

An Opportunity to Shape a New Reality with Lebanon

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Main Points

This policy paper proposes a strategy to translate the IDF's achievements in the war against Hezbollah—along with the disintegration of the Shiite axis, the collapse of the Assad regime, and the consequences of the war between Israel and Iran—into a new security reality along the border with Lebanon, and to foster better relations with Lebanon's new leadership.

The strategy combines ongoing military action to weaken Hezbollah and prevent its recovery with political and economic measures designed to diminish the organization while simultaneously strengthening Lebanon's pro-Western leadership. This approach differs from the one recently presented to Lebanon by the US administration, as it considers the constraints of Lebanon's weak leadership and the necessity of bolstering it in light of the challenge of disarming Hezbollah. It outlines a more realistic timetable and offers Israel greater flexibility, thereby increasing the chances of success—even if progress is slow and gradual—toward establishing a new security reality and improving bilateral relations.

Policy Recommendation Summary

Agreement on a phased plan with a reasonable timetable for implementation, given the anticipated difficulties the Lebanese leadership will face vis-à-vis Hezbollah:

- **First stage**—Demilitarization of southern Lebanon in exchange for Israel's withdrawal from the five disputed points, to be monitored by a US force (not UNIFIL);
- **Second stage**—Removal of Hezbollah's presence in the Bekaa Valley and along the border crossings between Syria and Lebanon, in exchange for resolving Israel–Lebanon border disputes (possibly alongside demarcation of the Lebanon–Syria border);
- **Final stage**—Disarmament of Hezbollah across all of Lebanon, in exchange for a complete halt of Israeli strikes and a formal Israeli commitment to respect Lebanese sovereignty.

Across all stages:

1. Maintain the IDF's freedom of action for continued Israeli enforcement and suppression of Hezbollah's rehabilitation efforts until a different reality in Lebanon is secured.

2. Preserve US involvement in building the Lebanese Armed Forces (while purging Hezbollah sympathizers from its ranks) and in monitoring the demilitarization of southern Lebanon.
3. Agree to the continued presence of UNIFIL, based on an improved mandate and for a limited period, while gradually reducing it until it is replaced by the Lebanese Armed Forces (in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2790).
4. Support the strengthening of the current Lebanese leadership, while considering its constraints and the political timetable (elections scheduled for May 2026).
5. Increase economic assistance to Lebanon from the first stage onward, including consent to rebuild destroyed villages in southern Lebanon (as a means of enhancing the Lebanese government's domestic legitimacy)—but also gradual and conditioned on Lebanon's progress in disarming Hezbollah.
6. Encourage regional and international actors to maintain diplomatic and economic pressure to weaken Hezbollah while strengthening the Lebanese state.
7. Consider Iran as a factor in Lebanon policy, given its backing of Hezbollah. Israel will need to reassess and update these recommendations in accordance with Tehran's chosen strategy.

The war has brought profound changes to the threat landscape emanating from Lebanon and to Israel, to Lebanon's internal power balance, and to the state of the broader Shiite axis:

1. Hezbollah 2.0 on "The Day After"

Hezbollah's condition changed fundamentally following its defeat in the confrontation with Israel. The organization is battered and weakened. Hassan Nasrallah's decision to join the war and to adopt a limited-war strategy—based on his assessment that Israel would avoid expanding the war while still fighting in Gaza—proved mistaken and sealed his fate. Hezbollah's limited-war strategy as a "support front" for the Palestinians did complicate the IDF and inflicted heavy damage in the north of Israel, but the organization paid a very steep price. It lost nearly all its political leadership along with its entire military chain of command and thousands of fighters. (In his August 5 speech, Secretary-General Naim Qassem claimed that Hezbollah had 5,000 dead and 13,000 wounded.) Its military capabilities were also severely damaged, including the key components that had once underpinned its status as Israel's most serious conventional threat: tens of thousands of rockets, including precision-guided ones; UAVs; tunnels; weapons-production infrastructure and storage. In addition, Hezbollah suffered extensive economic damage, and its Shiite support base was significantly affected. These outcomes led the organization to agree to the ceasefire of November 27, 2024, under terms far from optimal for the organization: It failed to compel a full Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, while Israel, with US backing, retained freedom of action against it.

Although severely weakened, Hezbollah has not disappeared and continues to cling to the ideology of “resistance,” focusing on rebuilding its capabilities and status. Since the ceasefire, it has been visibly reorganizing—replenishing its depleted financial reserves, seeking new arms-smuggling routes into Lebanon, recruiting personnel, and restructuring its institutions. It still possesses residual military capabilities, including tens of thousands of fighters and stockpiles of weaponry. While its political standing and overall support in Lebanon have eroded, it still enjoys significant backing among large parts of the Shiite population, as evidenced by the mass participation in the funerals of Nasrallah and his successor (February 23, 2025), as well as in the May 2025 Lebanese municipal elections. Moreover, Hezbollah succeeded in channeling hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation to Shiite communities harmed in the war.

2. Lebanon’s New Leadership

The strengthening of Hezbollah’s opponents within the Lebanese system as a result of the war has empowered state institutions and undermined Hezbollah’s dominant status. Contrary to its wishes, in January 2025 Lebanon elected new leadership: President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, who have made it their mission to ensure the state’s monopoly over weapons and its exclusive authority over decisions of war and peace.

This leadership has introduced a series of measures that constrain Hezbollah’s recovery efforts. The Lebanese Armed Forces have been operating more extensively than in the past to enforce the ceasefire, although often avoiding moves that could provoke direct confrontation with Hezbollah operatives and, in some cases, coordinating their presence with the organization in advance. Such activity undermines Hezbollah’s efforts to preserve the remaining weapons in its possession and to gradually return its fighters to the south—similar to its efforts after the Second Lebanon War in 2006, but Hezbollah nevertheless persists in maintaining its presence in southern Lebanon.

At the same time, Lebanon has intensified its efforts to prevent arms and financial smuggling to the organization: tightening airport inspections, halting flights from Iran since February, and strengthening border control over land crossings from Syria (paralleling the new Damascus regime’s own efforts to curb smuggling). On July 15, 2025, the Central Bank of Lebanon even banned all financial institutions from engaging with Hezbollah’s al-Qard al-Hasan network. Most far-reaching and exceptional, the new leadership has pushed, under American encouragement, to realize its vision of disarming Hezbollah (via Lebanese government decisions on August 5 and 8, 2025) and stripping the organization of its status as an independent militia.

3. The Collapse of the Assad Regime

The collapse of the Assad regime in Syria and the rise of the new leadership under Ahmed al-Sharaa, a bitter enemy of Hezbollah and Iran, has had far-reaching implications for both. Immediately upon taking power, the new regime set out to expel their forces from Syria. As a result, Hezbollah and Iran lost the strategic depth and freedom of action they had previously enjoyed in the Syrian arena, both for operations against Israel and for facilitating weapons smuggling from Iran to Lebanon, as well as drug smuggling from Lebanon into Syria, Jordan, and the Gulf states.

The new Syrian security forces are working to close unauthorized crossings between Syria and Lebanon and to intercept weapons and drug shipments. Recently, there have been reports of successful seizures of arms shipments bound for Hezbollah. These measures are constraining the organization's ability to use the Syrian land corridor precisely at a time when it needs more weapons and funds for its rehabilitation. However, indications suggest that the organization has already found alternative routes for transferring arms and cash (via Iraq, Turkey, and even the African continent).

4. The Challenges for Iran and the “Resistance” Concept

The results of the Swords of Iron war thus far have exposed the weakness of the Shiite axis led by Iran and the failure of its “Ring of Fire” strategy around Israel. Iran's disappointment over Hezbollah's defeat in its war with Israel was compounded by Hezbollah's inability to join the Israel–Iran war in June 2025.

Iran, which over the years has invested billions of dollars in building Hezbollah's capabilities as the spearhead of the Shiite axis against Israel, was compelled to accept the organization's incapacity to assist Iran “on the day of reckoning.” Nevertheless, the identification and mutual commitment between Iran and Hezbollah remain intact. Hezbollah is in desperate need of Iranian support, and Tehran appears willing to continue backing Hezbollah to strengthen it, despite its own current difficulties. In any scenario, Iranian assistance to the organization—financially, militarily, and politically—can be expected to continue, as reflected in Iran's unwavering support for Hezbollah's refusal to disarm.

5. Changing the Rules of the Game Between Hezbollah and Israel

A. The New Agreement Framework—While the ceasefire agreement rests on UN Security Council Resolution 1701, its implementation now provides Israel with two clear advantages. First, it preserves Israel's freedom of action to enforce compliance when the Lebanese Armed Forces fail to act and to neutralize emerging threats in southern Lebanon (as stipulated in an unpublished accompanying US letter). Second,

it assigns the United States a central role in implementing the agreement. Washington, which has shown understanding of Israel's concerns, is leading the five-party committee supervising its implementation. Although the Lebanese issue is not a top priority for the Trump administration, it is acting more vigorously than the previous administration, pressing the new Lebanese leadership to fulfill its obligations under the agreement while conditioning significant expansion of aid to Lebanon and its armed forces on Hezbollah's disarmament by the end of 2025 and on the advancement of economic reforms.

B. The IDF's Intensive Activity—The events of the Swords of Iron war—and above all, the tragic fate of the residents of Israel's communities along the Gaza border on October 7—brought about a change in the IDF's operational patterns in all theaters of war, including Lebanon, where an agreement was reached following the confrontation with Hezbollah. Since the ceasefire, the IDF has conducted daily operations to consolidate the war's achievements and enforce the agreement. As part of this military effort, Radwan forces have been pushed back, and at least 250 Hezbollah operatives, including key figures in its military apparatus, have been eliminated. Weapons factories and depots, including facilities for producing and storing rockets and UAVs, have also been targeted, although this has not been enough to halt Hezbollah's determined rehabilitation efforts.

C. The Strategy of Hezbollah 2.0—The defeat in the war has also led to a change in Hezbollah's strategy of using force. For now, it has been forced to abandon Nasrallah's "deterrence equation" doctrine and adopt a new strategy of "containment" and avoidance of direct retaliation for Israeli actions against it. The organization has carefully maintained the ceasefire and has refrained from firing into Israel in response to hundreds of Israeli strikes against it (except for an isolated incident on December 2, 2024, and rocket launches by Palestinian forces in March 2025). Instead, Hezbollah portrays Israel's attacks as grave ceasefire violations and places the responsibility of responding on the Lebanese government while reserving the right to act should the government fail to enforce the ceasefire. Unable to fully assist the Shiite population harmed by the war, Hezbollah has shifted that responsibility to the Lebanese government. At the same time, it is reorganizing for the possibility of another broad military confrontation with Israel and remains determined to block any efforts to disarm it. For now, Hezbollah prefers to advance dialogue with the Lebanese leadership. It presents itself as open to developing a "national defense strategy," but it remains adamantly opposed to disarmament, warning that "the hand" of anyone who attempts it "will be cut off," and cautioning that moves in this direction could spark a civil war.

Hezbollah's Possible Courses of Action in the Future

At present, Hezbollah's main effort is focused on rebuilding its capabilities and status while avoiding confrontation both with the IDF and with domestic rivals. However, as circumstances change, it could take several possible courses of action:

1. Adherence to the “Containment” Strategy for Reconstruction—Hezbollah may choose to maintain its current policy, given its weakened position and the challenges it faces. These include continued Israeli military activity with the backing of the United States; mounting pressure from Israel, the United States, Lebanon's new leadership, and domestic rivals to surrender its independent weapons; the need for calm to enable the recovery of its Shiite supporters hurt by the war; and the uncertain circumstances facing Iran and the entire Shiite axis. The primary aim of this course is to rebuild its standing without being drawn into direct confrontation with Israel or the Lebanese Armed Forces. Over time, this approach could lead to any of the four scenarios outlined below. The length of time Hezbollah pursues this approach will depend on the progress of its rehabilitation efforts and its ability to withstand military and political pressure.

2. Renewal of Limited Attacks Against Israel—Despite the challenges Hezbollah faces in its rehabilitation, the mounting internal and external pressure to disarm, coupled with the cumulative damage from continued Israeli strikes, could push Hezbollah to resume military confrontation with Israel at a “low intensity.” The aim would be to reduce Israeli attacks against it, reinforce the spirit of resistance, emphasize the importance of retaining its weapons, challenge the new rules of the game imposed on it, and broaden public support. This strategy could take mainly two forms:

- A. Attacks on IDF positions at the five strategic points in Lebanese territory that are still under Israeli control, with the claim that Hezbollah is operating to force Israel to complete its withdrawal from Lebanon, particularly if the Lebanese leadership fails to achieve this. Such actions would be widely regarded as legitimate by the Lebanese public and presented as proof of Hezbollah's role as “Lebanon's protector,” underscoring its claim that disarming the organization would harm Lebanon's security and serve Israel.
- B. Sporadic cross-border actions in the north, such as infiltrations into Israeli territory or limited rocket fire, ostensibly in response to Israeli activity against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. The goals would be to deter the IDF, reduce its attacks, and disrupt efforts at a settlement that bypasses Hezbollah. This scenario would create growing challenges for Israel and ongoing insecurity for its northern communities.

3. Resumption of High-Profile Fighting Against Israel—Hezbollah could abandon “containment” and could begin responding to Israeli actions, even initiating offensive operations into Israel, in an effort to reestablish its “deterrence equation” with the IDF. The organization understands that the IDF will respond forcefully. Still, it could feel emboldened by several factors: success in reconstituting its arsenal and forces;

the IDF's failure to prevent its rehabilitation; possible Israeli entanglement in southern Lebanon; increasing regional and international criticism of Israel's military actions despite the ceasefire; the prospect of a renewed nuclear deal with Iran that could enhance Tehran's support; and weakening confidence in Lebanon's new leadership and its ability to pull the country out of crisis. In this scenario, Israel could be dragged into a war of attrition with Hezbollah, and the threat to northern residents' security would be renewed.

4. A Struggle for Survival Within Lebanon—If the Lebanese leadership moves ahead with efforts to disarm Hezbollah, the organization could be drawn into violent internal confrontation and potentially even another civil war. This risk would increase if Hezbollah overcomes its wartime losses and if Iran deepens its support, seeking to restore its standing and reassert dominance over Lebanon's political system. From such a scenario, different courses of action toward Israel could emerge:

- A. Suspending armed struggle against Israel to focus on the domestic containment policies until the internal confrontation is resolved.
- B. Resuming resistance activities against Israel under the cover of internal chaos.

5. Transformation of the Organization—Although unlikely under the current conditions and more of a vision than a realistic scenario, Lebanon's leadership—supported by external pressure—compels Hezbollah to abandon its ideology of resistance, give up its status as an independent militia, transform into a political party, and integrate its military wing into the Lebanese Armed Forces. This transformation could take two possible forms: as an organic body within the army retaining its independence and weapons (an Iraqi-style model with many flaws), or by fully merging Hezbollah's operatives and weaponry into the Lebanese Armed Forces (similar to the integration of the Palmach into the IDF).

Key Considerations for Israeli Policy

The weakening of Hezbollah and its Iranian patron as a result of the war, along with the consolidation of a new leadership in Lebanon committed to disarming Hezbollah, creates opportunities for Israel to change the long-term security reality along the border and, in the longer term, to reshape its relationship with the Lebanese state. The concern, however, is that this is a temporary window of opportunity, which will narrow as Hezbollah succeeds in rebuilding its capabilities and domestic standing and as it assesses that it can renew its military confrontation with Israel.

At present, there is a convergence of interests between Israel and the Lebanese leadership under Joseph Aoun:

1. Maintaining a quiet border and security for residents on both sides while addressing the aftermath of the war (in Lebanon—the reconstruction of

- destroyed villages; in Israel—the civilian rehabilitation of northern communities).
2. Preventing Hezbollah's recovery and continuing to weaken it to the point of disarmament and transformation into a political movement.
 3. Strengthening and stabilizing the Lebanese state with the support of Western states and pragmatic Gulf states.
 4. Reducing Iranian involvement in Lebanon's internal affairs, ideally eliminating it altogether.

At the same time, the limitations of Lebanon's current government must be taken into account. While it recognizes the historic opportunity and has shown determination in dealing with Hezbollah, its time is limited (with elections scheduled for May 2026). This stands in contrast to Hezbollah's remaining military capabilities and its broad support among much of the Shiite population. These constraints dictate the Lebanese government's policy of avoiding clashes with Hezbollah to prevent civil war while publicly adopting Hezbollah's demands of Israel. This approach is also evident in the activities of the Lebanese Armed Forces in southern Lebanon, which avoid direct clashes with Hezbollah operatives and the Shiite population. Israel must also prepare for the possibility that, as Hezbollah advances its rehabilitation efforts, it will abandon its containment strategy. Given the manpower and weapons it still retains, Hezbollah already poses significant challenges to the IDF should it choose to employ them.

Indeed, Israeli operations against Hezbollah, carried out under the freedom of action granted by the ceasefire agreement and the accompanying American side-letter, are weakening the organization and delaying its recovery—mainly in the border area and not throughout Lebanon. As a result, these efforts cannot completely prevent Hezbollah's resurgence. Moreover, as Israeli military pressure increases, the greater the risk that Hezbollah will be pushed into renewing fighting, placing the IDF before difficult dilemmas regarding its operational choices.

Israel has an interest in strengthening the Lebanese state under its current leadership, but the continued Israeli presence at the five points along the border, together with the IDF's intensive operations, creates friction with Lebanon's leadership. For Beirut, completing the withdrawal from these positions is crucial in demonstrating to Hezbollah and the Lebanese public that it has the ability to contend with Israel and gain political credit. Promoting the reconstruction of areas damaged in the war may also contribute to expanding public support for the Lebanese government.

Iran continues to play a key role in supporting Hezbollah, particularly on the issue of disarmament, which has become even more significant given Hezbollah's weakened state. Despite its present difficulties, Iran is expected to continue assisting Hezbollah and nurturing it as a threatening arm on Israel's northern border, even after its disappointment that Hezbollah refrained from opening another front during the 12-

day war between Israel and Iran in June 2025. Iran is now engaged in internal deliberations about its strategy toward Israel, which will require Israel to reassess and update its own policy recommendations in line with Tehran's chosen course.

For Israel, it is crucial to preserve US involvement in the Lebanese arena and to enlist support from additional Western states as well as Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Such backing is important for ensuring continued assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces and the political system while distancing them from Hezbollah and Iran, and for securing US support for Israel's operations against Hezbollah, including within the five-party committee implementing the ceasefire agreement, led by an American general.

Options for Israeli Policy

The main options for Israeli policy are presented below, with their advantages and disadvantages assessed in light of Israel's core interests: providing security and a sense of security for its northern residents while weakening Hezbollah to prevent it from renewing fighting, up to its disarmament. (The likelihood of each option is not addressed here).

1. Military Enforcement to Preserve War Gains—continuing Israel's current pattern of military operations against Hezbollah, aimed at weakening the organization, striking its personnel and capabilities, and preventing its rehabilitation and return to southern Lebanon. The main advantage of this option lies in the difficulties it creates for Hezbollah as the organization strives to rebuild while entrenching the IDF's freedom of action to operate against it. The disadvantages are that the enforcement efforts in their current form could delay but not fully prevent Hezbollah's recovery—especially if Israel struggles to sustain such efforts over time due to political pressures or domestic dissatisfaction at the lack of long-term security stability in the north despite the IDF's ongoing investment. This approach could also weaken the Lebanese leadership by reinforcing Hezbollah's claims that it cannot contend with Israel, and over time, it would not prevent Hezbollah from resuming attacks against the IDF and the northern communities.

2. Another Large-Scale Military Campaign in order to conquer southern Lebanon and extend Israeli control to the Litani River, thereby expanding the security zone and enhancing the current achievements. This option would capitalize on Hezbollah's current weakness, the disintegration of the Shiite axis, and Iran's preoccupation with its domestic situation after the war with Israel. The main advantage of this course is that it could improve the IDF's ability to prevent Hezbollah's recovery and even extend the damage to it. The disadvantages are numerous: Hezbollah would challenge the IDF; Israel could again become mired in another long and bloody war; and the campaign would demand further resources from the IDF, already strained after two

years of protracted conflict. Lebanon as a whole would suffer severe damage, and the standing of its current leadership could be harmed.

3. Initiative to Advance an Arrangement or Agreement Between Israel and Lebanon—The potential advantages are clear, especially if such an initiative produces a stable solution that ensures protection for Israel’s northern communities and severely limits Hezbollah. The main drawback is the absence or weakness of a Lebanese partner for such an agreement, particularly while Hezbollah still wields power and influence. Especially problematic would be a scenario in which Israel, under such an arrangement, is forced to give up the military freedom of action it currently enjoys and make territorial concessions once the border is permanently demarcated (including withdrawal from the five points captured after the war and possibly additional areas held since before the war along the Blue Line). Progress in Israel’s relations with Syria’s new regime could serve as a catalyst for such a move. This option could take several forms:

- A. **Non-Belligerency Agreement**—A ceasefire and return to the 1949 armistice agreement, without altering the formal relations between the states. This could be based on the current American proposal or another arrangement.
- B. **Lebanon’s Inclusion in the Abraham Accords**—Although highly unlikely in the current reality, particularly in the absence of Saudi Arabia’s participation and significant progress on the Palestinian issue.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The long war that has taken place since October 7, 2023, has reshaped the regional balance, especially weakening the Shiite axis, and has brought significant changes in the Lebanese arena. Hezbollah’s current weakness presents opportunities for Israel. Yet the military achievements to date have not produced a stable security reality, nor can they necessarily be guaranteed over time. Hezbollah has not been defeated; it continues to pose a threat to Israel, clings to the ideology of “resistance,” retains military capabilities, albeit diminished, and, with Iran’s support, invests extensive efforts in rebuilding its forces and standing in Lebanon. Meanwhile, the Lebanese state remains weak, struggling to free itself from Hezbollah’s grip on its sovereignty and stability. Nevertheless, developments in Lebanon provide Israel with the potential to advance its security and political interests, by adopting a strategy that takes into account both Hezbollah’s present weakness and the constraints of Lebanon’s leadership.

An updated Israeli strategy is therefore proposed to turn the IDF’s achievements into a new security reality along the Lebanon border and to advance improved relations with Lebanon’s pro-Western leadership. This strategy should combine military activity

with political and diplomatic efforts to weaken Hezbollah, prevent its recovery, and strengthen the Lebanese state, paving the way for improved cooperation with Israel.

At the military level—Israel must persist with military activity to enforce UN Security Council Resolution 1701 to further weaken Hezbollah and prevent its rehabilitation and return to southern Lebanon, while leveraging the freedom of action it currently enjoys. This should be done carefully, with sensitivity to Lebanon’s political constraints, coordinated where possible with the Lebanese government and the Lebanese Armed Forces, and aligned with the US-led five-party enforcement framework. However, military action is not sufficient and must be accompanied by political efforts.

At the political level—in coordination with Washington, Israel should develop a plan with the dual aims of gradually weakening Hezbollah while strengthening Lebanon’s current pro-Western leadership. The proposal of the US Envoy, Thomas Barrack, to the Lebanese leadership includes demands that the Lebanese government has officially adopted (in its August 5 and 8 meetings), but which it and the Lebanese Armed Forces, in their current form, cannot fulfill (complete Hezbollah disarmament by the end of 2025, with expanded aid conditioned on this). Therefore, a phased plan is recommended—one that takes into account Lebanon’s constraints, sets a realistic timetable for Hezbollah’s disarmament, and includes reciprocal measures from Israel and the United States—making it more likely to succeed.

In this framework, Israel’s flexibility should include:

- Agreement to extend the disarmament timetable, beginning with southern Lebanon in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1701;
- Gradual withdrawal from the five points currently held by the IDF;
- Loosening conditions for aid to Lebanon, tied to measurable progress, with priority for projects that improve the population’s welfare, without Hezbollah’s involvement;
- Agreement to gradual, internationally supervised reconstruction of villages destroyed in the war (excluding those near the border);
- Support for strengthening the Lebanese Armed Forces, conditional on the removal of Hezbollah sympathizers from its ranks;
- A gradual drawdown of UNIFIL in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2790) as the Lebanese Armed Forces assumes responsibility, possibly alongside the deployment of another agreed force (preferably American) to oversee demilitarization.

At the same time, Israel must insist on two key demands until a new border-security regime is in place:

- Preserving the IDF’s freedom of action to enforce UN Security Council Resolution 1701 in southern Lebanon until it is fully implemented.

- Postponing the discussion of permanent border demarcation, which will entail painful Israeli concessions, until progress is made toward Hezbollah's full disarmament.

The following is a proposal for a gradual plan according to regions in Lebanon (which can be changed or added to), with a timeframe for the implementation of each of its stages:

- Stage One—Removal of Hezbollah's presence in southern Lebanon under UN Security Council Resolution 1701, in exchange for the IDF's gradual withdrawal from the five points (conditional on the compliance of the Lebanese Armed Forces).
- Stage Two—Removal of Hezbollah from the Bekaa Valley and the Syrian border (possibly coordinated with Syria's new regime), in exchange for delineating the Israel–Lebanon land border (and, if possible, the Syria–Lebanon border as well) and establishing a mutually agreed border-security regime.
- Stage Three—Complete disarmament of Hezbollah across Lebanon, particularly in Beirut's Dahiya, in exchange for an end to Israeli strikes in Lebanon and establishing a new security regime, potentially including the deployment of a US-supervised force (similar to the Multinational Force and Observers in Sinai), working alongside the Lebanese Armed Forces and replacing UNIFIL.

At the economic level—given Lebanon's urgent economic needs, Western aid should not be entirely conditioned on Hezbollah's complete disarmament. Aid should begin from the first stage onward, even if conditional and gradual. Economic support will strengthen Lebanon's pro-Western leadership if directed toward necessary reforms in its economic and governmental systems, as well as toward weakening Hezbollah—particularly by providing alternatives for the Shiite population, which remains heavily dependent on the organization. Economic aid should also be provided to the Lebanese Armed Forces, while requiring it to eliminate Hezbollah's influence from within its ranks. Moderate regional actors such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, together with Western partners, should be mobilized to prevent Lebanon from seeking Iranian, Turkish, or Russian assistance and to reduce its reliance on Qatari aid.

Israel–Lebanon relations—it is proposed to postpone to a later stage the initiatives to change the formal relations between the two countries until the conditions are adequate, so as not to overburden Lebanon's new leadership, which already faces significant domestic challenges. The inclusion of additional states in the Abraham Accords—especially Saudi Arabia, and possibly Syria—could ease Lebanon's path. Public statements that might complicate matters for Lebanon's leadership should be avoided. For example, the idea of normalization with Lebanon, recently raised, is premature. Instead, a gradual process of improving relations should accompany the security arrangement, including:

- Early-stage repeal by Lebanon’s parliament of the 1950s law forbidding Lebanese citizens from engaging with Israelis;
- Reverting to the 1949 armistice agreement (non-belligerency)—an idea President Aoun has previously raised publicly and one that would be easier for the Lebanese public to accept than full normalization;
- Israeli willingness to participate in economic projects that benefit Lebanon, such as the Arab Gas Pipeline to supply gas.

Additionally, Israel should cultivate informal channels, both direct and indirect, beyond US mediation, particularly with Lebanon’s new leadership but also with a variety of Lebanese political actors, including Shiite figures who oppose Hezbollah.

American involvement—Israel should encourage Washington to intensify its engagement with the Lebanon issue, support Israel’s policies and military activities, and extend aid to Lebanon and its armed forces.

International arena—Facing the possibility that Hezbollah will try to expand its activities overseas, Israel must advance diplomatic, economic, and informational efforts to cut off its funding sources and constrain its operations. This should include regional cooperation with states affected by Hezbollah’s terrorism and drug smuggling (Jordan, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Cyprus, Greece, Egypt, and even Syria), and a global campaign, together with Interpol, the European Union, the United States, Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil to thwart Hezbollah’s drug-trafficking and money-laundering activities.