

# **AMOS HOCHSTEIN'S VISIT TO BEIRUT: REVIVING U.S. MEDIATION EFFORTS**

Special Envoy for international Energy Affairs at the State Department Amos Hochstein visited Beirut on July 1-2, 2015, where he held a series of meetings with Lebanese officials in a bid to revive efforts to settle the maritime border dispute between Lebanon and Israel. During his two-day visit he met with Prime Minister Tamman Salam, Speaker Nabih Berri, Minister of Foreign Affairs Gebran Bassil, Minister of Energy Arthur Nazarian (this time in the absence of the members of the Petroleum Administration), former PM Fouad Siniora, Major-General Luciano Portolano (UNIFIL), and UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Sigrid Kaag.

In this 1228-word report, MESP presents the context and outcome of the visit; we focused in particular on (i) relations with Speaker Nabih Berri; (ii) talks with the UNIFIL Commander and a possible role for the United Nations; (iii) the communications strategy; (iv) Hochstein's efforts elsewhere in the Eastern Mediterranean, and we conclude with a light note on an unusually relaxed attitude, for an American diplomat, in the streets of Downtown Beirut.