PROPOSED: THAT ISRAEL UNILATERALLY WITHDRAW FROM LEBANON

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 25, 1996

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in praise of Stephen S. Rosenfeld, the author of an op-ed piece which appeared in the Washington Post, on June 21, entitled: ''For Israel in Lebanon—a Unilateral Withdrawal.''

Mr. Rosenfeld's article breathes new life into what I have been saying now for many years—get Israeli soldiers out of Lebanon, and the guerrilla Hezbollah will disappear as well—making it safe for both Israeli citizens in north Israel, and for Lebanese civilians who live in or near the southern border.

The Rosenfeld column is extremely timely given two recent and related events in the Middle East. First of all, the totally inappropriate and devastating attack on Lebanon civilians by the Israelis during operation Grapes of Wrath. In that operation 170 innocent Lebanese civilians were killed, and more than 400,000 men, women and children were left homeless, grievously injured, and suffering from the grave loss of their loved ones and of destroyed infrastructure on which they relied for life's daily necessities.

Second, what Rosenfeld has to say is timely because we have just witnessed the election—the first direct election—in Israel which replaced the Labor party with the more conservative Likud party—leaving most of us wondering about the future—if any—of the Middle East peace process.

Third, in the contest of a continuation of the Middle East peace process, where does it leave the innocent bystander nation known to the world as Lebanon, as it struggles with Syrian soldiers on the one side, and Israeli soldiers on the other.

In that context, I bring to the attention of my colleagues the column by Stephen Rosenfeld for the Post, in which he says what I and the Lebanese have been saying for years: get Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon—and the rest will take care of itself.

Mr. Rosenfeld states at the outset: ''Here is a good way for Benyamin Netanyahu to start off his foreign policy on the right foot. Remove Israeli troops from southern Lebanon and its larger occupier, Syria, but without negotiation. Just do it.''

Rosenfeld also notes that ''southern Lebanon, after all, is not part of the 'Land of Israel,' and no Jewish settlers live there.'' I agree completely with that observation and urge my colleagues to understand its deeper meaning in the context of Middle East peace. And I also agree that to rid Lebanon of Israeli soldiers would also rid southern Lebanon of the Syria-sponsored Hezbollah guerrilla infestation—because with Israeli troops gone, the guerrillas would have to go too. Syria's credibility would definitely be on the line.

I could not agree more. Just do it. And please, for the sake of humanity, do it without another operation first, which undoubtedly will only cause further civilian casualties.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the above-referenced newspaper article be printed in the RECORD at this point.

[From the Washington Post, June 21, 1996]

FOR ISRAEL IN LEBANON—A UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL

(By Stephen S. Rosenfeld)

Here is a good way for Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's new prime minister, to start off his foreign policy on the right foot. Remove Israeli troops from southern Lebanon. Right away. With notice to Lebanon and its larger occupier, Syria, but without negotiation. Just do it.

The advantages for Lebanon are obvious. It would be rid of the Israeli occupation. More important, Lebanon could reasonably anticipate being rid of the provocative presence of the Syria-sponsored Hezbollah guerrilla infestation. For without Israeli troops to attack on Lebanese soil, Syria loses the last pretext to keep Hezbollah in Lebanon. With Israeli troops gone, the guerrillas would have to go too.

There, of course, lies the advantage for Israel. The Israelis are dreadfully cynical about Lebanon, alternately bemoaning, exploiting and aggravating its weakness. But surely Netanyahu's Likud, newly validated as the party of security, is capable of serving the goal it professes. What greater interest does Israel have in Lebanon than to stop the relentless drain of its soldiers' blood in the Israeli-occupied border zone and to safeguard its own now-threatened northern villages? These results would flow from calming the Lebanon-Israel border.

Perhaps Prime Minister Netanyahu is more interested in flexing Israel's military power. In that case, he would want to wait for suitable Hezbollah provocation—they come along regularly—and conduct a bash. This is the traditional Israeli way to try to intimidate the guerrillas and reassure folks at home.

But set aside, as Israelis do, the repeated disasters this policy of reprisals has bought upon Lebanon. Netanyahu must know the policy has been an utter failure for Israel. Israeli soldiers are still being ambushed, Israeli towns still rocketed. This record and this prospect have to be the starting line of any serious Israeli effort to deal with Lebanon.

I hear you out there saying, wait a minute, if the Israelis pull back, Syria and Hezbollah may simply conclude that Israel has lost its nerve, that Netanyahu and his Likud have gone squishy, and stay in place. This fear of having one's resolve underestimated is the defining anxiety of Likudniks, especially those in America.

My answer is that Hezbollah's withdrawal is integral and implicit in the politics of the Middle East. In an Israeli pullback, Hezbollah and its patrons would be able to claim victory: to say they had driven Israel from Lebanon. They would have no reason to stay. Lebanon's residual nationalism and self-respect and Hafez Assad's care for his own credibility would propel the guerrillas out.

But Israel too could claim victory—the safety of its soldiers and civilians alike. An Israeli government devoted to security that did not explore this option would have its own problems of credibility. Southern Lebanon, after all, is not part of the ''Land of Israel,'' and no Jewish settlers live there: key factors in easing any possible Likud doubts about a pullback.

Netanyahu campaigned on a claim that only his Likud Party could make the tough decisions necessary for peace. Here is a tough decision, one perhaps that the left-leaning Labor could not have made but that the right-leaning Likud can.

The prime minister has been saying he wants to move away from his predecessor's attempt to find a ''comprehensive'' approach to Syria and adopt an ''incremental'' one. Okay, here is an increment, a nice bite-sized one; there aren't so many others.

Netanyahu has been making public the ''guidelines'' for his foreign policy. For most of them, he would seem to have no Arab partner, not soon, anyway. But for this one he could very well have a partner, Syria, which is in a position to bring along poor Lebanon and the killers of Hezbollah.

As for doing it unilaterally, the case for it is that this is how to get the thing done quickly and cleanly. Israel would simply announce its plans, reserving, of course, a ''right of return'' for the Israeli army if the Syrians don't deliver. The worst that could happen would be to go back to the unsatisfactory but manageable status quo.

In the early 1970s, I asked the Israeli prime minister, Labor's Golda Meir, if she had considered a unilateral withdrawal of Israeli forces from their positions on the Suez Canal back to the Sinai passes,with both sides free to police the evacuated territory to keep it demilitarized. She drew herself up in executive unanswerability and thundered: ''I suppose you want the entire Egyptian army directly on our frontier!'' Soon came the 1973 war, leaving the Israeli army at the passes.

In 1992 some in Likud thought the reason Yitzhak Shamir lost to Shimon Peres was that Shamir had not acted on Likud suggestions to withdraw unilaterally from troubled Gaza. Then as now the argument rested on Israel's security needs. Most foreign policy fixes take two. Here is one in Netanyahu's hands.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF LONG BEACH MASONIC LODGE NO. 327 F.&A.M.

HON. STEPHEN HORN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 25, 1996

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, for the past 100 years, members of the Long Beach Masonic Lodge No. 327 F.&A.M. have worked hard toward the betterment of the Long Beach area community, while actively promoting the highest principles of Masonry. Southern California is a better place for their efforts.

History records that it was due to the untiring efforts of Charles E. Mitchell, master of Wilmington Lodge No. 198 in 1895, that Long Beach Lodge No. 327 had its birth. Masons living in Long Beach held memberships in Wilmington, Los Angeles, and other towns. But roads were poor and traveling was difficult so it was decided that the time was right to start a Masonic lodge in the city of Long Beach, population 1,600.

On April 21, 1896, 21 brethren who recognized each other as Master Masons' meet in a small building on the north side of Ocean Boulevard, between Pine and Pacific Avenues, for the purpose of applying to Grand Lodge for dispensation to establish a lodge of Free and Accepted Masons in Long Beach.

Dispensation was granted on June 29, 1896, by Grand Master Edward M. Preston and Long Beach Lodge ''Under Dispensation'' held its first stated meeting on July 9, 1896. The meeting place was a lodge room on the top floor of a three story building known as castle hall on the northwest corner of Pine Avenue and Ocean Boulevard.

On October 15, 1896, at the 47th communication of the Grand Lodge of California, a

charter was granted and the new lodge was constituted on November 12, 1896, by Past Grand Master Henry Orme in ''The ceremony of constitution and dedicating the lodge in accordance with ancient usage.'' The 25 charter members were:

Charles Edward Mitchell, Russell Kincade, Thomas Stovall, William Schilling, Henry Clay Dillon, George Wesley Bond, John Fell Lightburn, Henry Clay Bailey, Robert Benton Vanderburg, Charles Fitz Abner Johnson, William Penn Haworth, Harry Bateham Marshall, John Wesley Hanselman, William Galer, Wesley Clay Bowers, Ephriam Roscrans, John Roberts, Henry Harrison, John Finlayson, Samuel Crawford Hummer, Joseph James Hart, Francis Joseph Pursey, Chester C. Clewett, William Jasper Morrison, and William Wallace Lowe.

New officers installed on November 12, 1896, were:

Master Charles E. Mitchell, Senior Warden Henry C. Dillion, Junior Warden Russel Kincade, Treasurer William Wallace Lowe, Secretary Wallace C. Bowers, Senior Deacon George C. Flint, Junior Deacon Charles H. Thornburg, Marshall Joseph J. Hart, Senior Steward George W. Bond, Junior Steward Chester C. Clewett, and Tiler William L. Briggs.

The cornerstone laying ceremony of Long Beach Lodge's Masonic Temple was conducted on August 5, 1903, by Grand Master Orrin S. Henderson and his Grand Lodge officers at 234 Pine Avenue, Long Beach. The brethren of the lodge, headed by the Marine Bank and escorted by the Santa Ana Knights Templars, paraded from the lodge room to the site of the new temple. The Grand Lodge officers and visiting brethren from all around the country were later entertained and dined by Long Beach Lodge No. 327.

Fifty-four years, two world wars and a devastating earthquake were to pass before the ground-breaking for another new temple would take place on August 24, 1957. The first shovel-full of earth was turned at 3610 Locust Avenue by John H. Ferguson, inspector of the 622 Masonic District and past master of Long Beach Lodge. On November 23, 1957, the cornerstone was laid with full Masonic Grand Lodge honors by Grand Master Leo E. Anderson.

Today, Long Beach Lodge No. 327 F.&A.M. has over 600 members. The Officers for 1996 are as follows:

Master John W. Gaddis IV, Senior Warden Richard L. Garrett, Junior Warden Gene M. Ferguson, Treasurer Truman W. Cleveland, Secretary Billy R. Wilkerson P.M., Chaplain Mark A. Shoemaker, Senior Deacon Jack E. Reynolds, Junior Deacon Larry R. LaCost, Jr., Marshall Charles D. LeReaux, Senior Steward Neil D. Staryk, Junior Steward Charles M. Higgins, Organist Leonard L. Black, and Tiler Howard C. Earnshaw.

Members of Long Beach Lodge No. 327 F.&A.M. have faithfully served their country and community in all branches of the military and many members currently serve the community in fields such as police and other public services.

Members of Long Beach Lodge No. 327 F.&A.M. look toward the future by supporting the local public schools. One month each year is devoted to actively visiting and discussing the needs of the next generation of citizens in the Long Beach public schools.

Through their service to the Long Beach area community and their commitment to the principles and doctrines of Masonry, the members of the Long Beach Masonic Lodge No. 327 F.&A.M. have made immeasurable contributions. We are far richer for their work.