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ISRAEL ANNOUNCES THREE-STAGE PLAN TO LEAVE LEBANON

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The Israeli Cabinet approved a plan today to withdraw the Israeli Army from Lebanon in three stages, beginning within five weeks.

The action came after 11 hours of discussions on Sunday and today. The vote was 16 to 6 in favor of the Defense Ministry's withdrawal plan. Prime Minister Shimon Peres said he hoped the plan would be completed within "six to nine months."

"After two and half years in Lebanon we have learned the hard way that Israel should not become the policeman of Lebanon," Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin said.

Likud Ministers Vote No

The six ministers to vote against the plan were all from the right-wing Likud bloc and included the Likud leader and Foreign Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, as well as Moshe Arens, a Minister Without Portfolio.

As was widely noted, the architect of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Ariel Sharon, the former Defense Minister, could not vote on the withdrawal plan - which he opposed - because he is in New York pursuing a libel case against Time magazine.

A 3-Stage Pullback

The withdrawal plan, which was produced by Defense Minister Rabin in consultation with the Israeli Army General Staff, calls for a pullback of Israeli troops to the international border in three stages.

The exact timing of each stage will need to be approved in separate decisions of the Israeli Cabinet and will depend on conditions inside Lebanon. As a result, Israeli officials do not rule out the possibility that chaos inside Lebanon after the first Israeli pullback could prompt delays in Stages 2 and 3. Stage 1 will take place "within five weeks," the Cabinet communique, said, and involve a withdrawal of the Israeli Army in western Lebanon from "the Sidon area" to "the Litani-Nabatiye region."

Speaking with reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Defense Minister Rabin refused to give any further details about

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exactly where the new Israeli line will run, apparently to keep Israel's options open until the last minute and to keep its opponents in Lebanon off balance.

According to military sources, however, the new line will run roughly 13 miles north of the **Israeli-Lebanese** border - keeping Israeli territory just out of the range of Soviet-made Katyusha rockets - roughly along the Litani River and then cutting north up to Mount Baruk.

Israel would thus relinquish the city of Sidon, along with two large Palestinian refugee camps around it, some Shiite villages just south of it and some Christian villages to the east.

Spy Station Would Be Kept

Israel would retain control of the Shiite-dominated towns of Tyre and Nabatiye and many small, hostile Shiite villages farther south. In this first stage, the Israelis would also keep their huge electronic spy station on Mount Baruk, which they use to listen to communications all over the region.

Although the pullback decision was made by Israel alone, Mr. Rabin expressed a strong desire to coordinate the withdrawal - if possible - with the Lebanese Army and the United Nations force in Lebanon.

A United Nations Under Secretary General, Brian Urquhart, arrived in Israel this evening at the start of a Middle East mediation effort.

'Not Contingent' on Lebanese

Mr. Rabin said, however, that the Israeli decision to withdraw would "not be contingent on the willingness of the U.N. or the willingness of the Lebanese Government and its army to coordinate its activities with us."

Since the Israeli Army invaded Lebanon in June 1982, 607 Israelis have been killed and more than 3,500 wounded.

Stage 2, according to the Cabinet statement, will involve a withdrawal of the Israeli Army in eastern Lebanon. The army will pull back from the Bekaa and the Mount Baruk range, where it is now facing the Syrian Army, to the "Hasbeya region," the Cabinet statement said, without giving further details.

Timing at Israeli Discretion

In Stage 2, the Israeli Army would not move from its new line in western Lebanon. As for the timing of Stage 2, Mr. Rabin said it would be at "our discretion."

"We will wait to see the results of Stage 1 and to what extent the Lebanese authorities are able to maintain law and order," Mr. Rabin said.

In Stage 3, the Cabinet communique said, "the Israeli Army will deploy along the **Israeli-Lebanese** international border while maintaining a zone in southern Lebanon where the local forces - the South Lebanon Army - will operate with Israeli Army backing."

Said to Seek Old Situation

Defense Ministry sources said Israel would seek to re-establish the same kind of situation with the South Lebanese Army, led by Gen. Antoine Lahd, that existed along the border in the days before the invasion. At that time, the border

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strip inside Lebanon was controlled by the Israeli-supported militia of Maj. Saad Haddad.

This would mean, the sources said, that Israeli troops and intelligence officers would move freely in and out of the border strip, advising the Lebanese militias and providing them with arms and logistical support.

Mr. Peres and Mr. Rabin have made it clear in private conversations with colleagues that they believe the Israeli Army must get out of Lebanon in order to establish a new, peaceful relationship with the Shiites of southern Lebanon, who are going to be Israel's permanent neighbors but who have been turned into enemies as a result of the Israeli occupation.

Another Blow to Shamir

The Cabinet's approval of the withdrawal plan is another serious political blow to the prestige of Mr. Shamir, the Likud bloc leader, political commentators in Israel said. Three Likud ministers - David Levy, Yitzhak Modai and Gideon Patt - voted with the Labor Party and the smaller coalition factions in favor the plan and in direct conflict with Mr. Shamir's wishes.

Ever since the national unity coalition Cabinet was formed last September, with Mr. Peres and Mr. Shamir supposedly serving as virtually co- equal heads, Mr. Shamir has been overshadowed by Mr. Peres, who has defined the agenda both on Lebanon and the economy.

Mr. Shamir was unable to come up with an alternative security plan for Lebanon - other than to keep the army where it is.

"I think the Cabinet decision makes it quite clear again that this is not a dual leadership - this is a Peres Government," said Daniel J. Elazar, head of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, an independent policy-research group. "Peres is making all of the strategic decisions and carrying them through. This will weaken Shamir further."

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CORRECTION:

A dispatch from Jerusalem yesterday about the Israeli Cabinet's troop- withdrawal plan for Lebanon incorrectly characterized the position of Finance Minister Yitzhak Modai. Mr. Modai, a Likud official, left the Cabinet meeting before the vote was taken and did not cast a ballot.

GRAPHIC: map of Lebanon

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