



August 1, 2006

**Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center
at the Center for Special Studies (C.S.S)**

An International Force: Advantages and Disadvantages

(Lt.-Gen. (ret.) Moshe Yaalon and Maj.-Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror)¹

**Jerusalem Issue Brief
Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs²**

- Discussions about security arrangements in Lebanon at the end of the war have included the proposal to station an international force in that country. Yet the UN has a very bad name in terms of confronting strong forces in areas where it is stationed.
- The only logical basis for an international presence is the creation of a force whose primary mission will be assisting the Lebanese Armed Forces in disarming Hizballah (as stated in UN Security Council Resolution 1559). Such a force should be deployed close to Beirut, at the border passages with Syria, and deep in the Lebanese Bekaa Valley.
- An international force has no role in southern Lebanon along the Israeli-Lebanese border. Israel itself is deployed along its northern

¹ Lt.-Gen. (ret.) Moshe Yaalon was the Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces and is currently a distinguished military fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Maj.-Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror heads the Institute for Contemporary Affairs at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

² Institute for Contemporary Affairs founded jointly with the Wechsler Family Foundation

border to defend itself and prevent the strengthening of Hizballah, should it try to move southward.

- To complement this deployment, there should be an agreement prohibiting the building of fortifications in southern Lebanon – as in the agreement between Israel and Egypt. In addition, the UN should establish a supervisory force like UNSCOM to deal with locating and clearing out Hizballah’s arms caches and preventing the building of new ones.

Types of International Forces

In the interest of a serious national discourse about security arrangements in Lebanon at the end of the war, it is worth more thoroughly discussing the proposal to station an international force in Lebanon, an idea that Israel has opposed in the distant and recent past.

There are four known kinds of international forces:

1. A force whose purpose is to supervise signed agreements between two states – such as the multinational force (MFO) that supervises the Israeli-Egyptian agreement in the Sinai.
2. A force whose role is to report on events in the field where it is deployed, without the ability or role of enforcing a certain policy – such as the international force that is deployed as a UN force in southern Lebanon (UNIFIL).
3. A force whose mission is to maintain quiet in a region where there is a potential for clashes – that being the role of the NATO forces in Kosovo.
4. A force whose task is to fight in the name of a certain policy – such as the UN force in the Korean War in the 1950s and the NATO force in Afghanistan today.

Although it is not clear what is being considered or planned regarding an international force in Lebanon, the accumulated experience on this issue should not be ignored.

The U.S. Marines who came to Lebanon at the end of 1982 withdrew in fear a few months later after Hizballah used intensive terrorism against them. UNIFIL has been in the field since 1978 and has done more harm than good – it did not prevent Palestinian terror (prior to Israel's entry into southern Lebanon in 1982) or Hizballah attacks, while hampering the IDF's freedom of action. Among all the international forces in our area, the only one that successfully carries out its role is the multinational force in Sinai, the MFO, which is built on a broad American basis. Its success is due mainly to the fact that the two countries involved, Egypt and Israel, are determined to uphold the security arrangements.

Also in Kosovo, where a large international force is stationed, there has been relative success – because the force, just by being there, promotes the interests of the local actors who want independence or annexation to Albania, and no one has an interest in harming the functioning of the force.

In Afghanistan, however, the multinational force under NATO command is waging a real war, and quite successfully, yet has no connection to the UN or its institutions.

What Should Israel Expect from a Multinational Force?

What should Israel expect from a multinational force? Is this a force that will fight Hizballah so as to disarm it? One should not expect this. The UN has a very bad name in terms of confronting strong forces in areas where it is stationed.

Is this the force that will separate between the aims and actions of a live-and-thriving Hizballah in the north and the State of Israel in the south? Such a buffer force is a recipe for disaster; it will most likely fail in fighting Hizballah, but will also hamper the IDF's freedom of response.

It seems the only logical basis that can justify an international force, made up of real combat soldiers, is the creation of a force whose primary mission will be assisting the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). It is the Lebanese Armed Forces that must carry the burden of disarming Hizballah, and it is the Lebanese Armed Forces that must verify that there are no military contingents or experts of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards in Lebanon (all as stated in UN Security

Council Resolution 1559). It is the Lebanese Armed Forces that must safeguard Lebanon's borders – so that Iranian or Syrian weapons will not be smuggled from Syria into Lebanon, and Hizballah will be prevented from rebuilding its fortifications close to the border with Israel.

The Lebanese Armed Forces is a sufficiently strong army and there seems to be no need to fear that the Shiites in it will defect to Hizballah. This army may, however, need assistance and backing, and that is what a strong international force can provide. Therefore, such a force should be deployed close to the capital, Beirut, at the border passages with Syria, and deep in the Lebanese Bekaa Valley. It should be prepared to assist the Lebanese Armed Forces in areas where Hizballah was strong and influential.

An International Force Has No Role in Southern Lebanon

Thus, an international force has no role in southern Lebanon along the Israeli-Lebanese border. Israel itself is deployed along its northern border to defend itself and prevent the strengthening of Hizballah, should it try to move southward. In southern Lebanon the Lebanese Armed Forces will have a supportive hinterland in the form of the IDF. It needs, however, a supportive hinterland in central and eastern Lebanon.

To complement this deployment, it may be worth importing two important ideas from other conflict zones of the world that can help ensure Lebanon's flowering as an independent state, without a threat from Hizballah either internally or externally toward Israel:

1. An agreement should prohibit the building of fortifications in southern Lebanon – as in the agreement between Israel and Egypt. This will remove the concern that the threat will return to the northern border and the stimulus to war will be renewed.
2. The UN should establish a supervisory force like UNSCOM to deal with locating and clearing out Hizballah's arms caches and preventing the building of new ones. The UN carried out this role reasonably well in Iraq and there is no reason it cannot do so in Lebanon.