

Research Report

Historical Security Council

The situation between Israel-Lebanon



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Forum	Historical Security Council
Issue:	The situation between Israel-Lebanon
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Introduction

Ever since the creation of the State of Israel on the 1st May 1949, the tension at the south-eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea has been escalating. These tensions created by the Jordan's water right disputes with Palestine and the refusal from the Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser to recognize this State led to the Six Day War (June 1967). During this short but murderous war, Israel succeeded in capturing the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights.

Following the war, Israel had to face severe internal resistance from various Palestinian and Arab groups. Among them, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was by far the most important one. The PLO is viewed as a terrorist organization. Established in 1964, this group's initial purpose was to liberate "the homeland" by armed struggle as they stated, "Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine and is therefore a strategy and not tactics. The Palestinian Arab people affirm its absolute resolution and abiding determination to pursue the armed struggle and to march forward the armed popular revolution [...]". The PLO sees its terrorist actions as defensive acts and therefore doesn't hesitate to take arms and fight violently not only against Israel's military occupation but also on an international scale. In the late 1960s and the early 1970s, PLO affiliated groups launched a wave of attacks against the Israeli and Jewish population around the world, including the well-known massacre of the Israeli athletes at the Munich Summer Olympics in 1972. The Israeli government responded with a series of assassinations and bombings on Lebanese territory, where the PLO is based, leading to an endlessly escalating cycle of violence.



Definition of Key Terms

Armed struggle

The main form of struggle in a war. It consists of organized employment of armed forces for the attainment of certain political and military ends. It represents a set of military actions of varying scope.

Terrorism (international terrorism)

"International terrorism" refers to activities with the following three characteristics:

1. Involving violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that violate federal or state law;
2. Appearing to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping;
3. Occurring primarily outside of the territorial jurisdiction of the U.S., or transcending national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to intimidate or coerce, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum.

(Definition by the FBI)

General Overview

Coastal Road massacre

The Coastal Road massacre was the origin of the Israeli invasion from 1978. It was an attack involving the hijacking of a bus within Israel in which 38 civilians, including 13 children were killed. The attack was carried out by 11 members of the PLO and its objective was to seize a luxury hotel in Tel Aviv and to take hostages in order to exchange them for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. According to the Time magazine of 1978, "their orders were to kill until they themselves were killed". It is therefore unnecessary to say that this Palestinian suicide mission left a trail of dead



The bus that was hijacked by the 11 PLO members on the 11th of March 1978.

"Coastal Road Massacre." *Wikipedia*. Wikipedia, n.d. Web. 8 Aug. 2014.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coastal_Road_massacre>



and wounded civilians along Israel's main coastal highway ending only with arms fire between the members of the PLO and the local police forces near Herzliya (central coast of Israel, at the Northern part of the Tel Aviv District).



Israel's Prime minister, Menachem Begin
 "Menachem Begin." *Menachem Begin*. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Aug. 2014. <http://www.whale.to/b/begin_h.html>.

One motive for this attack was to derail Egypt-Israel peace talks. In 1977, the United States hesitated to coordinate an Arab approval of a Geneva peace conference, as there was a presence of Palestinians and, most of all, Soviets. Both Egyptians and Israelis were opposed to this idea, so they decided to start working on their own peace treaty. However, the United States then quickly changed their minds and focused on the Egypt-Israel peace treaty. Following a visit from the Egyptian president, Anwar Sadat, in Jerusalem, Edward Said states in his book 'The Question of Palestine': "the first item dropped was the question of Palestine as it had evolved through the United Nations". But Anwar Sadat's main concern was that the territory of Sinai should be returned to Egypt who had lost it to Israel during the Six Day War and not the situation of Palestine. The PLO thus conducted the attack on Israel in order to disrupt the Egyptian-Israeli peace process and turn the attention back to the question of Palestine.

In a statement to the press following the attack, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin stated, "They came here to kill Jews. They intended to take hostages and threatened, as the leaflet they left said, to kill all of them if we did not surrender to their demands... We shall not forget. And I can only call upon other nations not to forget the Nazi atrocity that was perpetrated upon our people yesterday." On the 15th of March, three days after the massacre, Israel launched Operation Litani as a sort of retaliation for the terrorist attack against PLO bases on the Lebanese territory.

Operation Litani

The Military operation

During the night of 14th March 1978, some 25,000 Israeli soldiers crossed the Lebanese borders in order to wipe out all terrorist facilities between Israel and the Litani River that crosses South Lebanon, not 20 miles from the Israeli border.



Region targeted by Israel during operation Litani.

"Israeli Cabinet Continues Debate Over Ground Campaign." *Counterterrorism Blog*. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Aug. 2014. <http://counterterrorismblog.org/2006/08/israeli_cabinet_continues_deba.php>.

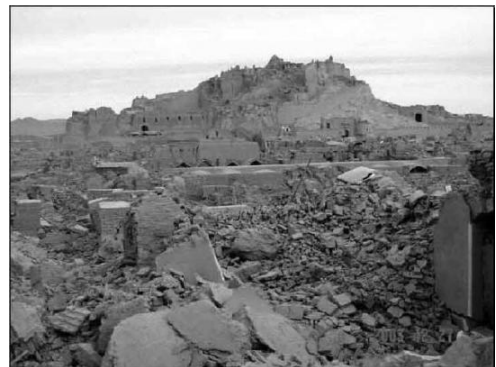


By naming their operation this way, Israel clearly informed the Palestinian and Lebanese authorities of their objective. They were also undermining their own claim, as was the force and violence of their invasion. Israeli defense Minister, Ezer Weizman, said the invasion was designed to “clean up once and for all terrorist concentrations in southern Lebanon.” But such “terrorist concentrations” didn’t exist in southern Lebanon. There were bands of Palestinian gunmen and militants spread throughout the country as the Lebanese government allowed them to be armed, but no “terrorist concentrations”.

The violence resulting from this invasion can be seen in its casualties: the majority of the 1,100 to 2,000 Lebanese and Palestinians killed were civilians, whereas only 23 of the original 25,000 men strong, Israeli army were killed. This invasion is in fact the biggest military action involving Israelis and Arab land since the Yom Kippur War in 1973.

Present situation (19th march 1978)

The Israeli invasion triggered a flood of refugees from South Lebanon. According to the Lebanese government, a total of 285,000 refugees are currently moving through the country, trying to escape the fighting. Three-quarters of them are Lebanese, the rest Palestinian. Some of them settled on the outskirts of Beirut, others in south Beirut.



Village destroyed by an air raid.

Analyzing the situation for The New York Times, William Farrell could not detect advantages as much as ambiguities and disadvantages. Israel claims 10 of the Litani region’s 100 villages have been leveled. Farrell personally visited seven that have been made uninhabitable. But the physical damage tells only part of the story of devastation. If for some, Israel’s response to the Palestinian raid on the 11th of March was warranted, Farrell wrote: “for others the military response was overreaction”, while for still others, “there is a desire, perhaps a need, to see the bloody episode recede into memory”.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Israel

As the invader, Israel is of course the main party involved in this war. Stating that the invasion of Lebanon is a “preventive attack” in order to end Palestinian attacks on Israel, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) clearly missed its targets as large numbers of PLO members retreated north before the IDF invasion occurred. In 1978, the Israeli government spoke about Israel’s determination to “root out the evil weed of the PLO”. Robert Fisk (one of the most recognized journalists in the Middle-east) wrote of how “This sort of metaphor became a constant refrain in Israel. Weeds had to be destroyed, torn out by their roots. The Palestinians were part of ‘a cancer’, one of the invading soldiers would later tell us. Once he had retired, one of Israel’s senior army officers would compare the Palestinians to ‘cockroaches’.”

Lebanon

Not involved on a military basis, the Lebanese government stayed out of this war and only denounced it to the international community without taking any significant action. Unable to intervene as the South Lebanon Army (SLA) wasn’t ready for combat against Israel’s well equipped and well trained soldiers, the Lebanese forces had no other choice than to watch and, from time to time, help the Israeli soldiers fight against the PLO members on their own territory.

Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)

The PLO is an organization founded in 1964 with the purpose of creating an independent State of Palestine. They organized and executed the Coastal Road massacre on the 11th of March 1978. This terrorist attack on Israel is the main cause of the invasion. The Palestinian hijackers have been glorified, especially Dala Mughrabi, a member of the Fatah faction of the PLO, who was considered a heroine and role model by the Palestinian media.

Egypt

As strongly as Egypt had condemned the Palestinian raid in Israel, Egypt is now condemning the Israeli punishment of Lebanon as “organized genocide” and “a flagrant violation” of Lebanese sovereignty. Even though they are not active in this war, the Israel-Egypt peace talks have come to an end and the tension between these two countries is once again rising.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
May 1 st , 1949	Creation of the State of Israel
May 28 th , 1964	PLO Founded
June 5 th - 10 th , 1967	Six Day War
March 11 th , 1978	Coastal Road massacre
March 15 th , 1978	Beginning operation Litani
March 19 st , 1978	UN Security Council on the Israel-Lebanon war

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

As this is the first time the Security Council treats this matter, there is neither a previous treaty nor a previous attempt to resolve the issue. In a more informal way, you could refer to resolution 425, 426 and 427 which are the original resolutions from 1978.

Possible Solutions

The first action the Security Council should take is, of course, to make this war end as soon as possible. The main, if not only way to make this happen is to order Israel to withdraw its forces from Lebanese ground. Of course all this is way easier said than done. If there is no one to stop them, the PLO will be coming back within days after the withdrawal. This possibility would be a disaster for the local population and it is therefore the United Nations obligation to stop the PLO from coming back and to secure the area. For such an action the Security Council stands in front of two choices: the first one would be to send peace keepers in order to separate the two countries and arrest as many PLO members as possible. The second option would be to send UN advisors to Lebanon in order to train the SLA so that the Lebanese army would be able to handle the situation by their own and prevent future attacks coming from the PLO in the Middle-east region.

But the military aspect isn't the only important aspect of this war. As stated before, this war created some 300,000 refugees. It is the United Nations task to help these people. The first thing the Security Council should do is to grant those populations safety by, for example, sending UN Peacekeepers to protect the refugees. UN affiliated organizations

should definitely be sent there to give a hand. For instance, the World Food Program (WFP) with some help from UN-Habitat and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) could be of great help to the population who just lost their homes after the Israeli air strikes and the nutrition problems issued by the huge population movements inside the country. In this way, both the safety and the wellbeing of the refugees and the Lebanese population could be guaranteed by the United Nations.

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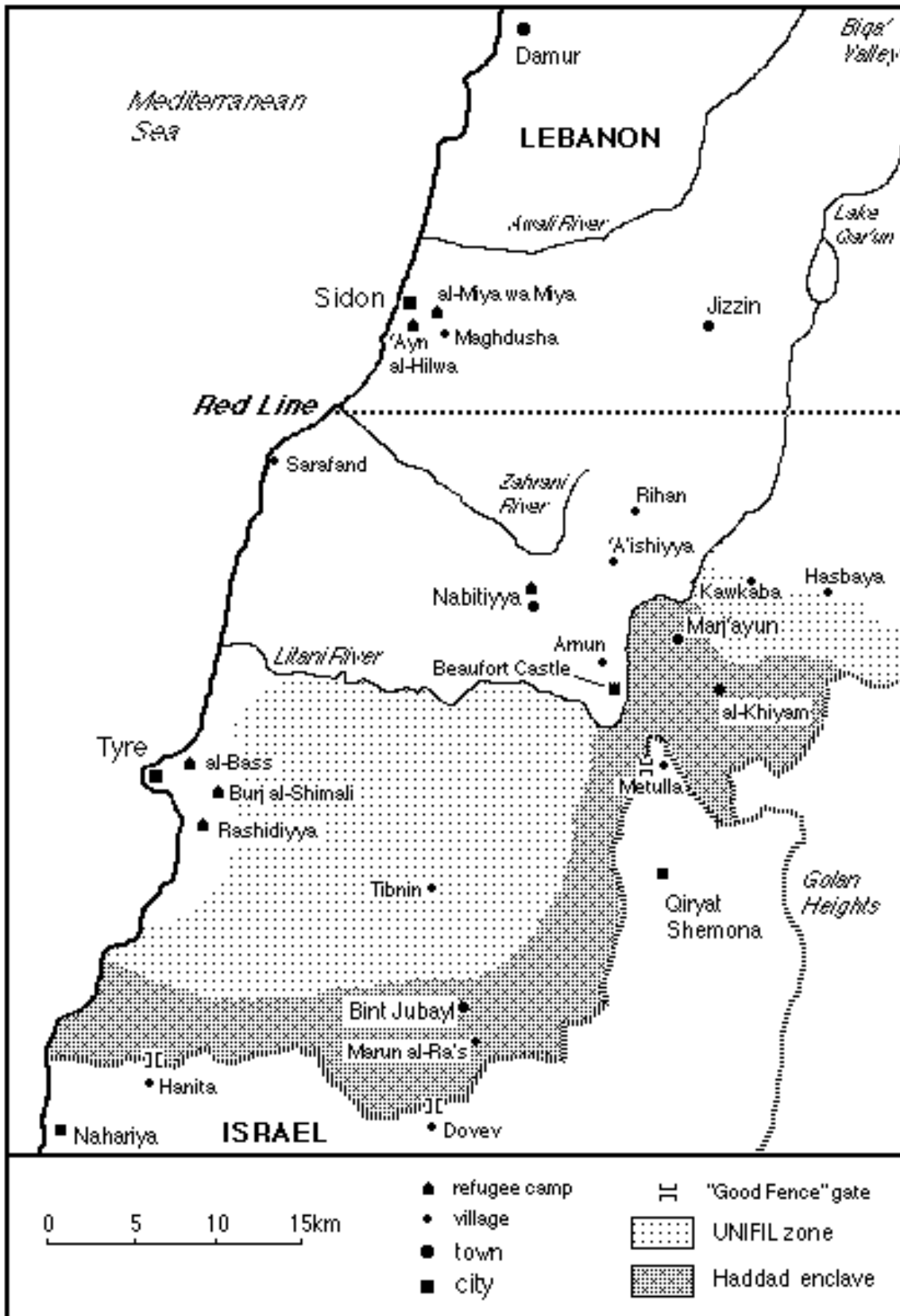
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Appendix or Appendices



Map of the refugee camps and villages

