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Minister of Defense Ehud Barak announces post-election retirement

,Good morning everyone

The State of Israel has experienced some tough times during the past two weeks, and I am proud to be part of the team that directed Operation Pillar of Defense, both militarily and diplomatically, to its successful conclusion. Fifty three years ago, in November 1959, I enlisted to the IDF and for forty seven years, I have served the people of Israel to the best of my ability. Today I stand before you to tell you about my decision to retire from political life, instead of running in the upcoming Knesset election. I took this decision not without doubts, but ultimately with a whole heart.

I would be lying if I said that the warmth that I felt from the public, and of you *some* even the positive coverage that I received from [journalists] – not of course from all of you – did not please me. For someone who has not always been spoiled with this [positive media coverage], I know how to appreciate support and was glad to receive it.

Practically, I will finish in my role as defense minister with the formation of the new government in approximately three months. This is the culmination of seven and a half years in this office, two terms under three governments, one of which I was at the head. Years in which, along with others, I led the defense establishment and the IDF, through the rehabilitation after the Second Lebanon War, strengthening our 'long arm' and building our operational capabilities to cope with the Iranian threat for if and when a decision should be

made, pushing through the 'Iron Dome' and the multi-layer
And no less important, we secured the nature .interception system
and depth of the relationship with the US in the operational, political
.and intelligence spheres

I am proud that in the last year and a half, alongside important
operational achievements, a real spirit of openness and clarity of
opinion has returned to the IDF; quiet confidence and modesty, things
.that have been damaged from time to time in the past

We restored the essential elements of the ethical code and an
uncompromising acceptance of the democratic foundations of our lives
here; understanding and internalizing the subordination of the military
.to the political

The decision to retire stems from the fact that I want to spend more
time with my family, that I have exhausted the practice of politics –
something for which I never had any special desire in the first place –
and that the fact that there is space to allow for new people to enter
Replacing the [personnel] in .senior positions in Israeli politics
.positions of power is a good thing

There are many ways to contribute to society and the country; not only
.politics

As a former chief of staff and prime minister, as well as the current
defense minister, and as long as my council is sought after and
received, then I will present it before the prime minister and the heads
of the establishment on any diplomatic or military matter, as and when
.I am requested to do so

I would like to thank with all my heart the commanders of the IDF, the personnel of the soldiers in the reserves and of the regular army, the ministry of defense and the intelligence establishment, for enabling me to function successfully as minister of defense

I am proud to stand at the head of [a network of] such wonderful people. I would like to thank the prime minister, members of the government, my devoted friends in the leadership and ranks of the Independence Party, who have all provided me with strength during long hours, every day, with many tough tasks. Thank you to everyone.

For the next three months, we will continue to tackle every challenge together, and I promise you, there will be many challenges