad before it), and from there to wage the struggle against terrorism. As a solution it was also extremely problematic, because it involved Israeli casualties and did not provide a solution for the Katyusha rockets fired into Israel from areas north of the zones occupied by the IDF.

C. **The opposition of the terrorism-sponsoring countries:** Throughout the years, those countries, with **Syria** in the forefront, proved their ability to hinder and even sabotage agreements and arrangements to which they were not a party and which were contrary to what they viewed as their interests. **On the other hand, involving Syria in the Grapes of Wrath agreement, did not prevent its eventual erosion, but it did prolong the period of its enforcement.**

5. The longer the current confrontation has lasted, the faster the international community has moved to find a diplomatic solution to end the fighting and change the fundamental conditions which enabled the crisis to occur. **The outlines for its solution are similar to those raised during the past 30 years. They center around distancing Hezbollah from the border, enforcing the authority and sovereignty of the Lebanese government, the establishment of security arrangements and the establishment of an international apparatus for effective enforcement of the agreement (with the addition of the release of the abducted soldiers as part of any solution reached).**

6. With all the reservations mentioned concerning the survival of agreements and arrangements in Lebanon, **which oblige Israel to have a fairly low level of expectation regarding any agreement reached**, in our assessment it is worthwhile to learn lessons from the past likely to **improve the quality of the upcoming agreement and prolong its life expectancy.** They are:

A. **The involvement of the United States:** America was involved in most of the agreements and arrangements, sometimes as the only participant and sometimes not, sometimes center stage and sometimes behind the scenes. **Significant American involvement is also important this time** (despite the fact that as stated, it cannot ensure enforcement) even if the UN and other countries are involved, such as France.

B. **Significant involvement of the Lebanese government:** In the past, as noted, the Lebanese government could not deliver the goods. During the past few years there has been an improvement in its ability to carry out political maneuvers, first because of the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon (2000) and second because of the eviction of the Syrian forces (2005). Sending the Lebanese army to south Lebanon (which is problematic because it is weak) will at least provide **Lebanese legitimacy for any agreement** and in our assessment should therefore be **central to its success**.

C. **Stationing international forces:** Although that has proved to be problematic, this time as well it will be necessary to station effective international forces to back up the weak Lebanese army. A past lesson is that those forces will need the a clear mandate to enforce their authority, and an appropriate order of battle. Otherwise it will be a replay of unsuccessful UNIFIL.

D. **The inclusion of Syria or at least the neutralizing of its destructive force (and indirectly that of Iran as well):** Including Syria in any agreement is likely to make it easier for the Lebanese government and the international force to function. On the other hand, including Syria (and even more so, Iran), is liable have **a political price which might be very high for the State of Israel**.

E. **Avoiding a long IDF stay in the captured areas of Lebanon:** Past experience has shown that when the IDF stays in Lebanese territory for a long period of time it is liable to be exposed to daily Hezbollah attacks in areas where there are large Shi'ite populations, parts of which are hostile to Israel, and to cost the IDF casualties. There is also the possibility that the Lebanese and international community will justify such attacks by representing the Israeli fighting as "occupation." Therefore, the arrival of the

Lebanese and international apparatuses should be synchronized with the **IDF withdrawal from Lebanon, according to the most rapid schedule** possible.

F. **Economic aid to south Lebanon:** After the wide-scale destruction in Lebanon caused by the current confrontation, the country will need pan-Arab and western aid to rehabilitate the infrastructures which were damaged. Past experience has shown that such aid is channeled into Beirut and does not reach the economically deprived population in south Lebanon where Hezbollah flourishes. A radical approach to the problem of terrorism necessitates the broad economic rehabilitation of south Lebanon **channeled through the Lebanese government** and not through Hezbollah's financiers with their **Iranian** backers. In other words, the Lebanese government will have to demonstrate its economic as well as its military presence in south Lebanon.

G. **Israeli maintenance of and support for any arrangement reached:** In the past, because of its desire not to rekindle the situation, Israel tended to overlook infringements and violations of the agreements. That created a dynamic of limited violations which quickly eroded the agreements. Thus **Israel will be forced to maintain and support (through military action, if necessary) any agreement reached** even if it leads to additional incidents, political difficulties and continued coping with the problem of terrorism originating in Lebanon.

Agreements, arrangements and understandings reached before the Lebanon War as part of Israel's struggle against Palestinian terrorism and in view of the civil war in Lebanon and the Syrian invasion

Overview

1. During the 15 years between the Six-Day War (1967) and the Lebanon War (1982), the Palestinian terrorist organizations strengthened their territorial base themselves in Lebanon, especially south Lebanon and western Beirut, and turned it into a launching ground for terrorist attacks against Israel. The Lebanese and Arabs took justification for such attacks from the Cairo Agreement of 1969 and its appendices.
2. Lebanese-based Palestinian terrorism increased after the civil war broke out in 1975. The reasons behind it were the collapse of Lebanese government institutions following the civil war (1975-1989); the exploitation by the Palestinian terrorist organizations of the ensuing vacuum to strengthen their military power and political influence, thus creating a state within a state; the Syrian takeover of large areas of Lebanon and the gradual imposition of the Syrian Order.
3. Between 1975 and 1982 there were **no direct agreements between Israel and Lebanon**, but there were agreements and arrangements in which **non-Lebanese elements** played a central role.

The indirect understanding between Israel and Syria (April-May 1976)

4. During April and May 1976, at the height of the Lebanese civil war and on the eve of the Syrian invasion of Lebanon, the Israeli government headed by Yitzhak Rabin and the Syrian régime headed by Hafez Assad held an indirect exchange of messages mediated by the United States.
5. That exchange of messages resulted in an unwritten understanding according to which **a red line was drawn in Lebanon** from Sidon to Kafr Houne (south of Jezzine) to Hatzbaiya (in the eastern sector). In essence, the Syrian forces which would invade Lebanon were given freedom to act north of the red line, while the territory south of the

line would be off limits, and thus there was *de facto* Syrian recognition of Israel's security interests in south Lebanon.³

6. That Israeli-Syrian understanding prepared the ground for the Syrian invasion of Lebanon in June 1977, which was at the time aimed at the Palestinian-leftist coalition, and therefore received the Christian leadership's blessings. The understanding was the basis for Israel's policy in Lebanon during the period before the Lebanon War, but it had eroded by the **spring of 1981** (the Israeli Air Force shot down Syrian helicopters and the Syrians positioned anti-aircraft missiles in the Beka'a Valley) and **collapsed in the Lebanon War**.
7. **During the first stages of the Lebanon War, Israel and Syria, for the first and so far only time, were dragged into a direct military confrontation on Lebanese soil.**

Operation Litani and UN Security Council Resolutions 425 and 426, which led to the establishment of UNIFIL (March 1978).

8. Operation Litani began on March 14, 1978, following a massive lethal terrorist attack on the coastal road north of Tel Aviv,⁴ which was the most disastrous Lebanon-based Palestinian terrorist attack up to that time. The operation was the most ambitious action taken by the IDF against the terrorist infrastructures in south Lebanon before the Lebanon War, and it captured, with the exception of the Tyre enclave, all of south Lebanon as far as the Litani River and the eastern sector.
9. **The operation ended with UN Security Council Resolutions 425 (March 19) and 426 (March 20).** They contained three interrelated provisions: an immediate Israeli ceasefire and withdrawal from all of Lebanese territory; the return of effective Lebanese government authority to the area evacuated by the IDF; and the establishment of a temporary UN peacekeeping force (**UNIFIL**, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon), which would help the Lebanese government enforce its authority and **“restore international peace and security.”**

³ For further information see Reuven Avi-Ran [Erlich], *The Syrian Involvement in Lebanon Since 1975*, (Westview Press, 1991), pp. 51-55.

⁴ On March 11, 1978, a group of Fatah terrorists landed on the coast near Kibbutz Ma'agan Michael and hijacked a taxi and two buses. They moved all the passengers into one bus and headed south toward Tel Aviv. In the battle that broke out at the Country Club junction just north of Tel Aviv, 37 passengers were killed and 78 wounded. The government of Israel decided to respond and initiated a large-scale military campaign in south Lebanon.

10. Resolution 425 was **only partially implemented** after Operation Litani: there was no Lebanese government which could enforce its authority in south Lebanon (the Lebanese army had dissolved along sectarian fault lines during the civil war); the Palestinian terrorist organizations continued their attacks against Israel, including from areas in which UNIFIL troops were deployed; the “temporary” UN force (in place to this day) did not have sufficient muscle and its mandate did not allow it to stop terrorist activities in south Lebanon.
11. Following Resolution 425, the IDF withdrew south of the armistice line, but pro-Israeli Christian militias were in place along the border, led by Major Saad Hadad, a Lebanese army officer. The militias came from Christian villages which were under heavy pressure from the Palestinian terrorist-leftist coalition and asked for Israeli support, first in the form of humanitarian aid but later military support as well. Resolution 425 would be fully implemented only in May 2000 with Israel’s unilateral withdrawal from the security zone and the collapse of the South Lebanese Army (SLA), which had been established after the Lebanon War, based on Major Hadad’s militias.

The American-mediated Israeli-PLO ceasefire (July 1981)

12. On July 10 and 24, 1981, fierce fighting was waged between Israel and Palestinian terrorists in Lebanon. Both sides escalated the fighting: Israel struck terrorist headquarters situated in Beirut from the air, causing hundreds of casualties to both Palestinian terrorists and Lebanese civilians. The terrorist organizations fired long-range artillery and rockets at populated areas in the Galilee panhandle and western Galilee. Israeli suffered casualties and property damage and Kiriyat Shmona and other population centers in the Galilee were evacuated.
13. During the fighting, the Regan government was called upon and special envoy Philip Habib was sent to the Middle East. A ceasefire with the PLO was reached with Saudi Arabian support, the first such agreement of its kind; until then the PLO had been perceived by Israel as a terrorist organization which could not be a partner to agreements. The agreement, reached on July 24, had three provisions:
 - A. No military acts of aggression would be carried out from Lebanese territory at targets in Israel from the air, by sea or on land.
 - B. No acts of aggression would be carried out by Israel against targets in Lebanon from the air, by sea or on land.

C. No hostile military acts would be carried against the territory controlled by Major Hadad or from that territory, i.e., the areas in Lebanon north of Hadad's area of control.

14. **The agreement was a matter of dispute even before it was signed and there are those who view it as the catalyst for the Lebanon War.** Israeli defined it broadly and claimed that it obligated **a complete cessation of Palestinian terrorism on all borders.** The PLO and the Palestinian terrorist organizations defined it far more narrowly as referring **only to the avoidance of terrorist attacks through the Israeli-Lebanese border.** The agreement turned into a time bomb which had its count-down turned off a number of times by the United States until June 3, 1982, when a terrorist belonging to Abu Nidal's organization shot the Israeli ambassador to Britain, and the IDF invaded Lebanon.

Agreements and attempted agreements during Operation Peace for the Galilee, which turned into the Lebanon War (1982-1985)

Overview

15. During the Lebanon War there was no effective Lebanese government with which Israel could sign a lasting peace agreement. In accordance with Israel's political perception, the Christian camp and not the Lebanese government, was to play a key role as the central partner for talks about an agreement that would enable the IDF to withdraw from Lebanon.
16. The government of Israel, in the spirit of its traditional policy, aspired to sign a peace agreement with Lebanon. A June 5, 1982 government decision specifically stated that "the State of Israel continues to aspire to signing a peace treaty with an independent Lebanon while preserving its territorial integrity." However, the leaders of the Christian camp were unwilling, and it is doubtful whether they were able to deliver the goods in the face of internal Lebanese and inter-Arab coercion. The Lebanese government proved that it could not stand behind an American-brokered agreement signed with Israel.

The establishment of a multinational force as part of an agreement to evict the Palestinians and Syrian army from Beirut (August 1982)

17. In August 1982, when the IDF siege of Beirut was lifted, an agreement was reached to evict the Palestinian terrorists and Syrian army from Beirut. It was reached through

American mediation (Philip Habib) and with the agreement of Israel, the PLO (Arafat) and the Lebanese government. A **multinational force** of American, French, Italian and Lebanese army troops was established. It was supposed to supervise the withdrawal of the terrorists and Syrian army, and to secure the evacuated areas in west Beirut. The evacuation was carried out between August 21-31 (usually without incident), while at the same time the multinational force deployed around Beirut.

18. In the summer of 1982 Hezbollah was established in the Beka'a Valley by Iran and with Syrian support, and became an important tool in carrying out their policies in Lebanon. As part of Syria's campaign against Israel, Hezbollah (supported and encouraged by Iran and Syria) carried out a series of suicide bombing attacks against western targets, focusing on the multinational force's American and French units and causing hundreds of casualties. **The United States, still licking its Vietnam wounds, was not interested in getting involved in the Lebanese quagmire. During the first half of February 1984 it unilaterally evacuated its forces from Beirut and its units from the multinational force.**

The Israeli-Lebanese "March 17" agreement, 1983

19. Even after the assassination of elected Lebanese president Bashir Gemayel, Israel continued seeking a peace agreement which would enable it to withdraw its forces from Lebanon. Its interlocutor was Amin Gemayel, brother of Bashir and the new Lebanese president, who had inherited from his father, Pierre Gemayel, an orientation toward Lebanon's integration into the Arab world. After an abortive attempt to formulate a secret working paper about normalizing Israel-Lebanese relations in December 1982, the two countries, **with the active support of the United States**, met in Kiriyat Shmona and Khalde (in Lebanon) for bi-lateral talks.
20. After complex, often difficult negotiations lasting six months, the talks yielded the May 17, 1983 agreement, entitled "Agreement between the Government of Israel and the Government of the Lebanese Republic." **Referred to as "the May 17 agreement," it was more a security and less a full peace agreement**, and thus was a compromise and delicate balance between the aspirations and necessities of both sides. **Its main points were:**

A. **With regard to security**, the agreement established measures to be taken in **the area south of the Awali River**, which was defined as a security zone where two

brigades of the Lebanese army would make a special effort to prevent terrorist attacks: the “**territorial brigade**,” in which Major Hadad’s militias would be integrated and which would operate from the international border to the Zaharani River; and the regular brigade of the Lebanese army, which would deploy from the Zaharani to the Litani. Those measures were supposed to enable the IDF to withdraw from Lebanon along with the other foreign forces (Syria and the PLO’s “armed elements.”)

B. The agreement’s diplomatic aspects were an expression of an essential difference in Israeli-Lebanese relations, although they were not defined as “peace” and the word “recognition” did not appear anywhere: the agreement expressed an obligation to respect sovereignty, independence and borders; a joint statement as to the end of a state of war; an obligation to ban and prevent terrorism and incitement to acts of terrorism and a series of arrangements preliminary to a normalization of civilian, cultural and economic relations between the two countries.

21. **The main weak point of the agreement was that it did not take into consideration Syrian interests**, the strong Syrian position in Lebanon and the extent of Syrian influence on Amin Gemayel’s régime. That was the basis for Gemayel’s surrender to the heavy Syrian pressure exerted both on the ground and politically, and the unilateral Lebanese government announcement on March 5, 1984, about ten months after the agreement was signed, that it was null and void. The IDF found itself stuck in Lebanon, exposed to increasing Syrian-encouraged terrorist pressure and without a political agreement to cover the end of the war.

The failure of the security talks at Naqura (November 1984-January 1985)

22. In view of those developments, Israel was forced to abandon its hopes for a peace treaty. Instead, it was willing to make do with an **Israeli-Lebanese agreement which would be purely security-oriented purely** and based on measures in south Lebanon which would ensure the safety of the population centers in the Galilee. After the UN emissary had managed to acquire the agreement of Syria, Israel and Lebanon, talks began between Israeli and Lebanese military representatives in Naqura on the Israeli-Lebanese border, which lasted for two and a half months (November 8, 1984 to January 24, 1985).

23. At the talks Israel raised a concept of security arrangements based on the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon after the creation of two buffer zones: **one** in which the

Lebanese army-based “territorial brigade”⁵ would be deployed, and the **other** in which UNIFIL would be deployed. The Lebanese, for their part (under Syrian influence) insisted that the Lebanese army supported by UNIFIL would be the only factor to guard the security of the areas evacuated by Israel. The Lebanese position was impractical, primarily because at that time the Lebanese army was weak, ineffective and unable to prevent a resumption of terrorist attacks from Lebanon.

24. Because the Naqura talks came to a dead end and there was criticism at home and terrorist pressure on the IDF in Lebanon, on January 14, 1985 the Israeli government decided on a unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon, an IDF deployment along the border and the **creation of a security zone in south Lebanon** where SLA forces would operate with IDF backup and assistance (Israeli government decision no. 291).

Understandings reached during the period of the security zone (1985-2000)

Overview

25. Israel considered the security zone as a way to protect the Galilee and prevent terrorist attacks originating in Lebanon. The Israeli government expected that it would enable both the IDF and the SLA to deal effectively and at the lowest possible cost with terrorism in Lebanon, **which had metamorphosed from Palestinian terrorism to Hezbollah-led Shi’ite terrorism**. Hezbollah, backed by Iran and Syria, became the dominant Shi’ite organization, at the expense of Amal, which represented the more pragmatic trend of the Shi’ite community.
26. Under the security zone, **Hezbollah rocket fire into Israel became the main threat to the security of the Galilee residents**. From the time the zone was established in 1985 rocket fire became a matter of routine, sometimes less intense (for example, 1990-1992), sometimes more intense (especially during the first years and during Operations Accountability and Grapes of Wrath, and the periods before them).
27. **The security zone did not provide a response to the rocket fire** (and was never intended to), while Hezbollah attacks there inflicted considerable losses on both the IDF and SLA. Israeli public opinion was opposed to the continuing losses incurred by

⁵ The “territorial brigade” was supposed to be based on SLA soldiers, a remnant of the May 17 agreement.

maintaining the security zone. When attempts to reach an understanding with the Syrians which would enable an agreement-based withdrawal failed, the Israeli government decided on unilateral withdrawal from the security zone, based on Security Council Resolution 425. The decision was fully implemented on May 24, 2000, and began a new era in Israeli policy in Lebanon.

Understandings resulting from Operation Accountability (1993)

28. During the summer of 1993, Hezbollah stepped up its challenge in the security zone. It limited IDF freedom of action by changing its mode of operations: every time the IDF was attacked from areas north of the security zone and returned fire, Hezbollah fired a barrage of missiles in the Galilee. That led to an increase in the number of shooting incidents and hampered the daily life of the northern Galilee residents. Thus Hezbollah accompanied the negotiations being held at the time between Israel, Syria and Lebanon as part of the Madrid process.
29. **Syria**, while negotiating with Israel, did nothing to rein in Hezbollah, although it had an interest to contain the incidents in south Lebanon and to prevent them from causing a general deterioration of the situation, into which Syria might get sucked.
30. In light of the above situation, the Israeli government decided on Operation Accountability (July 25-31). Its primary objectives were to stop the Katyusha attacks against the populated areas in the north and to increase the IDF's freedom of action in the security zone. One of the ways of doing that was to damage Hezbollah bases among the population by distancing the Lebanese residents from the battle areas in south Lebanon.
31. During the first days of the operation international public opinion was restrained. However, as time passed, in both the United States and western Europe there were strong adverse reactions to the pictures coming out of Lebanon. When the operation brought Israel and Syria to the brink of a clash, American Secretary of State Warren Christopher effected a ceasefire and brought about an understanding between Israel and Syria regarding the rules of the game in south Lebanon.
32. On July 31 the cease fire became effective, based on the understandings reached between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the American secretary of state. At the heart of the understanding was **Hezbollah's commitment not to launch rockets**

into Israeli territory, and Israel's commitment not to fire on Lebanese populated areas north of the security zone, except if IDF forces were shot at from within a specific settlement.

33. The informal agreement contained a number of weak points:
- A. **The oral agreements were vague** and to a large degree dependent on Israel's determination to stand behind them.
 - B. **The agreement was not accompanied by an apparatus which would or could ensure inspection and enforcement.** Syria refused to enforce the agreement with Hezbollah, claiming it had only limited influence on the movement.
 - C. **Hezbollah did not commit itself to stopping its attacks, including rocket attacks, on the security zone,** and it could be expected to increase pressure on the zone.
34. Despite the above weak points, the understandings were in force for almost three years until they crumbled and Israel was forced to undertake an additional operation, Grapes of Wrath.

Understandings resulting from Operation Grapes of Wrath (1996)

35. Operation Grapes of Wrath was undertaken because of increased Hezbollah attacks from the security zone in frequent breach of the understandings reached after Operation Accountability. Again, Syria made no attempt to restrain Hezbollah or to curb the escalation.
36. The objective of the operation was to damage Hezbollah infrastructures and exert pressure on the Lebanese government, and through it on Syria to restrain Hezbollah. In that operation as well, an effort was made to destroy Hezbollah's Katyusha rocket launchers, stationed in the heart of Lebanese civilian populated areas, while encouraging the residents of south Lebanon to leave the battle areas and flee toward Beirut in numbers larger than those of the previous operation. In addition, the Israeli Air Force struck electric installations in Beirut in response to the attacks on the electrical infrastructure in northern Israel.
37. The operation began on April 2 and in effect was halted on April 19: in response to Hezbollah rocket fire, IDF artillery fire mistakenly hit a group of Lebanese civilians in a shelter in a UNIFIL installation in the village of Qana and killed more than 100 of them. The tragedy stoked an outbreak of rage and condemnation in the Arab and

western worlds, and resulted in an Israeli government decision (six weeks before national elections) to end the operation. This time as well the American Secretary of State managed to bring about a ceasefire and new understandings (April 26, 1996).

38. The understandings reached were **completely different from those of Operation Accountability** in two important fields:

A. They were **put in writing** to prevent disagreement and misunderstanding.

B. **An international monitoring apparatus** was established in the form of a Monitoring Group which, under American and French aegis, served as a framework for direct dialogues between IDF, Syrian and Lebanese officers.

39. **The understandings were intended to fashion new ground rules for conducting the confrontation in Lebanon, to prevent deterioration of the situation between Israel and Syria and to remove the threat of confrontation and violence from the civilian populations on both sides of the border.** The main understandings to which Israel and Lebanon were committed (with Syria as an indirect third party) were:

A. “Armed groups” in Lebanon (i.e., Hezbollah and other organizations) would not attack Israeli territory with Katyushas or any other type of weapon (i.e., civilian and military targets in Israel were off limits).

B. “Israel and those cooperating with it (the SLA) [would] not fire any kind weapon at civilians or civilian targets in Lebanon.”

C. “The two parties (Israel and Lebanon) [were] committed to ensuring that under no circumstances [would] civilians be the target of attack and that civilian-populated areas, and industrial and electrical installation [**would] not be used as launching grounds for attacks.**”

D. It was determined that nothing in those understandings would prevent either side from exercising its right to self defense (ensuring the IDF freedom of action should it be fired on).

E. A **Monitoring Group** would be established to monitor the implementation of the understandings and would judge complaints of the parties regarding violations.

40. The negotiations on the establishment of the Monitoring Group were held in Washington beginning May 10, and were completed during July after the new Israeli government headed by Netanyahu was installed. They were conducted by delegations

from the United States, France, Israel, Syria and Lebanon, and led to an agreement on July 12, according to which:

A. The Monitoring Group was composed of military representatives from the United States, France, Syria, Lebanon and Israel.

B. The Group would have a rotating chairman and co-chair who would be American and French.

C. The chairman would receive complaints from Lebanon and Israel at any time and would disseminate them among the members of the group. The chairman would call meetings and chair them.

D. Complaints would be delivered by Israel and Lebanon within 24 hours in the case of a claim concerning a violation of the understandings. The Monitoring Group would issue a report within 72 hours after the complaint had been lodged.

E. The group would meet at the UNIFIL installation in Naqura.

F. When deliberations were finished the Group would issue a report in consensus identifying the side responsible for violating the understandings and containing recommendations for reinforcing the understandings. In case the Group had not reached a consensus, the report would contain a description of its discussions and the subject would be transferred to the foreign ministers for further discussion.

41. Arrangement were made to verify Israeli and Lebanese complaints on the ground by representatives of the groups member countries (an option almost never realized).

42. **The understandings of Grapes of Wrath, although they had been put in writing, also had weak points which led to disagreements between Israel, Syria and Lebanon.** The most important disagreement was in Article Three, which was meant to ban Hezbollah military activity from civilian populated areas. According to the original version, populated areas were banned as “launching grounds for attacks.” The article turned out to be open to interpretation: according to Israel (with American support) that meant that **all** Hezbollah military activity was banned from civilian areas. Hezbollah’s **narrower** interpretation (with Syrian support) was that it only banned Katyusha fire from **within settlements**. Therefore, claimed Hezbollah, it was entitled to situate itself in civilian areas and use them as launching grounds for attacks.

43. The dispute was in no way theoretical, because the Israeli interpretation legitimized the IDF's responding to fire coming from populated areas, even if it meant endangering civilians.
44. The understandings reached in Operation Grapes of Wrath, which were unpopular with the Israeli government, were in force until the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon on May 24, 2000. However, in that instance as well the understandings had been eroded and the Monitoring Group found it increasingly difficult to function because of the escalation on the ground, and in the middle of February 2000 it ceased meeting. Once the IDF withdrew from Lebanon, and the understandings became irrelevant and evaporated.

Epilogue: the period after the IDF withdrew from Lebanon (May 2000-July 2006)

45. While on May 24, 2000, the State of Israel was carrying out Security Council Resolution 425, and receiving recognition for having done so by the UN and the international community, the Lebanese government, **coerced by Syria**, did not deploy effective military forces in south Lebanon (beyond the presence of a nominal force) or enforce its authority over the region. **It also did not implement Security Council Resolution 1559** (adopted September 2, 2004), which calls, among other things, for the enforcement of Lebanese government sovereignty over all Lebanese territory (including the south) and for the disarmament of the militias (i.e., Hezbollah).
46. Hezbollah entered the vacuum created when the IDF withdrew from south Lebanon and took over what had been the security zone. It entrenched itself behind a line of strongholds along the border and created **new excuses to continue its terrorist attacks from Lebanon** (the "liberation" of the Sheba'a Farms in the central sector, an area recognized by the UN and the international community as part of the **Syrian Golan Heights**; the release of Lebanese terrorists sentenced to jail terms in Israel). **Those pretexts did not win a consensus within Lebanon after the IDF withdrew from the security zone.**
47. During the six years after the IDF left Lebanese, Hezbollah, supported and aided by **Iran and Syria**, has **significantly improved** its operational capabilities and has built up an **enormous, unprecedented arsenal of rockets** which threaten Israel and, according to Hezbollah, will deter it from **responding effectively** to Hezbollah's ongoing provocations. At the same time, Hezbollah kept up a **controlled level of**

tension along the border with Israel, trying, until the current crisis, not to go too far: it occasionally attacked Mt. Dov (the Sheba'a Farms), abducted and attempted to abduct IDF soldiers, fired mortars and rockets, sent in snipers, and fired anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles.

48. **In addition, Hezbollah has increased its aid to Palestinian terrorism**, both by **encouraging terrorism** in the Palestinian Authority and by **carrying out attacks** across the border from Lebanon (one of the most conspicuous of which was the infiltration of two suicide bombers in the area of Kibbutz Matzuba on March 12, 2002, who killed six Israelis). Hezbollah has also occasionally allowed Palestinian terrorists collaborating with them to fire rockets at Israel from Lebanese territory.
49. As part of its support of Palestinian terrorist organizations in the PA, it regularly transmits instructions to terrorist squads to carry out attacks, including suicide bombing attacks in Israeli cities, in return for the transmission of money. It also supports the Palestinian terrorist organizations with training, by providing weapons and by using its media (chiefly Al-Manar TV) to disseminate pro-Palestinian, pro-terrorism and anti-Semitic propaganda.
50. During the past six years Israel has showed **great restraint**, and until recently the IDF activity has been mainly defensive. Israel's response to the provocative attack in which Hezbollah abducted two IDF soldiers was extraordinary and surprised Hezbollah, and **led to a confrontation unprecedented in length, scope and seriousness since the Lebanon War.**