

Sezer also promised to defend the country's secular tradition. As chief justice, he supported laws that ban women from wearing Islamic-style headscarves at schools and in public offices.

"The principle of secularism will be protected without any concession and with determination," he stated.

Signs that Sezer supports extending civil liberties include his criticism of the Constitution, drawn up in 1982 during military rule, and his calls for reforming laws that check free speech. Those laws have imprisoned hundreds of people for speeches, books and newspaper articles deemed threats to national security.

Presidents in Turkey function mainly as figureheads, but play a crucial role as power brokers in times of political crisis. Sezer can also wield influence in his public speeches and by proposing legislation in his meetings with ministers.

His presidency begins at a time when the European Union, which accepted Turkey as a candidate in December, has been pressuring the country to enact democratic reforms to become a full member.

EGYPT HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP ACCEPTS NEW LAW DESPITE RISKS

Egypt's main human rights group said in May that it had registered under a new law despite fears the measure would give the government control of its affairs.

"We presented our papers yesterday after talks with the Social Affairs Ministry last month," said Hafez Abu Seda, secretary-general of the Egyptian Organization of Human Rights (EOHR).

Abu Seda said the EOHR, which the government has refused to register since its inception in 1985, had no choice but to apply for official status under a 1999 law regulating non-governmental associations (NGOs) by a deadline of May 31.

EOHR member Gasser Abdel Razek said he feared the government, which has had a stormy relationship with rights groups, would neutralize their impact as the Tunisian government has done.

"The fear among a lot of people is that the government will use the Tunisian scenario and flood human rights groups with members that they can control," he said.

The law allows the ministry to appoint members and dissolve boards of groups which register as "associations."

Abdel Razek, who runs a civil and human rights legal aid centre which has avoided the law by registering as a law firm, said a membership-based group like the EOHR could not do that.

Some groups have registered with the social affairs ministry as "foundations," but are subject to strict financial

controls, including prior approval for any foreign funding.

"A foundation is restricted to those who own it and this limits the chances of controlling it," Mohammed Zara of the Human Rights Centre for the Assistance of Prisoners said.

Three prominent groups, including the Arab Organization of Human Rights, have registered with the foreign ministry as regional organizations, which they say affords more protection.

The Group for Democratic Development has closed down in protest against the law, saying the government had interfered with its work promoting modern teaching methods and democracy.

In April, the government announced a new National Human Rights Council, but President Hosni Mubarak is still to announce his nominations for its 20 members, chairman and vice-chairman.

"It will be a government institution, not a human rights group or popular association," Zara said. "Its job will be to answer human rights reports from inside and outside Egypt."

Abdel Razek took part in a U.N. rights committee in Geneva this month which said that the law contravened the 1966 international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights because it restricts freedom of association.

WAHID URGES INDONESIAN LAWMAKERS TO LEGALIZE COMMUNISM

Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid in a television broadcast on May 19 repeated his controversial call to the country's lawmakers to legalize communism, which was banned after an aborted 1965 coup blamed on the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI).

Wahid, in a prerecorded talk show on state-run television, suggested that as an ideology, communism should be legalized, while the PKI may remain an illegal organization. He reiterated a proposal that an anticommunist law passed in 1966 be revised.

While the Oct. 1, 1965 coup could justify the banning of the party, the state could not ban communism as an ideology, Wahid said.

He said the banning of one ideology is "tantamount to human rights violations." Fighting the spread of communism "is not an affair of the state ... but of society," he said. He said the PKI "must be fought" by societal efforts and not through a state decree. Muslim groups are strongly opposed to the president's suggestion that communism as an ideology be legalized. At least 100,000 Indonesian communists and purported PKI supporters were killed in attacks launched by security forces and Muslim militants after the October 1965 coup attempt. •

World Celebrates Israeli Retreat

People all over the world celebrated what they saw as a victory over the apartheid state of Israel, though some worry that Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon happened so quickly it threatens stability.

The Israeli pullout from land it has invaded twice and occupied since 1982 marked the first time Israel withdrew from Arab land without negotiating a settlement – a situation that makes the event more chaotic – but to many, far sweeter. This is a clear sign that determination and will can lead to the liberation of an occupied homeland.

Hezbollah, the Lebanese freedom fighter group that led the effort to drive Israel out, is being widely praised throughout the world. In the past, the world in general has supported Hezbollah's goals but distanced themselves from it, trying to avoid quarrels with a U.S. government that considers Hezbollah a terrorist organization.

Now, many people are saying that Syria should borrow Hezbollah for the Golan, or set up its own. This could cut the long negotiations short for them.

The peace talks between Israel and Syria – the main power in Lebanon – that were aimed at eventually returning most or all of the Golan Heights to Syria have been stalled since January. Damascus state-run radio called the withdrawal a "sound defeat to Israel" and credited the "cohesion between Syria, Lebanon and the heroic (Lebanese) resistance."

Israel started pulling its troops out of southern Lebanon six weeks ahead of its July 7 deadline and rushed to finish the withdrawal after the rapid collapse of its militia ally, the South



A Palestinian woman from Lebanon shouts and waves at her relatives living in Israel through a barbed wire fence in the northern village of Jurdeikh May 31.

Lebanon Army. Palestinian negotiator Yasser Abed Rabbo said the pullout proves that occupation, no matter how long it lasts, will end – referring to Israel's 33-year presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

On behalf of the 22-member Arab League, the group's Assistant Secretary-General Saeed Kamal said, "We congratulate Lebanon and the Lebanese people for this historic achievement by forcing out occupation forces."

Foreign Minister Amr Moussa of Egypt, the first Arab nation to sign a peace deal with Israel, said the withdrawal was a necessity and the "faster it is carried out the better." If the situation remains tense too long, it

by a staff writer

will hurt the peace process, he said.

Kuwait University political science professor Massouma al-Mubarak, however, warned in an article in Al-Siyassah newspaper that the "sudden pullout will certainly upset Lebanese security arrangements."

Muslims and other non-Zionist American groups in the United States congratulated the people of Lebanon on their victory and urged them to exercise restraint. The victory is a landmark in the struggle for human rights and dignity. It shows that apartheid cannot last long, said Shaikh Omair Baqaullah, a young Muslim religious leader.

Following are key facts and a chronology of Israel's military occupation of Lebanon that ended on May 24.

OCCUPATION ZONE

Israel has controlled parts of south Lebanon with the help of militia proxies since its 1978 "Litani operation" invasion. Its occupation zone, about 15 km (nine miles) deep, was carved out in 1985 after it pulled back from a line further north, held since a 1982 invasion reaching Beirut.

FATALITIES

According to Israeli army figures, more than 900 Israeli soldiers were killed in Lebanon from 1978. Around 250 soldiers have been killed, since the latest occupation zone was established. Since the beginning of the year, eight Israeli soldiers were killed.

Antoine Lahd, commander of Israel's South Lebanon Army (SLA) proxy, has said that more than 650 SLA men and some 350 civilians were killed in the zone.

TROOPS

About 1,000 Israeli soldiers and an estimated 2,500-3,000 SLA militiamen patrolled the zone.

Events Leading to Israeli Withdrawal from Lebanon

1978 – Israel launches Lebanon offensive against Palestine Liberation Organization. Most troops withdraw within weeks, leaving behind a 10-km (six-mile) wide zone held by Israel's Lebanese Christian allies.

1982 – Israeli troops again invade Lebanon in a more ambitious campaign that takes them all the way to Beirut. During the war, Christian Lebanese troops enter Palestinian refugee camps Sabra and Shatila and, with the alleged support of the Israelis, massacre hundreds of innocent civilians.

1985 – Israel pulls back bulk of 1982 invasion force, leaving behind about 1,000 soldiers to patrol a self-declared security zone to prevent cross-border guerrilla attacks.

1991 – Israel begins talks with Lebanon as part of Madrid peace conference, but Beirut links results to Israeli-Syrian talks, failing to produce an agreement.

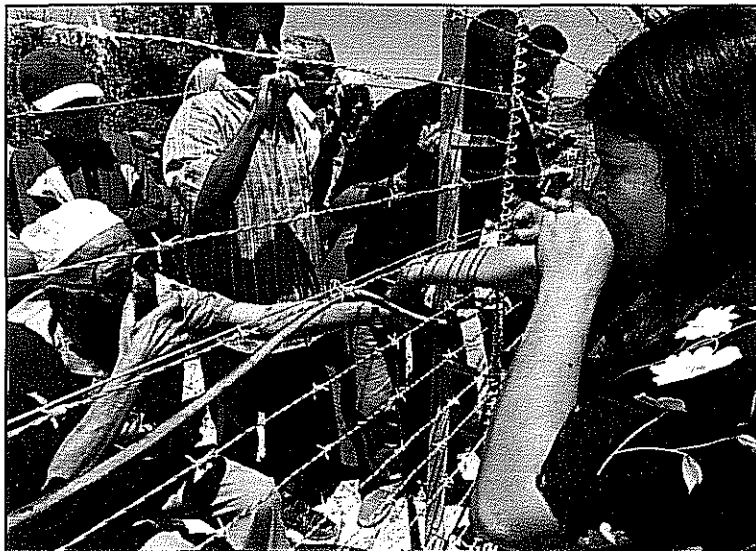
1993 – In response to freedom struggle of Hizbullah, Israel unleashes Operation Accountability, a week-long air, artillery and naval blitz in which 130 people, mostly innocent Lebanese civilians, die and 300,000 flee their homes.

1996 – Israel launches 17-day blitz, Operation Grapes of Wrath, that kills more than 200 Lebanese in retaliation for Hizbullah shelling of northern Israeli towns. Ceasefire understandings bar attacks from and on civilian centers.

1998 – Israel adopts 1978 U.N.

Security Council Resolution 425 to withdraw its troops from Lebanon, conditional on guarantees that Lebanon deploys its army southward to prevent guerrilla incursions into Israel.

May 1999 – Labor party leader Ehud Barak elected prime minister, pledges to pull troops out of Lebanon within a year of taking office on July 7.



Ibtisam Mustapha Bushnak cries for joy as she holds hands through the barbed wire fence with her father, who she has not seen in 11 years, as they are reunited May 31 on the Israeli-Lebanese border.

June 1999 – SLA retreats from Jezzine enclave north of Israeli zone it held for 14 years in move seen as possible precursor to wider Israeli withdrawal. After Hizbullah guerrillas rocket hit Lebanese power stations, bridges and roads in its widest offensive in Lebanon since 1996.

2000

Jan. 30 – Hizbullah freedom fighters say they killed Colonel Akl Hashem, second-in-command of pro-Israeli militia in Lebanon, with a roadside bomb.

Feb. 7 & 8 – In Israel's heaviest attacks on Lebanon since June, fighters destroy three power stations, blacking out Beirut.

Feb. 11 – Israel walks out of five-nation meeting called to stem violence in Lebanon after Hizbullah guerrillas kill seventh Israeli soldier in less than three weeks.

Feb. 17 – Syria announces that Israel's decision to give Barak wider powers to attack Lebanese civilian targets was a declaration of real war on Lebanon.

Mar. 1 – Hizbullah attack pro-Israeli militiamen in Lebanon, blowing up their jeep and raking it with machinegun fire.

Mar. 5 – Israel's cabinet votes unanimously to pull Israeli troops out of south Lebanon occupation zone by July.

May 4 – Hizbullah launches Katyusha rockets from Lebanon in retaliation for the killing of a woman and her daughter by a rocket fired by Israel from the occupation zone.

May 22 – Israel's army says it will be ready to withdraw as early as June 1 – five weeks before Barak's deadline. However, Israel's occupation crumbles under the advance of Hizbullah freedom fighters.

May 24 – Israel retreats from south Lebanon. ●

U.S. Interests in Lebanon

by a staff writer

instead of Hizbullah.

The French are taking the lead in the Security Council right now in figuring out exactly what beefed-up force is going to be there. But the U.S. and European nations must realize that neo-colonialism has no place in our world.

The people of Lebanon have a right to run their affairs without any foreign intervention.

These people have lived in harmony for thousands of years without any interference from either the Europeans or Americans. It is time that their freedom is respected by all.

The full text of Security Council resolution 425 of March 19, 1978, which Israel states it is fulfilling by pulling its troops out of Lebanon:

The Security Council, taking note of the letters from the permanent representative of Lebanon and from the permanent representative of Israel,

having heard the statements of the permanent representatives of Lebanon and Israel,

gravely concerned at the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East, and its consequences to the maintenance of international peace,

convinced that the present situation impedes the achievement

of a just peace in the Middle East,

1) calls for strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries;

2) calls upon Israel immediately to cease its military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese territory;

3) decides, in the light of the request of the government of Lebanon, to establish immediately under its authority a United Nations interim force for Southern Lebanon for the purpose of confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security and assisting the government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area, the force to be composed of personnel drawn from member states;

4) requests the Secretary-General to report to the Council within twenty-four hours on the implementation of this resolution. ●



Palestinian Prime Minister Yasser Arafat meets with U.S. Ambassador to Israel to discuss the peace process.