LEBANON'S POLITICAL SYSTEM: AN ANALYSIS OF THE TAIF ACCORD

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A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Political Science

University of Houston

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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By

Ghassan Abdallah

December 2003

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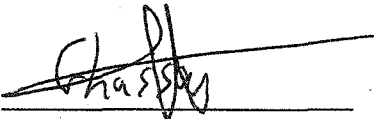P.O. Box 1346
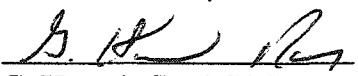Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

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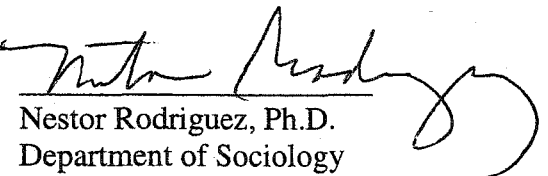
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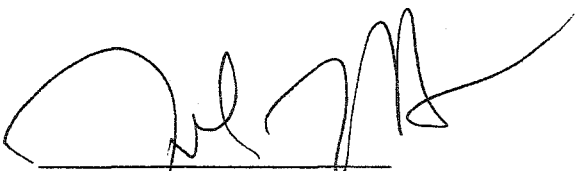
APPROVED:

_____
G. Hossein Razi, Ph.D.
Committee Chair

_____
John Sloan, Ph.D.

_____
Ernesto Calvo, Ph.D.

_____
Nestor Rodriguez, Ph.D.
Department of Sociology

_____
John J. Antel, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

The Document of National Understanding was concluded in Taif, Saudi Arabia on October 22, 1989. The Taif Accord ended Lebanon's fifteen-year civil war by creating a new sectarian equilibrium internally and establishing "privileged relations" with Syria externally. Lebanon's post-Taif political system is the product of domestic, regional, and international developments. The most important external development was the U.S-Syrian alliance against Iraq during the Gulf war. This alliance enabled the Syrians to crush militarily the opponents of the Taif accord inside Lebanon and paved the way for the implementation of the agreement in 1991. Al though some key provisions of the agreement, calling for the strengthening of political institutions and elimination of the sectarian political system, are yet to be fully implemented, this study finds that the Taif accord has significantly contributed to the establishment of security and stability in Lebanon. More significantly, by facilitating the evolution of the country's political system from endemic crisis to political stability it has also fostered the holding of freer elections. By focusing on the features and characteristics of the Lebanese political system, this study will shed some light on the variables that effect democratic development and stability in plurally fragmented societies. The findings should serve as a corrective to a number of misconceptions in the West concerning the Middle East as they reveal an Arab political system with liberal and democratic tendencies displayed through elections, a free press, and toleration of opposition groups.

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PREFACE

Andrew Rigby (2000) defines "Lebanisation" as a "term used to depict a Hobbesian condition occasioned by the complete collapse of the political order" (1). This term has been used widely to describe the turbulence that has occurred in several multicommunal states in the post- Cold War period. The expression "Lebanisation" first began to be used during the 1980's when Lebanon seemed to be fragmenting with two competing governments claiming legitimate authority in East and West Beirut. Prior to the outbreak of the civil war, however, Lebanon appeared to be a relatively stable country with a political system that some considered democratic, modernizing, and capable of dealing with challenges (i.e., Binder 1966). In 1966, for example, Edward Shils wrote:

> *Lebanon appears to be a happy phenomenon, unique in the third world, a*
> *prosperous liberal country. It has a parliamentary body, freely elected in*
> *the competition of a plurality of independent political parties. Its politicians*
> *are, as politicians go, relatively reasonable men. The tone of public debate is not*
> *strident. The chamber of Deputies is an orderly assembly. Elections are conducted*
> *with a minimum of violence, and reports of coercion of the electorate are rare.*
> *Lebanon enjoys freedom of association and freedom of expression. Its press is*
> *literate and not too sensational or abusive. Its, citizens, freely organized, feel free*
> *to approach their parliamentary representatives either as individuals or through*
> *their organizations. It is a law abiding country......(p. 1).*

Not everyone agreed with Edward Shils' assessment of the Lebanese political system. In his classic study, *The Precarious Republic* (1968), Michael Hudson, labeled it as "defective" and was surprised at its longevity. Hudson reported modernizing trends such as "growing

rationality, complexity, flexibility, participation, and executive power in the Lebanese political system" (4). He argued, however, that these modernizing trends were moving slowly, left very little margin for safety, and were only forestalling "the destruction of the fragile balancing mechanisms that adjust friction among Lebanon's several primordial communities" (4). Hudson's words proved prophetic as Lebanon plunged into the civil war of 1975-1990. The conflicts that led to the outbreak of hostilities were caused by disputes over Lebanon's identity, whether Lebanon was part of a greater Arab nation or a complete separate entity, and domestic disputes over sectarian-power sharing, socioeconomic inequalities, and an increased amount of intervention from external players.

The Taif Accord was aimed at ending the civil war by identifying some of the disputes, particularly those over the existing sectarian power-sharing arrangement. There is little doubt that Lebanon today is much better off than the Pre-Taif period. However, questions and problems relating to the country's long term stability and democratic development remain. This study focuses on Lebanon's current political system to determine the effectiveness of the Taif reforms.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

One of the more interesting developments in the Middle East has been the end of civil strife in Lebanon and the forced withdrawal of Israeli occupation troops from the southern part of the country. Lebanon began the road to recovery following the conclusion of the Taif accord in October 1989. At the time, many had hoped that the accord would lead to the emergence of a sovereign and democratic state that would favor public freedoms,

administrative reforms, a more effective parliament, and a fairer distribution of power. What were the international, regional, and domestic developments that brought about the Taif Accord? How have the roles of important global and regional actors affected Lebanon's post-Taif environment? What are the main features and characteristics of the Lebanese political system in the post-Taif period? And has the Taif Accord lead to the emergence of an equitable and democratic system that is going to provide Lebanon with a greater probability of long-term stability?

With regard to democratic development in the country, this study will focus on Lebanon's first post Taif parliamentary elections held in 1992 as well as the country's most recent elections held in the summer of 2000. While the first post-Taif elections of 1992 were marred by irregularities and boycotts resulting in a clean sweep for pro-government candidates, the results of the 2000 elections were not questioned and resulted in strong gains for the opposition. The comparison of the two elections reveals that Lebanon is making significant progress when it comes to holding freer democratic elections.

FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

During Lebanon's fifteen-year civil war, several initiatives to settle the conflict and reform the political system were launched, however the 1989 Taif agreement was the only one that was largely implemented. Chapter One discusses the internal and external developments that allowed the Taif Accord to come about. Because Lebanon's foreign policy, domestic policy, and future stability are interconnected, Chapters Two and Three examine the enduring roles of important global and regional actors in Lebanon's post Taif

environment. The United States historically has been the key external actor in Lebanon, and thus, chapter Two reviews the evolution of the Lebanese-American relationship and examines the American role in post-Taif Lebanon. Chapter Three focuses on the Syrian role in Lebanon. Syria is considered to be the main power broker in Lebanon with a military presence in the country. The characteristics, impact, and motives of that presence will be examined. Chapter Four examines Lebanon's sectarian-based political system by focusing on the relationship between religious identity and citizenship. Lebanon's political system is considered by many as an effective method of democratic representation. However, it is this same system that often leads to weak governments, perpetuates sectarian identifications, and renders Lebanon prey to foreign interference. Chapter Five examines democratic development by specifically focusing on a significant political event in post-Taif Lebanon, the 2000 Parliamentary elections. Those electoral results suggest that the elections were more open and fairer than previous elections, and signal a step forward when it comes to Lebanon's democratic development. Chapter Six will offer several conclusions based on the previous chapters and will provide a number of recommendations that may contribute to the country's democratic development.

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INTRODUCTION: THE ROOTS OF LEBANON'S
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Mount Lebanon

The formal boundaries of the Lebanese Republic that exist today were established in 1920, and its constitution was adopted in 1926. However, an inter-sectarian political system that is uniquely Lebanese in nature can be traced back to 16 century Mount Lebanon. In 1516 the Ottomans captured Mount Lebanon and continued to rule the region for the next 300 years. During most of that period, the Ottomans faced no serious threats, and the relative stability that existed allowed the two main dominant sects of Mount Lebanon--the Maronites and Druze--to move towards an inter-sectarian system. The Middle East Historian Helena Cobban (1985) stresses that, the already existing system of local lordships began to develop even further when the Ottomans began to consolidate their rule in the area. The Ottomans limited the autonomy that local rulers enjoyed during that period. "But what was important for the emergence of an inter-sectarian system in the Mountain was that the various different lords were tied into a single system, by the maintenance of a single lordly family at their head. Moreover, this primacy of a single lordly family in the Mountain received general recognition throughout this period both from the Ottomans and from a majority of the other lords: neither side was able to undermine it during these 300 years" (Cobban 1985, 37).

The political system that emerged under Ottoman rule was known as an Imara (principality). The principality would be headed by an amir (commander, or prince) who would collect local taxes for the Ottomans in exchange for local administrative autonomy. Two main families provided a continuing succession of princes for Mount Lebanon—the

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Ma'nis and the Shihabis. The third Ma'ni prince Fakhr al-Din II, who ruled from 1585 to 1633 is considered to be the first of Lebanon's nationalist leaders. During that period Fakhr al-Din extended the area under his control as far north as the Syrian city of Palmyra, and southwards to the region of Galilee. Fakhr al-Din, who was a Druze, favored local Christians and was willing to tolerate many of their customs. This also allowed Fakhr al-Din to assert his own independence from the policies of the Ottomans. Fakhr al-Din's assertion of independence, his warm relations with the merchant princes of Italy who were the Ottomans chief rivals in the Eastern Mediterranean, and his successive military conquests alarmed the Ottomans who finally moved against him in 1633. To William Harris, Fakhr al-Din for almost a half of a century "had inaugurated new phenomena in Mount Lebanon. He created an alignment of Druze and Maronite leading families that became the backbone for 150 years of local administrative autonomy...and he nurtured a Maronite-European interaction that was to define Maronite identity, as this community became the leading sectarian element in the mountain. These phenomena had no counterpart elsewhere in Syria" (1997, 29).

Following the ouster of Fakhr al-Din, the Ottomans stripped the Lebanese Principality from the lands that were gained in conquest. However, the institution of the emirate itself was left intact. In 1697 the lords of Lebanon, with Ottoman approval, selected a new family (the Shihab) to head the princedom. Like the Ma'ni princedom before it, the political basis of the Shihab princedom was the support of the alliance of the lordly families of Lebanon. The Shihabs themselves were Sunni Muslims, but "were supported in power by five lordly Druze families and three Maronite Families: together these families made up the class of the major lordly fief-holders in the Mountain" (Cobban, 1985, 39).

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In the 1830's, during the Shihabi dynasty Lebanon became more significant geopolitically. The Shihabs had entered into an alliance with the governor of Egypt Muhammad Ali. Supported by the French, Ali challenged the Ottoman rule of Syria and Lebanon. Ali's son Ibrahim Pasha mounted a successful military expedition that won the entire Syrian province from the Ottomans. The military successes of Ibrahim Pasha heightened the rivalry between the French and the British. The British signed an agreement with the Ottomans in the summer of 1840 that became known as the London Convention. This agreement that was also signed by Austria, Russia, and Prussia warned Muhammad Ali to withdraw from Mount Lebanon and the other Syrian provinces. When Ali refused to withdraw the Ottomans, backed by British Navy gunboats, drove his military out of the area.

Shortly after the Egyptians were expelled from the Levant, a commission made up of Britain, Russia, Prussia, France, Austria, and the Ottomans was formed to develop a new political system for Lebanon. The new regime that was created, still part of the Ottoman Empire, was called a *mutasarrifiya*, or provincial governorship. This new arrangement united Mount Lebanon under a single mutassarif or provincial governor who had to be a non-Lebanese Catholic Christian from elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire. Under the *mutasarrifiya* regime, eleven successive governors ruled Mount Lebanon. An administrative council advised every one of these men. The council was made up of Lebanon's various sects. The membership included four Christian Maronites, three Druze, two eastern Christian Orthodox, a Greek Catholic, and two Muslims- a Sunni and Shiite. The institutions of the *mutasarrifiya* accommodated sectarian pluralism, involved measures of popular representation, and created the foundations for the political institutions of greater Lebanon in 1920. Engin Akarli, (*Long Peace* 1993) discusses the development of sectarian pluralism

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during the *mutasarrifiya* period. He writes: "Confessionalism had helped make the regime acceptable to different mutually suspicious groups   and had facilitated its penetration into the countryside. Once the government became established and gained a momentum of its own, its confessionalist arrangement helped the sects come together...the regime united the Mountain territorially and politically" (161-2). Confessionalism, which involves the division of offices among the sects, remains a feature of today's Lebanon.

Throughout the decades of the *mutasarrifiya*, Lebanon enjoyed stability, economic growth, and development. Roads, railways, and the telegraph connected Lebanon with the rest of the region. Besides the increased commercial and trade activity with the West through the port of Beirut, there was an increase in educational activity. In 1866 American missionaries established the American University of Beirut and in 1875 French Jesuits established St. Joseph's University. Western concepts such as liberalism, socialism, and nationalism were introduced to Lebanon, and Beirut became a center for journalism and literary publications.

World War I, however, jolted this flourishing and developing society. After joining the war on the side of the Central Powers, the Ottomans abolished the mutasarrifiya system and placed Lebanon under military rule. The Ottomans outlawed contacts with the French, the British, and the Arab nationalist movement of Sherif Hussein in Mecca. On May 6, 1916 the Ottomans hanged fourteen Muslims and Christians in Beirut and seven others in Damascus for alleged treason. This day became known as Martyr's Day and has been commemorated annually ever since in both Syria and Lebanon. The Lebanese Historian Philip Hitti describes the three-year period of direct Turkish military rule that began in 1915 as the darkest period in Lebanese history. The Turks "imposed military conscription, requisitioned

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beasts of burden, and used crops for troops and trees as fuel for trains and camps. Allied

blockade of the coast interfered with the import of food, clothing and medical supplies…the

land became a paradise for disease germs. Mosquitoes spread malaria, flies typhoid, lice

typhus and rats bubonic plague. Lebanon estimatedly lost 100,000 of its 420,000 population"

(Hitti 1965, 216-17).

By the fall of 1917, the British and their allies were advancing northward from Palestine.

The Ottoman administration in Beirut finally collapsed on October 1 1917. The Sykes-Picot

agreement concluded secretly in 1916 between the French and the British had established an

understanding when it came to the division of the Fertile Crescent. The British were to

control Iraq and Palestine, and the French were awarded Syria and Lebanon. This

arrangement was later formalized by the League of Nations, which awarded France a

mandate over Lebanon and Syria until the two nations were ready for independence.

Lebanon was considered a Class A mandate.   Article 22 of the League of Nations outlines

the principles underlying this class of nations:

> *Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish*
> *Empire have reached a stage of development where their*
> *Existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized*
> *Subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by*
> *A Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand-alone. The*
> *Wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in*
> *The selection of the mandatory.*

The French along with Lebanese backing extended Lebanon's boundaries.   Christian

Lebanese Maronites lobbied the French to extend Lebanon's boundaries to include the

western Beqaa valley and the Christian Akar hills, which today comprise northern Lebanon.

The French acquiescence was based on interest considerations. Expanding Lebanon's

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boundaries eastward would allow the French to weaken the Syrian entity based in Damascus. Hence, the new Greater Lebanon extended eastward to included the agricultural al-Beqaa Valley, and westward to include all the coastal cities of Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon, and Tyre. This whole area is now internationally recognized as Lebanon. Following the redrawing of Lebanon's boundaries in 1920, the French moved to introduce several new elements into the political system--mainly new administrative, legislative and judicial agencies that were to deal with issues of public safety, health, and education. And though more modern laws replaced the Ottoman municipal code, much of the traditions that existed under the Ottoman Empire continued. Chief among those elements of continuity was the inter-sectarian principle, or the principle that the unitary political regime would be based on a form of religious coexistence and power sharing.

MODERN DAY LEBANON

In 1920, Lebanon for the first time in almost four centuries was free of Ottoman rule only to be ruled by the French. The French who were to rule Lebanon for the next several decades, the period between the two great wars, contributed to two main developments that have come to have a lasting significance on the Lebanese system. The first of these developments involved the extending of the country's borders, which resulted in the inclusion of new population groups--mainly Sunni and Shiite Muslims, into a system that had been dominated by Maronites and Druze. And second, was the adoption of a constitution in 1926 that remains largely intact until this very day. Both colonial measures by France have caused problems.

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The constitution, without specifying precise proportions, stated that power should be shared among the religious communities. This inter-sectarian power sharing principle became known as "confessionalism." The constitution also stated, however, that the "confessional" governing arrangement was to be temporary, until the country was ready to develop a secular or non-sectarian political system.

Organizationally, the 1926 Constitution vested legislative authority with the Chamber of Deputies (Parliament) and executive authority with the President of the Republic. The President of the Republic was to be elected by the Chamber of Deputies to a six year term and was made ineligible to serve two consecutive terms, "the fact that the President of the Republic is not immediately reeligible for this office was initially destined to prevent one community or one clan from perpetuating itself" (Rondot 1966, 129). The President appointed the Prime Minister who, along with the Council of Ministers, assisted the President in the day-to-day running of the government. Several individuals were elected and served as Presidents of the Republic during the French colonial period. However, the vastly more powerful French High Commissioner overshadowed these individuals. The first true post-independence Lebanese president was Bishara al-Khoury, elected in the summer of 1943. Khoury, a Maronite, had good relations with the Sunni Muslim community, including the prominent Sidon-Beirut based Sulh family. Riad Sulh, who, in the spring of 1942, had proposed a new Christian-Muslim governing formula, was chosen by Khoury to be his first Prime Minister. The National Pact proposed by Sulh, although unwritten and unofficial, has become a pivotal part of the constitution and the Lebanese political system. The National Pact formalized what had already been in practice during the French Mandate—the principle that the President of the Republic would be a Christian-Maronite, the Prime

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Minister a Sunni-Muslim, and the Speaker of Parliament a Shiite Muslim. This tradition continues in today's Lebanon.

Immediately after forming their first government in late summer 1943, Khoury and Sulh initiated negotiations with the French for the elimination of the mandatory regime and complete Lebanese independence. The Lebanese wanted to amend the 1926 Constitution and end special privileges enjoyed by the French. The French were strongly opposed to any unilateral Lebanese actions against the mandate. Undeterred, the Lebanese Parliament, in a special session in November 1943 amended the Lebanese constitution—removing all special privileges granted to the French. President Khoury signed parliament's amendment, and was subsequently arrested along with most of his cabinet by the French. The subsequent suspension of the constitution by the French unified all Lebanese- Christian and Muslim. The French imposed a curfew in Beirut, but that measure was not enough to prevent widespread demonstrations organized by Muslim and Christian organizations. On November 22nd 1943, the French relented and released President Khoury and his ministers. Lebanon had finally gained its independence.

For the first time Lebanon was completely independent and became a charter member of both the United Nations and the League of Arab States. Internally, Lebanon's first post-independence government initiated liberal economic and social legislation that minimized interference with trade, banking, commerce, and individual initiative. The free enterprise system in Lebanon allowed the young nation to begin its history with a wave of prosperity. Bankers, commercial traders, and the service industry dominated the new Lebanese economy. Lebanon's bank secrecy laws led to the arrival of Gulf Arab money, its moderate climate made it an oasis and a tourism center, and its geographic location made the Port of

Beirut the center of trading activity between West and East. All of these developments allowed Lebanon's first President Bishara al-Khoury to enjoy a broad base of popular support. However, by the early 1950's, several developments worked to erode Khoury's popularity. There were allegations that the president's friends and relatives were able to amass a significant amount of money during his presidency. Also in 1947, the year that Lebanon held its first ever free parliamentary elections, there were charges that Khoury used undue influence to try to secure a parliament that would serve his own ambitions and interests. Even though the constitution prohibits the parliament of electing a person to two consecutive terms, the parliament that was elected in 1947 passed legislation that allowed Khoury to renew his term, which was to expire in 1949. "Early in the 1950's the Khoury regime, which in 1943 was inaugurated with an unparalleled outburst of popular acclaim, began to show signs of weakness on a new front, the personal one. Charges of favoritism, nepotism, corruption, and laxity in the administration and execution of justice were mounting" (Hitti 1965, 226). Bowing out to pressure, Khoury and his Prime Minister both resigned in September 1952. The Lebanese Parliament met and within the framework of the constitutional process elected Camille Chamoun, another French schooled Maronite politician, as the Republic's second president. Chamoun promised to fight corruption and introduce judicial, fiscal, and administrative reforms. However, his biggest legislative accomplishment was not related to fighting corruption, but granting women the right to vote in 1953.

When it came to foreign policy, Chamoun adopted a pro-Western stance. In 1955 he supported the adoption of the Baghdad Pact. That same year Chamoun disapproved of Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal, and in 1956 resisted Arab pressure to break

diplomatic ties with Britain and France following their invasion of Sinai. These foreign policies had negative consequences internally and led to the alienation of a significant number of the Muslim population in Lebanon. Chamoun was able to retain the support of the Shiite community, but opposition from the Druze and Sunnis was intensifying.

A year before the expiration of his term as president, parliamentary elections were held in 1957. Groups and individuals, which were opposed to his policies, lost badly in the elections and quickly accused Chamoun of manipulating the election in order to obtain a parliament that would renew his presidential term. Not having a platform in parliament, certain groups among the opposition turned to violence. In the mountains, Druze opposition groups blew up bridges and closed roads, in Beirut numerous explosions shattered the calm that the city had enjoyed since the country's independence, and in February 1958 the Union between Syria and Egypt was another spark to what was already an explosive situation in Lebanon. Chamoun extended congratulations to Nasser of Egypt, but was not ready to brace the inevitable demand that Lebanon too be included in the United Arab Republic. In the weeks and months that followed pro-union groups and agitators banded with other opposition groups that had been formed the previous year to oppose the results of the parliamentary elections. Together this loose coalition of Druze and Sunni leaders demanded the resignation of Chamoun and called for a general strike. By mid May 1958, the general strike had turned into an insurrection with clashes mounting throughout the nation.

The civil war of 1958 saw the opposition gain control of all the coastal cities --Sidon, Tyre, and Tripoli. As for Beirut, the capital was divided along sectarian lines, with the Christian areas in the hands of the loyalists and the Sunni areas in the hands of the opposition. In the mountain areas the Druze forces battled Chamoun supporters and looked

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poised to advance down to the Presidential Palace on the foothills that overlooked Beirut. In other areas such as the Beqaa Valley to the East, the rebels were able to take control, with logistical support from across the border in Syria. With the opposition in control of most of the country, the demand for president Chamoun's resignation gained support. Chamoun did not step down but promised not to seek a second term as president. Then army commander Fuad Shihab, who had maintained the army's neutrality throughout the crisis, became the leading candidate for the presidency and was in the summer of 1958, elected by the Chamber of deputies as Lebanon's third post-independence president.

As army commander, Shihab had to deal not only cautiously with the pro- and anti-Chamoun forces but also with the unexpected landing of U.S. Marines on Lebanese soil. The American military deployment was not so much due to the turmoil in Lebanon as it was to events happening elsewhere in the Middle East. The deployment of marines in Lebanon was mainly connected to the rebellion in Iraq that resulted in the overthrow of King Faisal. In Lebanon, the Americans wanted to preserve the authority of the government but did not favor the renewal of Chamoun's presidential term. Instead, the United States came to favor the election of Shihab. Shihab had not only the baking of the United States, but also most of Lebanon's sects and communities.

The coming of Shihab to the presidency signaled a new era in Lebanese politics. He tried to forge a new national identity that was not centered on the allegiance to a particular leader. Chamounists, for example, were those in Lebanon who were loyal to President Camille Chamoun himself. Shihabists, on the other hand, were those loyal to the nation-building agenda that president Shihab advocated. The era of "Shihabism" covered both Shihab's own term (1958-64) and that of his disciple and successor, Charles Helou (1964-

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70). Throughout the Shihabist period the government's main concern was reforming and renewing the Lebanese political system as well as improving the country's physical infrastructure. Even though Shihabism led to the strengthening of the rule of law and institutions, it ultimately was not able to resolve many of the political and economic problems in the country. "It failed to resolve the conflict between the Mountain and the city. It failed to resolve the disparity between the ultra-rich and the urban rural poor. It failed fully to replace sectarian identity with a new loyalty to the Lebanese nation. The Shihabists made great efforts to resolve all these interweaving problems. But they still needed much more time" (Cobban 1985, 99). Time was one thing that the reformers in Lebanon were running out of. The atmosphere of general domestic calm and regional détente that allowed the Shihabist movement to make progress in Lebanon came to an end following the resumption of Arab-Israeli hostilities in the late 1960's and early 70's.

Before the late 1960's Lebanon, which had an armistice agreement with Israel, had very little to do with the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, following the humiliating defeat of Arab armies in the 1967 War, the Arab world in general and Lebanon in particular witnessed a surge of popular support for the idea of guerrilla action against Israel. In the period, which followed the end of the war, the Palestinian guerrilla movement took off among the Palestinian community in Lebanon, and the Palestinian issue itself began to put strain on the Lebanese political system. In 1970, the Shihabists lost the presidential election, and the same old and new forces that led to their defeat, would contribute to the turmoil that Lebanon witnessed in the early 70's, culminating with the outbreak of hostilities and war in 1975.

Palestinian activities in the late 1960's and early 70's began to erode Lebanese sovereignty not only around the Palestinian refugee camps but also along the borders with

Israel and Syria. This once again heightened Christian-Muslim divisions as inter-sectarian political compromise became more difficult to achieve. The majority of Christians felt threatened by Palestinian activities even though these activities were mainly aimed at Israel. Palestinians constituted about 8% of the country's population and since they were overwhelmingly Sunni and now had become energized politically, they presented a threat to Christian pre-eminence.

In 1970, the election of Sulayman Franjiyya to the Presidency also made the violent disruption of the Lebanese state more likely. The election coincided with increasing pressure on Lebanon from the Israelis, Palestinians, and Syrians. Instead of fortifying the regime to counter these challenges, Franjiyya weakened the government and its ability to control disturbances. His purging of the state's intelligence agencies—mainly the military's *Second Bureau*--of Shihabist officers meant that the state could no longer keep track and counter the activities of local radical parties, which were backed by external powers. Paramilitary groups in both the Muslim and Christian areas of Lebanon were more reluctant to obey state authority. By April 1975 the country had plunged into complete chaos and civil war. During the fifteen years that followed, Lebanon would become an anarchic country that existed by name only-- dominated by Israeli and Syrian armies as well as local warlords and their militias.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BIRTH OF THE TAIF ACCORD

Introduction

In May 1989 the League of Arab States established a "Tripartite Arab High Commission," composed of Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Algeria. The commission was designed to find a negotiated settlement to Lebanon's civil war and restore its sovereignty. The commission's negotiations with the various Lebanese factions in Beirut and with the Syrian government in Damascus paved the way for an Arab League sponsored meeting of Lebanese parliamentarians in September 1989 in Taif, Saudi Arabia, to consider a proposed draft agreement to end the Lebanese civil war.

The draft was strongly supported by the American and Saudi governments and ratified by Lebanese representatives on October 22. The Taif Agreement, also known as the Document of National Understanding constitutes a major political breakthrough in Lebanon's modern history. The accord ended Lebanon's fifteen years of civil war and set the internal conditions for peace. This chapter will analyze the constitutional reforms that resulted from Taif, as well as consider the internal and regional developments that allowed the accord to come about. The U.S-Syrian alliance against Iraq during the Gulf war, made it easier for the Syrians to militarily crush opponents to the Taif accord inside Lebanon, and paved the way for the implementation of the agreement in 1991.

The most significant achievement of the Taif reforms has been peace and calm. The objectives of the Taif Accords aimed at restoring Lebanon's sovereignty and independence

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have succeeded at least in part. Israel withdrew from the southern part of the country and the United Nations has confirmed the implementation of Resolution 425, which calls for strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries and for Israel to cease its military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese territory.

The provisions of the accord calling for the redeployment of Syrian troops to the Syrian border region, however, have not been fully enforced. Besides the security provisions, the Taif Accord had called for significant domestic political reforms that would lead to parliamentary elections, and eventually to the elimination of political representation based on religious affiliation. And al tough parliamentary elections have been held, the provisions calling for the end of political sectarianism have not been implemented.

PRELUDE TO AN ACCORD

The major factor contributing to the conclusion of the Taif Accord was the failure of Lebanese general Michel Aoun's "war of liberation" against Syria. Had Aoun succeeded in his revolt against the Syrian regime, the Taif accord would not have materialized.

In the late 1980's, following over a decade of civil war, the commander of the Lebanese army since 1984, Michel Aoun began a nationalist campaign against the Syrian forces in Lebanon. Aoun came from an ordinary middle-class Lebanese family, "had little interest in sectarian boundaries, and had a clean personal background in a legitimate state institution, he was an aberrant political personality in late twentieth century Lebanon" (Harris 1997, 243). Aoun's secular Lebanese nationalism was indicative of the patriotism that existed in the

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Army's officers corps, and even though the army's headquarters in Christian East Beirut was severed from other parts of the country during the civil war, the overwhelming majority of soldiers and officers continued to regard themselves as a single organization with a unified command.

Aoun recognized the need for reforming the governmental system in Lebanon. However, he believed that before reforms could be introduced and implemented, Lebanon had to be free of foreign armies, especially the Syrians. Therefore in late 1988, he began a military confrontation with the Syrians. Aoun had hoped that the confrontation would generate international pressure on Syria, forcing it to withdraw from Lebanon. The road would then be paved for the election of a new parliament and constitutional reform. Aoun distrusted the existing parliament, the same parliament that ended up ratifying the Taif Accord. The Lebanese parliament, which was made up of the traditional ruling class and not been up for reelection in twenty years, had no right to make decisions for the Lebanese people as far as Aoun was concerned. Aoun's dismissal of the traditional Lebanese ruling class on the grounds of corruption and his preference for non-sectarian politics resulted in a broad following among the Lebanese public. In addition, Aoun always proclaimed that he was a Lebanese rather than a Maronite-Christian and indicated that he would not object to a Muslim President, a post that traditionally had been reserved for Lebanese Christians. This was enough to give Aoun "a cross sectarian following. However, it was not enough to dissolve the suspicion separating Christians from non-Christians and to enable Aoun to head a united Lebanese movement above and beyond sectarianism, rather than being a Maronite leader who happened, uniquely, also to have a Muslim popular base" (Harris 1997, 245). Aoun ultimately failed to get the Muslim leadership behind him, and his efforts to drive the

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Syrians out of the country failed. The Muslim leadership believed that Aoun's campaign against Syria skirted the Lebanese internal conflict. To many Muslims, the issue of constitutional reform that would lead to a more equitable political system was far more pressing and important than the issue of Syrian withdrawal. "Most of the non-Christian leadership ranked priorities in the order of reform, elections, Syrian withdrawal---the reverse of Aoun's priorities" (Harris 1997, 245). In the end Aoun found himself increasingly isolated not just in his anti-Syrian position, but also in his opposition to the Taif accord, an accord that not only gained the support of the Muslims but also of a significant portion of the Christian community.

IMPACT OF THE GULF WAR

The Taif Accord would have never been concluded had General Aoun's uprising against Syria succeeded. "Aoun's recourse to arms, however, proved ineffective on both the military and diplomatic levels. On the military front, General Aoun's Lebanese Army units, supported at the time by the Lebanese Forces militia, could not match Syrian firepower. On the diplomatic level, international outrage----expected to force a Syrian retreat---failed to materialize" (Maila 1994, 32). The outrage, especially, failed to come from the world's only superpower, the United States. The realities of the Persian Gulf and international politics led the United States to downgrade the relative importance of Lebanon. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in the summer of 1990, the arrival of Western military forces to the region, and the Gulf War changed political calculations in the Middle East. In its confrontation with Iraq, the United States needed the broadest possible military and diplomatic Arab support. Syria,

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which was getting a significant amount of attention from the United States, joined the U.S. coalition against Iraq. Developments in Kuwait thus removed any potential U.S. opposition to Syria's forceful removal of Aoun and his troops from the presidential palace and other areas under their control in and around Beirut. In the months prior to the American military campaign against Iraq a flurry of American-Syrian diplomatic activity culminated in a visit to Damascus by the American Secretary of State James Baker. "Asad provided troops to sit in Saudi Arabia and in late September, clearly at Baker's request, made a personal visit to Tehran to secure continuation of Iran's adherence to U.N. sanctions against Iraq. In exchange for involvement in the Gulf, Damascus expected and received approval to settle things in Beirut, by whatever means" (Harris 1997, 276). With the green light from the United States, the Syrian forces invaded Aoun's positions in central Lebanon. Aoun's loyalists in the Lebanese army killed close to 400 Syrian troops before they surrendered. Aoun himself saw little benefit in prolonging the tragedy; he took refuge in the French embassy and ordered his military units to surrender to the pro-Syrian Taif regime. The military defeat of Aoun constitutes a major watershed in Lebanon's modern history as it signified the end of the civil war and the beginning of a new governmental arrangement under the Taif reforms.

THE TAIF ACCORD AND THE REFORMS INTRODECED TO LEBANON'S CONSTITUTION

The Taif Agreement established a number of key principles that the modern Lebanese state is now founded upon. From a domestic perspective, several points are very important. First, the Taif accord reaffirms that Lebanon is an independent, sovereign country with an Arab identity and a liberal parliamentary democracy where different communities coexist. Its solemnly stated principle, reaffirmed by the Document of National Understanding, maintains that Lebanon is a country where the legitimacy of the authority depends on the "pact of mutual coexistence," that the agreement of the various communities to live and govern together constitutes the basis of political power, and that any authority that does not protect or supports this mutual coexistence is not legitimate. The Taif Accord introduced the following ten general principles to the Lebanese Constitution:

1- Lebanon is a sovereign, free, and independent country. It is a final homeland for all its citizens. It is unified in its territory, people, and institutions within the boundaries defined in the constitution and recognized internationally.

2- Lebanon is Arab in its identity and its affiliation. It is a founding and active member of the League of Arab States and abides by its pacts and covenants. Lebanon is also a founding and active member of the United Nations Organization and abides by its covenants and by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The government shall embody these principles in all fields and areas without exception.

3- Lebanon is a parliamentary democratic republic based on respect for public liberties, especially the freedom of opinion and belief, and respect for social justice and equality of rights and duties among all citizens, without discrimination.

4- The people are the source of authority and sovereignty; they shall exercise these powers, through the constitutional institutions.

5- The political system is established on the principle of separation of powers, their balance, and cooperation.

6- The economic system is free and ensures private initiative and the right of private property.

7- The even development among regions on the educational, social, and economic levels shall be a basic pillar of the unity of the state and the stability of the system.

8- The abolition of political confessionalism shall be a basic national goal and shall be achieved according to a staged plan.

9- Lebanese territory is one for all Lebanese. Every Lebanese shall have the right to live in any part thereof and to enjoy the rule of law wherever he resides. There shall be no segregation of the people on the basis of any type of belonging, and no fragmentation, partition, or settlement of non-Lebanese in Lebanon.

10- There shall be no constitutional legitimacy for any authority, which contradicts the pact of mutual existence.

When it came to the institutions of government, the Taif Agreement called for equal representation among Christians and Muslims in parliament and a shift of certain powers from the president of the republic (a post traditionally reserved for Maronite Christians) to

the prime minister and his council of ministers. The Taif also strengthened the parliamentary powers by increasing the term of the parliamentary speaker from one to four years. The accord also provided for an initial one-time appointment of representatives to parliament, increasing the number from 99 to 108. Since then the number of deputies has been increased again to 120, divided evenly between Muslims and Christians. The accord also called for a redrawing of electoral lines from small districts to the larger communally mixed governorates. It established an economic and social council, and a constitutional court. The principle of administrative decentralization was upheld, increasing the importance of regions outside Beirut and depoliticizing administrative decision-making.

Clearly, the Taif was an attempt at reforming a political system that had caused years of civil strife. It attempted to do that by setting broad guidelines involving the unity of Lebanese territories and people and affirming Lebanon's Arab identity. The document also addressed more complicated issues such as the separation of state institutions, preserving the independence of the judicial authority, the upholding of public freedoms, and the stipulation for balanced economic, social, and cultural development. Lebanon's lack of independent state institutions had in the past, allowed politicians to seek their own personal interests as opposed to those of the country as a whole, and the Taif tried to end the cronyism, which had been an obstacle to creating a modern Lebanese state. This obstacle of political "cliques" that had stood in the way of progress in Lebanon had been characterized well by Michael Hudson who wrote: "The characteristic political pattern in Lebanon, as throughout geographical Syria, is labyrinthine, shifting factionalism of local notables with their clienteles of supporters. This pattern is part of traditional culture and social structure of the Near East, in that it merges the political domain with prevailing kinship and semi feudal

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relations" (1968, 19). Sectarianism contributed greatly to the political cliques that existed in Lebanon, and one of the crucial principles of the Taif accord involved the gradual elimination of the sectarian system.

The question of abolishing the sectarian system in Lebanon is not a new one. The original Lebanese constitution of 1926 had described the sectarian system as transitional, and the 1943 National Pact, which established a religious based distribution of government offices, also called for the eventual elimination of confessionalism in Lebanese politics. "The Taif accord reiterates the idea that Lebanon's sectarianism is transitional only, but goes somewhat further than previous statements by proposing certain steps to abolish it. For example, the accord's text eliminates sectarian criteria for recruitment of public servants, except for posts at high levels. Similarly, it eliminates all mention of religion on identity cards. Responsibility for devising further measures for the eventual, complete eradication of sectarianism is entrusted to a national committee chaired by Lebanon's president" (Maila 1994, 36). This goal of abolishing the sectarian system is probably the Taif Accord's most challenging objective. The different sects in Lebanon have traditionally been the main social organizations through which political activities have been conducted. Michael Hudson stressed that it was difficult for any observer to assess "the intensity of sectarian feelings, but it is safe to say that they involve a more complete commitment than do the kinds of religious affiliation common to the West; hence, their relevance to politics. Not, however, that the Lebanese in general are highly religious; rather sectarian affiliations are communal and sect affiliations have a corporate aspect"(1968, 21). Because the different religious communities are represented in parliament and bureaucracy according to their proportionality, and because that proportionality was determined in a census that was taken in the 1930's, there has always

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been a reluctance on the part of certain communities, whose numbers have declined, to reexamine or eliminate the proportional political distribution.

The confessional political arrangement extends to every aspect of society. Many believe it has been a major cause of the problems that have arisen in Lebanon's modern history. The lack of a shared national interest and a common identity among the Lebanese is due to the sectarian culture. Questions about Lebanon's Arab identity, for example, are contested along religious affiliations. Hence, when a united national stand is needed due to internal or external developments, Lebanon is unable to muster the unity needed for successful action. Varying confessional perceptions of the country's interest's work against the formation of a united national front. The sectarian system also contributed to the civil war and prevented the army and internal security forces from restoring order and upholding the rule of law. The military and police disintegrated under the pressure of sectarian rather than national loyalties.

Foreign intervention in Lebanon has also contributed to the sectarian problems. Foreign powers have in the past manipulated the different sectarian militias and their leaders to further their own interests in the country. The Lebanese people themselves have always been easy prey of strategies of divide and conquer, and have historically chosen to side with foreign powers and against each other. One can go all the way back to the Phoenician city-states to find evidence to this end. When Alexander the Great invaded Tyre for example, Sidon and the other Phoenician city-states sided with, and helped, Alexander defeat their fellow countrymen in Tyre.

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SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY PROVISIONS

The Taif Accord includes significant foreign policy and security provisions. With regard to security, the accord mandates the outlawing of militias and the confiscation of their arms. During the civil war, the different Muslim and Christian militias operated more like gangs than political organizations. The increasing state of anarchy during the civil war allowed the militias to get involved in drug smuggling, kidnapping, robbery, and other violent and serious crimes. All militia members received an amnesty from prosecution after the cessation of hostilities in 1990, and were integrated back into civilian life. The army drafted some former militiamen and others volunteered for service in the internal security forces. The only organization that was not disarmed was *Hizbullah*. The Lebanese resistance was allowed to keep it weapons under the Taif Agreement.

When it came to Lebanon's relations with Israel, the Taif called for the implementation of United Nations Resolution 425, which called for the unconditional withdrawal of Israeli troops from the country. The Lebanese resistance campaign has been successful as the Israelis have been forced to withdraw from the country. However, the situation in the south of Lebanon remains tense and there is no formal peace between Israel and Lebanon. The issues involved between Lebanon and its neighbors, Syria and Israel, are complex and that is why a chapter in this dissertation is going to be devoted to the Israeli and Syrian roles in the country. Before the war in Lebanon, Israel had never lost a war against the Arabs, and its defeat in Lebanon increased the prestige of *Hizbullah*, which was and continues to be backed by Iran. Iran's ally, Syria, also emerged as a winner in Lebanon. The Taif Accord had called on Syria to assist the Lebanese government in deploying its army and internal security

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forces all over the country. "With respect to Lebanon's relations with Syria, the accord sets

forth two key measures. First, two years after the adoption of the constitutional reforms,

Syrian forces should deploy to the Bekaa Valley...the second measure embodies the accord's

primary symbolic and political message: the establishment of 'privileged' relations with

Syria. Lebanon and Syria are expected to undertake and maintain close relations 'in all

areas.' The two states are expected to reinforce this cooperation in the area of security in

particular" (Maila 1994, 36). The Syrians up until now have not abided by the provisions in

the Taif accord that call upon them to withdraw, at least, from certain parts of the country.

Many in Lebanon today believe that the Syrian hegemony over the country has impeded

many of the stipulations, such as public freedoms and sovereignty, called for in the Taif

Accord.

Similar to the provisions in the Taif that call for the gradual elimination of the sectarian

system, the provisions calling for Syrian withdrawal from the country, are going to be

difficult to implement. Syria is likely to remain the ultimate powerbroker in Lebanon.

Syria's role was formalized with the conclusion of "The Treaty of Brotherhood and

Cooperation" and the "Defense and Security Pact" both concluded with Lebanon in 1991.

The "Cooperation Treaty" established a Higher Council between Lebanon and Syria,

comprising senior government officials from both countries. The Higher Council oversees

three permanent Syrian-Lebanese Committees: committees for social and economic affairs,

defense and security, and foreign affairs. Article II of the "Treaty of Brotherhood" calls for

"cooperation and coordination between the two countries in the fields of economics,

agriculture, industry, commerce, transportation, communications, customs, the initiation of

joint projects, and the coordination of development plan." The treaty also includes language

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that bolsters the Syrian nationalist ideological argument that the Syrian and Lebanese people are one people living in two states. The preamble, for example, stresses the common culture, history, and interests that underlie the relationship between Lebanon and Syria. The "Treaty of Cooperation" was followed by a mutual defense and security agreement known as the "Security Pact." The security agreement created a defense affairs committee consisting of officials from the Syrian and Lebanese Defense and Interior Ministries. According to Article II of the "Security Pact," the joint "defense and security affairs committee is charged with studying ways to safeguard the two states' security and proposing joint plans to confront any aggression or threat against their national security and any disturbance that may upset either country's internal security." The agreements between Lebanon and Syria in some ways may be interpreted as strengthening Lebanese sovereignty. For the first time Syria, which has no embassy in Beirut, recognized Lebanese sovereignty through two formal treaties. However, to such authors as William Harris the agreements were not aimed at strengthening Lebanese sovereignty but were pressed at the Lebanese government in a bid to establish a "formal framework for Syrian over lordship" over Lebanon (1997, 280). Among those Lebanese who opposed the agreements, were prominent Christian leaders such as the Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir and exiled army general Michel Aoun. Foreign powers such as France and the United States also expressed concern about Lebanon falling under Syrian control. During the Cold War, the United States gradually displaced France as the main external power, influencing Lebanese political affairs. The United States recent policies towards Lebanon and the region as a whole have been driven by realist considerations. The United States has as always supported Lebanon's independence and sovereignty and has repeatedly called for the withdrawal of foreign forces from the country

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and for the implementation of relevant United Nations Resolutions. However, the United States will not make the withdrawal of Syrian troops from the country a pressing priority. The American priorities in Lebanon are internal stability and calm, especially in the southern part of the country, along the borders with Israel. If that goal can be achieved, then the United States, which has been the dominant actor in the Middle East in the post-Cold War period, would be willing to tolerate a strong Syrian role in the country.

Lebanon, having emerged from fifteen years of civil war, will face two main challenges in the post-Taif period. First, internally, political legitimacy has to be restored, and second, a supportive international environment has to be established to promote reconstruction, economic development, and security. The second challenge will be formidable because external actors such as the United States are reluctant to support Lebanon full heartedly without certain conditions. The United States only recently lifted a travel ban on Lebanon and continues to impose soft sanctions that block the further development of cultural and economic ties between the two countries. Article I of the Taif Accord called for "balanced cultural, social, and economic growth," and made that principle a pillar "of unity of the state and of the stability of the system." If Lebanon is going to succeed in that goal, it will need the political and economic support of the United States. There is little doubt that The United States is going to be the key external actor in shaping Lebanon's post-Taif future. The next chapter will focus on the American role. The United States not only possesses a great amount of influence over the potential investments that would further Lebanon's reconstruction, but also the power to exert its leverage on Lebanon's neighbors which in the past have detrimentally intervened in Lebanon's domestic affairs.

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ANALYZING THE TAIF REFORMS

Lebanon's postwar recovery has been only partly successful. The most significant achievement of the Taif reforms has been peace and stability. The 1990's witnessed a return of investment capital and nationwide reconstruction, indicating a growing confidence in the future of the country. However, as the1990's came to an end, the nation continued to face significant economic and political problems. Economically, Lebanon was in debt of approximately 30 billion dollars, and the unemployment rate is close to 30%. These have in turn caused a mass immigration of young Lebanese from the country. While during the 1970's and 80's people immigrated due to the violence, now they emigrate because of the difficult economic conditions. And although there has been some progress at the political level, many of the Taif reforms are yet to be implemented. In "Lebanon After Taif" (1999), Michael Hudson concludes that, "Even though there have been salutary adjustments to the old consociational formula, there has been no progress toward dismantling the system of confessional representation....Ta'if was, after all , not just a return to consociationalism, with all its side effects, but also a call for deeper structural reforms in the Western liberal mode, which might (if enacted in phases) move Lebanon beyond political confessionalism toward a more legitimate and effective system of governance" (37-38). There was a time in Lebanon's history when confessionalism worked. The Consociational-type sectarian bargaining formula was effective in the negotiations leading up to independence in 1943, the conclusion of the National Pact, and even the Taif Accord. According to Hudson, however, these sectarian based political arbitrations can only be thought of as buying time. Hudson

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stresses that these power sharing arrangements have outlived their usefulness and are

blocking Lebanon's transformation into "a more inclusive political order that would provide

not just for sectarian participation but for the growth and integration of a larger, more

complex civil society into the body politic" (1999, 38). Hudson doubts that the current post-

Taif political order, characterized by weak institutions, confessional chauvinism, weak

institutions of citizen participation, inadequate policymaking and administrative capabilities,

and government by troika, would be able to deal with the growing economic problems, social

inequalities, and a dangerous regional security environment. What Lebanon needs is a

"leadership legitimized on a national, civic basis and not just on sectarian and patronage-

based constituencies" (1999, 58). In the end Hudson comes to the same worrisome

conclusions he had made in *The Precarious Republic* (1968). While conceding a point to

those who compare post-Taif Lebanon favorably to other countries in the region, Hudson still

maintains as he did prior to the outbreak of the 1975-90 civil war, that there is nothing to

"ensure that Lebanon can avoid another political catastrophe in the years ahead that will once

again make it the object of pity by its neighbors rather than envy" (1999, 58). Sami Ofeish

agrees with Hudson's assessments. In his article "Lebanon's Second Republic: Secular Talk,

Sectarian Application" (1999) Ofeish concedes that the Taif Accords were critical in ending

Lebanon's civil war, but stresses that the "Accord has not succeeded as of 1998 in creating

an effective formula for a stable Second Republic" (112). The problems that caused the

1975 civil war are yet to be resolved. The Second Republic continues to be sectarian and

discriminatory. Under such conditions, a unified national identity is unlikely to develop and

the country's stability will continue to be in serious peril. According to Ofeish, the Taif

Accords have strengthened the sectarian system instead of eliminating it. "The Ta'if Accord

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sustained the notion that political representation is for now mainly bound within sectarian

'representation.' The reinforced sectarian system continued to facilitate the process of tying

the popular classes to their respective co-religionist elite in a client /patron relationship. The

sectarian ideology in turn asserted the concept that access to resources and power may be

achieved mainly through sectarian channels" (1999, 108). In today's Lebanon such political

sectarianism is manifested in the Troika system. The Troika involves political decision-

making by the heads of Lebanon's three government institutions--the parliament, the council

of ministers, and the presidency. The Taif Accords rearranged political sectarian control

among the top three leaders in the country. The Maronite president's traditional functions

were weakened to the benefit of the Sunni prime minister. Article 64 of the Taif reforms

makes the prime minister the head of the government. The president now serves as a

ceremonial head of state and shares the decision-making process with the prime minister and

council of ministers. The parliamentary speaker's position, which is held exclusively by a

Shiite Muslim, was also strengthened by the Taif reforms. The speaker who is elected by the

members of parliament had his term extended from one to four years. The Taif amendments

also made it more difficult for the executive branch to dissolve parliament. This

redistribution of power among Lebanon's top three leaders led to new methods of political

arbitration never practiced before in Lebanon. Lebanon now has three presidents, The

President of Parliament, The Prime Minister, and the President of the Republic. The term

"Troika" began to be used after 1990 to describe how the trio shared power through different

capacities.

The sectarian environment exacerbates the political clashes among the three. The

conflict among the three may be linked to the conflicting interests and relations that exist

among their respective communities. In "The Constitution of Lebanon After the Amendments of August 21, 1990" (1991) Paul Salem notes that, while the Muslim Prime Minister and Speaker of Parliament are limited to four year terms and are subjected to a vote of no confidence by the Chamber of Deputies, the Christian President of the Republic serves a six year term and can only be removed from office by impeachment; a procedure that has never been undertaken in Lebanon's history. Salem also stresses that Article 44 of the Taif Accords, which extended the Speaker's term to four years, is reflective of Sunni-Shiite sensitivities and the necessity of maintaining a balance between the two sects. Hence, what exists in the end is a troika where each one of the three individuals acts as top government representative of his respective religious community. The troika relationship and the relative parity of power among its members have an effect on the mass level. Regarding this point, Sami Ofeish notes, "the growing competition among the troika members may resonate negatively on the popular level, while their rapprochement usually spells stability...the success or failure of their maneuvers to legislate and or implement policies is usually measured in scores of 'losses' or 'gains' of the Maronite, Sunni, and Shiite sectarian communities" (1999, 109). The filling of high and low level government jobs for example, has been a major issue of contention between the troika members. Religious affiliations have increasingly become the major criteria for the selection of government employees. Each of Lebanon's top three leaders has been interested in maximizing his own personal power. Speaker Nabih Berri and Prime Minister Hariri, who have held those posts for most of the post-Taif period, and current President Emile Lahoud have developed personal rivalries that have overshadowed the institutions that they head. While the heads of Lebanon's three political institutions played very significant roles prior to the Taif reforms, at no time in the

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country's history did state policies depend on the relations among them as they do now. And while corruption in Lebanon has always been part of politics, at no point in the country's history has corruption been as rampant as is today in the post-Taif period. According to Sami Ofeish corruption has become more "rampant at different levels of the power structure, from monopoly of elite family members over private services, to favoritism in the distribution of government contracts, to nepotism in the bureaucracy, to the payment of bribes in most government departments" (1999, 109). Cronyism in the 1990's has contributed to the spread of corruption. A significant number of the new elite who come from the middle and lower classes have been effective in using sectarianism and clientelism to further their personal interests.

This has led to a general lack of confidence in the institutions of government, and a heightened concern about sectarian spoils and security. Certain sects have faired better than others. The Maronites who were the dominant sect prior to the outbreak of civil war have been the most disaffected. Not only have they been disaffected by the Taif reforms, which reduced their former powers, but also by Syria's hegemony over the country. Many believe that Syria was behind the assassination of two Maronite Presidents, Bashir Gemayel in 1982 and Rene Moawad in 1988. Traditional Maronite families and populist followers of exiled Army General Aoun have been working within and outside the system to reverse their state of marginalization under the Second Republic. As for the Druze, former enemies of the Maronites now turned allies, they have not been satisfied with the political power distribution in the post-Taif period either. Even though their leader Walid Jumblatt heads a significant bloc in parliament and at least a couple of cabinet posts are usually reserved for his loyalists, the Druze community is not significantly represented in higher military and civil service

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positions. Furthermore Jumblat faces challenges from the Druze Yazbaki faction. Some of Lebanon's most prominent intellectuals and businesspeople have come from the Yazbaki Druze faction. Jumblat has worked to prevent them from playing a significant political role in Lebanon. TheDruze community which constitute only seven percent of the entire Lebanese population has historically played a role in Lebanon that has been greater than its meager demographic weight. However, in post Taif Lebanon that role seems to be shrinking.

As for Lebanon's largest sect, the Shiite Muslims, they have been the beneficiaries of some of the reforms introduced by the Taif. The term of the Shiite Speaker of parliament has been extended. The close relationship that the current Speaker Nabih Berri has with Syria has also increased his influence. As for the members and followers of *Hizbullah*, who have emerged victorious in their battle against Israeli occupation, they continue to contend that the end of civil war has not led to an improvement in the living conditions of the Shiite community. *Hizbullah* has tried to replace the state when it has come to providing social welfare services such as education and healthcare, and has been accepted as a legitimate political party with elected representatives in parliament. In the parliament and government, however, it is not *Hizbullah* but *Amal*, a Shiite movement that is headed by parliament speaker Berri and one that is closer to the middle of the ideological continuum, that has the most influence. Considering that they are the largest sect in the country, the Shiites whether, they are followers of *Amal, Hizbullah*, or come from the traditional *Zuama* families, do not believe they have gained enough from the post-civil war reforms.

As for the Sunni Muslims, the position of their community has been enhanced by the Taif reforms. Michael Hudson (1999) stresses that the Sunnis "have emerged as the principal winners in the constitutional 'fine-tuning': their leader, the prime-minister, is now *primus*

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inter pares in the troika along with the Maronite president and Shiite Speaker of parliament"
(35). Rafiq Hariri, who has served as prime minister for most of the years since the end of
civil war, has become a powerful figure. His own personal wealth and his close ties to
foreign and Arab leaders, such as Jacque Chirac of France and the Saudi Royal family, have
given the Sunni community increased leverage. Even tough Hariri has at times alienated the
Shiite and Maronite communities, and his governments have failed to properly deal with
many of the socio-economic problems that the country faces, his own commercial
connections have been instrumental in Lebanon's massive post-war reconstruction efforts.

The Taif Accord has not been as innovative as some hoped it would be. Instead of
eliminating sectarianism the Accord has so far embraced the confessional governing
arrangements agreed to by prior Lebanese pacts and agreements. In his evaluation of the Taif
Accord Joseph Malia (1994) concludes that the Accords have reinforced sectarian logic and
accepted the "dictates concerning the necessity and value of procedures that distribute public
offices among the various communities, that provide the communities with a veto, and that
regulate conflicting sectarian interests" (31). Hence the Taif Accord has led to a
consociative rather than a constitutional political system. Under such conditions communal
and national political conflicts are arbitrated through a pragmatic consensual approach rather
than a legal framework.

DEMOCRATIZATION AND ELECTIONS

The Taif Accord reinforced the democratic provisions of the original Lebanese constitution. Article I of the Taif Agreement stresses that, "Lebanon is a democratic, parliamentary republic founded on the respect for public liberties, the foremost of which are freedom of opinion...The people are the source of power and the possessors of sovereignty which they exercise through the constitutional institutions." The people are to exercise their power like other voters in other representative democracies, indirectly through elections. The Taif Accord had also called for measures aimed at ensuring free and fair elections. The agreement called for the establishment of an independent constitutional council with "the purpose of interpreting the constitution and of monitoring the constitutionality of the laws and to rule on all disputes and appeals relating to parliament and presidential elections" (Article III, B). When it came to the issue of redistricting the accord called for a new electoral law that would eliminate parliamentary elections by the "qada" or electoral district, and for the redrawing of electoral lines on the basis of the larger "Muhafaza" or province. The Lebanese parliament has since passed an electoral law creating a single district at the provincial level despite the fact that some segments of the country did not favor the new arrangement. The opponents of the new plan, mainly local notables, believed votes from smaller communities and townships would be diluted if they were aggregated at the provincial level with those of larger cities.

There have been several elections, both parliamentary and municipal, in the post-Taif period. In 1992, parliamentary elections were held for the first time in twenty years. The hastily scheduled elections caused a significant amount of controversy and criticism. Many

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viewed the elections as an attempt by Syria to increase its grip on the Lebanese government.

By electing a pro-Syrian parliament, Damascus could avoid the hassle of dealing with a

legislature likely to demand Syrian troop redeployment or total withdrawal from the country.

Because the elections were perceived as being rigged, many Lebanese, especially Christians

boycotted the elections. As a result none of Lebanon's five provinces had an overall turnout

of higher than 40%. And in many electoral districts less than 5% of eligible Christian voters

participated. As a result, pro-government and pro-Syrian candidates won an overwhelming

majority of the seats. The Muslim voter turnout was higher but still lower than the historical

average. Among Muslims, the highest turnout rates were among the Shiites, who had to

choose between the traditional notables *(zuama)* who historically had dominated Shiite

politics and a new class of elites. In Southern Lebanon, the Shiite voters overwhelmingly

rejected local family notables, including former Parliament Speaker Kamel Al-Asad whose

family had dominated southern politics for years. Instead, *Amal* leader Nabih Berri's list

garnered most of the votes. Joining Berri on the winning list were candidates from *Hizbullah*

who were pressured by Syria to join Berri's list and not form an independent rival list of their

own. Augustus Richard Norton concludes that the snubbing of traditional political bosses by

Shiite voters in favor of candidates from *Hizbullah* and the reform movement of *Amal*

represented the most authentic result of the 1992 elections. Norton stresses that, "the long

process of politicization and political mobilization among the Shiites that began in the 1950's

and culminated in the 1990's has been the central challenge facing Lebanon for some time.

After generations of marginalization and being kept outside the system, the Shiites now

found themselves in the halls of parliament" (1999, 43). Prior to the 1992 elections, the

Shiites who are the largest confessional group in the country did not have their interests properly represented in government.

Contrary to the expectations of many in the West and some in Lebanon, *Hizbullah* thus far has behaved responsibly in parliament. The party's representatives in parliament have been as pragmatic as their secular colleagues when it has come to the building of alliances and the promotion of good legislation. Richard Norton asserts that "a number of leading Lebanese politicians have emphasized in private interviews conducted in 1995 and 1996, the entry of *Hizballah* into parliament is a success story, yet another proof that participation in the political game tends to moderate radical players"(1999, 45). *Hizbullah's* record in government and its role in resisting the Israeli occupation allowed it to increase its base of popular support and retain its seats in parliament following the 1996 elections. Voter turnout in 1996 increased slightly from 1992 levels, but at 44% was still far below the turnout rates Lebanon enjoyed in elections held prior to the outbreak of civil war in 1975. Contributing to the low turnout were the repeated calls for a voter boycott being made by prominent political personalities. These calls for a boycott by mainly Christian leaders such as former army general Michel Aoun and former president Amin Gemayel were contrary to calls being made by the U.S. embassy in Beirut for broad mass participation. The U.S. State Department's support for the elections evoked cynicism among many in Lebanon who found it difficult to believe that the elections would be fair and honest. And indeed according to the Lebanese Association of Elections and Democracy, a Lebanese watch group, irregularities and systematic tampering by the government marred the 1996 elections. Specifically, according to Richard Norton, "voter lists were often incomplete and inaccurate, newly naturalized citizens were instructed to vote for the government approved list (and did

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so for fear of losing their coveted identity cards), ballot boxes were stuffed to prevent some embarrassing defeats (apparently including that of Foreign Minister Faris Buways), and voters were sometimes denied the right to cast a secret ballot" (1999, 44). The end result was very similar to the outcome of the 1992 elections; pro-government candidates swept into office and opposition political figures were marginalized.

While questions were raised about the legitimacy of the 1992 parliamentary elections that immediately followed the conclusion of the Taif agreement and the 1996 elections four years later, the most recent parliamentary elections held in the summer of 2000 were viewed by most as being free and fair. Steps were taken by the Lebanese government to ensure transparency during vote counting, and the Syrians promised not to meddle in the voting process. Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, was quoted as saying that, Syria "keeps the same distance from all the candidates...as it considers it only has friends in Lebanon" (Daily Star, August 29, 2000). Some very prominent pro-Syrian candidates, both Christian and Muslim, were handily defeated in the 2000 Parliamentary elections. Opposition candidates such as Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, who had called for a reappraisal of the relations between Syria and Lebanon, made striking electoral gains. The crushing defeat of many of the Syrian-approved pro Lebanese government candidates, paved the way for the return to power of former prime minister Raffic Hariri, despite his differences with President Emile Lahoud. In the Beirut electoral district, former prime-minister and businessman Rafiq Hariri's list defeated incumbent prime minister Salim Hoss' list. Hariri's clean sweep in Beirut and the victories of his allies elsewhere in the country allowed him to control enough seats in parliament to make him the leading candidate for prime-minister. The Lebanese constitution calls for the government to resign the day after voting, with the president selecting the new

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prime-minister after consulting with members of parliament. Sitting Prime-Minister Hoss who lost his own seat in parliament, publicly accepted the results and the will of the voters. President Emile Lahoud who had campaigned against Hariri, also accepted the results of the elections and selected Hariri as new Prime-Minister, who was easily able to gain a vote of confidence in parliament. This process of a popular election leading to a change in the composition of parliament, which in turn led to a peaceful transition of power in the executive branch, is rather rare in the Middle East.

The main accomplishment of the first two post- Taif elections of 1992 and 1996 was the emergence of a new class of non-traditional politicians and political movements such as *Hizbullah*, whose social and welfare activities in Beirut and the Province of the South allowed it to pick up a significant number of parliamentary seats and emerge as a force in Lebanon's civil society and political system. As for the Parliamentary elections of 2000, they represented a major step forward in Lebanon's democratization. The first two post-Taif elections of 1992 and 1996 were marred by irregularities and boycotts, resulting in a clean sweep for pro-government candidates. But the results of the 2000 elections, which ended in strong gains for the opposition, were not questioned. Thus Lebanon is clearly making progress when it comes to the strengthening of democratic institutions.

CONCLUSION

To say that the Taif accord constitutes a major event in Lebanon's modern history would be an understatement. Both international and internal conditions facilitated the signing and implementation of the Taif Accord. The Accord ended Lebanon's fifteen-year civil war. It had major implications for the roles of several regional and international players. Internally the various Lebanese sects, including Christians came to accept the inevitability of structural reforms that would lead to a fairer power sharing arrangement. Externally, the Gulf War paved the way for Syrian-American cooperation. That allowed the Syrians to suppress militarily the opponents of the accord in Lebanon.

The main objective of the Taif Accord that is, the restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty and independence has at least succeeded partly. Israel has been forced to withdraw from the Southern part of the country and the United Nations has accordingly confirmed the implementation of Resolution 425. The provisions of the accord calling for the redeployment of Syrian troops to the Syrian border region, however, have been only partially implemented. As an important external actor, the U.S. has a stake in the success of the security provisions of the Taif accord, particularly conditions along the Israeli-Lebanese border, and any American economic and political support for Lebanon is also likely to be effected by how Syria and Lebanon behave along the Israeli borders.

The Taif Accord had also called for significant domestic political reforms that would lead to parliamentary elections, and eventually to the elimination of political representation based on religious affiliation. Although parliamentary elections have been held, the provisions calling for the end to political sectarianism remain to be implemented. The

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succeeding chapters provide a comprehensive analysis of the internal and external impact of

the Taif Accord.

CHAPTER 2

AMERICAN-LEBANESE RELATIONS IN THE
POST-TAIF PERIOD

INTRODUCTION

The Taif Accord contains important security provisions, especially regarding

relations with Israel. The Taif calls for the implementation of Resolution 425 of the United

Nations Security Council, which calls on Israel to withdraw its forces from Lebanon. Israel's

recent compliance with the resolution was welcomed by the United States, which had called

for stability on the Lebanese-Israeli border. The Security of the state of Israel has always

been a key component of U.S. political objectives in the Middle East. The United States,

which had historically enjoyed good relations with Lebanon, would like to see the Lebanese

government exert its authority in the southern part of the country, the area that has been

vacated by Israel. However, without an Israeli-Syrian peace accord it is very difficult for the

Lebanese government to deploy troops along the Israeli border and give the impression that it

is providing security guarantees for the state of Israel. The way in which Lebanon handles

this dilemma is likely to have a major impact on its relations with the United States, and on

its ability to garner a supportive policy position from the world's last remaining superpower.

This chapter will focus on U.S-Lebanese relations by reviewing the evolution of that

relationship. The United States has always been an important player in Lebanon, twice

intervening directly in 1958 and 1982. Although the Cold War is over, the evolution of

democracy and political stability in Lebanon remain important goals for American policy-

makers.

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LEBANESE-AMERICAN RELATIONS DURING THE COLD WAR:
THE CRISIS OF 1958

The United States became increasingly involved in Lebanon following WWII. The

United States provided assistance to Lebanon and other Middle East countries in order to

minimize the influence of the Soviet Union in the region. American concern with Soviet

expansionism in the region was manifested in the Truman Doctrine, which committed U.S.

military and economic support for Greece, Turkey, and Iran. In 1958, following the collapse

of the Baghdad Pact, the United States intervened directly in Lebanon. American troops

landed in Lebanon on July 15, the day after the Iraqi coup. The "American intervention in

Lebanon is best understood in the context of the Arab nationalism, anti-colonialism, and

opposition to Western-sponsored defense organization proposals that had swept the Middle

East after the Egyptian revolution of 1952 brought Gamal Abdel Nasser to power. Nasser's

policies came to be identified with the objectives of Soviet communism, particularly after the

1956 Suez crisis and the declaration of the Eisenhower Doctrine, aimed at controlling Soviet

influence in the Middle East, in 1957" (Ellis 2002, 92).

Earlier in the spring of 1958, before the American military intervention, civil war had

broken out. Opposition parties challenged pro Western Lebanese President Camille

Chamoun's authority on the grounds that he had interfered with parliamentary elections in

the previous year. With control of parliament, Chamoun then, it was feared, would be able to

amend the constitution to allow for an extension of his term. By June of 1958, the Lebanese

government had lost most of the country to opposition forces that included "the Progressive

Socialist Party, with smaller parties of Ba'thists, Arab Nationalists Movement, and

Communists. The array of groups, parties, and leaders was ideologically divided, yet cast in a

historic role of collective opposition to the succession of the Lebanese president" (Gendzier

1997, 239).

In his memoirs, President Eisenhower asserts that Chamoun's attempt at gaining an

extension to his term was a mistake. Eisenhower writes, "when the news first came to me, I

was convinced that President Chamoun had made a political error. If he had not actually

favored the constitutional amendment, he should have quickly dispelled all rumors by a

public announcement. He did not do so, however, and because of Arab-Christian rivalries

in Lebanon, this news stirred up renewed resentment. Rebellion, smoldering for some

weeks, finally broke out in early May in an armed uprising in Beirut" (Eisenhower 1965,

265). That being said, however, Eisenhower was fond of Chamoun, and asserted that

Chamoun's actions were motivated by "patriotism" and if assured of a "pro-Western

successor" he would not seek a second term for himself (Eisenhower 1965, 265). Another

American policymaker opposed to Chamoun's reelection was Ambassador to Lebanon

Robert McClintock. McClintock believed that U.S. interests were better served by

supporting the regime and not Chamoun. And while he publicly was uncritical of Chamoun,

McClintock regarded the prospect of Shamoun "staging a second presidential campaign

nothing short of disastrous for the country, the guaranteed precursor to civil as well as

confessional strife, since the opposition included Lebanese Christians as well as the more

numerous Muslims" (Gendzier 1997, 235). The person who McClintock viewed as the

logical choice to succeed Chamoun was Shihab, Lebanon's army commander, who would be

elected as Lebanon's third president in the Fall of 1958. To the CIA, however,

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McClintock's views were a sign of failed U.S diplomacy. To counter the ambassador's influence, the CIA dispatched Wilbur Eveland to Lebanon. "While McClintock feared the divisive impact of a second Chamoun presidency on Lebanon that would bode ill for the United States, Eveland argued that only Chamoun could safeguard U.S. interests, including the intelligence network operating out of Beirut, provided that the United States supported him" (Gendzier 1997, 235). Eveland, especially after the union between Egypt and Syria, viewed Chamoun as the only person who could assure the continuity of U.S. intelligence activities in Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. Ultimately the battle between the CIA and the Department of State would be won by the latter. The State Department official in charge of Syrian and Lebanese affairs, Edward Waggoner, had suggested to the Director of Near Eastern affairs that Chamoun would not be the choice if a suitable alternative candidate could be found. The alternative candidate would have to be pro-Western, acceptable to most of the Christian and Muslim communities, and for whom broad support could be obtained. (Gendzier 1997, 235).

President Eisenhower views paralleled those of the Department of State. When contemplating a decision on a request by Chamoun for direct American military intervention in Lebanon. Eisenhower responded favorably but placed certain conditions. Eisenhower asserted that, "we would not send United States troops to Lebanon for the purpose of achieving an additional term for the president. Second, the request should have the concurrence of some other Arab nation. Third, the mission of United States troops in Lebanon would be twofold: protection of life and property of Americans, and assistance to the legal Lebanese government" (Eisenhower 1965, 267). In early July of 1958, Chamoun announced that he would not seek a second term and it appeared that the crisis could be

solved without U.S. military intervention. However, the situation in Lebanon, which seemed to be calming down, now was once again critical because of events elsewhere in the region. On July 14 1958, Arab nationalists overthrew the conservative monarchy in Iraq, further weakening Western influence in the Middle East, and returning Lebanon to the consciousness of American officials. From the very beginning, "the preoccupation of U.S. officials with the identity of the future Lebanese president was inseparable from regional developments that directly affected the aggravated course of Lebanese politics. These included the creation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) in 1958, in which Egypt was joined by Syria as the first step in the realization of Arab unity. Another was the military coup in Baghdad in July 1958 that leveled British influence in Iraq" (Gendzier 1997, 230).

Eisenhower ordered the Marines into Lebanon on July 15 to put Nasser and other Arab nationalists on notice that America would act aggressively to protect its interests in the Middle East. Although, there was no evidence that Nasser was behind the coup in Iraq or that those who gained power in Baghdad were communists, the Eisenhower administration feared that the strategically important Middle East and its oil reserves could fall under communist control and "wanted to reassure the leaders of friendly nations in Southwest Asia, such as Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey, that their faith in the United States was not misplaced. Fortunately American troops did not have to prove these points by going into combat. The marines went ashore near Beirut without opposition" (Pach & Richardson 1991, 193). During there three months occupation of Lebanon, the marines faced no significant resistance, and in the end the conflict was not settled militarily but diplomatically. Eisenhower sent the Undersecretary of State Richard Murphy to Beirut to find a political solution to the crisis. By making it clear that the United States would not support a second

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term for Chamoun, Murphy defused "much of the opposition to the American landings. After many meetings with Chamoun and opposition leaders, Murphy helped work out an agreement that called for Chamoun to step down at the end of his term and Chihab to succeed him" (Pach & Richardson 1991, 193). The American military intervention in Lebanon ended in 1958 and the country enjoyed one of its more prosperous and stable periods under Chihab's reign. However, the American intervention failed to solve other regional issues such as the Israeli-Arab conflict and the rise of Palestinian resistance in the 1960's. The regional environment would eventually contribute to the outbreak of Lebanon's 1975 civil war, and lead to another U.S. military intervention in 1982.

THE ISRAELI INVASION OF 1982

The regime in Lebanon remained stable until the outbreak of Civil War in 1975. The outbreak of civil war in Lebanon led to Syrian and Israeli intervention in the country. The Syrians entered Lebanon in 1976, the Israelis followed first in 1978 and then on a massive scale in 1982. "Lebanon in the 1980's was the hapless arena for the collision between the dominant and expanded Israel which Begin was determined to build and the rival regional order with which Asad tried to stop him" (Seale 1988, 366). Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's biggest source of support was the Reagan administration, specifically, the Secretary of State, Alexander Haig. Alexander Haig, who had previously worked in the Nixon White House, had presidential aspirations of his own and was well aware of the power wielded by Israel's supporters on domestic politics in the United States. The support Israel received from Congress also encouraged the tendencies of Begin and his hawkish Defense

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Minister Sharon. One U.S. official who was working to calm tensions along the Israeli-Lebanese border and prevent a military confrontation between the Syrians and Israelis was Reagan's envoy to the region Philip Habib. Habib, however, would ultimately fail to prevent the Israelis from invading Lebanon. Begin was determined to expel the PLO out of Beirut, wrench Lebanon from Syria's sphere, and install a regime in Lebanon that would sign a peace treaty with Israel. Israel still needed a pretext for its invasion. Patrick Seal (1988) stresses that, "Begin and Sharon dared not be candid about their intentions, they had to resort to the use of deception" (374). Limited military raids targeting the PLO in Lebanon could be tolerated by domestic and international public opinion but a massive invasion of a sovereign country was a harder sell. "Begin and Sharon preferred to have US approval for their attack, and made their pitch at their chief ally in the administration, Secretary of State Haig" (Seal 1988, 375). Although Haig was not enthused about the plan, he did assert that Israel would be justified to invade Lebanon if it was provoked (Seal 1988, 376). Haig was not as alarmed about Israel's intentions as Philip Habib, who believed that, "Haig did nothing which could seriously have blunted Sharon's determination to invade" (Seale 1988, 376).

Israel proceeded to invade Lebanon in early June of 1982. The military incursion was initially aimed at pushing "the PLO forty kilometers north of the Israeli border, but Israeli troops soon spread all over Lebanon. It was a major invasion, and its scale left no one in any doubt that Israel had been preparing for it for some time" (Chadda 1986, 163). The Palestinians along with some elements of the Syrian army were trapped and surrounded by the Israelis in Beirut. The United States brokered an agreement that allowed for the evacuation of PLO fighters, by sea, to other Arab countries, and for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Beirut to other parts of the country. The U.S. marines, along with other

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multinational forces, were sent in August of 1982 to monitor the withdrawal of Syrian and Palestinian forces from Lebanon. Following the withdrawal, the United States found itself entangled in the Lebanese quagmire.

After the assassination of President-elect Bashir Gemayel, the Israelis violated the agreement, which had called on them not to enter Beirut. With the PLO gone, the Israelis pushed into Beirut, meeting very little resistance along the way. The Israelis were accompanied by elements of the Christian Phalange Party, whose members are widely believed to have taken part in the gruesome Sabra and Shatila Camps massacres. The massacres were particularly embarrassing for the United States, which had brokered the agreement that led to the withdrawal of Palestinian forces, and left the Lebanese and Palestinian residents of the camps defenseless. The United States, appeared to be willing to play the role of mediator, except this time it was Haig's successor George Shultz, who was believed to be more evenhanded between the Arab's and Israel, who was going to lead the U.S. efforts. "Shultz saw in Israel's invasion an opportunity to attain a cease-fire between Israel and Syria and achieve a diplomatic arrangement that would get all foreign forces out of Lebanon. If Lebanon could get on it's feet, he reasoned, it could reassert its national identity and develop a stable relationship with Israel (Ellis 2002, 95). The Reagan plan, which also involved granting autonomy to the Palestinians in the Gaza and West bank, depended on Syrian and Israeli cooperation. Cooperation was not forthcoming from the two, who pursued the same objective of a dominant role in Lebanon. Even with an Israeli and Syrian withdrawal "an independent sovereign Lebanon needed a strong central leadership backed by effective military muscle. Gemayel and his Lebanese army could provide neither, although both were propped up with massive U.S. support. The U.S. Marines were shielding

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Gemayel and training the Lebanese, but this involvement was not paying off. It was, in fact,

becoming increasingly unpopular in the United States, since the marines became a target"

(Chadda 1986, 167). By the end of 1983, the Reagan administration's efforts in Lebanon

took on an increasingly military dimension. U.S. warships and fighter planes attacked both

the Syrian forces as well as the Syrian backed Druze and Shiite Muslims. "The hostilities

continued, and the American presence in Lebanon continued to be resented. On 20

September 1983, the U.S. embassy annex in Beirut was destroyed by a bomb....in October,

the U.S. Marine barracks at the Beirut airport were bombed, resulting in a loss of 243 lives"

(Ellis 2002, 96). By 1984 all U.S. military forces were withdrawn from Lebanon. Maya

Chadda (1986) reaches several conclusions concerning the Reagan administration's conduct

in Lebanon. The "debacle in Lebanon was anchored in aggressive ambition on the part of

Israel's Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, grave miscalculations on the part of Prime Minister

Begin and his cabinet, and a serious lack of foresight and coherence in Washington. Both

Israel and the United States contributed to the awful tragedy in Lebanon, but neither emerged

triumphant (168). Israel's image in the world was tarnished and America's prestige was

undermined. Gholam Hossein Razi (1988) also believes that the U.S. and Israeli policies in

Lebanon led to tragic consequences for all involved. He stresses, that the consequences of

these policies were the end "of American presence in a country where the US had long

enjoyed a great deal of influence and affection and made major contributions, particularly to

higher education through the world-class American University of Beirut." As for Israel, it

had to abandon its aspirations in Lebanon as well, but not before having "caused the killing

of hundreds of Israeli soldiers and tens of thousands of Lebanese civilians and reduced

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Beirut, that once beautiful and vibrant tourist and commercial center of the Middle East, to rubble" (250).

Following the 1984 withdrawal of American troops from Lebanon, the U.S. government was content to support peace initiatives sponsored by the Arab League and to accommodate Syrian interests in the country. Syria returned "to the dominant position it had lost during the course of the Lebanon war" (Zisser 2001, 135). Moshe Ma'oz credits Syria's reemergence as the main power broker in Lebanon to the political skills of Syrian president Asad. "Asad completely turned the tables on his enemies and re-emerged as a major actor in both the regional and international arenas. He managed, through direct and indirect measures, to drive the American and Israeli forces out of Lebanon" (Ma'oz `1988, 170). The United States, however, would resume a more active role in Lebanon beginning in 1988 in anticipation of the end of President Gemayel's term. The Lebanese parliament failed to elect a new president, leading Gemayel to appoint army commander Michel Aoun as interim prime minister. "This move precipitated a constitutional crisis and the formation of a rival Muslim government in West Beirut, headed by the incumbent prime minister Salim al-Hoss" (Ellis 2002, 98). In an effort to resolve the constitutional crisis in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, supported by the United States, invited the members of the Lebanese Parliament to Taif, Saudi Arabia to negotiate an end to the fifteen-year old Lebanese crisis. Following intense efforts, the Lebanese parliamentarians adopted the Document of National Reconciliation, also known as the Taif Accord. The "agreement became the centerpiece of U.S. policy in Lebanon. It was regarded by Washington as the best means available to forge a settlement among Lebanon's contending political and religious factions" (Ellis 2002, 98).

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AMERICAN-LEBANESE RELATIONS IN THE POST-COLD WAR PERIOD

Internationally, Lebanon like other Middle East countries has to face the realities of the new world order. The end of the Cold War and the subsequent American victory in the Gulf War, paved the way for the expansion of American military and political influence in the Middle East. The Arab League, with heavy American support and encouragement, brokered the Taif Accord itself. The United States no longer views itself as a strategic ally of Lebanon as in the crisis of 1958 and the intervention of 1982-83. However, the United States will remain an important participant when it comes to the implementation of the Taif accord and in helping Lebanon in its recovery. As the political process in Lebanon has returned to normalcy, the various Lebanese governments of the 1990's have all tried to develop friendly relations with the United States. The political process inside Lebanon has returned to normalcy. Since 1992, several elections have taken place, the militias except the Lebanese resistance, have been disarmed, and all western hostages had been freed. This atmosphere led to the first visit of a high-ranking American official to Lebanon since the end of the civil war. Warren Christopher's visit in 1993 paved the way for the lifting of the State Department's travel ban on U.S. citizens wishing to visit Lebanon, and the easing of other economic sanctions.

These developments are encouraging signs and bode well for Lebanon's future. However, difficult and complex issues remain, which if not dealt with adequately, may become problematic for both Lebanon and the United States. Thirteen years after the end of the civil war, Lebanon continues to be caught in the middle of the geopolitical conflict

between Syria and Israel. The Syrians are just beginning to comply with provisions of the Taif Accord calling on them to redeploy their forces to the Bekaa Valley. The United States State Department and members of the U.S. Congress have repeatedly called on Syria to comply with the Taif Accord and redeploy its forces in Lebanon. However, the recent Syrian military movements in Lebanon do not appear to be the result of American pressure, but rather a response to the Israeli withdrawal from the southern part of the country. The Syrian redeployment is aimed at satisfying a significant part of the Lebanese population that has grown increasingly impatient with the Syrian military presence and the deteriorating economic conditions in the country.

As for the Israelis, they were forced to withdraw from Lebanon in the spring of 2000. The Israeli withdrawal, however, although verified by the United Nations Interim Force for Lebanon (UNIFL), continues to be the source of controversy. Resolution 425 which the Israelis claim to have complied with, also calls on UNIFL to assist the Lebanese government in reasserting its authority in the area vacated by the Israelis. However, thus far, to the dismay of the United States, the Lebanese government has refused to deploy the Lebanese Army in the southern zone vacated by the Israelis. The Lebanese government claims that the Israelis have not complied fully with Resolution 425 of the United Nations, and that they still occupy a strip of land along the Lebanese-Syrian-Israeli border known as the Shebaa Farms. *Hizbullah*, the pro-Iranian Lebanese organization, which is credited with driving the Israeli forces out of Lebanon, has vowed to continue its military activities until the Israelis are driven from the disputed farms. *Hizbullah's* anti-Israeli military activities in the area may bring massive reprisals by the Israelis against Lebanon's infrastructure and Syrian forces inside Lebanon. That is the scenario that the United States would like to avoid in a region

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where it has vital national security and economic and strategic interests, including the security of Israel. So far the Israelis, who have been preoccupied with the Palestinian uprisings, have limited their reprisals in response to attacks in the Shebaa region. However, there is no guarantee that they will not attack deep into Lebanon and Syria in the future. The United States has continued to press Israel to practice restraint and Syria to use its influence to maintain calm along the Israeli border. The United States had played that role when the Israelis were still occupying Lebanon. The United States was part of the Group of Five along with France, Lebanon, Syria, and Israel. The regime that was established in 1996, known as the "April Understanding" developed new rules that "stipulated that armed groups in Lebanon would cease all attacks on Israel and the use of civilian areas and industrial instillations to launch attacks on Israeli and allied forces in Lebanon; Israel would in turn refrain from targeting civilian areas in Lebanon; and nothing in the agreement would preclude any party from exercising the right of self defense" (Malik 83, 1997). While this agreement was violated on occasion, it was adhered to for the large part. The Lebanese resistance refrained from staging attacks against the Israelis from civilian areas and the Israelis did not retaliate against civilian targets. Now, however, with the Israeli withdrawal, the rules of the game have changed to the advantage of Israel. The Israelis believe that they will have the backing of the international community and the moral justification to launch punitive retaliatory strikes deep into Lebanon if they are attacked.

There is no doubt that Lebanon has come along way and recovered nicely from the civil war over the thirteen years, but without a formal peace with Israel, the situation in the south and the rest of the country remains volatile. What is needed is a permanent, just, and a

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comprehensive peace that would cover the whole region and end the Arab-Israeli conflict once and for all.

LEBANON IN THE CONTEXT OF THE U.S. SPONSORED PEACE PROCESS

The U.S sponsored Middle East Process did suffer a setback with the failure of Camp David II and the resurgence of the Palestinian uprising. Ironically, however, there was a significant amount of progress at Camp David II as the two sides, the Israelis and Palestinians, came as close as they ever have to resolving their conflict. The Syrians and Israelis have also come close in the past, and by some accounts a mater of meters prevented an Israeli-Syrian agreement on the Golan Heights. For a person that sees the glass half full as opposed to half empty, there has been significant progress in the Middle East peace process. Israel has formal peace treaties with two of its neighbors, has accepted the inevitability of a Palestinian state, and understands that in order to achieve peace with Syria it will have to relinquish land it gained in the 1967 War.

A more evenhanded approach by the United States, placing pressure on Israel to further compromise would move the peace process forward. The United States is better able to place such pressure on the Israelis today, than it was in during the Cold War. During the Cold War, the United States took an accommodating stance with Israel. Israel was viewed as a strategic ally in a foreign policy perspective, which prioritized stalling Soviet ambitions in the Middle East. The political stability of Israel as well as its military capacity made it an important American ally. During the Cold War, the United States did not pressure Israel to compromise territorially in exchange for peace. Middle East scholar Emma Murphy, who

examined the changing nature of the American-Israeli relationship, stresses this point. The issue of territorial compromise "always effectively evaded American foreign-policy makers, because it was by far outweighed by the strategic value of Israel to U.S. interests in global terms" (Murphy 1994, 83). Following the decline of the Soviet Union, however, Israel's centrality to American interests was reevaluated. Because the Soviet threat was diminished, the United States was better able to develop warmer relations with Israel's adversaries in the region. This new American attitude towards the Arabs represented a change in Israel's previously unchallenged status of special American ally in the region. In the post-Cold War period the United States began to openly oppose Israeli policies that undermined any potential land for peace settlement with the Arabs. The American refusal in 1991 to provide Israel with $10 billion worth of loan guarantees for the housing of newly arrived Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union, reflected the new American attitude towards Israel. Faced with this new reality, Israel was compelled to seriously negotiate and compromise with the Arabs, publicly in Madrid and secretly in Oslo. The Arab willingness to engage Israel diplomatically was also due to the breakdown of the bipolar world. The decline of the Soviet Union forced the Arabs to come to terms with the new global balance of power. The political legitimization of Israel by the PLO and Jordan, and a corresponding moderation of policy by several other Arab countries, accords with the emergence of the United States as the world's only remaining superpower.

How significant of a role will Lebanon play in the ongoing peace efforts? Most Middle East analysts are cynical when it comes to an independent Lebanese role in the Middle East peace process. There is little doubt that Syria will have a major impact on the Lebanese government if and whenever it gets involved in direct negotiations with Israel. That being

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said, however, Lebanon has its own objectives, which are independent of those of Syria, when it comes to the peace processes. The United States has the ability to ensure that the Syrians and Israelis do not marginalize Lebanon's objectives and role. Habib Malik stresses that, "the United States has the clout to make a tangible difference in Lebanon's favor during the peace negotiations and, more importantly, after the treaties are signed. Moreover, the United States has demonstrated that it is not averse to helping Lebanon when it judges this to be feasible and attainable within the overall parameters of American interests" (1997, 105). The United States does not have to, nor is it willing, to intervene in Lebanon to save its sovereignty. Such a heavy-handed American involvement is neither realistic nor desirable. However, the United States can be more forthcoming in its support for Lebanon as an independent political actor from Syria.

Lebanon faces a tough road ahead in its recovery efforts and there are no quick fixes. Nonetheless, the direction in which the world seems to be heading is towards greater democratization, liberties, and freedoms. Autocratic regimes are coming under increased pressure from their own citizens who, because of the new communications revolution, see how others around the world a living and demand the same way of life. The United States can promote "the eventual decoupling of Syria from Lebanon without impinging upon Syria's vital interests in Lebanon. Defined in reasonable terms that the international community can condone, these 'vital' interests would include—but not exceed—solid guarantees of Syrian security, a measure of influence proportional to the historical and fraternal ties between the two states, good neighborliness, and the normal political, economic, and social affinities dictated by geographic proximity and the cultural similarities between the two countries" (Malik 1997, 106).

Chief among Lebanon's objectives in the peace process, a goal that is independent of Syrian interests, is the issue of Palestinian refuges. There are over 400,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, a majority of whom are Sunni Muslims. The Palestinian refugees some in Lebanon since 1958 live mostly in refugee camps in and around the Lebanese coastal cities. The majority of Palestinians inside Lebanon live in miserable conditions, are subjected to mistreatment, and face an uncertain future. The Shiite and Christian communities are vehemently opposed to granting citizenships to Palestinians in Lebanon because their naturalization would upset the confessional balance of power. The official Lebanese government position is that there will be no formal peace with Israel without a solution to the refugee problem. Lebanese President Emile Lahoud has repeatedly rejected attempts by Israel to permanently settle Palestinians in Lebanon. During a meeting with Beirut-based Arab news agency directors, Lahoud was optimistic about the prospects of a resolution to the regional conflict. However, he made it very clear that Lebanon is going to insist that the issue of Palestinian refugees be given a top priority. As far as the Palestinian refugees were concerned, Lahoud, said that "The Palestinians have the right to return to their home. This is one of the conditions for a just and comprehensive peace and a basic factor for ending the state of war with Israel" (Daily Star 12/6/2000).

Part of the refugees will end up returning not to Israel proper, but to a future Palestinian state when a peace agreement is reached between Israel and the Palestinian authority. However, reality dictates that the majority of refugees are not going to be repatriated to their original homeland. Some may be resettled in other Arab or even Western countries such as Canada, others will remain in Lebanon. The Maronite and Shiite communities may accept the naturalization of a portion of the Palestinians in Lebanon, if they were compensated

politically through constitutional guarantees that would preserve Lebanon's current delicate pluralist power sharing arrangement. As for the Palestinians, they have to be compensated financially by the international community. The United States and Saudi Arabia have taken the lead in the past when it has come to financing political agreements in the Middle East and, although some in Congress may be concerned about the heavy price tag, a U.S. administration that finally succeeds in ending the Arab-Israeli conflict is likely to get the support of the majority of Congress.

PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE LEBANESE-AMERICAN RELATIONS

Because of its fragile political system, Lebanon will need the support of several external players, including the United States. A U.S. policy in the Middle East that is more fair and balanced would give more legitimacy to governments friendly with the United States. It will be important for Lebanese policy-makers to demonstrate Lebanon's importance not just to the United States, but the European Union, and other Arab countries as well. The 2000 parliamentary elections in Lebanon led to the return to power of billionaire businessman Rafiq Hariri, who enjoys good relations with Saudi Arabia and the United States. Hariri has moved quickly to cut taxes and red tape in an effort to revive the slumping economy. Historically, Lebanon's distinguishing feature had been the liberal characteristic of its economic system. And now Lebanon can once again become a hub between the East and the West. To Michael Hudson, Lebanon "can function as a meeting ground for the dialogue between the Arab-Islamic world and the West....To the extent that it can serve these functions, Lebanon will be able to demonstrate to the United States and its regional

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neighbors that it is an asset—not a strategic asset as much as moral and developmental asset—in the region, and between the region and the international community" (1994, 147). The key to Lebanon becoming an asset internationally can be found domestically. Administrative, democratic, social, and economic reforms are going to be essential when it comes to safeguarding Lebanon's stability and security.

To help Lebanon in its recovery, U.S. policy-makers can encourage Lebanon to pursue certain options and policies. U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon, David Satterfield, along with his superiors in the Department of State were very supportive of the 2000 parliamentary elections. The Clinton Doctrine was one of engagement and enlargement. Engagement involves the United States remaining involved and not reverting to isolationism in the post-Cold War period. Enlargement involves increasing the number of democracies because democracies are believed to be more peaceful and more prosperous. Both components of the Clinton Doctrine should apply to Lebanon. The United States can help strengthen the democratic institutions of Lebanon by encouraging the Lebanese government to be tolerant of a credible and responsible opposition and of a free press. There is already strong evidence that indicates the government is striving towards those goals. The strong showing of opposition candidates in the 2000 general elections underlies this point. Prior to the elections, Lebanese President, Emile Lahoud pledged that the government would be neutral towards all candidates in the 2000 parliamentary elections. Speaking to a number of parliamentary deputies, Lahoud was quoted as saying "All candidates should rid themselves of personal sensitivities and compete according to democratic principles and political norms that serve the country's interests…Politics cannot be without pro- and anti- government forces. But I affirm that the government will distance itself from all candidates irrespective

of their political tendencies" (Daily Star, 11/30/99). The way issues are debated and the way in which the government is criticized by the opposition in parliament indicate that those words are more than just simple hollow words. There have been, for example, increased calls from parliamentary members for a Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon. Such controversial issues were not debated in the past and only recently have entered the political forum. The type of opposition that is emerging in Lebanon is authentic and backed by a cross sectarian popular base. The press is also involved in meaningful political debates. The Lebanese press is enjoying such freedoms for the first time since before the civil war. A free democratic nation cannot exist without a free press that is not controlled by a one-sided political power. The press in Lebanon is largely independent and free from government interference.

Besides encouraging democratization, the United States has and is likely to continue to lend moral support, through exchanges and simple political statements, to Lebanon's academic institutions, professional associations, and other non-governmental organizations. These are the organizations that fortify Lebanon and are the cornerstone of its civil society. Financially, the United States has supported Lebanon very little, but has encouraged international institutions to provide Lebanon with loans and other assistance packages. The United States has also encouraged private firms to do business in the country. The withdrawal of Israeli forces from the southern part of the country and the emergence of a pro-business government in Beirut should increase foreign investments in Lebanon. However, it is important to note that the situation in the south is still volatile and potential investors who undertake a cost benefit analysis may find Lebanon a place where the risks exceed the benefits. Pressure by the United States on Lebanon's neighbors to respect

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Leb sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity would go a long way to reduce investor's risk and increase confidence in the country.

CONCLUSION

During the Cold War Lebanon was much more significant in the eyes of U.S. foreign policy-makers. That is not to say that the United States no longer has interests and will no longer play a major role in Lebanon. The Lebanese-American relationship suffered numerous setbacks during the civil war, now, as Lebanon is recovering so is the relationship. The United States would like to see a stable regime that could prevent internal chaos in Lebanon, and would be a major factor in bringing about a peace deal with Israel. Lebanon, on the other hand, needs the political support of the United States, in order to regain its international reputation and credibility as a free, open, and independent nation- state. Only the United States has the power and the prestige to put pressure on Lebanon's neighbors, to refrain from policies that may impede the country's recovery.

The Taif Accords security provisions are primarily aimed at the state of Israel, America's long time ally in the region. The Accord calls for the implementation of U.N. Resolution 425, which calls on Israel to withdraw from Lebanon. According to the United Nations, Israel has complied and withdrawn its forces from Lebanon. The United States has made it very clear to the Lebanese government that it would like to see the deployment of the Lebanese army into the areas vacated by Israel. The Lebanese government is as yet unable to deploy its army units to the south without Syrian approval. This puts Lebanon in a difficult position because as long as Israel's security is jeopardized, the United States will not

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strengthen ties with Lebanon.   What is likely to be a catalyst to the improvement of

American-Lebanese relations is a just and comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle

East that will not only encompass Lebanon, but also Palestine and Syria.   A solution to the

Arab-Israeli conflict, will not only improve relations with the United States but lead to a

stronger more independent Lebanon, a Lebanon that faces little interference from its insecure

neighbors.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SYRIAN ROLE IN LEBANON AND
THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

In order to further their domestic agendas, Lebanese factions have historically relied on

foreign sponsorship. Israel, for example, during the Lebanese Civil War maintained close

relations with Christian groups, such as the now outlawed Lebanese Forces. Muslim groups

on the other hand maintained closer relations and ties with other Arab and Muslim powers.

Iran's financial and political backing of the Party of God (*Hizbullah*) was instrumental in the

emergence of that party as a dominant political force in Lebanon. Presently, Syria has

emerged as the main outside power and final political arbitrator in Lebanon. The Syrian

military presence has contributed to the security and stability of the country. Eric Thompson

(2002) argues that, "Syrian efforts to impose peace gained added respect in the eyes of those

actors that had firsthand experience in trying to bring peace to Lebanon" (88). Nonetheless,

there is growing opposition to Syria's role in Lebanon from domestic groups and the United

States.

Even though Lebanon has often come under the influence of regional powers before, the

amount of influence that Syria has in present day Lebanon has not been witnessed since the

end of the Ottoman Empire and French colonial administration. This chapter will focus on

the historical ties between Lebanon and Syria, as well as the Syrian role in post-Taif

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Lebanon. It examines the motives behind Syrian military presence and how has this presence changed the distribution of power in Lebanon?

SYRIAN OBJECTIVES IN LEBANON

Throughout the French mandate period, Syrian Arab nationalists refused to recognize the legitimacy of Greater Lebanon, which borders were drawn by France in 1920. Subsequently none of the Syrian governments established diplomatic ties with Lebanon or accepted it as a separate entity. Other than "this historical claim Syrian leaders, notably Asad, regarded Lebanon as vital to their national and strategic interests in all aspects: military, political, economic and security. Much of Syria's trade passed through Beirut's sea port, part of her water supplies came from Lebanon, and remittances were sent home by the several thousand Syrian workers in Lebanon" (Ma'oz 1988,123). Furthermore, Lebanon's free enterprise economic system and its political freedoms made it a heaven for Syrian opposition groups who harshly criticized and organized to overthrow the autocratic establishment in Damascus. Asad feared those groups and aspired to limit their influence.

Patrick Seale (1988) stresses that Asad's move into Lebanon "was motivated by geo-strategic reasons, by the need to head off an Israeli intervention" (286). Asad believed without a military presence in Lebanon, Syria would be left vulnerable to an Israeli flank attack. Not only was Asad concerned with Israel's military threat but also with its efforts to gain political influence by forging closer relations with Christian Lebanese factions. Some Maronites believed that their similarities and alliance with Israel would secure Maronite independence and strengthen their community's presence in Lebanon (Schulze 1998, 14-15).

Asad "knew that Israel, whose alliance with the Maronites became public in 1976, had a strong intelligence presence in Lebanon" (Seale 1988, 276). When fighting in Lebanon broke out, Asad became more concerned with the security of his own regime since he viewed the security of Lebanon and Syria as inseparable. "Asad felt his environment bristling with perils. He could not allow the Lebanese crisis to rot. If necessary, he would have to intervene and he felt no qualms about doing so. His gut conviction was that Syria's concern with Lebanon was in the very nature of things, whereas interference by Israel, a state alien to the region, could only be illegitimate and malign" (Seale 1988, 276).

A common explanation of Syrian dominance in Lebanon is centered on the Baathist regime's pursuit of a greater Syria. Since Lebanon was part of Syria before French colonial rule, Syrian nationalists believe that Lebanon not to mention, Iraq, Palestine, and Jordan, share a common culture, history, and language with Syria, and thus all borders between them should be eliminated. However, many who stress that the late Syrian president Hafez Al-Asad was not an ideologue, have dismissed this explanation. Asad was a pragmatist and now his predecessors similarly are very much aware of the environment they operate in. The Syrian regime understands the difficulties involved in creating a greater Syria. The Syrian nationalist movement and its ideology were more appealing in 1940's and 50's when Israel was being established. Today even members of the Lebanese Syrian Socialist Party and other pro-Syrian groups in Lebanon have serious doubts regarding the feasibility of establishing a Greater Syria. The rhetoric that comes out of the government sponsored Syrian media concerning the closeness of the Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian people may be viewed as propaganda aimed at bolstering the Arabism and nationalist credentials of the Syrian regime as opposed to the desire of the Syrian leadership to annex Lebanon. Syrian

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direct involvement in the country beginning in 1976 was not intended to lead to the "annexation of Lebanon and no such annexation has taken place. Such a goal was not apparently in Hafiz al Asad's sight since in his view it was unrealistic and unattainable" (Zisser 2001, 143).

A more plausible explanation of Syrian policy in Lebanon revolves around the regimes' preoccupation with maintaining its grip on power. This paradigm that has been labeled as the "raison de regime" by As'ad Abukhalil (1994) is predicated on the belief that Syrian foreign policy objectives depend on the interests of the Syrian regime itself. The "raison de regime" explanation focuses on the autocratic nature of the regime and the methods used to legitimize its grip on power. "Asad's undemocratic regime, in its quest to generate some semblance of political legitimacy, tries to justify its actions publicly in ways that conform to the public mood of the Syrian population. Often this requires the regime to rationalize its deeds and policies ideologically, by employing rhetoric drawn from Islam and from pan-Arab nationalism"(Abukhalil 1994, 127). Abukhalil's skeptical explanation can be used to explain the policies of other autocratic Arab regimes, which frequently invoke the national interest when they are primarily concerned with personal interests. Here it is important to note that at times the interests of the people in power may coincide with that of the state. The Syrian military domination of Lebanon for example, has not only increased the security of the regime, but has been beneficial for the Syrian economy. Lebanon has become a major market for Syrian goods and a source of income for hundreds of thousands of Syrian laborers

Chief among Syria's security objectives in Lebanon is making sure that the PLO's influence remains in check. When the Syrians first entered Lebanon, they moved quickly to contain the PLO and its Lebanese Muslim allies. The Syrians feared that PLO activities in

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Lebanon would draw Israeli intervention. The Syrians have avoided a direct military confrontation with Israel, and relied instead on the Iranian backed *Hizbullah* to keep the military pressure on Israel. The rise of the *Hizbullah* posed a challenge to the Syrian policy of not allowing any single Lebanese faction or party to become dominant. Syria had always preserved its own military supremacy by preventing any one faction from controlling Lebanon. However, by allowing *Hizbullah* to operate against Israel, the Syrians "acted to link a solution to the problem of South Lebanon and Hizballah activity in the region to an overall solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and, included in this, a solution to the Golan Heights question" (Zisser 2001, 147).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Syrian interest in Lebanon goes back to the period of the Ottoman Empire. Under Ottoman rule, Mount Lebanon was considered part of the Syrian geographic entity. Unclear administrative and political divisions led to persistent questions over Lebanon's boundaries and its autonomy. These questions were not settled when France gained a mandate over Syria and Lebanon in 1920. The Syrians felt that the French designation of the boundaries of both nations favored Lebanon at their expense. The subsequent Syrian refusal to establish diplomatic ties with Lebanon was due to the belief that Lebanon was rightfully part of Syria.

Under Ottoman rule Syria was divided into several provinces. The decentralization of power by the Ottomans led to the emergence of powerful local rulers who enjoyed a significant amount of autonomy. As long as these provincial governors collected taxes for

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the treasury and acknowledged the supreme authority of the Sultan, they faced few

constraints from Istanbul. The Ottomans accorded Mount Lebanon a distinctive status.

Although nominally subordinated to the governors of the bordering Syrian provinces, two

successive dynasties of local Lebanese rulers pushed their independence to the limits. The

Ma'ni Dynasty was established by Fakhr al-Din I and his Shuf region of the mountain was

recognized by the Ottomans in 1516. His successor Fakhr al-Din II was the first to envision

a "greater Lebanon," enlarging the area under his control from the borders of Egypt in the

south to the borders of Aleppo in the north. Eventually the Ottomans beheaded him because

of his increasing ambition and power (Hitti 1951, 680-83). The rulers of the subsequent

Shihabi dynasty (1697-1841) also attempted to enlarge their autonomy and geographical

sphere of influence. Bashir Shihabi II, who ruled between 1788 and 1841, was the most

successful in creating a greater Lebanon. Besides gaining jurisdiction over all of Mount

Lebanon, Bashir was able to incorporate the coastal towns to the west and the Biqa' valley to

the east, despite the strong objections of the provincial governor of Damascus (Hitti 1951,

690-95).

Following the Shihabi dynasty in the mid 19th century, the Ottomans introduced

administrative changes to the Mountain. The new Ottoman regulations led to the

establishment of a distinct district. These new reforms "provided the Mountain with the

most explicit administrative autonomy it had experienced to date. Defined as a distinct

district, or *sanjaq*, its ruler was directly responsible to the porte, rather than reporting through

the *vali* of an adjacent Syrian province. Lebanon's domain was confined to the Mountain,

thereby excluding the coastal cities and the Biqaa which had been incorporated during the

Shihabi period" (Weinberger 1986, 44). This new administrative district known as a

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mutasarrifiyyah was headed by a non-Lebanese Ottoman Christian governor general

(*mutasarrif*). Despite the fact hat the governor was not Lebanese and was ultimately

answerable to Instanbul, the new form of government aimed at providing broader

confessional representation. The different sects in the Mountain, the Maronite, Druze, Greek

Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Shiite and Sunni Muslims were to be represented proportionally

in a Central Administrative Council. "The experience of the *mutasarrifiyyah* was vital in

inculcating the principle of "confessionalism" in Lebanese political culture. Allocation of

government positions on the basis of religious sect meant that government served as a

trustee for the interests of the various communal groups" (Weiberger 1986, 44-46). The

leader of each sect tried to ensure that his community members received their share of

benefits and rights. Naomi Weinberger (1986) describes the period of the *mutasarrifiyyah* as

one of "tranquility." However, it was one that was short lived. At the start of WW I the

Ottomans abolished the *mutasarrifiyyah* and incorporated Lebanon into their provincial

system.

CREATION OF GREATER LEBANON

The defeat of the Turks in WW I paved the way for European domination of the Middle

East. Before the allied victory was completed the French and British carved up the region

under the Sykes-Picot agreement. That was done even though promises were made to Sharif

Husayn, the ruler of Mecca that the Arabs would be granted independence as a reward for

their help in the war against the Ottomans. Furthermore "the Franco-British proclamation of

11 November (1918) was intended to reassure the doubters and authoritatively to assert

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Allied policy.   It did so in the most unequivocal terms; it promised to the peoples so long

oppressed by the Turks a 'complete and final liberation' and 'the setting up of national

governments and administrations that shall derive their authority from the free exercise of the

initiative and choice of the indigenous populations' in Syria" (Longrigg 1958, 68).   The

declaration asserted that the allies' sole concern was to "offer such support and efficacious

help as will ensure the smooth working of the Governments 'which those populations will

have elected of their own free will" (Longrigg 1958, 68).   However, pre-war promises of

independence were not honored.   France, which was granted the mandate for Lebanon and

Syria by the League of Nations, enlarged the boundaries of Mount Lebanon, creating present

day Greater Lebanon. This was done despite the fact that the majority of inhabitants of Syria

and Lebanon favored a united Syria.   A U.S commission, the King-Crane commission,

which was dispatched to the region by president Woodrow Wilson in 1919, was tasked with

ascertaining the wishes of the population. "The commission reported that 80.4 percent of the

petitions received demanded a united Syria....Accordingly the commission recommended the

establishment of a united Syria-Palestine after an interim mandatory period" (Weinberger

1986, 46-47).

By creating Greater Lebanon, the French doubled the territorial size of the

mutasarrifiyyah and increased the country's population by fifty percent from 400,000 to

600,000. The populations of the annexed areas were mostly Muslim. In the eastern Biqaa

Valley the Sunni and Shiite Muslim population was almost twice as the Christian population.

As far as the coastal cities were concerned, Tripoli to the north was predominantly Sunni

Muslim, Beirut was roughly half Muslim half Christian, and the southern cities were

predominantly inhabited by Shiite Muslims. "Whereas the Maronites had comprised 59

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percent of the population in the *mutasarrifiyyah*, they were only 29 percent in Greater

Lebanon. However, the Maronites were still the single largest sect, and the Christian

population as a whole comprised a majority of Greater Lebanon" (Weinberger 1986, 47).

Even though the Maronites were concerned with the new demographic reality they were still

in favor of annexation of the surrounding areas to Mount Lebanon. A minority of

Maronites had reservations about the enlargement of Lebanon because they believed, with

the increase in the Muslim population, the country would no longer serve as a sanctuary for

Christians in the Middle East. However, the majority of Maronite Christians were strong

advocates of a Greater Lebanon. Naomi Weinberger stresses that the French decision to

enlarge the boundaries of Lebanon was "an act of favoritism to the Maronites. As the most

Francophile of the indigenous groups, the Maronites traditionally enjoyed French protection

and maintained cultural, educational, and social bonds with France. Maronites believed that

their status would be more secure in an enlarged, independent Lebanese state" (1986, 50).

Furthermore, Lebanon it was believed would become more economically viable with the

addition of the commercial cities on the Mediterranean, the agriculturally productive Biqa'

valley in the east, and the Mount Amil area of the south.

Unlike the Maronites, Sunni Muslims opposed the creation of a Greater Lebanon in

which they would become a minority community. Sunnis favored a union with Syria where

as in the rest of the Arab world, Sunnis were a majority. Most other minority sects also

supported the Syria-Lebanon or Greater Syria alternative. These groups would retain

minority status whether the Sunnis or Maronites dominated Lebanon. In the end the

strongest opponents to the creation of Greater Lebanon would be the Arab and Syrian

nationalists. To them Greater Lebanon was an artificial creation which differed markedly

from Mount Lebanon during the Ottoman Empire. Ever since Lebanon's creation in 1920, the Syrian nationalists have been calling for its reunification with Syria. During the French mandate, the Syrians were particularly interested in the economically and strategically important Biqaa Valley. And throughout the 1920's the Syrians tried to gain back the Biqaa, which was part of the western Province *(Wilayet)* of Damascus in the Ottoman period. Their efforts to undermine French and Lebanese influence in the area appeared to have succeeded to a certain extent. In 1926 "the French High Commissioner, recommended annexing to Syria part of the *Biqa'* valley, including *Ba'albak*. This plan was never implemented, however, as his successor, Henri Ponsot, met with strong opposition from French military circles and his own staff, as well as from the *Maronite* church" (Zamir 1999, 192). Also in the 1920's the Syrians raised territorial claims on Lebanon's second largest city Tripoli. The Syrians were becoming increasingly dependent on the port of Beirut for their exports and imports, and they believed in the coastal city of Tripoli they would have a port of their own and a natural outlet to the sea and a center of international commerce. Also increasing the Syrian interest in Tripoli was the building in the city of a terminal for the Iraqi Petroleum Company's pipeline from *Mosul*. Meir Zamir (1999) stresses that the "claims on Tripoli were motivated, however, not only by economic considerations, but also by the Syrian nationalists' vision of their future state—a modern, liberal, independent Arab state which, while being an integral part of the Arab Muslim world, would also maintain close ties with Europe" (192). However, just as was the case in the Biqaa Valley the Syrian attempts to annex Tripoli failed because of stiff opposition from the *Maronite* Church and officials in the French High Commission.

Following the failed attempts to regain the *Biqaa* and Tripoli, the Syrians reconsidered their tactics in Lebanon. Beginning in 1930's the leaders of the National Bloc, the most important Syrian Arab nationalist organization during the mandate period, came to realize that their demands of revising the borders of Lebanon were undermining Syrian efforts of gaining independence from France. The leaders of the National Bloc believed that the French "were exploiting Lebanese Christian fears of the Muslims to justify retention of the Mandate not only in Lebanon but also in Syria as well. National Block leaders such as Riad al-Sulh, and later Fakhri al-Barudi and Jamil Mardam, proposed that Syria shelve its political and territorial claims in Lebanon and strive to win the Maronites' trust in order to undermine the French position there" (Zamir 1999, 193). The Maronites had misgivings concerning the ending of the French mandate, however, abscent an end to Syrian threats against their territory they would continue to seek French protection. Syrian nationalists were willing to appease the Maronites, believing that following independence they would be able to dominate an independent Lebanon. Furthermore, Arab nationalists such as Lebanon's first Prime Minister Riad al-Sulh argued that detaching Muslim regions in the north and east from Lebanon would increase Lebanon's separatist tendencies away from an Arab nation and into closer ties with the west.

In 1936 during the formal Syrian French negotiations over the future fate of Syria, the leaders of the National Bloc were once again faced with the Lebanon dilemma. Should they renew their territorial claims in Lebanon? Or should they continue to improve their relations with Lebanese Christians? There were advantages in continuing a policy of rapprochement with the Lebanese, who were beginning to be more vocal in their opposition to the French mandate. However, there were some prominent members of the National Bloc such as

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Syria's first president Shukri Quwatli who insisted that Syria must not ignore the calls for

unity between the two countries coming from among Muslims in Lebanon, nor voluntarily

give up claims on any territory in Lebanon during negotiations with the French that would

ultimately determine Syria's boundaries. Furthermore, there was fear among Syrian

nationalists that following independence the French would maintain military bases in

Lebanon and make it a major hub for their activities in the Middle East and in doing so

imperil Syria's own independence and sovereignty.

Consequently, the Syrians were sending conflicting signals into Lebanon. They assured

the Christians that they would respect Lebanon's territorial integrity as long as Lebanon

strove to gain independence and end the French mandate, while at the same time they

encouraged the Lebanese Muslim population and leadership to demand union with Syria.

In the Summer of 1936, while negotiations regarding Syria's independence were taking place

in Paris between the Syrians and the French, "nationalists in Damascus began urging pro-

Syrian Muslim leaders....to send petitions to the French authorities and the Permanent

Mandates Commission in Geneva and to organize demonstrations in support of union with

Syria. On July 5, delegates from Tripoli, Beirut, Nabatiya, Marj Ayoun, Tyre and Bint Jubeil

met in Sidon and passed a resolution upholding Syrian unity. They also called for a

plebiscite to be held in the regions annexed to Mount Lebanon and authorized the Syrian

delegation in Paris to represent their national aspirations" (Zamir 1999, 196). Muslim

leaders in Lebanon also held a conference in Beirut, which was dubbed the "Conference of

the Coast," in which they unanimously advocated the return to Syria of Muslim areas

annexed to Lebanon in 1920. On the mass level, general strikes and large demonstrations

took place in support of the Muslim and Syrian leadership. The desire to unite with Syria

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was not confined to Lebanese Muslims. While most Lebanese Catholics shared the Francophile sentiments of the Maronites, Lebanese Eastern Christian Orthodox did not. The Orthodox were not happy with the dominance and influence that Maronites enjoyed in Lebanon, and they preferred being incorporated to a unified Syria. "The Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) was founded by a Greek Orthodox Lebanese, Antoine Sa'ada. Committed to a single Syrian state within its 'natural boundaries,' the party strove to reincorporate Lebanon as well as Palestine" (Weinberger 1986, 56). The SSNP did not advocate the creation of a greater Pan-Arab state for fear of compromising Greater Syria's autonomy. Originally operating as a secret organization, the party began to attract a large following in Syria and Lebanon when it started to operate in the open in 1935. The party continued to grow in the mandate period despite the frequent attempts at suppression by the French.

In the end the efforts of nationalists in Syria and Lebanon failed to compel the French to unite the two countries. The Syrian negotiators in France in 1936 realized that their territorial and economic claims on Lebanon were jeopardizing the treaty negotiations. Hence, the Syrian delegates changed their tactics, hoping that border and economic issues would later be negotiated with an independent Lebanon instead of France. In the final Franco-Syrian treaty signed in Paris in September of 1936, the French agreed to end their mandate and grant Syria independence. Even though the French were able to exclude Lebanon from the treaty, they failed to get a clear and unequivocal commitment from the Syrians to recognize the legitimacy of Greater Lebanon's borders.

Aware of the potential Syrian threat to Lebanon, the French moved to conclude a treaty with Lebanon as well. The French hoped the treaty would create a Lebanese-French military

alliance and turn Lebanon into a center of French economic, cultural, and military influence in the Middle East.   If to the French the treaty with Lebanon was needed to ensure French strategic interests in the Eastern Mediterranean, to the Lebanese, especially to Maronite leaders such as the President of the Republic Emile Edde, the treaty with France was needed to secure French protection from Syria.

Reacting to the French-Lebanese treaty negotiations, "the Syrian press stepped up its attacks on the Lebanese Christians, particularly the Maronites. It accused them of 'harming the Syrians and the supporters of Syrian unity' and described Emile Edde as 'a Maronite president known for his hatred of the Arab race and culture" (Zamir 1999, 198). Faced not only by Syrian but by domestic opposition as well, the negotiations were conducted secretly and completed in only three weeks. In contrast to the treaty the French struck with the Syrians, the treaty with Lebanon gave the French armed forces complete freedom of movement in the country. The reaction to the signing of the treaty was hostile. Thousands of Muslims demonstrated in Beirut where they set cars ablaze, stormed government buildings, and looted shops. Christian political organizations such as the *Phalange* mobilized in order to defend Christian lives and property. Concerned that tension might turn into sectarian clashes, the French sent military forces to maintain order in Beirut. Hundreds were wounded before the French were able to restore calm in the capital. The French blamed the Syrian political leadership for the riots and threatened not to implement the Franco-Syrian Treaty. The Syrian nationalists denied being behind the riots in Beirut and held Lebanese President Edde responsible for the riots instead of the Muslim political leadership. Clearly the Syrians were trying their best not to alienate the French, going as far as sending an official delegation to Lebanon to convince Muslim notables not to oppose the Franco-

Lebanese agreement, lest they put in jeopardy Syria's own treaty with France. In the end Syrian efforts to safeguard their treaty with France were to no avail. "French rightist deputies and senators, as well as colonialist circles who had opposed the Syrian treaty from the start, prevented its ratification in 1937 and 1938. The growing threat of war in Europe reinforced opposition from the French army, which argued that the treaty would limit its freedom of action in Syria" (Zamir 1999, 202).

The Syrian nationalists' conduct during the riots and turmoil in Beirut upset the Muslims in Lebanon. After being urged to demonstrate for union with Syria and against the Lebanese agreement with France, the Muslim leadership felt abandoned by the National Bloc, which was more interested in saving its own Syrian treaty with France. Muslims in Lebanon such as Lebanon's first post-independence Prime Minister Riad al-Sulh argued that with Lebanon poised to gain independence, the Muslim community should strive to secure rights in Lebanon rather than advocate a confederation with Syria. For its part, the Syrian government, now controlled by the National Bloc was forced to exercise caution when it came to pursuing its objectives in Lebanon. The Syrians came to accept the inevitability of an independent Greater Lebanon and even cooperated with the Lebanese in undermining the mandate. However, they never formally gave up their political, economic and territorial claims in Lebanon.

The sporadic cooperation between opposition elements against France in Lebanon and Syria reached a new level of coordination during World War II. "The rise in each country of nationalist leaders, whose highest priority was the termination of French authority, encouraged consultation between political elites. The backdrop to this new phase was

common allegations about French betrayal of promises of independence" (Weinberger 1986, 56-57).

Following France's occupation by the Nazis and the installation of the Vichy regime in 1940, the new French Commissioner in Lebanon asserted that the Germans would be allowed to use military facilities in Syria. In response, the Free French forces, led by Charles De Gualle joined forces with the British to invade Lebanon and Syria. The Free French and the British promised independence to the people of the Levant. The people of Syria and Lebanon "could not be expected to provide a battle-ground, suffer the dangers inseparable from war, and yet gain nothing save a change of masters" (Longrigg 1958, 309). De Gaulle asserted that he would grant Lebanon and Syria independence upon the conclusion of treaties with the two countries that would secure France's rights and interests. The French commander who invaded Syria and Lebanon was even more unequivocal regarding the granting of independence to the Syrians and Lebanese. General Cartroux, through thousands of leaflets distributed in the mandated territories, proclaimed that France would guarantee the two nations independence. The leaflets read:

> *In the name of Free France, which is the traditional and authentic France,*
> *I come to put an end to the Mandate and to proclaim you free and independent.*
> *You will therefore be from henceforth sovereign and independent peoples......*
> *Your independent and sovereign status will be guaranteed by a treaty in which*
> *our mutual relations would be defined. The treaty will be negotiated as soon as*
> *possible between your representatives and myself. (Longrigg 1958, 310).*

Even though the French promise was received with skepticism by most, it initially created some good will among the masses and prevented any hostility against the Gaullists and their British allies. The skepticism was warranted because de Gaulle, while promising independence, made it clear that for the time being the mandate was still in effect.

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Nevertheless, nationalists in Lebanon and Syria were encouraged by two developments: first, the withdrawal of France from the League of Nations in 1941, effectively ending France's mandate; and, second, the persistent pressure the British placed on the Free French to respect the constitutions of Syria and Lebanon and allow the people of both countries to practice self government. Indeed, "by the end of 1941 the suspended constitutions of Syria and Lebanon were restored and formal sovereignty was granted to each country...After heavy British urging, the Free French permitted general elections in 1943, which brought the National Bloc firmly to power in Syria under the leadership of Shukri al-Quwatli, and respected nationalists to the helm in Lebanon led by president Bishara al-Khuri (a Maronite) and Prime Minister Riyadh al-Sulh (a Sunni)" (Weinberger 1986, 58).

When it came to their dealings with the French, cooperation between the Syrian and Lebanese governments reached unprecedented levels. In 1943 they sent identical petitions to the High Commissioner now known as the Delegate General, demanding full law making and executive powers. Specifically, they demanded that the French not interfere in economic and security issues. The French High Commissioners had enjoyed a significant amount of powers over national affairs and were in control of the *troupes specials,* local special forces attached to the French Army. The Lebanese constitution promulgated in May 1926, limited the independence of Lebanon, while recognizing its sovereignty. Martin Sicker stresses that, "Lebanese independence was...restricted by the terms of the mandate, which were incorporated into the constitution. The legislative and executive powers of the French High Commissioner continued in force. The High Commissioner remained entirely responsible for foreign and military affairs, and could veto any decision by the Lebanese authorities that he considered detrimental to the mandate" (2001, 74).

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When the French rejected Lebanese demands to give up powers granted to France by the constitution of 1926, the Lebanese Parliament defiantly and unilaterally amended the constitution in November 1943. The changes included: "the abolition of all administrative functions and rights of the French, the omission of all references to the Mandate, the substitution of Arabic for French as an official language and the formal recognition of the borders as final" (Madram Bey 1994, 94). In response, the French dissolved parliament, suspended the constitution, and arrested the president and his cabinet. The arrests angered every sectarian group in the country, uniting them against the French. The widespread riots by the Lebanese public and pressure being applied by the British against the French forced de Gaulle to release the prisoners and begin the process of transferring power to Lebanon and Syria. Two years later, in December 1945, the Anglo-French Agreement provided for a phased withdrawal of the European forces from Lebanon and Syria. The last French forces left Syria in April of 1946 and Lebanon in December 1946.

The mutual recognition and cooperation between Lebanon and Syria during their struggle for independence was bolstered when both became founding members of the League of Arab States. The Alexandria Protocol adopted by the Arab states collectively in 1944 included a clause affirming respect for Lebanon's frontiers. To Naomi Weinberger this constitutes evidence of the "Syrian reconciliation to the integrity and sovereignty of its Lebanese neighbor. In agreeing to the wording of the 1936 draft treaty with France, as well as the Alexandria protocol, Syria renounced both its minimalist claims to the district annexed to Lebanon in 1920 and the maximalist claim to the whole of Lebanon" (1986, 59). Nevertheless, Syria's refusal to establish diplomatic ties with Lebanon signifies unwillingness on the part of the Syrians to recognize Lebanon as a foreign state. While

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successive Syrian governments have not publicly made claims to parts or all of Lebanon, the

charter of the Syrian Nationalist Party, which operates in both Lebanon and Syria, has

articulated the hopes for unity between the two countries.

SYRIAN INFLUENCE IN LEBANON IN THE POST INDEPENDENCE YEARS

Following their independence Lebanon and Syria pursued divergent economic and

foreign policies. Lebanon's free enterprise economic system attracted foreign investment

and created prosperity, while Syria's socialist system minimized its interaction with the West

and led to lower standards of living. Politically, Syria adopted an Arab nationalist

identification, while Christian dominated Lebanon identified more with the West than the

Arab nation. However, in the 1950's Muslims in Lebanon were galvanized by the moves

toward Arab unity between Egypt and Syria. The pan Arabism advocated by Egyptian

President Nasir fueled Muslim anger with the Lebanese Christian establishment and

ultimately led to civil war in 1958. Muslim leaders in Lebanon were angered by President

Kamil Shamoun's refusal to break diplomatic relations with France and Britain following the

Suez crisis in 1956. Shamoun was also criticized for supporting the Baghdad pact and for his

anti –Nasirist stand during a period of growing popularity for President Nasir.

During the civil war of 1958, the Lebanese government had accused Syria, the northern

partner in the United Arab Republic, of supporting rebel elements. Lebanon's Foreign

Minister Charles Malik formally leveled these charges at the United Nations in June of 1958.

These charges included "broadcasts by Radio Damascus and Radio Cairo encouraging the

Muslim forces,…smuggling arms across the border, of sending armed forces to attack

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Lebanese customs posts, of training rebel forces on Syrian soil, and of providing material

support to Kamal Junblat and other rebel leaders" (Weinberger 1986, 111). The meddling

by Syria and Egypt in Lebanon, along with the toppling of the pro Western conservative

regime in Iraq, alarmed the United States and led to its military intervention in 1958.

Fuad Shihab who replaced Chamoun as president following Lebanon's 1958 civil war,

was able to gain Muslim support by pursuing a neutral foreign policy. The main challenge

facing Shihab and other Lebanese governments in the 1960's was the growing power of

Palestinian groups in the country. Lebanon, which had opted out of the Arab-Israeli conflict

because of its weak military and fragile domestic political system, now had no alternative but

deal with the problem of Palestinian guerrillas using Lebanese territory as a base for their

activity against Israel. Palestinian cross-border military operations were also a major reason

for Syria's growing political interest in Lebanon. Syrian leaders realized that the activation

of a military front in Lebanon would divert Israeli forces that would have otherwise been

deployed in the Golan Heights. Syrian support of the Palestinian resistance was also due to

inter-Arab rivalries. The goal of liberating Palestine served Syria's pan-Arab ambitions,

especially its efforts to challenge Egypt for the leadership of the Arab world. Syrian support

for the Palestinians and leftist movements in Lebanon caused a strain between the Lebanese

and Syrian governments. The Lebanese were concerned with Syria's willingness to support

Palestinian guerrilla activity against Israel from Lebanese but not Syrian soil. This

ambivalence of Syria toward the Palestinian armed confrontation with Israel meant that

Lebanon would have to absorb the costs of Israel's retaliation on its own.

Despite of continued differences on the Palestinian issue and despite continued absence

of diplomatic ties between the two countries, relations between Lebanon and Syria began to

improve in the 1970's. Part of the reason for the improvement in relations was due to the

close personal ties between the family of Lebanon's president Faranjiyyah and the Asad

family in Syria. "Asad had been on friendly terms with then president, Sulayman Franjiyya

(Franjiyya and his family, fleeing from his enemies in north Lebanon, took refuge in the

1950's with Asad's family in Qardaha" (Ma'oz 1988, 124). Unlike his predecessors, who

tried to undermine the Lebanese government from 1965-1969, Asad opted to deal with the

conservative Christian regime of president Franjiyya. As a result an "Exchange of visits by

senior officials began at Syria's invitation in 1970...A border commission, first established

in 1967, was reactivated in 1970, and a joint commission was established to resolve political

and economic issues. Syria lifted transit restrictions on Lebanese goods passing through its

territory and abolished the requirement for Syrians to secure travel permits if they wished to

visit Lebanon" (Weinberger 1996, 112). Asad did not limit himself to cultivating relations

with the Lebanese president. He also established ties with other Lebanese groups outside the

governing establishment. This gave Asad more options and increased his influence in the

country. Among the groups with whom Asad established links with was the Shiite

community, the largest single community in Lebanon. The recognition of the Alawites by

influential Shiite leader, Musa al-Sadr, allowed Asad to increase his legitimacy in Syria and

gain Shiite support in Lebanon. Asad also strengthened ties with the PLO by supplying

them with weapons and supporting their efforts to establish a stronghold in the southern part

of the country along the border with Israel. "Drawing considerable leverage from his

relations with the PLO and the Shi'is (as well as from pro-Syrian forces in Lebanon, like the

Ba'ath Party), and gaining high prestige from his role in the 1973 war, Asad became the most

influential external factor in Lebanese politics in 1974 and 1975. Thus when he visited

Lebanon in January 1975...Asad was warmly welcomed by both the public, the parliament and the cabinet" (Ma'oz 1988, 125). During his visit, Asad pledged to use Syria's economic, political, and military resources to help Lebanon against the Israeli threat and to maintain its sovereignty and territorial integrity.   Patrick Seale stresses that Asad's rare visit to Lebanon was "a defensive move" that "was meant to signal the closer bond Syria wanted with its neighbor at this dangerous time" (1988, 268). Asad's attempts to forge closer ties with Lebanon "reflected his concern to protect himself by exerting some control over his immediate environment" (Seale 1988, 269).

SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION 1976-1990

In the spring of 1975 civil strife broke out in Lebanon, leading to death of thousands of innocent civilians, causing massive damage to the infrastructure, and undermining the authority of the government.   To Asad the security of Lebanon and Syria "was indivisible. He reacted to the threat by repeated attempts to stop the fighting" (Seale 1988, 270). Asad encouraged reforms which would have given "Muslims some of the key concessions they have campaigned for: equal parliamentary representation with Christians; more powers for the Sunni prime minister...equal access to top civil service posts; and a reference to Lebanon as an Arab country" (Seale 1988, 277).   However, when his political efforts failed, "Asad felt compelled to intervene militarily in the civil war. His move was not impulsive. It had been long pondered and debated within the Ba'th party leadership" (Seale 1988, 280). Kamal Jumblatt, the head of the Socialist Party, was Asad's main opponent in Lebanon. Jumblatt not only opposed Syrian military intervention but earlier had refused to accept

Syrian sponsored reforms aimed at ending the civil war by creating a more equitable power sharing arrangement between Muslims and Christians. Jumblatt was determined to militarily crush the Christian forces. To "Asad Jumblatt's war policy seemed utter folly, playing straight into Israel's hand and exposing Syria itself to untold peril" (Seal 1988, 281). In a March 1976 meeting between the two, Asad asked, "why are you escalating the fighting?." "The reforms…give you 95 percent of what you want. What else are you after? Jumblatt replied that he wanted to get rid of the Christians who have been on top of us for 140 years" (Seale 1988, 281). What Jumblatt, a Druze, truly wanted was the presidency, a post constitutionally reserved for Maronites. "To rule Lebanon as he aspired to do, he had to smash the confessional system, but smashing the system meant smashing the Christians" (Seale 1988, 281). Jumblatt, who had allied himself with the Palestinians and other leftist groups, had gained the upper hand in the fighting against the Christians and was close to victory. "But Asad was filled with horror at the prospect of a radical, adventurist Lebanon on his flank, provoking Israel and alarming the west by giving free rein to Palestinian militants. And this was precisely where Junblatt's ambition was heading" (Seale 1988, 281).

Asad's first direct involvement in Lebanon was alongside the Christian-Maronite camp. The Syrians did not want to see the political left which enjoyed support from rival Arab states such as Iraq to become the dominant unchecked force in Lebanon. Samir Khalaf stresses that Syria's "avowed objectives were; namely to ensure that neither side in the war emerged as victorious or upset the delicate equilibrium of forces" (2002, 53). Moreover, Asad feared the downfall of the Christian groups "would push them into the arms of Israel or the West. It may also be said that Damascus viewed unfavorably the strengthening of the power and position of Arafat who, taking advantage of the protection he gained from the civil

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war, had turned West Beirut and South Lebanon into an independent territorial state" (Zisser 2001, 134). Therefore, when the Christian camp asked for protection from the Syrians in 1976, Asad took advantage of the opportunity and ordered his military forces into Lebanon, with the goal of striking at the Leftist and PLO groups in the country.

Syrian military intervention proceeded with the approval of Lebanese president Sulayman Franjiyya. The Lebanese government was losing its grip and hoped that the Syrians would bolster the fragile Lebanese Army in its fight against the Palestinians and other Leftist groups. The United States approved of the Syrian intervention and pressured Israel to stand aside, despite reservations about a prolonged Syrian deployment along its northern border. The Israelis acquiesced after they were assured by the United States that the Syrians would not use air power in Lebanon, would not introduce surface to air missiles, and would not move their forces south of the city of Sidon. (Seale 1988, 270-80).

Syria's intervention took place through several stages from April to October of 1976. Their forces first moved into the Beqaa Valley and then proceeded to take control of the coastal cities. They overpowered all resistance, which came mainly from the PLO and the National Movement, a coalition of leftist groups. The Arab League issued a resolution calling for unity and a political settlement in Lebanon and for an Arab Deterrent Force to assist the Lebanese government in establishing order. "Due to the lack of consensus amongst the Arab states, no framework for allotting the number of troops to be contributed by each state to the 30,000 man force was established; the decision was instead left to the president of Lebanon" (Thompson 2002, 76). Newly elected, President Sarkis "decided that Syrian forces should comprise the bulk of the ADF, up to 25,000 troops" (Thompson 2002, 76).

Eventually most Muslim groups in Lebanon, including the PLO, came to accept the

Syrian military presence in the country. However, by late 1977 the Christians who had at

first welcomed the Syrians into Lebanon, became weary of the Syrian military presence,

especially after the rapprochement between Syria and the PLO. "From East Beirut's

perspective, Syria had served its purpose by late 1976 and Christians did not want the Syrian

army in their area. Maronite leaders were suspicious of the restoration of relations between

Damascus and the PLO through 1977, while the Syrians did not like the multiplying

connections between East Beirut and Israel" (Harris 1997, 167). Former president Chamoun

and presidential aspirant Bashir Gemayel broke away from Syria and opened up links to

Israel. At the same time the PLO, which was no longer involved in a conflict with Syria,

turned its attention to its confrontation with Israel. In the spring of 1978, the Israelis

responded to the PLO attacks against their northern borders by invading southern Lebanon.

In 1982 Israel invaded Lebanon again, reaching the outskirts of Beirut and cutting the

Beirut-Damascus highway. The Israeli occupation facilitated the election of Bashir

Gemayel, the leader of the Israeli backed Lebanese Forces, as President on August 23 1982,

and forced the withdrawal of the PLO and Syrian troops out of Beirut on August 31. Just

when it seemed that Syrian influence in Lebanon was on the decline, an explosive device

went off in the headquarters of the Christian Phalangist Party in East Beirut. Among the

dead was President-elect Bashir Gemayel. This event began to shatter Israel's hopes for a

new order under its influence in Lebanon. Though later in 1983, the Israelis managed to

sign a peace treaty with the Lebanese government of Bashir's brother, Amin Gemayel, the

treaty was never implemented (Salem 1995, 105). Israel began to withdraw from Lebanon

under pressure of guerilla attacks from the various Muslim and Palestinian groups. The

pressure from *Hizbulla* did not abate until the Israelis completed their withdrawal in the Spring of 2000.

The gradual evacuation of Israeli troops from Lebanon, paved the way for Syria to regain its dominance over the country beginning in the mid 1980's. Syria was particularly interested in the 1988 election of a Lebanese president to replace Amin Gemayel, whose term was set to expire. The election of a pro-Syrian candidate would allow the Syrians "to exploit this opportunity to break through the deadlock in the political system in Lebanon and to extricate their involvement in the country from the quagmire into which it had sunk" (Zisser 2001, 136). However, the Syrians were unable to get a loyalist elected. The Lebanese parliament's failure to elect a president led to the rise to prominence of Lebanese Army General Michel Aoun. When Gemayel's term ended he turned over the reigns of government to Aoun, who became the acting Prime Minister.

Syria's rival, Saddam Hussein, supported Aoun. Aoun, also, managed to gain broad base popular support during his brief period in power 1988-90. Being commander of the army and his theme against sectarianism were particularly appealing to many Lebanese from across the political spectrum. Aoun "was determined to reconstitute the internationally recognized independent Lebanon, member of both the United Nations and the Arab League"(Winslow 1996, 277). However, Aoun eventually would lose his base of support in both the Muslim and Christian communities. His fight against the "Lebanese Forces" and other Lebanese militias and groups alienated a significant number of Lebanese, who chose to side with their sectarian militias instead of backing a national figure whose goal was to unite all Lebanese under the authority of state institutions. This lack of unity among Lebanese contributed to Aoun's failure to crush domestic Para-military organizations and to achieve

his ultimate objective of bringing domestic and international pressure to force the Syrian and Israeli armies out of Lebanon.

Following the signing of the Taif Accord by Lebanese Muslims and Christians in October of 1989, General Aoun remained Syria's last major opponent in Lebanon. He strongly opposed the Accord and prevented its implementation in the regions of the country, which he controlled. Initially, the Syrians refrained from using force to remove Aoun, fearing the heavy casualties would lead to opposition in Lebanon and the Arab and Western world. "Only at the end of 1990 were conditions ripe for the Syrians to make a military move against Aoun. First, by that time they had successfully won the support of most of the political and military forces in Lebanon for the Taif Accord, including *Hizballah* and even the "Lebanese Forces." Second, Syria's "joining the US-led anti-Iraq coalition led to warmer ties with Western countries, especially the United States. The Syrians apparently received the green light to move against 'Aoun during James Baker's visit to Damascus in September 1990" (Zisser 2001, 141). In October of that year the Syrians moved against the enclave controlled by the Lebanese Army units under Aoun. Aounn himself took refuge in the French embassy and later was exiled to France. Syrian control of Christian East Beirut paved the way for the implementation of the Taif Accord.

SYRIA AND THE TAIF REGIME

The constitutional crisis that erupted at the end of Gemayel's term in 1988 ended, shortly after the adoption of the Taif Accords in November 1989 with the election of Rene Mu'awad as President of Lebanon. Mu'awad "was President of Lebanon for less than three weeks. On

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November 22, 1989, he was killed by a car bomb in Beirut. Some twenty-three others had to lose their lives in this vicious act of determining power. Mu'awad was not a major personality within Lebanon's Christian community and seems to have been assassinated simply because he was the man chosen to hold the presidency under the new constitutional formula" (Winslow 1996, 274). Shortly after Mu'awad's death, Ilyas Hirawi a Maronite deputy from the Beqaa Valley, known for his close relations with the Syrian leadership, was elected president. The election of Hirawi and the elimination of General Michel Aoun, paved the way for the rehabilitation of Lebanese governmental institutions- the presidency, bureaucracy, and parliament. The establishment of a stable loyal authority in Beirut would allow Syria to maintain its influence and power in the country. The Syrians did not seek to either annex Lebanon or radically transform its political, economic, and social systems. "All that the Syrians did was define the political rules of the game for the Lebanese players and, more precisely, lay down the boundaries that could not be crossed. The main thrust of these was acceptance of Syrian hegemony in Lebanon and agreement to subordinate Lebanese foreign policy interests to Syria's" Zisser 2001, 144).

The Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination (May 1991) formalized Syria's role in post-Taif Lebanon. The treaty created a Higher Council between Lebanon and Syria, headed by a general secretariat and comprising senior political personalities. The Higher Council was to oversee several Syrian-Lebanese committees: foreign affairs, defense and security, economic and social policy. These committees were to take binding decisions concerning coordination on foreign policy, security and economic issues. A Defense and Security Pact (August 1991) followed the Treaty of Brotherhood. The pact linked the Lebanese army, security agencies, and intelligence agencies to their Syrian counterparts.

Military instructors and information related to security matters were to be exchanged in order to facilitate military coordination between the two countries. A variety of Syrian-Lebanese agreements dealing with economic and social issues ensued. The ten agreements concluded between the two countries since the adoption of the Taif Accords addressed issues ranging from agricultural and industrial development and water to the freedom of movement of citizens and capital.

These agreements have allowed Syria to envelop Lebanon, especially when it comes to foreign policy issues. The Syrian government has always stressed "the Arab constants in dealing with Israel, as well as the irreversibility of Lebanese-Syrian unity" (Bodansky 2002, 292). Lebanon and Syria attended the Russian-American sponsored Middle East peace conference in Madrid in 1991. When it has come to negotiations with Israel, Lebanon has followed Syria's lead. When Syria, for example, refused to participate in the Arab-Israeli multilateral negotiations in Moscow in 1992, Lebanon refused as well. Hafez al-Asad had argued that multilateral negotiations, dealing with issues such as water, environment and trade, would give Israel legitimacy and security without having withdrawn its military from occupied Arab lands. For a brief period of time, Lebanon tried to pursue an independent course of action towards Israel. In the Spring of 1993, early in his tenure as prime minister, Rafiq Hariri set the guidelines for negotiating with Israel. Hariri indicated Lebanon's willingness to sign an agreement with the Israelis provided they implement resolution 425 of the United Nations Security Council, which called on Israel to withdraw its forces from Lebanon. Hariri tried to distinguish between Israeli occupation of Lebanese land and the rest of the Arab-Israeli conflict, arguing that resolution 425, unlike resolution 242, was clear and unequivocal. He "declared his refusal to wait for progress by other parties negotiating

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with Israel. Hariri's independent position did not survive the Spring, and by October 1993 Lebanon announced a policy of 'total coordination with Syria" (Norton 1999, 48). At the behest of Syria, for example, Lebanon has thus far refused to send army units to the south, and disarm *Hizbullah,* which sporadically lunches attacks on Israeli troops in the disputed *Shiba* Farms region. While the United Nations has confirmed Israel's full withdrawal from Lebanon and the implementation of resolution 425, Lebanon with Syrian prodding claims that the area at the foot of Mount Hemron, known as the *Shiba* farms, belongs to Lebanon, and that no Israeli withdrawal can be considered complete until Israel vacates the area. The Israelis insist that the land was gained in the 1967 War from Syria and the dispute over the land should be negotiated with Syria not Lebanon. Although, Syria backs Lebanon's claims to the farms, the Syrians have not formally signed an agreement with Lebanon recognizing Lebanese sovereignty over *Sheba.* Syria's backing of Lebanon regarding the farms is motivated by Syria's desire to preserve a military role for *Hizbullah* along the Lebanese-Israeli border until there is a peace agreement between Israel and Syria.

THE RETURN TO NORMAL LIFE 1991-2000

With Syrian support, the Lebanese government began disarming the different militias in 1991. These militias have in turn transferred their activities from military to the political realm. *Hizbullah,* was the only party not to be disarmed in order to allow it to continue its resistance operations against the Israeli forces in the south. The Lebanese army, which was divided along religious lines during the war, is also being reorganized and deployed in different regions of the country. Internal security forces have also been used to restore the

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sovereignty of the central government, and to crack down on criminals, especially on narcotic growers and smugglers.

Parliamentary elections have also been held in 1992, 1996, and 2000. Close to 90% of the Maronite population, boycotted the 1992 election and a significant majority boycotted the 1996 round as well. The organizers of the boycott, who claimed Syrian intervention would make the holding of free and fair elections impossible, failed to prevent the elections from taking place. Another significant development marking the 1992 and 1996 elections was the participation of *Hizbullah* in the elections. The organization had initially opposed the Taif Accords, but later opted to take part in the political process successfully. The parliamentary list sponsored by *Hizbullah* won eight seats in 1992 and seven in 1996.

In 1995 President Hrawi's term was extended for an additional three years. The extension of the term violated the Lebanese constitution, which limited the president to six years in office. "Despite the constitutional prohibition, parliament voted on 19 October 1995 to extend Hrawi's term of office for three years (Norton 1999, 46). Of the 128 deputies in parliament only eleven deputies voted against the extension. Of the eleven only six were able to win reelection in 1996, "victims of government manipulation of the elections" (Norton 1999, 46). However, things were different in the next round of elections. As chapter five will illustrate, the elections of 2000 witnessed the partaking of the opposition in the election and their return to the parliament. The midterm elections of 2000 were conducted during the term of current Lebanese president Emile Lahoud. Lahoud, a former army commander, with Syrian backing, was selected by the Lebanese parliament to replace Hirawi at the end of the latter's term in November 1988. Lahoud's coming to power was also accompanied by a change in the office of the prime minister. Hariri, who had a tense

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relationship with Lahoud was replaced by Salim Hoss. Hariri's removal signaled the emergence of Lahoud as the most powerful politician in the country. However, Hariri would later regain his former post after defeating Hoss in the 2000 parliamentary elections.

One of the main conclusions of this study is that the implementation of the Taif Accords has led to calm and stability after fifteen years of civil strife. "The political stability achieved in Lebanon made possible the gradual restoration of Lebanese life to its normal course and, in particular, the rehabilitation of the country's economic infrastructure" (Zisser 2001, 143). Inflation grew at a slower pace, the Lebanese currency was stabilized, and the economy exhibited growth. Many Lebanese who had left the country during the civil war began to return, and foreign investment increased. Beirut and other Lebanese cities became the sites of massive reconstruction and development projects worth billions of Dollars. "This flurry of development gave observers grounds for optimism. Jobs were created....the national economy had benefited, and there had been a building boom" (Davie 2002, 169). Syrian government officials and their allies in Lebanon have stressed the role of the Syrian army in bringing back normalcy to Lebanon. Syrian Vice President Khadam asserted that the objective of Syrian forces in Lebanon was to "attain a state of 'overall security' in Lebanon. Later Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'a justified the Syrian military presence even after the signing of the Taif Accords, saying, "do you expect for the cease fire to stabilize itself of its own accord without a mechanism to police it?" (Thompson 2002, 87). Indeed the "The Syrian success in rehabilitating Lebanon led to an overhaul in the approach of most Western countries to the role they had played there. From the mid-1990's Western pressure on Syria to redeploy its forces in Lebanon in accordance with Taif Accord decreased" (Zisser 2001, 143). The international community became more accepting of the Syrian role in Lebanon

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because of Syria's ability to maintain order in the country. Samir Khlalaf (2002) stresses that Syria's dominance of Lebanon "could not have been sustained without international acknowledgement and tacit approval or support" (54). In the end only the Syrians were able to achieve peace and security in Lebanon. "Although many states were fearful of Syrian designs for a post-civil war Lebanon, no other country had the will to commit the resources to the Lebanese theater to bring an end to the factional fighting" (Thompson 2002, 88).

Only recently, following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on the September 11, has the United States been less willing to recognize Syria's status in Lebanon. The Syrian Accountability Act currently being considered in Congress, calls for sanctions against Syria if it does not withdraw from Lebanon. The Bush administration has indicated its willingness to support the legislation. The Bush administration is increasing the pressure on Syria, demanding among other things, an end to Syrian support of *Hizbullah* activities against Israel.

SYRIA'S OPPONENTS IN LEBANON

Once the Lebanese Civil War was over, it became clear that Syria's allies in Lebanon were going to share the spoils. Key government posts, from the President of the Republic on down are occupied by Syrian loyalists. August Richard Norton stresses that, "there is little prospect for comprehensive political reforms so long as power remains in the grip of a coterie of politicians on good terms with Damascus. Instead, the government is used like a giant patronage machine, enabling newly entrenched political bosses to busily create networks of clients and to grow richer on Sweetheart deals" (1999, 47). Groups, especially

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Christians opposed to the Syrian role in Lebanon complain about being left out of government decisions. Despite gaining a significant number of seats in the 2000 parliamentary elections, anti-Syrian groups were not given any portfolios in the new cabinet, formed by Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. "Syria's longstanding policy of rewarding its clients and punishing its foes, has at times intensified sectarian friction in the country. This is because Syria's attitude toward the various Lebanese sects was sometimes shaped by the desire to impose its political will" (Abukhalil 1994, 129). During the civil war, religious hostilities allowed Syria to gain international and domestic support for its military presence in the country. Similarly, today the debate concerning power sharing arrangements in Lebanon and imbalances in the relationship with Syria are increasingly taking on a sectarian tone. However, to characterize the debate concerning the Syrian role in Lebanon as one that is divided along religious lines, would be an oversimplification. The harshest criticism of the Syrian presence in Lebanon has come from Maronite Cardinal Sfeir. However, prominent Muslim leaders, such as Walid Jumblat and a host of secular and leftist leaders have also recently called for less Syrian interference in Lebanon, and the implementation of the Taif Accords, which calls for a Syrian troop redeployment to the Eastern Beqaa, as a prelude to a complete withdrawal from the country. Following the swearing in of the new Parliament in the winter of 2000, Druze leader Walid Jumblat, joined Christian deputies by calling for a reappraisal of the ties between Lebanon and Syria and a redeployment of Syrian troops. Jumblat questioned the policy statement of the newly formed Hariri government, which described the Syrian military presence in the country as "necessary." Jumblat asserted that the words in Hariri's policy statement were contradictory and ambiguous. "If the presence is 'necessary,' he argued, the statement should specify why; if it is 'legitimate,' it

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contradicts the Taif Accord; and if it is 'temporary,' the Maronite Patriarch, Cardinal Nasrallah Butros Sfeir, is right to call for a withdrawal of Syrian troops." In reference to the redeployment of Syrian troops to the Beqaa stipulated by the Taif Accord, Jumblatt asked why "the policy failed to mention the need to implement, amend or explain the Taif Accord, at least the military part of it." Although "I understand Syria's strategic considerations which necessitate the presence of Syrian troops" in specific areas, he said, "I do not understand Syrian internal interferences in Lebanese affairs in matters which are not connected with the needs of national security. I call on the Syrian leadership to reconsider its presence in other aspects that have nothing to do with these considerations" (Daily Star: 11-4-2000).

On the ground, demonstrations against the Syrian military have come mainly from college students loyal to exiled general Michel Aoun and his Free Patriotic Movement (FPM). More recently, students from the Lebanese Forces, the National Liberal Party, the Communist Party, the People's Movement, and the Socialist Party have joined students demonstrations. The Lebanese government, clearly upset by the demonstrations, have responded by imprisoning students and trying them in military courts. Such practices has come under criticism from the United Nations and human rights organizations such as Amnesty International. After an examination of a report on Lebanon, the United Nation's Human Rights Committee expressed concern over "the broad scope of military court jurisdiction in Lebanon" and stated that all cases involving civilians must be transferred to ordinary civilian courts. Amnesty International for its part, has repeatedly called on the Lebanese government to halt the trials of civilians before military courts, and for the release of students who have not been given fair trials which conform to international standards.

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Amnesty International has also criticized other countries in the Middle East such as Israel, for its human rights abuses against Palestinians.

The pro-Syrian regime has been unwilling or unable to go after other anti-Syrian voices, especially those coming from prominent parliamentarians and journalists. The question of the Syrian military presence is no longer considered taboo. The editor of the leading Lebanese daily *Anahar,* Gibran Tueni criticizes the Lebanese and Syrian leadership almost on a daily basis. However, the current Syrian regime and its loyalists in Lebanon have maintained that the question of the Syrian military presence in Lebanon is one that can only be tackled by the Syrian and Lebanese governments. The Syrian leadership has also encouraged its supporters in Lebanon to speak out in-favor of its military in Lebanon, and to counter demonstrate against those calling for Syrian withdrawal. Syria's biggest proponents in Lebanon include the President of the republic Emile Lahoud, Prime Minister, Rafiq Hariri, and Parliamentary Speaker Nabih Berri, who have always maintained that calls for Syrian withdrawal only serve Israel's interests. Also frequently speaking in favor of the Syrian role in Lebanon, are Muslim religious leaders such as the grand mufti, Sheikh Mohammed Rashid Qabbani, and *Hizbullah* leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah.

CONCLUSION

Syria continues to be the final political arbiter in Lebanon. However, its influence has declined somewhat. There is growing opposition to its role in the country, opposition not only from the public but also from deputies in the newly elected Lebanese parliament (2000). Furthermore on the ground, the number of Syrian troops in Lebanon, specifically in and

around Beirut has been reduced dramatically. Beginning in mid June 2001, the Syrians withdrew close to 10000 troops from the Lebanese capital. Official information on the extent and timetable of the withdrawal, and more importantly a clear statement that it is in conformity with the Taif Accord which should have been implemented in 1992, did not come from the Lebanese and Syrian authorities. This deployment would have been more significant had it taken place within the context of the Taif Accord because it would have signaled a willingness on the part of Syria to eventually withdraw from the country as a whole. Nonetheless, statements made by Syrian officials regarding the subject are encouraging. Following the surprise Syrian withdrawal from Beirut, Syrian president Bashar Assad stated that the withdrawal was coordinated between the military commands of both Syria and Lebanon and more significantly that the Syrian military presence in Lebanon was "temporary." "What happened was a redeployment of the Syrian forces in Lebanon. This was a subject of technical considerations decided by the military both in Syria and Lebanon...It is certainly connected to a decision of the political leadership of both states. There is continuous coordination between the military leadership of both countries." (Daily Star, June 23, 2001).

Syria's behavior in Lebanon does not appear to be ideologically motivated. The Syrian regime is not interested in annexing Lebanon or creating a greater Syria. To that extent the Syrian regime seems to be willing to grant Lebanon greater autonomy when is comes to domestic decision-making. However, Syria will continue to benefit from controlling Lebanon's foreign policy agenda especially regarding peace with Israel. It is the lack of formal peace with Israel that is blocking Syrian compliance with the provisions of the Taif Accords that call on it to fully re-deploy its troops in Lebanon. A partial Syrian troop

redeployment appears to have taken place. However, absent a Syrian-Israeli peace agreement, a complete Syrian military withdrawal from Lebanon is not in the cards.

CHAPTER FOUR

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY, CITIZENSHIP, AND
LEBANON'S SECTARIAN SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

Similar to its surrounding neighbors, Lebanon is a mosaic of religious and ethnic groups. At times Lebanon has resembled more of a confederation of sects than a nation of people who shared some common history. This chapter focuses on the origins of the Lebanese sectarian system, its characteristics, and the different groups operating within it. Political, economic, and internal social dynamics as well as external forces contributed to the development of the sectarian system and to the intensity of religious identity in Lebanon. The constitution of 1926, adopted during the French mandate, provided for power sharing among religious communities. The political authority that was outlined by the constitution of 1926 was formalized by an unwritten convention, the National Pact of 1943. The pact that was proclaimed in the year the French Mandate ended, provided for the political association of the different sections of the Lebanese population on the basis of equality. The provisions of the Taif Accords that call for the elimination of sectarianism in politics are yet to be implemented.

Lebanon's confessional arrangement has deepened the divisions among the country's sects and has led to constant turbulence in the political system. Sectarian leaders are preoccupied with pursuing their constituents' interest in government, which draw countermoves from representatives of other sects who in turn present their own demands

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to the government. Hence, instead of pursuing a national programmatic agenda, sectarian leaders often engage in a winner take all struggle over limited resources. The constitutional structures of power have also prevented secularism among Lebanon's political parties. Parties find it extremely difficult to develop into true cross-sectarian organizations.

The good news for those who hope to rid Lebanon of its sectarian governing arrangement is that there is a sense of common national identity among Lebanon's different communities. Religious loyalties do not necessarily negate loyalty to the state or patriotism. A Lebanese could be a member of a party, a sect, and a club, while simultaneously giving his loyalty to the state.

THE ORIGINS OF THE SECTARIAN SYSTEM: THE CONSTITUTION OF 1926

The Constitution of 1926, without specifying a precise formula, stated that power should be shared among the religious communities. The intensity of religious identity did not originate solely from within Lebanon's domestic society. Political, economic, and internal social dynamics as well as external forces contributed to polarization along religious lines. The Taif Accord has called for the eventual adoption of a secular political system. However, the communal system has become an unchallenged tradition. The unwritten National Pact of 1943 formalized the political authority that was outlined by the constitution of 1926. The pact provided for the political association of the different sections of the Lebanese population on the basis of equality. It attempted to create a

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balance of power when it comes to the division of political offices. The presidency was to be occupied by Christian Maronites, the council of ministers were to be presided over by a Sunni, and the Chamber of Deputies by a Shiite.

Certain aspects of the Lebanese Constitution were designed to address communal considerations. For example, the provision in the constitution that prohibits the president from seeking or serving two consecutive terms was designed to prevent any one community or clan from perpetuating its grip on power. "The Constitution includes a system of original provisions designed to cope with special sociological conditions in Lebanon. These regulations, confirming the role of the religious communities in public life, constitute an outline of what can be called 'confessionalism'"(Rodnot 1966, 129). It was hoped that the confessional regulations would lead to harmony by having representation in government based proportionally on the numerical size of the communities. The comparativist Arend Lijphart has labeled the Lebanese political system as a consociational democracy. A double phenomenon is common in such democracies, first the population is segmented into several religious, linguistic, ethnic, racial, or ideological communities; and second the process of negotiations is institutionalized as it takes place at the level of the different communities' elites. In Lebanon negotiations are conducted by elites from different societal segments. Elites perform certain roles in all competitive democracies, but in consociational systems their roles and the rules by which they play are somewhat different. The rules are "related to the process of interest aggregation. Within each camp, the articulation of interests is performed in a very effective way. But since no camp is in a position to win a majority, the aggregation must be performed by an accommodation between elites. The more

important and controversial the issue, the higher the level at which a compromise will be reached. Contrary to competitive democracy, which rests on the principle of majority rule, consociational democracy retains the principle of proportionality. Each camp is represented in institutions proportionally to its electoral strength" (Dogan & Pellasy 1984, 97). In today's Lebanon the controversial political issues are arbitrated through the "Troika" system. A consensus among Lebanon's Troika of President, Prime Minister, and Speaker of Parliament is needed before a major political and economic decision can be made. It was not always this way. Early after independence, the President of the Republic ruled in an authoritarian manner in the absence of institutionalized checks on his power. Constitutionally, the president and the prime minister were both responsible to the parliament. The Parliament elected the president, and the prime minister was required to gain its vote of confidence before his power was formalized. However, in practice the president was more dominant than parliament. The president often promulgated legislation by decree, had the power to appoint and dismiss prime ministers, the power to dissolve the parliament and because of his control of government institutions, was able to exert the greatest influence on parliamentary elections. According to Michael Hudson, the presidency in Lebanon mirrored the country's dilemma. The presidency was an asset and a liability at the same time. "Only the President can provide the dynamism that a rapidly changing country requires...
It is precisely this possible dynamism, however, that makes the President the greatest threat to Lebanon's pluralistic balance......The crucial test for the Lebanese Republic is whether or not it can build a presidency that is not only powerful enough to make and implement wise policies but is also one that can function without destroying traditional

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pluralism" (Hudson 1968, 262-63). Lebanon's first post-independence president and arguably the country's most accomplished politician Bichara al-Khoury used the cabinet to promote national unity and his own political interests. By distributing cabinet portfolios among the country's notables, Khoury was able to give communal leaders a stake in the state apparatus and create an equilibrium that prevented political rivalries from destabilizing the regime. By including the major traditional notables and institutionalizing traditional rivalries in the council of ministers, Khoury was able to play the role of arbiter. Pierre Rodnot stresses that this type of strong executive "is required in a country compartmentalized into communities, the leaders of which are influential, and yet subject in varying degrees to the influence of feudalism and clan loyalties. Hence the constitutional rule: The President of the Republic holds executive authority which he wields with the aid of the ministers" (1966, 135). However, presidents who followed Khoury into power were less able to use the cabinet as a buffer to protect the presidency and promote national unity. Cabinets composed of wealthy and sectarian leaders were becoming less legitimate in the eyes of many. And as the number of non-traditionalists increased, power shifted away from the presidency toward other institutions such as parliament, which itself was opening up to a new political class. These trends were first noticed by Michael Hudson who wrote in 1966: "As the politically relevant stratum has increased in size, new sources of power have been created, new philosophies have been articulated, and new expectations have been created concerning public institutions" (238). These trends continue in post-Taif Lebanon. The Chamber of Deputies had been historically presided over by traditional Shiite families such as the Assads and Hammadehs, who in today's Lebanon have lost much of their clout and influence. The

parliament is currently headed by non-traditionalist Nabih Berri, a former warlord during the civil war, who now competes for influence over the Shiite community with the Party of God *(hizbullah),* and over the country's political spoils with the Maronite President Emile Lahoud and Sunni Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. The Taif Accord enhanced the constitutional power of the Shiite speaker of parliament and Sunni prime minister and reduced the power of the Maronite president. A troika was introduced wherein the leaders of Lebanon's three main sects would have equal power when it came to political decision-making and appointments. The rest of Lebanon's religious communities "such as the Druze and non-Maronite Christians, are junior partners in the new sectarian system. In structural terms, Taif rearranged the distribution of political power and modified the mode of interaction among the sects, but it certainly did not change the ordering principle of the system, which remains sectarian political representation" (Richani 1998, 145).

The sectarian system was reinforced by the Taif Accord, which maintained the distribution of political positions on religious basis. And it is unlikely that the provision of the Taif calling for the elimination of the sectarian system will be applied any time soon. The Taif Accord had called for the formation of a committee, composed of the speaker of parliament, prime minister, and president, that would come up with a plan to end the sectarian based political representative system. If political sectarianism is not ended, Lebanon will remain highly divided and polarized just as it was under the previous regime. Unlike the previous regime, however, which led to Christian hegemony, the Taif is likely to lead to Muslim political hegemony. The post-Taif years have led to an asymmetry of bargaining power in favor of Muslim elites at the expense

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of the different Christian and other sects. What made this possible was the formal constitutional changes brought about by the Taif, the support that some Muslim leaders, such as Speaker Berri, have received from Damascus, and the strong financial clout of others, such as Prime Minister Hariri, who has the backing of such important regional players as Saudi Arabia and such international players as France.

In Lebanon's sectarian political system turbulence is constant. Sectarian leaders pursue their constituents' interest in government, and in doing so draw countermoves from representatives of other sects, presenting their own demands to the government. Hence, instead of pursuing a national programmatic agenda, sectarian leaders often engage in a winner take all struggle over limited resources. According to Nazih Richani this struggle over resources that leads to turmoil and polarization is powered by political sectarianism. As long as Lebanon's leaders refuse to secularize the political system, "Taif or any similar sectarian arrangement will perpetuate the polity's sectopolitical polarization. Given the long history of sectopolitical strife that has been compounded by feelings of mutual distrust between the Maronite and Muslim communities, the Taif Accord does not seem to nurture the development of interelite consensus" (Richani 1998, 147). The inequalities among the sects and the lack of consensus are likely to keep Lebanon vulnerable and its democracy in a precarious state.

There are many reasons why Lebanon's politicians have not transformed the sectarian political system into a secular one. However, the one reason that is usually given by those who are opposed to such transformation is centered on the argument that a secular system would be incompatible with the country's traditional religious culture. Samir Khalaf (1968) for example argues that the sectarian system embodies the

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traditional ties that have been the most enduring and strongest in Lebanese politics.

Khalaf believes that political modernization in Lebanon does not need to be based on a

transformation from a traditional religion based system into an ideological based secular

one. The traditional values rooted in Lebanon's history are likely to prevent the

emergence of a secular society. Khalaf and other defenders of confessionalism not only

argue that it is not possible to overcome sectarianism in Lebanon, but also that this

traditional system has been a source of stability and prosperity. This may have been true

at one time. However, following the outbreak of civil war it became much more difficult

to defend the confessional system, which has proven to be flawed and an obstacle to

national unity. The system collapsed in 1975 not just because it was sectarian based but

also because of the changing demographics. The inclusion of the Eastern Bekaa Valley

and the coastal regions to Lebanon in 1920 meant that the Maronites were no longer a

majority in a political system that disproportionately granted them power on the premise

that they were the majority. Also contributing to the system's collapse and aggravating

the already existing divisions in the country was the emergence of religious political

parties. "These parties constituted politicoreligious sects, embodying the same type of

fanaticism and bigotry that they accused their sectarian opponents of harboring" (Ayoub

1994, 246).

LEBANON'S SECTS AND THE INTENSITY OF RELIGIOUS COMMITMENTS

An analysis of religious communities and their history is required to better understand the relationship between religious identity and citizenship in Lebanon. To some Lebanon is part of the Arab Middle East through geography only. This misconception views the country as a nation with a Phoenician past and one that is historically and culturally linked to the west. However, the record reveals an entirely different story. From the seventh century until today, Lebanon has been a homeland for a variety of persecuted tribes and religious communities. For example the Maronites and Druze originated from southern Arabia. These two communities fled persecution first to Syria and then to Lebanon between the seventh and eleventh century. There is also evidence that suggests that a significant portion of the Shiite community migrated from Yemen. Hence, the Druze, the Maronites, and the Shiite communities originated from the Arabian Peninsula to different parts of Mount Lebanon. The three communities that share a common origin have come to share a Lebanese history as well.

The Maronite Church has had a significant amount of influence on the political system and is considered to be the country's national church. The church, founded by St. John Maroun, which was catholic in creed became associated with the Vatican during the sixteenth century. Ever since that time a significant majority of Maronites have come to associate themselves with the West. Their backing of the crusades for example, led to a declaration by Pope Leo X in 1510, making the Maronites "a faithful catholic community planted among "infidels" (muslims), "schismatics" (Greek Orthodox), and "herectics"

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(Jacobites and other non-catholic Christian sects): "a rose among thorns." (Ayoub 242, 1994). However, the Maronites alliance with the west and the Catholic Church was not only religiously and culturally based but one that was motivated by patronage and protection as well. There were economic benefits to be gained by the Maronites from their religious and political patrons in the West.

The Maronite Church's assimilation into the Catholic Church began during the Ottoman period. In his study of the Church, Iliya Harik stresses that there was a "constant effort on the part of the Holy See to bring the Maronite Church into greater conformity with and understanding of Catholicism and to offer some degree of organization and education to the Maronite clergy" (1966, 33). In 1584 Pope Gregory XIII established a school in Rome to educate Maronite youths who were interested in joining the clergy. Upon graduation many returned to Lebanon where they made significant contributions to the Church's development educationally and organizationally. And as European influence strengthened in the Middle East, the Maronites forged even closer relationships with the West, particularly France. European powers have always tried to act as protectors of Christians in the Fertile Crescent. "Some Arab Christians— particularly Maronites, many of whom were educated in the West or Western institutions established in Mount Lebanon by the Catholic Church or by France—were employed as consuls and vice consuls representing their European patrons. That is, they represented foreign powers in their own country. This unnatural political alliance, regardless of arguments in its favor, cut the Maronite community off from the rest of the local political communities and set it on a collision course with Ottoman, as well as local Muslim and Druze authorities." (Ayoub 1994, 245). European overprotection of Christians in

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Lebanon, and pressure by France on the Turks to grant Europe a greater say in Lebanon's internal affairs contributed to the Civil War of 1860 between the Druze and the Maronites. French pressure also led the Ottomans to adopt a *Mutassarrifiyya* political system in Mount Lebanon in 1861. The *Mutassarrifiyya* was an administrative unit, governed by an Ottoman Christian who also had the blessings and the backing of the European powers. Mahmoud Ayoub stresses that, "The *Mutassarrifiyya* was not, as some have argued, a good experience in multiethnic and multireligious living. Rather it was a prelude to the emergence of confessional states in the Middle East dominated by religious, sectarian, and civil strife." (1994, 245). Hence, the British and French sponsorship of confessional political systems in the Middle East dates back to the 1860's. The Western powers were behind the creation of a Maronite state in Mount Lebanon, the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, and tried but failed to create an Alawite mini-state in Syria. This imperialism contributed to polarization and to the conflicts that have plagued the Middle East in the twentieth century. Colonial interests ended when most Arab states gained their independence following World War II. However, some states like Lebanon remained confessional entities with close political ties to the West.

The Maronite Church as a social force has made both ideological and political contributions to the development and stability of Mount Lebanon and the current post-independence Lebanese Republic. Iliya Harik stresses that, the "role of the clergy, that of a policy-making group, was in conformity with their role as an interest-articulating group. The clergy not only articulated interests, but also took steps to see that their ideas became policies" (1966, 50). The learned clergy have always articulated the interests of their group to the political regime. The Patriarch defined the policy of the Maronites in

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relation to the state and in relation to Lebanon's other sects as well. In August 2001, the Maronite Patriarch Sfeir made a historic visit to the Shouf region of Mount Lebanon, a region that witnessed some of the heaviest fighting and bloodshed between the Maronites and Druze during the civil strife of 1860 and the 1975-1990 Civil War. Sfeir became the the first Maronite leader in two hundred years to visit the Druze stronghold, were he was warmly received by the Druze clergy and political leaders who viewed the visit as one that marked the official end of the two hundred year old, sometime very violent, feud between the two communities. The patriarch acknowledged the mistakes of the past but stressed that the Lebanese were now capable of responsible self-government. Speaking to the thousands who came out to greet him, Sfeir said "We are beyond the puberty stage, we are now adults and capable of running our own country." (Daily Star: 8/10/2001). The visit not only sealed the Druze-Maronite reconciliation, but is likely to have accelerated the return of thousands of displaced Maronites to the Shouf region eleven years after the end of the civil war.

Just like the Maronite community, the Druze community has a long history as well. The Druze religion originated in Cairo in the tenth century by a young Fatimid Egyptian caliph. The religion was spread in the Middle East by a preacher called al-Darazi who gave the sect his name. The Druze are also known as the mouahhidoun or the unifiers because their doctrine combines elements of Muslim, Christian, Hindu, and Greek philosophies. Following the death of its founder, members of the sect were persecuted and had to flee Egypt to the Fertile Crescent. Beginning in the eleventh century, no new conversions into the religion were allowed. This was done in order not to provoke the wrath of other religions, which may have viewed any Druze recruitment of new members

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as a threat. Ever since that time, the Druze have formed a close knit community in Mount Lebanon, Mount Hebron, and the Golan Heights. Michael Hudson (1968) points out that "the Druze community was closed down to outsiders, and its belief and ritual remain somewhat obscure even into the present time. Within the community a distinction is made between religious elite, the *uqqal*, who are privy to the inner secrets of the religion, and the ordinary believers, the *juhhal*, who are ignorant of these mysteries." (32). Hence, the overwhelming majority of Druze and non-Druze know little about the secretive religion.

The Druze emerged as a major political force in Lebanon beginning in the twelfth century, reaching a peak during the Maan Dynasty that ruled Mount Lebanon during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Druze Prince Fakhr al-Din al-Maani II is considered one of Lebanon's greatest leaders. The prince whose castle was located in the center of the Chouf at Deir-el-Qamar, a township that now has a Maronite majority, extended his authority over greater Lebanon and the Galilee and preserved the princedom's independence until the Ottomans overpowered him. Fakhr al-Dine was well-known for his tolerance, often encouraging the Maronites to come live in the Metn and Shouf regions of Mount Lebanon. He also "reopened the Lebanon to European influence: French and Florentine merchants established commercial enterprises, and some Christian missionaries were admitted." (Hudson 1968, 33).

Druze power began to decline in the nineteenth century during the Shehab Dtnasty. Prince Beshir Shehab II, a Maronite, backed his own community and stirred rivalries among Druze factions to maintain his own grip on power. The policies of Prince Beshir II contributed to confessional conflict and led to the Civil War of 1860 between the

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Maronites and the Druze. The war led to the exile of a significant number of Druze from Mount Lebanon to Mount El-Arab also known as Mount El-Druze in Syria, where a number of Druze had already settled over the previous centuries. Although Druze power waned to the benefit of the Maronites under the rule of Beshir the II, the Druze "have remained a potent force in the tangled politics of the area, and today the leaders of their rival internal factions play conspicuous roles in nearly every cabinet and assembly, frequently acting as balancer among the larger groups and exercising effective vetoes in crisis." (Hudson 1968, 33). Among the Druze leaders who played an important role in post-independence Lebanon was Kamal Jumblatt who before his assassination during the Civil War, advocated a socialist state, institutional reform, and pan-Arabism. Jumblatt did not advocate Lebanese-Syrian nationalism, but rather Arab nationalism and a policy of non-alignment. Jumblatt is important in Lebanon's political history because he had forced the establishment to accept new ideas that ran contrary to traditional Lebanese politics. Educated in France where he studied social philosophy, Jumblatt advocated equality, solidarity, and brotherhood. In his idealism, he advocated harmony and purity in human affairs, and the Progressive Socialist Party, he founded, was joined by many young activists who were attracted to a party that was not centered on a cult of personality or sectarianism. In today's post-Taif Lebanon, Jumblatt's son Walid has emerged as a national political figure, who has advocated unity, sovereignty and the strengthening of democratic institutions. Commenting on his role in the political arena, Lebanon's leading English newspaper, the *Daily Star* stressed that "Walid Jumblatt has taken a quantum leap in his own personal development, a welcome success that challenges other Lebanese figures to do the same and augurs well for the Arab world's

ability to produce a new generation of genuine statesmen. Jumblatt is approaching political discourse from an entirely new angle (for this part of the world), and in doing so he can not help but bring it to a higher level" (August 13, 2001). Jumblatt has been especially effective at healing civil war wounds by making genuine overtures of reconciliation to the Maronite and Shiite communities.

The Shiites which comprise Lebanon's largest community believe that the succession to the Prophet Muhammad passed through Ali, the prophets' cousin, to a line of eleven other imams or spiritual heads, the last of whom disappeared in the ninth century and is expected to reappear sometime in the future. The Shiites had broken off with orthodox Islam during the seventh century at a time of conflict between the Ummayad Caliph, Muawiya, and Ali and his decedents. Scholarship on the Shiites of Lebanon is rare. Most of the scholarship had focused on the other "influential communities, namely the Maronite Christians, Druze, and Sunni Muslims. Rare indeed is the political study of Lebanon that accords the Shi'a more than passing mention. Indeed for many authors the Shi'i sect was no more than a curios artifact of the early succession struggles in Islam. Impoverished, underdeveloped socially, and underrepresented politically, Lebanon's Shi'a hardly seemed to merit serious attention" (Norton 1987, 14). The socio-political underdevelopment of the Shiites was in part due to the patron-client relationship that existed between the *zu'ama* (notables) and their Shiite constituents. The community supported these notables and their designed candidates regardless of their qualification or political program. "Participation in politics was mobilized rather than autonomous, and deferential as opposed to deriving from any sense of civic responsibility. However, one important effect of the continuing modernization of the Shi'i community has been a

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significant loosening of the ties between the za'im and his clients" (Norton 1987, 33).

This modernization began in the late 1960's and was due to increased access to education, external and internal migration, and the successful recruitment of Shiites into newly formed secular parties such as the Lebanese communist party. Today the Shiite community, which is mainly represented by two political parties, *Amal* and *Hizbullah*, has emerged as a leading force in Lebanon's political arena, surpassing Lebanon's other Muslim community, the Sunnis. The Sunnis are orthodox Muslims who have historically dominated Lebanon's coastal cities of Beirut, Tripoli, and Sidon. A significant number of Lebanon's land owning and commercial bourgeoisie class comes from the Sunni community.

The four sects—the Maronites, Druze, Sunnis, and Shiites—can be distinguished from Lebanon's other thirteen sects by their level of participation in politics. Even though these other smaller communities have little input, their ability to tip the scale in favor of one or the other major communities, makes their role significant. Eleven of the thirteen sects are Christian, one is Jewish, and the other Alawite. Of the Christians groups, the Greek Orthodox is the largest. The Greek Orthodox community "provides a good representation of the overall communal structure of Lebanon. Their existence in the region predates the advent of Islam, and they consider their sect in Lebanon part of a wider community extending to Syria and elsewhere in the Arab world. Their historical identification with the Arab world may explain their flexibility in dealing with Arab culture to this day, although their national church still maintains links with other centers of orthodoxy like Moscow and Athens" (Abul-Husn 1998, 42).

While the first president of the Lebanese Republic was an Orthodox and while the community has been involved in other areas of political life, such as administration, the community largely stayed out of the 1975 political conflict and civil war. The Orthodox community who was supportive of the creation of Greater Lebanon in 1920, did so while continuing to identify with the Syrian and Arab nations. The Orthodox communities not just in Lebanon but throughout the Middle East have historically managed to be "closely associated with Islam...This harmonious coexistence was probably due to a mastery of survival skills in an overwhelmingly Sunni Society" (Abul-Husn 1998, 42).

Lebanon's remaining sects include, the Greek Catholics, the Alawites, the Protestants, and ethnic groups such as the Armenians. All of these groups are guaranteed seats in parliament. However, because of their minority status they rarely occupy important posts in the cabinet and the bureaucracy.

THE PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON

Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, close to 800,000 Palestinian refugees fled to neighboring Arab countries, 200,000 of whom ended settling up in Lebanon. Most of the refugees settled in over a dozen refugee camps in and around major Lebanese cities. Today the United Nations Relief and Work for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) administers these camps. Following the 1967 War and the Palestinian clashes with the Jordanian authorities in 1970, a new group of Palestinians, including combatants from the PLO, moved to Lebanon. Lebanon had opened its borders to refugees on prior occasions. In the late nineteenth century, thousands of Armenians fleeing persecution from the

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Turks found a sanctuary in Lebanon. Other stateless groups, such as the Kurds and the Christian Assyrians also found a home in Lebanon. Unlike the Palestinians however, the Assyrians and Armenians were legally integrated into the Lebanese society. Most Arab countries including Lebanon had refused to grant the Palestinians citizenship on the basis that permanent integration in refugee countries would undermine the ultimate goal of return to Palestine. In Lebanon, this was not the only reason for the lack of permanent resettlement. Granting the Sunni Palestinian refugees citizenships would have upset the delicate sectarian political balance. Simon Haddad (2000) stresses that the "Palestinian presence is a pervasive issue in Lebanon. All Lebanese groups showed lack of enthusiasm to resettling the Palestinians in the sense of granting them citizenship and political rights" (97).

Even without legal assimilation, the Palestinians in Lebanon have managed to develop their own self-governing bodies, social institutions, and have established a strong economic presence. By the early 1960's political institutions and military bases were established "inside their refugee camps. Unlike the situation of Palestinian refugees elsewhere, they were free to organize politically and militarily as they chose" (Abul-Husn 1998, 44). By the mid 1960's, due to their organization and increasing military strength, the Palestinians began to get involved in the Lebanese political process. Palestinian involvement in Lebanon's domestic political affairs was encouraged by the leftist-Muslim Lebanese political front know as the National Movement and by other Arab regimes who supported the Palestinian cause. "The mushrooming of Palestinian power in Lebanon, along with domestic communal rifts, eroded the credibility of Lebanon's political, economic, and military institutions" (Abul-Husn 1998, 44). The Palestinian

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backing of Muslim demands for political reform, leading to a more equitable power sharing arrangement between the Christians and Muslims, ultimately led to clashes between the Lebanese Army and the PLO in the late 1060's. The clashes between the Army and the Palestinian guerillas, along with pressure from Arab countries, forced Lebanon to sign the Cairo Agreement of 1969. The agreement called on the Lebanese government to relinquish its sovereignty in the Palestinian refugee camps and over certain areas in the south in return for some control over the Palestinians in other parts of Lebanon. To Christians, giving legitimacy to the increasing Palestinian power in the south was a threat to Lebanese sovereignty. From the standpoint of the government the agreement was aimed at regulating and supervising the Palestinian military activities in the country. The agreement itself would later be amended to limit Palestinian activities in the south. Repeated violations of both the agreement and the amendment led the reaching of a new understanding in 1977 between the PLO and the Lebanese government. The new protocol called on the Palestinians to suspend their military activities against Israel and withdraw their guerillas from the Lebanese-Israeli borders. In 1982, following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the PLO was expelled from Lebanon altogether. "Overall, the Palestinian presence and activities in the country increased the tension between the status quo and reformist coalitions and led to further political polarization of Lebanon's policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict" (Abul-Husn 1998, 44).

SECTARIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

Nazih Richani defines Sectarian Parties "as those groups that recruit mainly from one sect or religion. Furthermore, unlike secular political parties, these groups do not even intend to establish mass multisectarian political parties" (1998, 120). In the first few decades after independence political parties were relatively insignificant in Lebanese politics. Most Lebanese had no party affiliation, and viewed factions and the few members that they attracted as being perilous to the political system and the stability of the country. The establishment that governed Lebanon prior to the outbreak of civil war in 1975 excluded organized factions from political power. Michael Hudson labeled organized parties in Lebanon as "outsiders" and "fifth columnists." Hudson stresses that, these counter-elite movements "are all hostile, or at least lack commitment, to the Lebanese entity as it now exists. To the establishment they appear as real or potential fifth columnists. Their programs stress sweeping reform and range from advocacy of Islamic theocracy to proletarian democracy; their various doctrines share an orientation to total commitment, in contradistinction to the prevailing pragmatic and instrumental tenor of established politics" (1968, 168).

Lebanon has parties but not a party system. The agents of political representation are mainly independent deputies in parliament, known as Zu'ama'. "A za'im in the specifically Lebanese and contemporary sense is a political leader who posses the support of a locally circumscribed community" (Hottinger 1966, 85). A Za'im normally comes from a wealthy or landowning family and passes his leadership position on to his

descendents. A Za'im is also more than a political leader, who tries to better the condition of his client group socially and economically. Therefore, a Za'im's followers support him and campaign for him on the hope of receiving help from him when it comes to dealing with governmental institutions or obtaining work in either the public or private sector. They do not vote for a Za'im because of his political platform, which is usually nonexistent.

Not all of Lebanon's Zu'ama have opted for a political course outside of partisanship. Some Zu'ama of established families such as the Maronite Gemayels and Druze Jumblatts have been heads and founders of political parties, parties that have had a following across Lebanon as opposed to a particular region or a home district. Beginning in the 1970 s, irrespective of whether they are headed by traditional families or not, parties have become more important as agencies through which various Lebanese voters and citizens are represented. Lebanon's four main sectarian political parties are, the Amal Movement, the Party of God, the Phalange or Kataib Party, and the Progressive Socialist Party.

THE PROGRESSIVE SOCIALIST PARTY (PSP) AND THE LEFTIST MOVEMENTS

Kamal Jumblatt and a group of other leftists founded the Progressive Socialist Party in 1949. Originally the party attracted individuals from all sects who were interested in forming a party dedicated to social and secular democratic change. "The PSP was designed to be a mass popular political party with a secular socialist ideology,

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largely influenced by European socialist parties. The multisectarian composition of its leadership since its inception suggests the party commitment to secularism—that is, the total separation of the church from the state" (Richani 1998, 36). However, eventually the party would become a sectarian organization, largely representing the Druze community. Its founder, Kamal Jumblatt came from the Shouf region of Mount Lebanon. The Jumblatt clan, a leading Druze feudal family has been very influential in Lebanese politics since the seventeenth century. The PSP failed to become a multi-confessional party and extend its base beyond the Druze community because of institutional and structural variables. The Lebanese Constitution of 1926 and the National Pact, which had created a religious hierarchy of power insured that few parties in Lebanon would ever have a non-secular power base.

The 1958 Lebanese Civil war led to a clash between the forces of pro-Western president Chamoun and a coalition of leftist Arab nationalist movements. As for the civil war of 1975, it was caused by a number of socioeconomic and political problems that had been building ever since the 1960's. Both crisis were accompanied by increased sectarian polarization in the country and led to the radicalization and change in the religious composition of the PSP. An increasing number of Druze joined the party, a trend that continued, especially, after the assassination of Kamal Jumblatt in March of 1977. His son Walid Jumblatt took over the party presidency even though he had not previously occupied a leadership position in the party's organization. "While Walid Jumblatt was not a PSP leader, social pressures, particularly from the Druze followers of the Jumblatt clan, dictated his election. The process of succession illustrated vividly how sectopolitics, imposed itself on a presumably modern institution such as a political party"

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(Richani 1998, 62). Had party leaders not elected Walid Jumblatt, they would have risked losing their traditional Druze base. Today Walid Jumblatt is projecting himself as a non-sectarian national leader. However, originally, Walid Jumblatt focused on consolidating his Druze base. When he took over leadership of the party in the late 1970's he was a political amateur who lacked his father's intellectual abilities and experience. His decision to prioritize rallying the Druze community behind his leadership undermined the PSP's standing as a leader of the other leftist forces and groups in the country. This alliance, which had existed between the PSP and other leftist parties, collapsed in the early 1980's. This collapse "weakened the standing of all secular forces and contributed to making sectopolitics the dominant political discourse in Lebanon.....In the 1980's, the PSP emerged more than ever before as a sectarian political force (i.e., in terms of its base of support and political actions), joining the ranks of the Kataib, the Lebanese Forces, Amal movement, and the Party of God (a Shiite organization established in 1983)" (Richani 1998, 99). The sectarian nature of the PSP and the others deepened the divisions and contributed to the violence during the civil war.

The Taif Accord that ended Lebanon's Civil war was welcomed by the PSP. It has participated and scored important victories in all three post-Taif elections. In the 2000 parliamentary elections the PSP and its allies picked up sixteen of the nineteen seats assigned to the Chouf and Aley districts of Mount Lebanon. The PSP managed not only to gain an overwhelming majority of the Druze vote, but a majority of the Christian Maronite vote as well. This support may pave the way for the PSP to pursue a secular path. For this to happen, however, the Lebanese political system that calls for representation on the basis of sectarianism itself has to change. And the gradual

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elimination of this type of sectarian system is what the Taif Accords calls for. Barring

such a structural change, the PSP is unlikely to be able to transform itself into a secular

political movement. The existing constitutional structures of power has even prevented

Lebanon's two most secular oriented parties, the Communist and Syrian Nationalist

Parties, from developing into true cross-sectarian organizations. Both groups' secular

ideologies prevented them from expanding their power base beyond certain Lebanese

sects. The Lebanese Communist Party's 1993 Beirut Convention "reflected the impact of

social and political structures on the party's sectarian composition: 69 percent of the

conference delegates were Muslims; only 31 percent were Christians; and the Maronite

delegates did not constitute more than 10 percent of the total number. This fact suggests

that the communist party, like the PSP, failed to attract wide support from the dominant

Maronite status group" (Richani 1998, 108). As for the Syrian Nationalist Party, its

main base of support comes from the Christian Orthodox community. The party's

advocacy of a greater Syria, where there is a significant concentration of Christian

Orthodox coreligionists, made the party appealing mainly to the Orthodox Lebanese. The

Progressive Socialist Party, The Lebanese Communist Party, and the Syrian Nationalist

Party have one common characteristic, a low representation of the dominant Christian

Maronite sect among their ranks.

THE KATAIB (PHALANGE)

Pierre Gemayel founded the Kataib Party in 1936 as a youth and athletic organization.

Soon after the party emerged as a major military and political force with branches

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throughout the five regions of Lebanon. As a conservative party, the Kataib has always defended the Lebanese political system and aligned itself with the bourgeoisie, particularly the Maronite community. In 1958, during Lebanon's first civil war, the Kataib paramilitary units sided with the pro-Western regime of president Camille Chamoun and in 1969 the party displayed its military capabilities when it confronted Palestinian and leftist militias. By 1980, the party's military wing became part of an umbrella organization known as the Lebanese Forces, headed by Pierre Gemayel's son, Bashir Gemayel. In 1980 Bashir had unified the Kataib with the other Maronite parties, such as Camille Chamoun's National Liberal Party and the Guardians of Cedars. The National Liberal Party did not assimilate peacefully into the Lebanese Forces. It took several violent confrontations before Bashir Gemayel was able to establish a unified Christian military structure and consolidate his hold on the Christian areas of Beirut and Mount Lebanon. The Lebanese Forces organization was outlawed in 1994, mainly for its opposition to the pro-Syrian regime. The Kataib party continues to operate as a political party in post-Taif Lebanon. However, its power has declined substantially. Undermining the Kataib's position in the power structure was the emergence of the Free Patriotic Current, a movement established by army General Michel Aoun, advocating national unity and sovereignty. The general's "popular movement put into question the credibility of both the Kataib and the Lebanese Forces and put them into a peripheral position in the emerging power structure in the Maronite community" (Richani 1988, 131). Even though Aoun's influence is visible in the political activism of his supporters, he has been forced to live in exile in France. Aoun who declared himself as acting prime-minister, was removed from power in 1991 by a Syrian-led military operation. His movement has

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not been transformed into a party with a specific programmatic agenda, and continues to be centered around nationalistic slogans and general Aoun himself.

THE AMAL MOVEMENT AND HIZBULLAH (PARTY OF GOD)

The two main Shiite political parties that vie for power in Lebanon are *Hizbullah* and Amal. Amal was established in 1975 by Musa Sadr who was born in Iran and educated in Najaf, Iraq, one of the most important theological centers of Shiite Islam. A charismatic leader, Sadr was able to give the Shiite community a platform from which it could mobilize and press the government for reforms. For example, it was Sadr's efforts that led the government to establish the Council of the South to launch development projects in the neglected Shiite areas of the south. Augustus Richard Norton stresses that "what Musa al-Sadr did bring to Lebanon, in addition to his other considerable attributes, was the ability to stand above a fragmented community and see it as a whole....Furthermore, he reminded his followers that their deprivation was not to be fatalistically accepted, for so long as they could speak out through their religion, they could overcome their condition" (1987, 40).

On the regional level, Sadr was a personal friend of Hafez Assad of Syria. "He even gave Assad political legitimacy when he came to power in 1971; as a member of the minority Alawi sect, Assad's authority to lead Syria was challenged. Sadr issued an edict, *fatwa,* that the Alawis were Shiite and secured Assad's position" (Jaber 1997, 11). Following Sadr's disappearance in Libya in 1978, his Amal movement continued to have

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close relations with Syria. Its current leader, the Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament,

Nabih Berri, is considered Syria's most dependable ally in Lebanon.

   Hizbullah or "Party of God" was formed in the early 1980's during Israel's

invasion of Lebanon. The party's most prominent leaders had broken away from Amal's

politburo. Such Founding leaders as Hassan Nasrallah were disillusioned with Amal's

secular course. The Iranian Revolution was a source of inspiration for the young men

and clerics who established the Party of God. "The relationship between Iran and Hizb

Allah is maintained through the Islamic Republic's Higher Defense Council...The Higher

defense Council is the central decision-making body of the Iranian military security

establishment....and is the vehicle through which" Iran's Supreme spiritual leader relays

his guidance to the Lebanese organization (Norton 1987, 102). From the start Iran has

also been a source of financial and military support. *Hizbullah's* clerics have made

frequent visits to Iran and Iranian Revolutionary Guards have trained the military wing of

the organization. The initial objectives of the organization were to recruit young men and

train them into squads capable of attacking the occupying Israeli forces. "Between 1982

and 1985, the Party of God was training hundreds of young men, spreading the word

amongst the population and working on creating a political agenda of its own" (Jaber

1997, 52). Its central leadership was formed in 1983. The three member *Shoura*

(Consultative) Council was responsible for planning resistance activities and deciding on

political and social issues. Originally, the Party of God's power was concentrated in the

Beqaa Valley in the eastern part of the county. But by 1983 the party began operating in

Beirut, especially the southern suburbs which were heavily populated by the Shiites who

had fled southern Lebanon either because of fighting or socioeconomic conditions. The

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intrusion of *Hizbullah* into Beirut began to loosen Amal's strong hold on the Shiite Community. The competition between the two over the Shiite community has been underpinned by political, ideological and geographical factors. Amal draws most of its support from the southern regions of the country while *Hizbullah* draws the bulk of its popular support from the eastern Beqaa valley. Amal has suffered a number of defections to the benefit of *Hizbullah.* Many members of Amal's politburo disagreed with Amal leader Nabih Berri over the party's policy towards Israel and the southern region. Initially, Berri had called for the pacification of the south, hoping to spare it from Israeli retaliation. Factional differences also stem from the social differences among the Shiite of the south and those of the Beqaa. Unlike the Bekaa, in the south clan loyalties and bonds are weak. This difference is due to the difference in the socioeconomic development of the two regions. The Shiites of the Beqaa view the Shiites of the south as being less traditional, complacent, and lacking *assabiyya,* which is a term used to describe a sense of strong solidarity and loyalty among clan members. Nazih Richani (1998) attributes at least in part the differences between the Shiites of the two regions to *Assabiyya.* He writes, "The conflict between the two groups may have been partially due to Shiite regional differences, particularly their respective feelings of assabiyya, which provides to the group that sense of manhood and stamina to fight the 'enemy' (133).

Regionally, Amal and *Hizbullah* have two different sources of support. Amal is closely allied with Syria while *Hizbullah* is loyal to Iran. The latter's rapid growth not only brought it into conflict with Amal but with Syria as well. Since its creation, "Amal, had become a Syrian protégé and Assad was not prepared to let his ally lose ground to the new, Iranian-backed movement of Hizbollah" (Jaber 1997, 31). During Israel's invasion

of Lebanon in 1982, Syria had allowed the passage of Iranian Revolutionary Guards to the Beqaa Valley and did not stand in the way of the Iranian embassy in Damascus when it was involved in the founding of *Hizbullah*. However, Syria was weary of *Hizbullah* becoming the sole Islamic force in Lebanon. The Syrians had always tried to maintain a balance of power among different Lebanese factions and at times played these factions against each other. And when the rivalry between Amal and *Hizbullah* degenerated into an armed struggle, it took Syrian and Iranian intervention to stop *Hizbullah* from eliminating Amal from Beirut. The war between the two Muslim factions had begun in May of 1988 in southern Lebanon. Amal, with Syrian military support, had begun the war on the pretext that it was attempting to prevent *Hizbullah* from establishing an Islamic state in the southern part of the country. The fighting would eventually reach Beirut and lead to the defeat of Amal in the capital city. "Only the intervention of Iran stopped the military group from liquidating Amal altogether in its few remaining strongholds in Beirut....The conflict was resolved in an Iranian-brokered agreement in January 1989, signed in Syria under the auspices of President Assad and Known as the Damascus Agreement" (Jaber 1997, 34-5). Following the agreement, *Hizbullah* turned its attention to the Israeli military troops in Lebanon. The attacks on Israeli troops inside Israel's self declared "security zone" increased as did the barrage of missiles fired on Israeli northern settlements. The Israelis finally withdrew from Lebanon in the Spring of 2000.

With its enemy defeated, *Hizbullah* transformed itself into a political organization. The organization had taken steps in that direction well before the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. In 1992, *Hizbullah* had participated in the first post-war parliamentary

elections and managed to win several seats in the chamber of deputies. The party retained most of its seats in the 1996. In the 1998 municipal elections *Hizbullah* had sponsored lists comprised mainly of traditional Shiite families. The *Hezbullah* sponsored lists were able to defeat Amal's candidates in most electoral districts. This alarmed the Syrians who wanted to create equilibrium between the two groups. Therefore the Syrians pressured *Hizbullah* to form an alliance with Amal and run on the same lists in the 2000 parliamentary elections. In the parliament, *Hizbullah* has been a powerful voice against government corruption and for increased social spending. One area that the party has shied away from is the section in its manifesto that calls for an Islamic Republic. The party's political performance has impressed many politicians and analysts. Former Sunni Muslim Lebanese prime-minister Salim Hoss comments:

> *They have been very active in parliament. It (Hezbollah) is distinguished*
> *from other parties in the fact that its dealings with people in general are*
> *morally upright. Many of the other parties collapsed because of the*
> *transgression that their military wings committed. To a large extent,*
> *Hezbollah has succeeded in not falling into this trap. Hezbollah has shown*
> *that it is in total harmony with itself and its opposition the government in*
> *general. Its stance on the various issues debated in parliament is also clear*
> *and united. As a political party, however, one must question the goals of*
> *this group. For if Hezbollah is determined to work for the establishment of*
> *an Islamic republic in Lebanon, then we must disagree with it on this issue.*
> *For Lebanon is a multi-confessional nation, in which many different*
> *religions and sects co-exist. So any suggestion of establishing an Islamic*
> *republic contradicts the multi-faced nature of this nation. Despite our*
> *disagreement over this ideology, we consider that Hezbollah has the*
> *right to a political role within a democratic framework in order for it*
> *to achieve any goal that it adopts. (Jaber 1997, 211).*

Hizbullah for its part has stressed that its Islamic view should not be construed as an attempt to impose an Islamic society on the Lebanese people. Even though the party's

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platform calls for replacing the multi-confessional government with an Islamic system, the *Hizbullah* leadership has made it clear that the Lebanese people should be the ultimate arbiters of such decision, and that the people should choose a political system that is most suitable to their beliefs. Hence, whatever changes are being advocated by the party, are going to be pursued within the democratic process and the country's political institutions.

The fact that *Hizbullah* is not perusing an Islamic republic does not mean it can not be a key player in post-Taif Lebanon socially and politically. The millions of dollars the organization receives annually from Iran allow it to provide public services in healthcare and education. *Hizbullah* claims that government neglect and lack of spending in social areas have forced the organization to tackle the problems itself. In 1987 for example, the party established the Islamic Healthcare Committee (IHC), which has opened several medical clinics in Beirut, the south and the Bekaa. The party has also emphasized education by building schools in those regions. The lack of educational opportunities has contributed to the lack of socioeconomic progress, especially among the inhabitants of the south and the Bekaa valley. To tackle the problem, *Hizbullah* has embarked on a construction program of rebuilding schools and rehabilitating ones that had been damaged in the country's civil war. The party's efforts in the areas of healthcare and education have increased its popularity among the public and improved its standing in the Lebanese society.

THE PERSISTENCE OF PRIMORDIAL TIES IN POST TAIF LEBANON

The political parties of Lebanon have not fared well when it has comes to the legislative process. "No more than one-third of the members of the 1991 parliament (elected in 1972) were members of a political party. The parliament elected in 1992 had fewer than that" (Abul-Husn 1998, 45). Most of the individuals who are elected to parliament are local notables, the *Zua'ma*. "Although formally a consociational democracy with a constitution, a parliament, and regular elections, real political power in Lebanon derives from the informal networks that are governed by the various sectarian elites" (Kingston 2001, 55). These notables draw their support not from an organized political party but from what Samir Khalaf (1987) refers to as "primordial ties." Primordial ties encompass ties of kinship, fealty, and religion. To Khalaf, primordial ties are a mixed blessing. "While kinship, fealty, and religious ties and loyalties have been functionally instrumental in providing the much needed social, psychic, and spiritual supports, they have also served as divisive forces by reinforcing the traditional cleavages in society" (Khalaf 1987, 104). In other words, in the absence of institutions or organizations of political change, primordial ties provide alternative methods of democratic representation and political stability. However, at the same time, these ties continue to prevent and undermine the growth of civility and national loyalty. The end result is the emergence of "political blocs and fronts.... so absorbed with parochial and personal rivalries that they fail to serve the larger national purpose of mobilizing the population for the broader aims of society. Politicians and pressure groups alike have not

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been able to transcend their petty personal feuds to grapple effectively with the public issues of the country" (Khalaf 1987, 102).

Among Lebanon's primordial ties, kinship has served as an affective avenue for political power and leadership. In Lebanon the family as a social unit is considered more important than the individual. The status of an individual is defined more by his family's name than his occupation. "Since the family dominates the life experience of an individual, it becomes almost an exclusive agency of political socialization and tutelage" (Khalaf 1987, 104).   As Table 1 demonstrates 48% of the new entrants into parliament between 1943 and 1972 had a parliamentary family history. The Lebanese parliament has not only included members who have inherited their position, but also family members who have served simultaneously. It is not unusual to see two brothers, or two cousins, or even a son and a father serving together in parliament.   Out of the 443 deputies that served in a span of fifty years, (1920-1972) 270 had a relationship to current or former parliamentarians (Table II).

TABLE I

NEW DEPUTIES
WITH FAMILY PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY
1943-1972

	1943	1947	1951	1953	1957	1960	1964	1968	1972
NUMBER	14	10	22	9	7	10	18	14	22
PERCENTAGE Of NEW ENTRANTS	46	40	52.4	75	29.6	19.6	64.3	50	56.4

Source: Khalaf 1987

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TABLE II

KINSHIP AMONG 443 DEPUTIES (1920-72)

Family Ties	Number	Percentage
Fathers	36	9
Sons	41	10
Brothers	33	7
Cousins	37	8
Nephews	12	3
Uncles	19	4
In-Laws	16	4
Distant Relatives	76	17
Unrelated	129	28
Not determined	44	10
TOTAL	443	100

Source: Khalaf 1987

Since the early years of independence most of the main prominent political families who were initiated into political life, have had an uninterrupted presence in successive parliaments. For example the current Lebanese parliament (elected in 2000) includes a number of third generation members from the Maronite Frangieh clan (first elected in 1929) and Gemayel clans (elected in 1960), from the Druze Jumblat clan (elected in 1920), the Sunni Karami clan (elected in 1937), and the Shi'i Husayni clan (elected in 1922). The 2000 Chamber of Deputies also includes several other prominent political families who have held not only a parliamentary but cabinet and presidential positions (Table III).

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PROMINENT FAMILIES IN THE 2000 -2005 PARLIAMENT

FAMILY	YEAR OF INITIATION
Arslan	1922
Frangieh	1929
Gemayel	1960
Hamadeh	1925
Harawi	1943
Husayni	1922
Junblat	1920
Karami	1937
Khatib	1937
Khazin	1920
Lahhoud	1943
Skaff	1925
Usayran	1922
Zayn	1920

Initiation Date Source: Khalaf 1987
Current family membership source: www.lebvote.com

Like the legislature the composition of the executive has also been heavily impacted by kinship. The post of prime-minister, for example, has been the property of four main families: the Solh, the Salam, the Yafi and the Karami. These four families have headed close to forty different cabinets since independence. Only recently has these families' monopoly of the premiership been broken by newcomers like Salim Hoss and self made Billionaire, Rafic Hariri. Individual cabinet posts are also associated with particular families or individuals. The Ministry of Defense, for example, was long held by Druze leader Majid Arslan, while the Foreign Ministry was the preserve of the Taqla family. Even in the post-Taif Lebanon, the Interior Ministry has been the property of the Murr

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family. Michel Murr, who was being roundly criticized for his autocratic leadership style, exited the cabinet following the 2000 parliamentary elections, but he was promptly succeeded by his son, Elias Murr, who as the head of the powerful Interior Ministry overseas internal security, intelligence gathering, and the administration of elections in the country. It would not be considered an oversimplification to describe Lebanon's political history in terms of a few political families competing for power from bases in different parts of the country. These rivalries have characterized not only relations between different families but also the members of the same families. The main rival of Michel Murr for example is his brother and parliament member, Gabriel Murr. Current Lebanese President Emile Lahoud's main challenger is his cousin and a member of parliament, Nassib Lahoud, who has presidential aspirations of his own. Hence, what we see in post-Taif Lebanon is not only inter-family rivalry but intra-family competition as well. These rivalries have turned the political process into a personal not an ideological one. For example, opposition blocs in and outside parliament are not ideologically based but include a number of factions opposed to current Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri. In today's Lebanon the most prominent opposition front is the *Qornet Shahwan* Gathering. This gathering includes a number of prominent parliamentarians, journalists, and scholars interested in seeing Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon and in rectifying Lebanese-Syrian relations. At times, however, *Qornet Shahwan* has acted more as a political front opposed to Lebanese President Lahoud than a front interested in ending Syrian hegemony over Lebanon.

Political disputes in Lebanon are not just based on personal rivalries and sustained by kinship alliances. Ideological rifts among Lebanon's troika of president, prime

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minister and parliamentary speaker are also common. The personal rivalry between President Lahoud and Premier Hariri is more than a personal struggle. These two came to power from different backgrounds, Lahoud from the military and Hariri from business. Consequently, their political careers have been marked by different ideological and pragmatic orientations. Hariri, a strong believer in deregulation and free enterprise economics, has consistently clashed with Lahoud over economic issues such as privatization. These ideological differences came to a climax in the summer of 2002 over the future of the mobile telephone sector. Lahoud favored state control of the sector at least on an interim basis, while Hariri favored auctioning of the sector to private investors. Lebanon's most prominent newspaper summed up the dispute, "In a nutshell, Hariri wants a lump sum to help quench the public debt while Lahoud contends direct state administration of the sector would bring in a bigger income on monthly or yearly basis. Hariri says state administration would ruin the sector altogether" (Naharnet, 07/22/2002).

Fealty is another primordial tie that has been pervasive in Lebanon's political system. Fealty "survives in the personalized relationship between follower and leader. Among other things, fealty involves the recognized obligation of a leader in return for the loyalty and unquestioned allegiance of a follower" (Khalaf 1987, 112). Leaders in Lebanon fill government posts allocated for their religious communities by their own supporters. "despite the establishment of a modern Lebanon, clientalism has evolved and persisted along with other modern forms of participation" (Hamzeh 2001, 167). In today's post Taif Lebanon no leader has tried to monopolize this process as much as parliamentary speaker Nabih Berri. For example, members of the Shiites community in

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southern Lebanon who are not loyal to Berri have not only been kept out of government posts but also denied basic government services. Posts allocated for Shiites in the civil service are all filled with Berri supporters. Shiites who are interested in working in academia either as professors or teachers in public schools must be Berri supporters. Berri has even filled the public utility companies with his supporters and gone as far as preventing government institutions tasked with aiding the population of the south to rebuild after the Israeli occupation from providing financial assistance to members of the Shiite community who were not loyal to him.

Because of such favoritism it would be preferable to create a secular political system that would lead not only to a fairer but more efficient system filled with qualified professionals. The Taif Accords, while temporarily maintaining the confessional system does provide for its eventual elimination. The Accords calls on parliament to establish a commission composed of the president, the prime minister, parliamentary speaker, and other political and intellectual figures. The commission is to present its recommendations for eliminating the confessional system to the president, parliament, and the cabinet. However, "the accord provides no guidelines for this commission and sets no time limit on its work, nor does it specify whether the recommendations will be binding on Parliament or the council of minister, the two institutions most representative of the confessional establishment" (Khairallah 1994, 263). Thus far the confessional establishment has made no serious efforts at creating such a commission and the creation of a secular democratic system remains an illusive goal. Some believe a secular political system must be established as a prerequisite for the establishment of social cohesion and unity among Lebanon's different political sects. Such a political system

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would provide, as Daoud Khairallah put it "guarantees against the recurrence of the last Lebanese tragedy; generate common values, interests, and goals and give them expression in state laws and institutions such that all Lebanese enjoy equal rights and opportunities; forge a common perception of the national interest and public good; and (while respecting pluralism) be effective in bringing about needed change by solving problems that are the inevitable product of political life in any society" (1994, 264). One of the main reasons behind Lebanon's failure to secularize is the lack of leadership. The three presidents who have ruled Lebanon have not made a serious effort at changing the system. And while a secular system would be preferable to some analysts, it is important to stress that the current system has been stable since the end of civil war in 1990. It is also noteworthy to refer to the presence of patriotism among the population despite the persistence of confessionalism in politics.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the origins of the Lebanese sectarian system, its characteristics, and the composition of different groups operating within it. Internal political, economic, and social dynamics, as well as external forces have contributed to the development of the sectarian system and the intensity of religious identity in Lebanon. The constitution of 1926 adopted during the French mandate provided for power sharing among religious communities. The political authority that was outlined by the constitution of 1926 was formalized by an unwritten convention, the National Pact of 1943. The pact, proclaimed in the year the French Mandate ended, provided for the

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political association of the different sections of the Lebanese population on the basis of equality. The provisions of the Taif Accords that call for the elimination of sectarianism in politics are yet to be implemented.

Lebanon's confessional arrangement has deepened the divisions among the country's sects and has led to constant turbulence in the country's political system. Sectarian leaders are preoccupied with pursuing their constituents' interest in government and, in doing so, draw countermoves from representatives of other sects who present their own demands to the government. Hence, instead of pursuing a national programmatic agenda, sectarian leaders often engage in a winner take all struggle over limited resources. The constitutional structure of power has also prevented the spread of secularism among Lebanon's political parties. Parties have found that developing into true cross-sectarian organizations is extremely difficult. The end result is a plural confessional society that enjoys a freely elected parliament and liberal and democratic tendencies without possessing the characteristics of a civil polity.

Religious loyalties have not necessarily negated loyalty to the state or patriotism, nor have they prevented the emergence of a sense of national or civic identity among the Lebanese people. A Lebanese could be a member of a party, a sect, and a club, while simultaneously giving his loyalty to the state. Hence, the good news for those that hope to rid Lebanon of its sectarian governing arrangement is that a sense of a common national identity among Lebanon's different communities may be growing but to accelerate the process confessionalism will have to be abolished or considerably modified and the constitutional provisions which sustain it will have to be abolished.

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CHAPTER 5

ELECTIONS IN POST-TAIF LEBANON

INTRODUCTION

For a democratic political system to function, more than the relevant formal institutions of a party system, a parliament, and universal suffrage are needed. A participant public that views the electoral process as fair and honest is also needed. Do the Lebanese view the post-Taif elections as legitimate? Are they taking part in the electoral process? Answers to these questions would move the focus of the analysis from the macro to the micro level and allow for a more accurate assessment of the state of democracy in Lebanon.

Lebanon's second republic has witnessed several elections. This chapter will focus on Lebanon's first-post Taif parliamentary elections held in 1992 as well as the country's most recent elections held in the summer of 2000. While the first post-Taif elections of 1992 were marred by irregularities and boycotts resulting in a clean sweep for pro-government candidates, the results of the 2000 elections were not questioned and resulted in strong gains for the opposition. The comparison of these two elections reveals that Lebanon is making significant progress when it comes to holding free democratic elections. However, the actual progress and change in Lebanon's elections have not been accompanied by a change in the way Lebanese citizens view the electoral process in the country. Surveys taken prior to Lebanon's most recent parliamentary election held in the summer of 2000, show little or no change in the attitudes of potential Lebanese voters compared to surveys taken prior to the 1992 elections. Even though the number of Lebanese, especially Christians who participated

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in the 2000 elections increased from the numbers in 1992, the Lebanese public continues to be cynical, and generally less likely to take part in the electoral process. Therefore, while the Taif Accord has been conducive to strengthening of democratic institutions and to freer and fairer elections, it has not yet led to an increase in participation and to a growing confidence in the legitimacy of the electoral process among citizens. The results of the 2000 parliamentary elections which appear to have been fairly conducted, do not support the high level of mass cynicism. But, cynicism about politics is not confined to Lebanon. It is prevalent throughout the Middle East and even in parts of the Western World.

FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

To assess the attitudes of individual Lebanese toward the political system in general and their own role in it, data will be used from two surveys conducted in 1992 and 2000. The 1992 survey was conducted by the Lebanese daily *al-Safir,* and has been previously analyzed by Harik and Khasan (1993). *Al-Safir's* sample consisted of 1435 Christian and Muslim respondents drawn from Lebanon's six electoral districts. The objective of the survey was to determine respondents' views as to whether elections should be held in the first place, and, if so, whether they expected the elections to be held under democratic conditions. The survey also sought to determine the expectations of respondents concerning the results of the elections and their effect on change in the composition of the parliament.

The second (2000) survey was conducted by the Center for Developmental Studies and has not been analyzed before. This sample consisted of 2000 respondents aged 21 or older. All regions in Lebanon were included in the sample in proportion to the size of the

population. The study investigated the following relevant issues: first, the number of citizens who plan to participate in the 2000 parliamentary elections; second, whether the respondents believed the elections will be free and honest; and third, whether respondents believed the results of the elections were already pre-arranged..

POLITICAL CULTURE

Lebanon's political system is patterned on Western institutions and liberal ideology. However the Lebanese electorate does not appear to have developed the values and attitudes that Western scholarship have viewed as important for successful democratic practice. Table 2 presents the data on reasons given by the respondents for not wanting to participate in elections; fear of foreign intervention, lack of free expression, mistrust of politicians, and fear of cheating. They indicate a very low level of trust by the respondents in the political system. It is this cynicism and disenchantment that have caused low participation in elections. A significant majority of Lebanese do not place high value on the belief that citizens should participate and do not expect that their participation would make a difference. These are the values, which Almond and Verba (*Civic Culture* 1963) found to be essential to a stable, effective democracy. Almond and Verba did not stress the importance of participation in elections as much as the importance of citizens believing that the elections were legitimate. The *Civic Culture* produced support for several cultural attributes that composed the major prerequisites of a democratic system. Chief among these was a high level of support among the electorate for the system itself. They also found that the classic rational activist model, where citizens had to be both knowledgeable and active, to be

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mythical. Instead, they suggested that what was needed was a trusting and confident electorate. That is how some, for example, dismiss the significance of low voter turnout in the United States, by stressing that while turnout among eligible voters is low, the level of trust and confidence in the system is high. This may no longer be the case, however, even in the U.S. In Lebanon, neither the turnout nor confidence is high. Table 6 shows that 60 percent of Lebanese did not believe that democratic conditions existed in the country in 1992 and Table 4 indicates that only 26% of the eligible voters did actually take part in elections held that year. There was no significant change in the attitudes of the Lebanese citizenry between 1992 and 2000. Polls taken in the summer of 2000, prior to the holding of parliamentary elections, showed the same levels of cynicism and mistrust about the political process that had existed almost ten years earlier. As Table 9 indicates, almost 46% of the respondents indicated that they did not believe the 2000 parliamentary elections would be fair and honest.

Tom Rice & Alexander Sudberg (1997) link the concept of a civic culture to the development of an efficient government. States that are more civic are more likely to be innovative and meet the needs of their citizens. Such elements of a civic culture as civic engagement, the presence of a civil society, and political equality would probably contribute to the Lebanese government's effectiveness when it comes to responding to the citizenry's demands and solving social and economic problems. Maher Massis (1998) stresses the importance of political equality as a democratic principle. He asserts that, "in societies with relatively equal size of different minority groups, the concociational system has often been the political mechanism to maintain a relative balance of group power. In the Arab world, Lebanon is the only state that sought to incorporate sectarianism into its political system"

(1998, 46). It is clear that until the Taif amendments calling for the elimination of the sectarian system are somehow implemented, interests are going to be articulated and represented through the concociational formula.

Besides political equality, the presence of a civil society is also a fundamental principle of democratic practice. Some contemporary scholarship on Middle Eastern democratization has stressed the incompatibility of Arab political culture with the emergence of a civil, participant society. For example, Arab political culture has been "characterized by primordialism (strong clan, tribal, and sectarian loyalties), which inhibits a sense of common citizenship" (Brynen, Korany,& Noble 1995, 7). Others have dismissed the validity of such an assessment, raising critical questions regarding the prejudices and misconceptions that have been brought to scholarship. In his study of Jordan's political system, for example, Maher Massis (1988) stresses that civil society exists in the Middle East in varying types and degrees. Countries such as Jordan and Lebanon include elements of a modern civil society, with labor unions, political parties, professional and voluntary associations and a free press. These countries also include elements of a traditional civil society. The "traditional culture has provided some level of autonomy from the state and facilitated the practice of open communication, democratic decision-making, and conflict resolution. From the state's perspective, too, the traditional civil society has been important to political stability since it has helped maintain social tranquility" (Massis 1988, 153). Hence, traditional and modern sectors of the civic culture are not necessarily exclusive of each other and can coexist in a multifaceted society. Civil and participant societies are also present elsewhere in the Middle East. Institutions of civil society for example have facilitated political liberalization in Kuwait. Jill Crystal and Abdallah al-Shayeji (1998) maintain that the pro-democracy

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movement in Kuwait grew through the *"diwaniyyas-* the institutionalized gatherings of families and friends. The elected cooperative societies provided practice with democratic procedures and generated an experienced pool of elected representatives" (113). The Kuwaiti opposition movement was successful in perusing democratic reforms because it was supported by a variety of ideological groups. "This coalition was possible because Kuwait has a history of civil politics, with not only well-entrenched indigenous notion of political rights but also well-entrenched notion of civil rights" (114). The pro-democracy movement's message resonated with the long standing belief that society must have a measure of autonomy from the state.

A democratic culture can also be found closer to Lebanon in the Palestinian territories. Palestinian attitudes, prior to the outbreak of the violence in 2001, indicated that "a large majority (around 80 percent) expressed a belief in democracy and viewed elections as the appropriate way to select the Palestinian Authority. Surveys also suggest that Palestinians support the full participation of Palestinian women in elections (71.8 percent) and oppose the use of domestic political violence by the PA (73.5 percent)" (Brynen 1998). And in 1996 prior to the election of the Palestinian National Council "only a small minority (11.3 percent) of Palestinians expressed dissatisfaction with the fairness of the process" (Brynen 1998). That stands in sharp contrast to the attitudes of the Lebanese public, which did not expect parliamentary elections to be conducted fairly.

LEBANON'S FIRST POST-WAR ELECTION (1992).

The 1992 parliamentary elections are considered important because they represented the

first national election held under the reforms of the Taif accords. The last parliamentary

election to be held in Lebanon prior to 1992 took place in 1972 before the outbreak of the

civil war. Even though no parliamentary elections were held during the twenty years

between 1972 and 1992, this period witnessed the elections of four different presidents in

1976, 1982, and twice in 1989. Because the security and political situations did not allow for

the holding of mass elections, the parliament was able to extend its own term and continue to

fulfill its duty of electing the President of the Republic and preventing a constitutional

vacuum. The parliament also ratified the Taif provisions in 1990, thereby establishing a

basis for the implementation of political reform and restoration of calm in the country. By

1990, only 68 of the original 99 members of parliament elected in 1972 were still alive.

One of the first moves made by the parliament following the conclusion of the Taif Accords

was expanding and replenishing its membership. "In total forty new members were needed:

thirty-one seats were vacant due to death or resignation; nine others had been added to

achieve Muslim-Christian parity. The Taif Accord included a provision for an exceptional

procedure to fill the vacant parliamentary seats, namely the appointment of deputies" (Norton

& Schwedler 1994, 49). The appointments were made even though there was a significant

amount of opposition to beginning Lebanon's national reconciliation process by appointing

deputies to what is supposed to be a popularly elected body. Criticism and pressure came not

only from domestic elements but also from such foreign powers as France and the United

States to insure that the newly appointed parliament's term would be short-lived, and that a nationwide election to decide a new parliament would be held within a short period of time.

As plans for Lebanon's first post-war elections began to crystallize, many in the country questioned the conditions under which the voting would take place. The Lebanese government was eager to hold the elections. Syria preferred that the elections be held before the implementation of the Taif provisions, which called for a partial Syrian troop withdrawal out of Lebanon. The election of a pro-Syrian parliament would accommodate the Lebanese executive branch's policy of strengthening of ties and facilitating the continued drive towards economic and political union between the two countries. On the other hand, the Maronite Church and a significant number of Christian politicians argued the elections should be postponed until Syria withdrew its troops from the country. The prospects of a pro-Syrian parliament alarmed many, especially Maronite Christians who had historically always sought a Lebanese identity that was distinct from the rest of the Arab world. This dispute over Lebanon's identity, which had contributed to the outbreak of civil war now manifested itself again in the debate over the likelihood of holding a fair and honest parliamentary election. What was the citizenry's attitude towards the holding of elections? The 1992 data collected by al-Safir shows that only 57% of the Lebanese supported the holding of elections.

Table 1

Opinions as to Whether Parliamentary Elections Should Held

N=1435

Elections should be held	57%
Elections should not be held	43%
Total	100%

Table 2 indicates the reasons given for opposing the elections. They consisted of lack of security, fear of foreign intervention, lack of guarantees of free expression, fear of cheating, the likelihood of instability, and mistrust of politicians. While only a minority of respondents specifically cited the fear of cheating as the main reason against holding the elections, most where clearly concerned with their own security and the stability of the electoral process.

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TABLE 2

Reasons for Opposing the Holding of Elections

N=572

Reasons

Lack of security	38%
Fear of foreign intervention	21%
Mistrust of politicians	17%
Lack of guarantee of free expression	13%
Likelihood of instability	8%
Fear of cheating	3%
Total	100%

Fresh memories of the legacy of the fifteen-year civil war, which had just ended and the continuing occupation of the south by the Israelis contributed to the concern over the lack of security. It should be noted that the Christian Maronite respondents who cited foreign intervention as a reason for not being in favor of holding elections were concerned more with the Syrian rather than Israeli intervention. Table 3 indicates that the majority of respondents who were against the holding of elections were Christian Maronites, who historically have been the most outspoken against Syria's tutelage over the country.

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Table 3

Opinion on Holding Elections by Sect

N=1435

Sect	%Agree	%Disagree	Total%
Sunni	68	32	100
Shiite	69	31	100
Druze	66	34	100
Maronites	26	74	100
Orthodox	52	48	100
Other Christians	58	42	100

The 1992 parliamentary elections reflected the lowest level of popular turnout since the country's independence. As Table 4 shows, merely 26% of the eligible voters participated in the 1992 elections compared to levels that ranged from 60%-70% in the 1960's. In her assessment of "how post-Taif democracy works" works, Judith Harik (1998) stresses that "Given the savage manner in which the civil war was fought and the way it ended, feelings of vindication and revenge on the part of winners and the losers' bitter humiliation and fear were important factors in the political dynamics of the postwar period. This was true despite the government's repeated assurances of a 'no victor's, no vanquished' policy" (139). The low turnout in the 1992 parliamentary elections was in part due to the lingering effects of the civil war. In the first few years following the civil war, the formerly conflicting factions did not follow the provisions of the Taif accords by engaging in any meaningful dialogue to strengthen national reconciliation. Especially alienated were the Christians who boycotted the 1992 elections in mass to protest Syria's influence in the country.

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Table 4

1992 Voter Turnout by Region

Region	%Turnout
Mt. Lebanon	13
Beirut	20
North	25
Beqaa	35
South	37

Source: (Norton & Schwedler 1994)

Table 5

1992 voter Turnout by Religion

Religion	%
Christian	9
Muslim	45

Source: (Norton & Schwedler 1994)

The low turnout was not just due to the fact that a large number of Christians

boycotted the process to protest Syrian military presence in the country, but also due to a

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general feeling among all Lebanese groups that the elections could not be held under

Democratic conditions (Table 6).

Table 6
N=1435

Expectations of Holding Elections Under Democratic Conditions

Response	%
Possible	39
Impossible	61
Total	100

And indeed the 1992 parliamentary elections were not held under democratic conditions.

In 1993, Farid El-Khazen and Paul Salem edited a study of the 1992 parliamentary elections.

The study involved a number of scholars and researchers and comprised workshops,

conferences, interviews, data analysis, and other forms of research. The study concluded that

the elections were marred by irregularities and inadequate preparations. El-Khazen and

Salem stress that in certain constituencies the electoral process "was not free of government

intervention whose goal was to influence the results. An official report on the constituency's

tabulation process described in detail the infringements which occurred on election day

(breaking or stealing ballot boxes, the disappearance and concealment of voter lists, vote

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tabulations unsigned by the appointed observers, etc.)" (1993, ch.1). The end result was a

sweeping victory for pro-government candidates across the country.

The only watershed event marking the 1992 elections was the striking gains made by the

Party of God and the subsequent integration of the party into the Lebanese political system.

The highest level of turnout came from the Shiite community, which for the first time had a

choice between traditional notables who had dominated Shiite politics since independence or

a new class of counter-elites dedicated to social and economic reform. *"Hizballah's* effective

grassroots campaign, based on its resistance record and social service activities, resulted in a

strong showing and gave the Islamic movement... one of the largest parliamentary blocks"

(Harik 1998, 142). *Hizbulla* has since surpassed the *Amal Movement* of Lebanese

parliamentary Speaker Nabih Berri in popularity among the Shiites. This was evident in the

1998 municipal elections, which witnessed lopsided victories for *Hizbullah* backed lists over

its main rival *Amal* in most Shiite townships.

THE 2000 PARLIAMENATRY ELECTIONS

The 2000 parliamentary elections are considered important because they resulted in a

victory for the opposition forces in Lebanon. Those who were running against the pro-Syrian

regime in Lebanon were not given much of a chance by pundits who believed that the vote

would be rigged and electoral process would be manipulated by the incumbent government

and forces allied with it. The months leading up to the summer elections witnessed an

increase in anti-Syrian sentiment and accusations that Syria would interfere in the electoral

process. Outgoing members of parliament from different denominations leveled charges of "bias" at the leaders of the Lebanese government and the mainly Christian opposition groups stated that they would urge their supporters to boycott the elections. In a joint statement, the Free National Current of former Lebanese Army General Aoun, the National Liberal Party of Dory Chamoun, and the Lebanese Forces movement urged the voters "to boycott the poll and reject all attacks on the democratic system" (French Press Agency-AFP, Aug 2, 2000). The anti-government parties condemned the election law that would govern the process as well as the government's role in the formation of alliances or candidate lists. Others, such as populist member of parliament Najah Wakim also echoed their concerns. The popular Christian Orthodox Wakim whose reelection would have been certain, withdrew his candidacy and urged that the elections be postponed. Wakim predicted that the outcome of the elections would be lopsided urged the Lebanese "to band together to work for change, particularly to the practice of dividing parliamentary seats along religious community lines" (AFP, Aug 15, 2000). Wakim's secular message drew support from artists, intellectuals, and even religious leaders. Prominent Shiite Muslim leader Sheik Mohammed Hassan al-Amin labeled the upcoming elections a "farce" (AFP, Aug 15, 2000). Other critics of the electoral process included former prime-minister, Omar Karami, Druze leader and the head of the Progressive Socialist Party, Walid Jumblatt, and member of parliament, Nasib Lahoud who came from the same extended family as president Emile Lahoud. The charges being leveled at the government by the trio were those of corruption centering mainly on the role of government intelligence services in meddling in the elections by forcing unnatural alliances on lists of candidates favorable to the government. "We have an interesting cocktail of lists," noted the head the National Liberal Party, Dori Chamoun, speaking of interior minister

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Michel Murr's *Metn* Accord List, which had grouped together traditional rivals in the

Phalange and Syrian Socialist parties. "When the order comes from up above," he said, "any

agreement can take place" (*DailyStar*, Aug 23, 2000).   Besides the Phalange and the Syrian

Nationalists, Murr had included Emile Lahoud Jr, the son of Lebanon's president, on his list

of candidates. Michel Murr known for his close ties to Syria was the target of a significant

amount of criticism, especially in his capacity as interior minister overseeing the elections.

Murr was accused of directing the internal security forces to interfere in the campaign. Such

accusations came from MP Nassib Lahoud, who had formed a list that would provide the

main challenge to Murr's list in the Metn District. Walid Jumblatt also criticized Murr.

Jumblatt was quoted as saying "the impartiality of the state is a lie. Murr is biased. He is a

power monger taking control of everything. Security services are taking control of

evrerything" (AFP, Aug 2, 2000).

Murr fired back at the critics, denying tampering with any campaigns and the electoral

process. Acting on his suggestion, the Lebanese government appointed a number of

committees, composed of attorneys from the country's public prosecutor's office, to crack

down on illegal activities. Each committee was to monitor an electoral district to ensure no

electoral law violations were taking place. In addition, Murr's Interior Ministry announced

that 3000 polling stations in the provinces of the North and Mount Lebanon would be

equipped with special cameras that would serve to insure transparency during the vote

counting process. Lebanon's highest government officials were also promising transparency.

President Lahoud affirmed the government's neutrality in the elections by stating that

candidates "rid themselves of personal sensitivities and compete according to democratic

principles and political norms that serve the country's interest…Politics cannot be without

pro- and anti-government forces. But I affirm that the government will distance itself from all candidates irrespective of their political tendencies....The government will make sure that no violations will take place during the polls and that voting and vote calculation will be fully honest" (*Daily Star*, Dec 12, 1999). In his first few months as president, Lahoud had already taken steps to increase public freedoms in the country and since 1996 his government had lifted a ban on public demonstrations. Furthermore in the year prior to the parliamentary elections, Lahoud's Prime Minister, Salim Hoss continuously touted the government's efforts aimed at safeguarding freedoms and civil liberties in Lebanon. Hoss was quoted as saying that, "Lebanon boasts its status as an oasis for public freedoms, including the freedom of information media. The word goes that Lebanon and freedom are inseparable" (*Daily Star*, Nov 30, 1999).

Public opinion in Lebanon was on the side of the government critics and not its defenders when it came to the issues of public freedoms, democracy, and honest and free elections. Data from the Lebanese Center for Developmental Studies showed that Only 55% of eligible voters in the country planed to participate in the 2000 parliamentary elections (Table 7). There was almost no change from the attitudes that existed during the 1992 elections year. Prior to the 1992 elections only 57% of eligible voters said that the elections should be held on schedule (Table 1).

Table 7
N=2000

Are You Planning on Participating in the Upcoming
(2000) Elections

Response	%
Yes	55
No	32
No Opinion	13

What did change however from 1992 to 2000 was the number of Christians; especially

Maronites who intended to participate in the elections. In 1992 most Christian voters

boycotted the parliamentary elections. 74% of Maronites believed that the 1992 elections

should not be held (Table 3) and only 9% participated (Table 5). In 2000 close to 60% of

Maronites indicated that they would participate in parliamentary elections (Table 8).

Table 8

N=2000

Are You Planning on Participating in the Upcoming Elections (2000) By Sect

Response	Religion					
	Sunni	Shiite	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholics	Druze
Yes	49%	65%	59%	53%	43%	46%
No	37%	27%	26%	29%	38%	39%
No Opinion	14%	8%	15%	18%	19%	15%

Why this change in the willingness to take part in the electoral process? It would be safe to say that it was not because there was a change in Maronites' attitudes regarding the fairness of the electoral process. Altough Maronites indicated that they would, and indeed did, participate in higher numbers in the parliamentary elections of 2000, they still overwhelmingly believed that the elections would be neither fair, nor honest. Only 25% of the respondents from the predominantly Christian region of Mt. Lebanon believed that the 2000 parliamentary elections would be fairly conducted (Table 9). These beliefs were not just limited to Maronites but were shared by most Lebanese regardless of region or religion. As Table 10 shows, 37% of respondents believed that the results of the entire election were predetermined and 37.5% believed that the results of at least some of the contests were predetermined.

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Table 9
N=2000

**Do You Believe the Upcoming Elections (2000) are Going
To be Fair and Honest**

Response   Province

	South	North	Mt. Lebanon	Beirut	Bekaa Valley
Yes	40%	23%	25%	29%	27%
No	48%	51%	43%	51%	36%
No Opinion	12%	26%	32%	20%	37%

Table 10

**Do you Believe the Results for the Upcoming Election (2000)
Are Known in Advance**

Response

The Results of the Entire Election are Known	37%
The Results of Some of the Contests are known	37.5%
No the Results are not Known	25.5%

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2000 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (RESULTS)

"Although the elections were initially presented by the press as being a forgone conclusion with the 'results known in advance' on a nod from Syria, they saw victories of candidates who during the campaign dared to call for reappraisal of relations with Damascus." That was the lead paragraph to an article titled "Lebanese Elections Present Damascus With New Regional Equation" published by the French Press Agency (AFP) on September 5, 2000. The same Lebanese voters that were skeptical when it came to the fairness of the electoral process witnessed the winning of many opposition groups and candidates. The highly controversial list making process ended up serving the opposition instead of the regime. Artificial candidate lists composed of "unnatural alliances" backed by the government were not successful. Because there was no genuine reconciliation among the political rivals comprising the lists, the voters found them to be unconvincing and unappealing and ended up crossing the names of candidates which they viewed as rivals rather than allies. *Hizbullah* supporters, for example, crossed out the name of outgoing MP and former Lebanese Forces militiaman, Elie Hobeika, and substituted it with a Maronite candidate from another list. *Hizbullah* supporters were not convinced of Hobeika's reconciliation with their party. Hobeika who many blame for the Sabra and Shatilla massacres of 1982, had become a Syrian ally in the post-Taif period. Hobeika's defeat may have been the biggest, but definitely not the only surprise of the elections. Al though opposition Druze leader Walid Jumblatt was expected to win, the margin and scope of his victory surprised many. Jumblat's list gained 16 out of the 19 seats in his Mount Lebanon

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constituency. In the Shouf district his entire ticket was elected, with the lowest vote getter on his list receiving 15000 more votes than the most successful candidate of the government backed competing ticket. Jumblatt's demands for a rebalancing in the relationship with Syria resonated with Christian voters, the main force behind his lopsided victory. Other important opposition victories in Mount Lebanon included those of Pierre Gemayel, son of former President Amin Gemayel, MP Nasib Lahoud, and Albert Moukhaiber, who has since been the most vocal opponent of the Syrian presence in Lebanon.

The real test of the government's neutrality would come in Beirut, where former prime-minister and businessman, Rafiq Hariri, was heading a list competing with incumbent prime-minister, Salim Hoss. The end result was a clean sweep for Hariri, who along with his allies gained enough seats in parliament to make him the leading candidate for prime-minister. The Lebanese constitution calls for the government to resign the day after voting and authorizes the president to select a new prime-minister after consulting with members of parliament. Prime-Minister Hoss, who lost his own seat in parliament, publicly accepted the results as the will of the voters. The President of the Republic, Emile Lahoud, who had campaigned against Harriri, also accepted the results of the elections and selected Hariri as new Prime-Minister. He was easily able to receive a vote of confidence in parliament. This process of a popular vote, leading to a change in the composition of parliament, which in turn led to a peaceful transition of power in the executive branch, provides an example of how an Arab country can implement democratic process.

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CONCLUSION

While the first post-Taif elections (1992) were marred by irregularities and boycotts resulting in a clean sweep for pro-government candidates, the results of the 2000 elections were not questioned and resulted in strong gains for the opposition. The comparison of both elections reveals that Lebanon is making significant progress when it comes to holding freer democratic elections. However, it is not as yet certain that the actual progress and change in Lebanese elections have been accompanied by a change in the way Lebanese citizens view electoral democracy. Surveys taken prior to Lebanon's most recent parliamentary election held in the summer of 2000, show little or no change in the attitudes of potential Lebanese voters compared to surveys taken prior to the 1992 parliamentary elections. The polls analyzed in this chapter have shown that the Lebanese public continues to be highly cynical when it comes to the perceived fairness of the electoral process in the country. Although the levels of participation increased, especially among Christian voters from 1992 to 2000, participation remains low compared with pre-war elections.

The relative success of the 2000 parliamentary elections can serve as a momentum for further democratic reforms and less cynicism. Having the Lebanese President elected directly by the voters instead of parliament and implementing the provisions of the Taif Accords, which call for eliminating sectarianism may further strengthen democracy in Lebanon. As it stands now, state institutions are still somewhat marginalized by the "Troika" system. Important decisions on the economy, foreign policy, and recruitment of government personnel are reached by consensus among the President, Prime Minister, Parliamentary Speaker and a subsequent green light from Syria. In most instances Syria

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prefers not to meddle in Lebanese domestic affairs, but it often finds itself compelled to play

the role of an arbiter and guardian for a government lacking sufficient cohesion and maturity.

Syria should not have to constantly settle disputes for Lebanon's contending forces and

political centers. In a politically mature Lebanon, the Presidency, the Parliament and the

Council of Ministers are the institutions were issues dealing with the budget, taxes,

privatization, and the hiring of civil personnel should be arbitrated.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

The Taif Document of National Understanding was a seminal event for Lebanon, a state suffering from a bloody and seemingly unending civil war at the time. It established a number of principles upon which the current Lebanese state is founded. The accord reaffirmed the belief that Lebanon is a country where the legitimacy of authority depends on the pact of "mutual coexistence," that is, the agreement of the various communities to live and govern together. Regarding the institutions of government, the Taif agreement called for equal representation among Christians and Muslims in parliament and a shift of some powers from the Maronite President of the Republic to the Sunni Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers. The Taif also strengthened the power of the Shiite Speaker of Parliament by increasing his term from one year to four.

The Taif accord set broad guidelines for maintaining the unity of Lebanese territories and people and affirmed Lebanon's Arab identity. Furthermore, the document called for the separation and strengthening of state institutions, the upholding of public freedoms, and for balanced economic, social, and cultural development. The relative peace and calm that Lebanon has enjoyed since the adoption of the Taif accord have facilitated the return of investment capital and promoted a growing confidence in the future of the country. Nonetheless, the country continues to face significant economic problems as it has close to 30 billion dollars in debt and suffers from high unemployment.

The purpose of the study has been to examine the Taif accord in order to see whether it has been effective in reforming Lebanon's political system, leading to the emergence of equitable and democratic practices, and consequently providing the country with a reasonable prospect for long term stability. The study has identified the main features and characteristics of Lebanon's political system as well as a number of international, regional, and domestic developments that have shaped Lebanon's post-Taif political institutions. The following are some of the major findings and conclusions.

The Taif agreement, which was ratified by Lebanese parliamentarians in the Fall of 1989, was sponsored by the Arab League, especially Saudi Arabia. Internally, the major factor contributing to the conclusion and implementation of the accord was the failure of its chief opponent, Lebanese Army General Michel Aoun in his military campaign against Syria. Aoun ultimately failed to gain the support of the Muslim leadership. Muslims believed that Aoun's campaign against Syria avoided the issue of constitutional reform and creation of a more equitable political system, which they considered as a far more pressing objective than Syria's military withdrawal. Externally, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and subsequent Syrian participation in the American-led coalition against Iraq allowed Syria to gain American and Arab support to remove Aoun from power. Aoun had hoped that international outrage would prevent the Syrians from moving against him and eventually pressure Syria to withdraw its troops from Lebanon. However, such pressure failed to materialize, especially from the world's only remaining superpower, the United States. The realities of the Persian Gulf and international politics had led the United States to downgrade the relative importance of Lebanon. In its confrontation with Iraq, the United States needed broad Arab military and

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diplomatic support. Syria's partnership in the coalition against Iraq removed any potential American opposition to Syrian dominance over Lebanon.

Politically, the Taif accord has contributed to the stability of the country by creating a more equitable power-sharing arrangement among the various communities. However, despite strengthening such institutions as the army and internal security forces, most governmental institutions remain weak and in most cases their proper functioning is replaced with government by a "Troika," consisting of the President, Prime Minister, and House Speaker, who have shared power. While the heads of Lebanon's top three political institutions did play very significant roles prior to the Taif reforms, at no time in the country's history did state policies depend on the relations among them to the extent they do now. Each of Lebanon's top three leaders has an interest in maximizing his own personal power. Speaker Berri and Prime Minister Hariri, who have held those posts for most of the post-Taif period, and current president, Emile Lahoud, have developed personal rivalries that overshadow the institutions which they head. The relationship among the three has in general led to stability but when they fail to reach a consensus and one party ends up winning over the others in policy matters and legislative matters, the victory is viewed in terms of a zero-sum game by the Sunni, Maronite, and Shiite communities. The filling of high and low level government jobs, for example, has been a major issue of contention among the Troika members. Religious affiliation has increasingly become the major criterion for the selection of government employees.

The Taif accord's provisions calling for the elimination of the sectarian system are yet to be implemented. The Taif called for the formation of a committee, composed of the speaker of parliament, prime minister, and president, that would come up with a plan to end

the sectarian-based representative system. Until this committee is actually formed and sets in motion the process to end sectarianism, Lebanon will remain highly divided and polarized just as it was under the previous regime. Unlike the previous regime, which led to Christian hegemony, however, the current Taif regime has led to Muslim political dominance. The post-Taif period has led to an asymmetry of negotiating power at the expense of the Christian sects. This was made possible because of the following facts: first, the formal constitutional changes brought about by the Taif; second, the fact that the majority of the population is Muslim, a fact which Christians have refused to acknowledge; third, the backing that some Muslim leaders, such as Speaker Berri, receive from Damascus; and, fourth, the strong financial clout of other leaders, such as Prime Minister Hariri, who enjoys the support of regional and international powers such as France and Saudi Arabia. Christians would like to see Lebanese President Lahoud be more assertive when it comes to pursuing the interests of their community. In a recent front page political commentary (*Nahar* January 17 2003), prominent Maronite journalist Gebran Tueni stressed that it was time that the President understood that there need not be any "contradiction between being a Christian and his Lebanese, Arab identity." This perceived contradiction, according Tueni, has prevented the president from being "first a leader in his own community, to then lead the entire nation." Pressing the point harder, Tueni noted that just like Hariri is a "zaim" in his Sunni community, and speaker Berri and Druze leader Walid Jumblatt hold similar statures in theirs, there should be no shame for the Christians to enjoy such a privilege.

This study has also analyzed the Taif accord's security and foreign policy provisions. In the area of security, the agreement's provisions calling for the disarming and outlawing of militias, have been implemented. During the civil war, different Christian and Muslim

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militias operated more like gangs than political organizations. The anarchy that existed during the civil war allowed the militias to get involved in smuggling, kidnapping, robbery, and other violent and serious crimes. Following the end of the civil war, militia members received amnesty from prosecution and were integrated back into civilian life. The only organization that was not disarmed was *Hizbullah;* this Lebanese resistance against Israeli occupation was allowed to keep its weapons under the Taif agreement. The agreement had called for the implementation of United Nations' Resolution 425, which called for the unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli army from Lebanon. The Israelis were eventually forced to end their twenty-two year occupation of the country. However, their withdrawal, which has been verified by the United Nations Interim Force for Lebanon (UNIFL), continues to be a source of controversy. Resolution 425 also calls on UNIFL to assist the Lebanese government in reasserting its authority in the areas vacated by the Israelis. The Lebanese government however, has refused to deploy the Army in the southern part of the country. The government claims that Israelis have not complied fully with U.N. Resolution 425 because they have refused to withdraw from a small strip of land along the Lebanese-Syrian-Israeli border known as the *Shebaa* farms. The Israelis assert that the Shebaa farms are not Lebanese and were occupied in the 1967 war against Syria. *Hizbullah*, the pro-Iranian and Syrian organization, which is credited with driving the Israelis out of Lebanon, has vowed to continue its military activities until the Israelis are driven from the disputed farms. *Hizbulla's* anti-Israeli military activities in the area may bring massive reprisals by the Israelis against Lebanon's infrastructure and Syrian forces inside Lebanon, which in turn may result in *Hizbullah* retaliation, in the form of missile strikes against Northern Israel. That is an outcome that the Israelis, the Syrians, and the Iranians, who have counseled

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against giving the Israelis an excuse to launch massive military strikes against Lebanon's infrastructure, would all like to avoid. So far the Israelis, which have been preoccupied with the Palestinian uprisings, have limited their reprisals in response to attacks in the *Shebaa* farms area. But, there is no guarantee that they will not attack deep into Lebanon and Syria in the future. As for the United States, which has vital national, economic, and strategic interests in the region, it has continued to press Israel to practice restraint and the Syrians to use their influence to maintain calm along the Israeli border.

The Taif stresses the importance of fraternal relations between Lebanon and other Arab countries, especially Syria. The agreement states that, "between Lebanon and Syria there is a special relationship that derives its strength from the roots of blood relationships, history, and joint fraternal interests. This is the concept on which the two countries' coordination and cooperation is founded, and which will be embodied by the agreements between the two countries in all areas, in a manner that accomplishes the two fraternal countries' interests within the framework of the sovereignty and independence of each of them." However, in reality Lebanon's policy-making process has not been independent nor free of Syrian interference. Successive post-Taif Lebanese governments have been greatly influenced by Syria, which has emerged as the final political arbiter in the country. The two presidents that have served since the conclusion of the Taif have both been very close to Syria. The Lebanese constitution stipulates that the parliament elects the president for a six-year term, while preventing any elected president from seeking consecutive terms. In 1995 when President Elias Hirawi's term was due to expire, Lebanese parliamentarians amended the constitution and extended Hirawi's term for three more years. With Syrian support, the Lebanese Parliament did so by proclamation. Syria's influence over Lebanon had never

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been so overtly manifested. Previously, Bishara al-Khuri, who led the drive to independence and was elected president in 1943 and reelected in 1949, had been the only president able to gain an extension to his term.

Relations between Lebanon and Syria were formalized by the Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination (May 1991). This treaty led to the creation of a Higher Council between Lebanon and Syria, headed by a general secretariat and comprising senior political personalities. The Higher Council was tasked with overseeing four joint Syrian-Lebanese committees on foreign affairs, defense and security, economic and social policy, and cabinet coordination. These committees make binding decisions concerning coordination on foreign policy, security and economic issues. A Mutual Defense and Security Pact, concluded in August 1991, followed the Treaty of Brotherhood and Cooperation. The pact linked the Lebanese Army, security agencies, and intelligence agencies to their Syrian counterparts. Military instructors and information related to security matters were to be exchanged in order to facilitate military coordination between the two countries. A variety of Syrian-Lebanese agreements concerned with economic and social issues ensued. The ten agreements concluded between the two countries since the adoption of the Taif Accords addressed issues ranging from agricultural and industrial development to water and freedom of movement of people and capital.

The opponents of Syria in Lebanon claim the various treaties and agreements have led to Syrian domination of the country. These opponents have called for a more balanced relationship between the two countries based on mutual recognition of each other's independence and sovereignty. The opponents of the pro-Syrian regime in Lebanon believe that a balanced relationship can only be achieved when there is a full Syrian military

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withdrawal from the country. The Taif agreement stipulates that the Syrian forces redeploy to the eastern Bekaa Valley and for an agreement to be "concluded by the two governments to determine the strength and duration of the presence of Syrian forces in the above mentioned area and to define these forces' relationship with the Lebanese state authorities." The Lebanese authorities have characterized this relationship and the Syrian military presence as being a "necessary" and a "temporary" one. The Lebanese government maintains that the Syrian military presence is necessary to confront the common internal and regional threats the two countries face and that it is temporary and will end once the Lebanese government is able to deploy its own army and internal security forces to assert its authority throughout the country. Both the Syrian and Lebanese governments have genuine security concerns stemming not just from the Israeli threat but also from domestic sources. The various Palestinian refugee camps, for example, and the Wahabi religious extremism that is on the rise not only inside the camps but also from major Lebanese cities such as Tripoli and Sidon have caused problems for both the Lebanese and the Syrian regimes in the past and if left unchecked, are certain to destabilize the two countries in the future.

To comply with the provisions of the Taif accord calling for their redeployment, the Syrian forces have been withdrawn from Beirut and all southern and northern coastal cities to other parts of the country closer to the Syrian border. These military moves and a surprise visit by President Bashar Asad to Beirut which in effect recognized the independence of Lebanon, have been viewed as important concessions by Syria to its critics and opponents in Lebanon. Nonetheless, Syria's opponents have continued to insist on complete Syrian military withdrawal from the country. Some in the Maronite community have even gone as far as supporting the Syrian Accountability Act, which is being considered by the U.S.

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Congress. The bill, is supported by the Israeli lobby, calls on Syria to withdraw from Lebanon and cease its support of groups the United States considers terrorist organizations or risk being slapped by sanctions. The Syrian Accountability legislation has caused a split among the opponents of Syria in Lebanon. Many have argued that the bill only serves Israel's interests and that the objective of removing the Syrian army from Lebanon should be pursued through other means. The legislation has also caused a temporary split in the United States between the Bush administration and the members of Congress supporting the bill on the grounds it would weakens the president's prerogatives on the conduct of foreign policy and waging war on terrorism, an effort with which the Syrian government had been cooperating. In fact, the Syrian authorities have arrested and interrogated several anti-American militants and turned over valuable information to the U.S. authorities and law enforcement agencies. Since these events, relations between the U.S. and Syria have deteriorated and the Bush administration has signed on the Syrian Accountability Act.

As we have noted, the fate of Lebanon depends on the interaction between international and domestic forces. The Department of State has long supported Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and the goal of removing all foreign forces from the country. With the recent U.S. military intervention in the region to oust the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein, the Bush administration hopes to gain additional leverage over Syria and Iran, two regional powers with strong ties to Lebanon. However, there are limits on the powers of the United States, and its main demand that the Syrian and Iranian-backed organization *Hizbullah* be disarmed is not likely to come to fruition in the foreseeable future. Disarming the Lebanese resistance would leave both Lebanon and Syria vulnerable to preemptive Israeli strikes. The

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balance of power on the Israeli-Lebanese border is likely to persist until there is an overall settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The last area addressed in this study has been the development of democratic institutions and practices in Lebanon. While the first post-Taif parliamentary elections (1992) were marred by irregularities and boycotts, which resulted in a clean sweep for pro-government candidates, the results of the 2000 elections resulted in strong gains for the opposition. The comparison of those two elections revealed that Lebanon has made significant progress in the holding of free and honest elections. However, the actual changes in Lebanese elections have not been accompanied by a change in the way Lebanese citizens view electoral democracy in the country. Surveys taken prior to Lebanon's most recent parliamentary election held in the summer of 2000, analyzed in chapter five of this study, show little or no change in the attitudes of potential Lebanese voters compared to surveys taken during the 1992 parliamentary elections. The continued cynicism of the public from 1992-2000 may be due to either a natural lag or a deeper cultural phenomena. In any case, the results of the 2000 elections contradicted what both the public and the pundits believed would be a forgone conclusion involving large electoral landslides for pro-government candidates.

For a democratic political system to function, a participant public that views the electoral process as fair, honest, and legitimate is needed if one believes the findings of such Western researchers as Almond and Verba (1963). However, the majority of the Lebanese electorate did not appear to hold these same views that are considered important for democratic practice, at least before the 2000 elections. Surveys revealed the reasons for not wanting to participate in elections. These reasons included, fear of foreign intervention, lack of free expression, mistrust of politicians, and fear of cheating. They indicated a very low

level of trust among the Lebanese in their political system. Nonetheless, it is also true that these same voters participated in the 2000 parliamentary elections and contributed to the wining of many opposition candidates.

The results of the 2000 elections clearly contradicted the cynicism and the widely-held belief among the Lebanese public that the results of the elections would be fixed by the government with its candidates and allies being guaranteed electoral success. Those who were running against the pro-Syrian regime in Lebanon were not given much of a chance by pundits, who believed that the vote would be rigged and the electoral process would be manipulated by the incumbent government and its forces. In fact, the months prior to the elections witnessed an increase in anti-Syrian sentiments and accusations that Syria would interfere in the electoral process. Prominent politicians and former and current members of parliament from different denominations leveled charges of "bias" against the leaders of the Lebanese government and Christian opposition groups indicated that they would urge their supporters to boycott the elections all together.

In the end, the results of the 2000 parliamentary elections proved the skeptics wrong. This was evident by the strong electoral victories of such opposition candidates as Druze leader Walid Jumblatt. Al though Jumblatt was expected to win, the margin and the scope of his victory surprised many. Jumblatt's list gained sixteen out of the nineteen seats in the province of Mount Lebanon. The results were even more impressive in his home district of Shouf, where his whole ticket was elected with the lowest vote getter on his list receiving 15,000 more votes than the most successful candidate of the government-supported competing ticket. Jumblatt's demands for a rebalancing in the relationship with Syria had resonated with Christian voters who became the main force behind his lopsided victory. The

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government's neutrality and non-interference in the elections was also evident in the

Governorate of Beirut, where former prime-minister and businessman Rafiq Hariri was

heading a list competing with incumbent Prime-Minister Salim Hoss. The result was a clean

sweep for Hariri, who gained enough seats in parliament to make him the leading candidate

for prime-minister. The Lebanese constitution calls for the government to resign the day

after voting, with the president selecting a new-prime minister after consulting with members

of parliament. Subsequently, President Lahoud, who would have preferred to see Hoss

remain on as prime-minister, could not ignore the will of the voters and selected Harriri to

head the new government. Harriri was easily able to obtain a vote of confidence from the

parliament, now controlled by his supporters and allies. This process of a popular vote

leading to a change in the composition of parliament, which in turn led to a peaceful

transition of power in the executive branch, is an example of how an Arab country can

successfully implement democratic rules.

To preserve democracy and maintain momentum for economic revitalization, the 2000

democratically-elected parliament and the parliaments of the future must reassert themselves

when it comes to policymaking. Prior to the outbreak of the civil war, various parliaments

made important legislative contributions to Lebanon's political development. Between 1953

and 1972, for example, the parliaments introduced more than 4,100 bills and passed 91% of

them (Baaklini 1976). These laws allowed the government to pursue socioeconomic

projects in the areas of communication, transportation, health, education, energy, and

agriculture. The result was the emergence of Lebanon as an open, modern country serving as

a commercial bridge between East and West. The legislature was also more effective before

the civil war in overseeing the executive branch. In 1952, for example, it was the opposition

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of such prominent members of parliament as Camille Chamoun and Kamal Jumblatt that forced the then-President Khury to resign after he unlawfully meddled with the parliamentary elections. During the presidency of Fuad Shihab and Charles Helou (1958-1970) the parliament took the lead in opposing the military's interference in politics. In 1970, the parliament elected Suleiman Franjiyeh as president. He in turn supported the parliament's efforts to limit the military's usurpation of power. The present chamber of deputies must continue this tradition of checking the power of the executive and passing vital administrative and economic reforms to help Lebanon compete in the new global economy.

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THE TAIF ACCORD

First, General Principles and Reforms:

I.   General Principles:

A. Lebanon is a sovereign, free, and independent country and a final homeland for all its citizens.

B. Lebanon is Arab in belonging identity. It is an active and founding member of the Arab League and is committed to the League's charter. It is an active and founding member of the United Nations Organization and is committed to its charters. Lebanon is a member of the nonaligned movement. The state of Lebanon shall embody these principles in all areas and spheres, without exception.

C. Lebanon is a democratic parliamentary republic founded on respect for public Liberties, especially the freedoms of expression and belief, on social justice, and on equality in rights and duties among all citizens, without discrimination or preference.

D. The People are the source of authority. They are sovereign and they shall exercise their sovereignty through the constitutional institutions.

E. The economic system is a free system that guarantees individual initiative and private ownership.

E. Culturally, socially, and economically-balanced development is a mainstay of the state's unity and of the system's stability.

G. Efforts (will be made) to achieve comprehensive social justice through fiscal, economic, and social reform.

H. Lebanon's soil is united and it belongs to all Lebanese. Every Lebanese is entitled to live in and enjoy any part of the country under the supremacy of the law. The people may not be categorized on the basis of any affiliation whatsoever and there shall be no fragmentation, no partition, and no repatriation (of Palestinians in Lebanon).

I. No authority violating the common co-existence charter shall be legitimate.

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II. Political Reforms:

A. Chamber of Deputies: The Chamber of Deputies is the legislative authority, which exercises full control over government policy and activities.

1. The Chamber spokesman and his deputy shall be elected for the duration of the chamber's term.

2. In the first session, two years after it elects its speaker and deputy speaker, the chamber may vote only once to withdraw confidence from the speaker and deputy speaker with a two third majority of its members and in accordance with a petition submitted by at least ten deputies. In case confidence is withdrawn, the chamber shall convene immediately to fill the vacant post.

3. No urgent bill presented to the Chamber of Deputies may be issued unless it is included in the agenda of a public session and read in such a session, and unless the grace period stipulated by the constitution passes without a resolution on such a bill with the approval of the cabinet.

4. The electoral district shall be the governorate.

5. Until the Chamber passes an election law free of sectarian restriction, the parliamentary seats be divided according to the following basis:

   a. Equally between Christians and Muslims.

   b. Proportionally between the denominations of each sect.

   c. Proportionally between the districts.

6. The number of members of the chamber of Deputies shall be increased to 108, shared equally between Christians and Muslims. As for the districts created on the basis of this document and the districts whose seats became vacant prior to the proclamation of this document, their seats shall be filled only once on an emergency basis through appointment by the national accord government that is planed to be formed.

7. With the election of the first Chamber of Deputies on a national, not sectarian basis, a Senate shall be formed and all the spiritual families shall be represented in it. The Senate's powers shall be confined to crucial issues.

B. The President of the Republic: The President of the Republic is the head of the
   the state and a symbol of the country's unity. He shall contribute to enhancing
   the constitution and to preserving Lebanon's independence, unity, and territorial
   integrity in accordance with the provisions of the constitution. He is the
   supreme commander of the armed forces, which are subject to the power of the
   cabinet. The president shall exercise the following powers:

1. Head the cabinet [meeting] whenever he wishes, but without voting.

2. Head the Supreme Defense Council.

3. Issue decrees and demand their publications. He shall also be entitled to ask the
   cabinet to reconsider any resolution it makes within fifteen days of the date of
   deposition of the resolution with the presidential office. Should the cabinet insist
   on the adopted resolution, or should the grace period pass without issuing and
   returning the decree, the decree of the resolution shall be valid and must be
   published.

4. Promulgate laws in accordance with the grace period stipulated by the
   constitution and demand their publication upon ratification by the chamber of
   deputies. After notifying the cabinet, the president may also request the
   reexamination of the laws within the grace periods provided by the constitution,
   and in accordance with the articles of the constitution. In case he laws are not
   issued or returned before the end of the grace period, they shall be valid by law
   and they must be published.

5. Refer the bills presented to him by the Chamber of Deputies.

6. Name the Prime Minister-designate in consultation with the Chamber of
   Deputies. The parliamentary consultation is binding.

7. Issue the decree appointing the Prime Minister.

8. On agreement with the Prime Minister, issue the decree forming the cabinet.

9. Issue decrees accepting the resignation of the cabinet or of cabinet ministers
   and decrees relieving them from their duties.

10. Appoint ambassadors, accept the accreditation of ambassadors, and award state
    medals by decree.

11. On agreement with the Prime Minister, negotiate on the conclusion and signing
    of international treaties which shall become valid only upon the approval of the
    cabinet. The cabinet shall familiarize the Chamber of Deputies with such treaties
    when the country's interest and state safety make such familiarization possible. As

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for treaties concerning state finances, trade treaties, and other treaties which may not be abrogated annually, they may not be concluded without the Chamber of Deputies' approval.

12. When the need arises, address messages to the Chamber of Deputies.

13. On with the Prime Minister, summon the Chamber of Deputies to hold special sessions by decree.

14. The President of the Republic is entitled to present to the cabinet any urgent issue beyond the agenda.

15. On with the Prime Minister, calls the cabinet to hold a special session whenever He deems it necessary.

16. Grant special pardon by decree.

17. In the performance of his duty, the president shall not be liable unless he violates the constitution or commits high treason.

C. The Prime Minister: The prime minister is the head of the government. He represents it and speaks in its name. He is responsible for implementing the general policy drafted by the cabinet. The prime minister shall exercise the following powers:

1. Head the cabinet.

2. Hold parliamentary consultations to form the cabinet. And co-sign with the president the decree forming it. The cabinet shall submit its cabinet statement to the Chamber of Deputies for a vote of confidence within thirty days [of its formation]. The cabinet may not exercise its powers before gaining the confidence, after its resignation, or when it is considered retired, except within the narrow sense of disposing of affairs.

3. Present the government's general policy to the Chamber of Deputies.

4. Sign all decrees, except for decrees naming the prime minister and decrees accepting cabinet resignation.

5. Sign the decree calling for a special session and decree issuing laws and Requesting the reexamination of laws.

6. Summon the cabinet to meet, draft its agenda, familiarize the president in advance with the issues included in the agenda and with the urgent issues to be discussed, and sign the usual session minutes.

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7. Observe the activities of the public departments and institutions, coordinate between the ministers, and issue general instructions to insure the smooth progress of work.

8. Hold working sessions with the state agencies concerned in the presence of the ministers concerned.

9. By law, act as the Supreme Defense Council's Deputy Chairman.

D. Cabinet:

[No item 1. as published]

2. Watch over the implementation of laws and regulations and supervise the activities of all the state agencies without exception, including the civilian, military, and security departments and institutions.

3. The cabinet is the authority, which controls the armed forces.

4. Appoint dismiss, and accept the resignation of state employees in accordance with law.

5. It has the right to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies at the request of the president If the chamber refuses to meet in an ordinary or a special session lasting no less than one month, even though it is summoned twice consecutively, or if the chamber sends back the budget in its entirety with the purpose of paralyzing the government. This right may not be exercised again for the same reasons, which called for dissolving the chamber in the first instance.

6. When the president of the republic is present, he heads the cabinet sessions. The cabinet shall meet periodically at special headquarters. The legal quorum for a cabinet meeting is two thirds of the cabinet members. The cabinet shall adopt its resolutions by consent or by vote if the need arise. The resolution shall be adopted by a majority of the members present. As for major issues, they require the approval of two thirds of the cabinet members. The following shall be considered major issues: the state of emergency and its abolition, war and peace, general mobilization, international agreements and treaties, the state's general budget, comprehensive and long term development plans, the appointment of top level civil servants or their equivalent, the reexamination of the administrative divisions, dissolving the chamber of deputies, the election law, the citizenship law, the personal status law, and the dismissal of cabinet ministers.

E. Minister: The minister's powers shall be reinforced in a manner compatible with the government's general policy and with the principles of collective responsibility. A

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minister shall not be relieved of his responsibilities unless by a cabinet decree or unless the Chamber of Deputies withdraws its confidence from him individually.

F. Cabinet Resignation and the Dismissal of Ministers:

1. The cabinet shall be considered retired in the following cases:

   a. If its chairman resigns.

   b. If it loses more than one third of its members.

   c. If its chairman dies.

   d. At the beginning of a president's term.

   e. At the beginning of the Chamber of Deputies' term.

   f. When the Chamber of Deputies withdraws its confidence from it on an initiative by the chamber itself and on the basis of a vote of confidence.

2. A minister shall be relieved by a decree signed by the president and the prime minister, with the cabinet's approval.

3. When the cabinet resigns or is considered retired, the Chamber of Deputies shall by law considered to be convened in a special session until a new cabinet is formed. A vote of confidence session shall follow.

G. Abolition of Political Sectarianism: Abolishing political sectarianism is a fundamental national objective. To achieve it, it is required that efforts be made in accordance with a phased plan. The Chamber of deputies, elected on the basis of equal sharing by Christians and Muslims shall adopt the proper measures to achieve this objective and to form a national council which is headed by the President of the republic and which includes, in addition to the Prime Minister and the Chamber of Deputies' speaker, political, intellectual, and social notables. The council's task will be to examine and propose the means capable of abolishing sectarianism, to present them to the chamber of deputies and the cabinet, and to observe the implementation of the phased plan. The following shall be done in the interim period:

1. Abolish sectarian representation and rely on capability and specialization in public jobs, the judiciary, the military, security, public and joint institutions, and independent agencies in accordance with the dictates of national accord., excluding the top level jobs and equivalent jobs which shall be shared equally by Christians and Muslims without allocating any particular job to any sect.

2. Abolish the mention of sect and denomination on identity cards.

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III. Other Reforms:

A. Administrative Decentralism:

1. The state of Lebanon shall be a single united state with a strong central authority.

2. The powers of the governors and district administrative officers shall be expanded and all state administrations shall be represented in the administrative provinces at the highest level possible so as to facilitate serving the citizens and meeting their needs locally.

3. The administrative divisions shall be recognized in a manner that emphasizes national fusion within the framework of preserving common coexistence and unity op the soil, people and institutions.

4. Expanded administrative decentralization shall be adopted at the level of the smaller administrative units. [district and smaller units] through the election of a council, headed by the district officer, in every district, to insure local participation.

5. A comprehensive and unified development plan capable of developing the provinces economically and socially shall be adopted and the resources of the municipalities and municipal unions shall be reinforced with the necessary financial resources.

B. Courts: To guarantee that all officials and citizens are subject to the supremacy of the law and to insure harmony between the action of the legislative and executive authorities on one hand, and the givens of common coexistence and the basic rights of the Lebanese as stipulated by the constitution on the other hand:

1. The higher council which is stipulated by the constitution and whose task it is to try presidents and ministers shall be formed. A special law on the rules of trials before this council shall be promulgated.

2. A constitutional council shall be created to interpret the constitution, to observe the constitutionality of the laws, and to settle disputes and contests emanating from presidential and parliamentary elections.

3. The following authorities shall be entitled to revise the constitutional council in manners pertaining to interpreting the constitution and observing the constitutionality of the laws:

    a. The President of the Republic.

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b. The Speaker of Parliament.

c. The Prime Minister.

d. A certain percentage of members of the Chamber of Deputies.

4. To insure the principle of harmony between religion and state, the heads of the Lebanese sects may revise the constitutional council in matters pertaining to:

a. Personal status affairs.

b. Freedom of religion and practice of religious rites.

c. Freedom of religious education.

C. To insure the judiciary's independence, a certain number of the Higher Judiciary Council Shall be elected by the judiciary body.

D. The Parliamentary Election Law: Parliamentary elections shall be held in accordance with a new law on the basis of provinces and in the light of rules that guarantee common coexistence between Lebanese, and that insure the sound and efficient political representation of all the people's factions and generations. This shall be done after reviewing the administrative divisions within the context of unity of the people, the land, and the institutions.

E. The creation of a socioeconomic council for development: A Socioeconomic Council shall be created to insure that the representatives of the various sectors Participate in drafting the state's socioeconomic policy and providing advice and proposals.

F. Education:

1. Education shall be provided to all and shall be made obligatory for the elementary stage. A

2..The freedom of education shall be emphasized in accordance with general laws and regulations.

3. Private education shall be protected and state control over private schools and books shall be strengthened.

4. Official, vocational, and technological education shall be reformed, strengthened,

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and developed in a manner that mets the country's development and reconstruction needs. The conditions of the Lebanese University shall be reformed and aid shall be provided to the university, especially to its technical colleges.

5. The curricula shall be reviewed and developed in a manner that strengthens national belonging, fusion, spiritual and cultural openness, and that unifies textbooks on the subject of history and national education.

F. Information/Media: All information media shall be recognized under the canopy Of the law and within the framework of responsible liberties that serve the cautious tendencies and the objective of ending the state of war.

Second, spreading the sovereignty of the state of Lebanon over all Lebanese territories: Considering that all Lebanese factions have agreed to the establishment of a strong state founded on the basis of national accord, the national accord government shall draft a detailed one-year plan whose objective is to spread the sovereignty of the State of Lebanon over all Lebanese territories gradually with the state's own forces. The broad lines of the plan shall be as follows:

A. Disbanding of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias shall be announced. The Militias' weapons shall be delivered to the State of Lebanon within a period of six months, beginning with the approval of the national accord charter. The President of the Republic shall be elected. A national accord government shall Be formed, and political reforms shall be approved constitutionally.

B. The internal security forces shall be strengthened through:

1. Opening the door for enlistment to all Lebanese without exception, beginning The training of enlisted personnel centrally, distributing the enlisted personnel in the Govern orates, and subjecting them to organized periodic training courses.

2. Strengthening the security agency to insure control over the entry and departure of individuals into and out of the country by land, air, and sea.

C. Strengthening the armed forces:

1. The fundamental task of the armed forces is to defend the homeland and if necessary, protect public order when the danger exceeds the capability of the internal security forces to deal with such a danger on their own.

2. The armed forces shall be used to support the internal security forces in preserving security under conditions determined by the cabinet.

3. The armed forces shall be unified, prepared, and trained in order that they

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may be able to shoulder their national responsibilities in confronting Israeli aggression.

4. When the internal security forces become ready to assume their security tasks, the armed forces shall return to their barracks.

5. The armed forces intelligence shall be reorganized to serve military objectives exclusively.

D. The problem of the Lebanese refugees shall be solved fundamentally, and the right of every Lebanese evicted since 1975 to return to the place from which he was evicted shall be established. Legislation to guarantee this right and to insure the means of reconstruction shall be issued. Considering that the objective of the state of Lebanon is to spread its authority over all Lebanese territories through its own forces, represented primarily by the internal security forces, and in view of the fraternal relations binding Syria to Lebanon, the Syrian forces shall assist the forces of the legitimate Lebanese government to sspread the authority of the state of Lebanon within a set period of no more than two years, which begins with the election of a new president, formation of the national accord cabinet, and approval of the constitutional political reforms. At the end of this period, the two governments— the Syrian Government and the Lebanese National Accord Government—shall decide to redeploy the Syrian forces in the Bekaa area. An agreement shall also be concluded by the two governments to determine the strength and duration of the presence of the Syrian armed forces in the above mentioned area. The Arab Tripartite Committee is prepared to assist the two states, if they so wish to develop this agreement.

Third, Liberating Lebanon from the Israeli occupation:
Regaining state authority over the territories extending to the internationally-recognized borders, requires the following:

A. Efforts to implement Resolution 425 and the other United Nations Security Council resolutions calling for fully eliminating the Israeli occupation.

B. Adherence to the truce agreement that was concluded on the 23rd of March 1949.

C. Taking all steps necessary to liberate all Lebanese territories from the Israeli occupation, to spread state sovereignty over all the territories, and to deploy the Lebanese army in the border area adjacent to Israel; and making efforts to reinforce the presence of the U.N. forces in South Lebanon to insure the Israeli withdrawal and to provide the opportunity for the return of security and stability to the border area.

Fourth,   Lebanese-Syrian relations:

Lebanon, with its Arab identity, is tied to all the Arab countries. by true fraternal relations. Between Lebanon and Syria there is a special relationship that derives its strength from the roots of the blood relationships, history, and joint fraternal interests. This is the concept on which the two countries' coordination and cooperation is founded, and which will be embodied by the agreements between the two countries in all areas, in a manner that accomplishes the two fraternal countries' interests within the framework of the of the sovereignty and independence of each of them. Therefore, and because strengthening the basis of security creates the climate needed to develop these bonds, Lebanon should not be allowed to constitute a source of threat to Syria's security, and Syria should not be allowed to constitute a source of threat to Lebanon's security under any circumstances. Consequently, Lebanon should not allow itself to become a pathway or a base for any force, state, or organization seeking to undermine it's security or Syria's security. Syria, which eager for Lebanon's security, independence, and unity and for harmony among it's citizens, should not permit any act that poses a threat to y Lebanon's security, independence, and sovereignty.

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