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***United States Foreign Policy Towards Lebanon***

Submitted by

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*Abstract:*

This capstone focuses on United States foreign policy towards Lebanon beginning in 1958, the year the of the first Marines' intervention in the country, until present day. Specifically, this study examines the circumstances and factors surrounding both deployments of the U.S. Marines in 1958 and 1982, respectively. Particular attention is paid to the regional and international factors that influenced the U.S. decision to intervene and suggests alternatives on what could have been differently throughout the American decision making process. This study will also demonstrate the influences that domestic Lebanese politics exerts on America's foreign policy formulation towards the country. What should emerge from this analysis are the parallels between the present-day Lebanon and both instances of American intervention.

## *The 1958 Lebanese Crisis*

The 1958 crisis that occurred in Lebanon seemingly appeared to be an internal conflict brought about by the sectarian divides within the nation. Lebanon had been no stranger to these issues as the sharp contrast in religious beliefs had influenced every aspect of political and social behavior within the country. However, the 1958 crisis was not only due to Lebanon's internal makeup, but also due to various regional and international external factors that spilled over into Lebanon. The ideology of pan-Arabism, which supported reducing the West's influence in the region, was on the rise. President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt was the most influential Arab leader during this period and supported the Arab cause and many Lebanese Muslims supported him as a result. Already in place in Lebanon, however, was the pro-Western Christian Government of President Camille Chamoun. Given the Lebanese Parliament's representation of all religious groups, differing views on external issues like pro-Arabism were based on Lebanon's internal religious splits, which brought the population against each another. Generally speaking, the Christian population supported a pro-Western stance, while the Lebanese Muslims supported a more Arab nationalistic stance, which is what inevitably culminated in the 1958 crisis.

### **Domestic Lebanese Issues - Lead up to Tension.**

President Camille Chamoun was a major factor influencing the divide that came about over the issue that led to the crisis that occurred in Lebanon. Chamoun came to power in 1952 and was initially neutral in foreign policy; he sought to sustain good relations with both the United States and the Soviet Union and also to involve Lebanon more actively in Arab affairs.<sup>1</sup> Chamoun, however, would soon become a major American ally in the region; while maintaining a relationship with the Soviets, his support for the United States was clear. He had previously

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<sup>1</sup> Alin, Erika G. *The United States and the 1958 Lebanon Crisis: American Intervention in the Middle East*. Lanham: University of America, 1994. 35. Print.

served as Lebanon's ambassador to London as well as to the United Nations during and after World War II. Subsequently, his past and close contact with Britain and the West caused him to believe that Lebanon would benefit greatly from good relations with the West.<sup>2</sup> His underlying support for the West coalition and anti-communist stance came as early as February 1953 when Lebanon encouraged Saudi Arabia to join them in an "official declaration" to call on other Arab nations to prevent communist penetration in the Middle East.

To begin with, President Chamoun's internal politics helped aid in dividing the Lebanese population. First, Chamoun reformed electoral laws in Lebanon and decreased the number of parliamentary seats. These prospects affected both Christians and Muslims; however, given the fact the highest political position was and would always continue to be run by a Christian, the reforms were looked at as posing a greater challenge to Muslims. The reforms showcased the fact that the president could "limit the national-level political influence of the Muslim community by circumscribing Muslim politicians' prospects for election to the legislature."<sup>3</sup> The failure to introduce economic and social programs also aided in the divide. Though wide expansion of social services were implemented during that time, the image created made it seem as only major urban and Christian areas were reaping the benefit of these advances, while the rural regions containing much of the country's Muslim population were not.

Lebanon's embrace of the Eisenhower Doctrine was proof of Chamoun's pro-Western beliefs. The Doctrine implemented the fact that "a country could request American economic assistance and/or aid from U.S. military forces if it was being threatened by armed aggression from another state."<sup>4</sup> The Doctrine also singled out the Soviet threat by stating it would "protect the territorial integrity...of such nations, requesting such aid against overt armed aggression

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid 38

<sup>3</sup> Ibid 39

<sup>4</sup> "The Eisenhower Doctrine, 1957." *History.state.gov*. Web. 20 Apr. 2012. <The Eisenhower Doctrine, 1957>.

from any nation controlled by international communism.”<sup>5</sup> The Doctrine, however, was contrary to the much of the Muslim population’s stance that the country should distance itself from the West and pursue a closer relationship with other Arab countries. The president’s tenure, according to Lebanon’s constitution limited it to only one term, and many believed Chamoun intended to seek a second term.

External factors occurring in the Middle East region during Chamoun’s presidency had caused factions of the Lebanese population to question support for the West, however. A growing sense of Arab nationalism had arisen, due in part to Gamal Abdel Nasser’s ascent to power in Egypt in 1954. Nasser was a strong leader, and his Arab nationalist ideologies resonated through the Arab world. The Suez Crisis in 1956 only added to this sense of Arab nationalism, as Nasser’s public image improved positively with the notion that he had come out victorious, while the West had been defeated; his influence therefore increased in the region. The Baghdad Pact in 1956 added to this, as it sought to form an anti-Soviet, pro-Western alliance. However, the Pact’s main Western member was the United Kingdom, who had attacked Egypt during Suez the year before, causing even more backlash towards the West and the Pact’s premise. The United States was influential in the Pact’s formation; however, it did not join because they believed Arab states would oppose it as a result. The plan backfired, however, because of the United Kingdom’s membership as well as the fact that the United States offered incentives for countries that would join. As Nasser’s ideologies resonated throughout the Arab world, Lebanese Muslims could not help but to feel supportive of this cause. On the contrary, Christians feared the growth of the nationalist movement, which could sweep Lebanon into a

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid



large Arab Muslim union, in which the Lebanese Christians would become an insignificant minority.<sup>6</sup>

President Chamoun's internal and external policy was important in that much of the Muslim population believed his decisions violated the country's National Pact. The National Pact is the foundation of the Lebanese political system which is governed along religious lines; the president in Lebanon must be Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim and the speaker of parliament a Shia and the seats in parliament must incorporate all religious sects that are present in Lebanon's population. The rules are set as to deter any one religious group from gaining too much power, given the major ethnic divide among Lebanese Christians and Muslims. The Pact, however, also states that Christians should defer from "calling on Western countries to defend their interests," and, though Lebanon has an Arab character, "Lebanese Muslims should not attempt to politically unify the country with other Arab states."<sup>7</sup> Acceptance of the Eisenhower Doctrine, according to many Muslims, was the Western alliance that was prohibited in the National Pact. Also, Chamoun never explicitly stated he would seek another term, but it was highly thought to be his intention. Another term violated the constitution which limited the president's tenure to one term, as well as impose his views on the country for another six years, which many Muslims were fearful of.

### **U.S. Policy towards Lebanon in the Years Prior to the Crisis.**

Lebanon for the United States in the years leading up to the 1958 crisis was a unique and therefore important regional ally.. After the Suez Crisis, President Chamoun was more supportive of American policy in the Middle East than any other leader in the area. However, Lebanon was only a small country in a region dominated by stronger and more important

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid 37

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

countries when it came to United States policy. During this time the entire region can be directly looked at as Cold War politics, in which the United States sought to deter Soviet influence in the oil rich area. Furthermore, the Arab nationalist movement that was developing put a strong emphasis on erasing the influence the West had previously had and was in direct opposition to the United States policy of perpetuating Western power in the area.<sup>8</sup> This was a challenge as the emergence of strong organization like the Baath party and Pan Arabists like Nasser sought to unify Arab nations and end Western dominance. The United States realized that the only way to achieve their goals was to promote friendly relations with Arab nationalists and did this by prospects of offering economic and military aid.

Lebanon was, therefore, given a lower priority in relation to other countries in the region, based on the fact that it already had a pro-Western stance in place. Lebanon was seen as an important strategic base for American government operations and commercial interests the United States had in the Middle East.<sup>9</sup> This is not to say the United States was not fearful of communist activities and its influence in Lebanon. President Chamoun was less harsh on communism within Lebanon itself than was his predecessor President Bechara Khoury. The United States Embassy in Beirut had reported in 1953 and 1954 that communist efforts had expanded recruitment activities, especially among women, students and Palestinian refugees.”<sup>10</sup> The embassy also complained that the Lebanese government was not inclined to try suspected communists “in a more energetic manner.” As a result, President Chamoun rejected various American requests to take firmer action against communists believing it would be counterproductive; causing the movement to move underground, thus harder to control. Various

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid 4

<sup>9</sup> Ibid 5

<sup>10</sup> Ibid 45

American programs were therefore sponsored, many of which focused on workers in order to counter communist and Arab nationalist influence among the Lebanese trade unions.<sup>11</sup>

Though the United States in former years was concerned by growing communist sentiments, it is clear that by 1956 they believed that the general Lebanese public did not support communism and it posed absolutely no clear threat. Officials observed that no opposition groups within Lebanon had seriously considered “communist collaboration,” and the communist party had not in any way sought to overthrow the government in Lebanon.<sup>12</sup> Given all these facts, many Lebanese requests for military and security aid was denied by the United States given that communism was not a real threat. Technical and economic aid was provided to Lebanon, however, but even so Chamoun believed that it was inadequate when compared to aid given to countries like Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Yet the Eisenhower administration argued Lebanon was comparably prosperous to other countries and were less in need of military aid than other countries in the region.<sup>13</sup>

Aid somewhat changed with Chamoun’s open acceptance of the Eisenhower Doctrine in 1957; the move was a shock in the Arab world.<sup>14</sup> Chamoun sought to strengthen American support for his government with his acceptance of the Doctrine. It was somewhat of a slap in the face to his domestic and regional critics, who were not supportive of his regime. These include President Nasser, whose pan- Arabist views differed greatly from that of Chamoun. Nasser’s ideology, as mentioned earlier, had a great influence on Lebanese Muslims specifically. Acceptance of the Doctrine was therefore a signal to Chamoun’s critics that any threat to his government would be fought with American resistance. With the Doctrine’s stress on assistance

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Ibid 46

<sup>13</sup> Ibid 52

<sup>14</sup> Korbani, Agnes G. *U.S. Intervention in Lebanon, 1958 and 1982: Presidential Decisionmaking*. New York: Praeger, 1991. 33. Print.

to strengthen pro-Western states, Lebanon received \$2.2 million in military aid, aid which had previously been denied.<sup>15</sup> The United States believed Chamoun showed courage in openly accepting such a thing, especially in the Arab world, and believed he should be rewarded. The United States also hoped, through its aid programs, Lebanon would serve as an example of U.S. and Arab cooperation, creating a positive image of the United States among other countries in the region.

Chamoun's embrace of the Eisenhower Doctrine and its negative effects on Lebanon was somewhat overlooked by the United States. Acceptance to align with the West violated the National Pact and isolated Lebanon from the Arab world. The Eisenhower administration, however, believed no significant opposition existed towards the Doctrine, and political leaders in Lebanon who disagreed were merely trying appeal to those who supported the Arab nationalist cause. It is true that the Lebanese parliament overwhelmingly supported the Doctrine; however, the fact that "opposition politicians had absented themselves from the parliament's vote" was overlooked.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the Muslim pro-Arab sentiments were not visible in the vote that occurred. The reelection of President Chamoun was also overlooked as well. The Administration realized that there were grievances against Chamoun's government, but did not realize the extent to which the re-election issue played a factor. It was not until the situation in Lebanon had gotten worse that the United States had comprehended Chamoun's reelection and magnitude in aiding the conflict.

### **Outbreak of Violence**

Opposition to Chamoun's government was exacerbated by organized, legal groups present in Lebanon's political scene, and was influential in coordinating resistance to the

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<sup>15</sup> Alin 49

<sup>16</sup> Ibid 54

Lebanese government. Most established of these groups was the United National Front which was led by prominent Muslim figures like Druze leader Kamal Junblatt and Abdullah Yafi.<sup>17</sup> The group was mostly backed by Arab nationalists and traditionalists, yet also found Christian following with their support for social reform. The Front believed tension within Lebanon was due to Chamoun's domestic policies and efforts to align with the West, and the Front sought to pursue closer cooperation with Arab States. Tensions in Lebanon were heightened by the Front's political maneuvers in the 1957 parliamentary elections. The Front sought to increase the number of anti-Chamoun politicians in parliament. The effort was due in part to the fact that when elections for president came the year after, parliament, who agrees on the new president, would choose someone more to their liking. The results of the elections were surprising to Junblatt and Yafi as more than two thirds of the seats were won by Chamoun supporters. Junblatt and Yafi had even lost their parliamentary seats.<sup>18</sup> The National Front refused to recognize the outcome of the election and the leaders now had personal reasons as Junblatt and Yafi were furious not only with the outcome, but their voice in parliament was lost as well. They were pushed to harden their stance toward Chamoun and increase resistance activity through means of the National Front.<sup>19</sup>

Regionally, the United Arab Republic was formed on February 1, 1958 between Egypt and Syria. The republic was formed as a union of two pro-Arab states and Lebanese Muslims saw the move as a victory for Arab nationalists and their personal cause as well within Lebanon. Popular demonstrations were held in Lebanon supporting the Republic throughout February, and when Nasser visited Damascus in late February, hundreds of thousands of Lebanese crossed into

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Ibid 58

<sup>19</sup> Ibid 59

Syria to welcome him.<sup>20</sup> Political opposition leaders showed support for the Republic with official statements. Demonstrations and statements, however, only aided Christian fears of the integration of Lebanon into the pro-Arab cause, where they would become a minority. Over the pursuing months clashes became common between pro-Chamoun and opposition forces, brought about by street fights and guerrilla attacks with those who supported the Republic and Junblatt's stance.<sup>21</sup> As stated earlier, the indication that President Chamoun planned to seek another term only helped increase tension. Tension boiled over on May 8, 1958 when Nassib Al Matni, a Christian editor of the Lebanese newspaper Al Telegraph, was killed in Tripoli. Matni was Christian but also opposed the Chamoun government.<sup>22</sup> Opposition had strongly believed that the government was involved in Matni's murder, and his murder was used as a basis of outcry against the government. Riots broke out in Tripoli and quickly spread to other parts of the country like the south and the Bekaa Valley.<sup>23</sup> By mid-June, Foreign Minister Malik reported that the situation was deteriorating and that opposition forces could possibly try to overtake the presidential palace soon.<sup>24</sup>

### **The May White House Meeting**

Four White House meetings convened between May and the subsequent decision to intervene in Lebanon in July. With the escalation of violence, President Chamoun had asked the French, British and the United States governments to notify him how they would react to a Lebanese request for assistance to prevent Arab nationalists and anti- Western forces from taking over the government in Lebanon. The May 13 White House meeting was the first serious deliberation on the issue given the request that was provided by President Chamoun. It is

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid 67

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Korbani 35

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Alin 88

important to note that the meeting did not take place in order to settle the question of whether the United States should provide military assistance to Chamoun; rather the main issue was to go over the “what if” factors if the situation led to such a degree that military force was in fact needed. Furthermore, if the United believed action was required, a main focus of the meeting was to decide on what basis intervention would be enforced as well as to inform Chamoun what kind of help he could come to anticipate should his government actually ask for assistance.<sup>25</sup>

In terms of the “what if” factors of intervention, the meeting covered the pros and cons of using military force in Lebanon. Many important political advisers were present at the meeting including Secretary of State John Dulles, CIA Director Allen Dulles and Deputy Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs William Rountree among others.<sup>26</sup> Main points of the meeting covered the negative aspects of using military force in Lebanon, which included the fact that force would not guarantee the survival of Lebanon’s pro –Western government and would fail to resolve the crisis. Not intervening, on the other hand, would lower the United States’ credibility as defender of Western allies in the region. With the mounting communist and anti-Western movements that were taking place in Asia and Latin America, Secretary Dulles and Eisenhower were fearful that United States inaction would send a signal that the United States was unable to protect its allies. By the time of the Lebanese crisis Eisenhower had been looking for ways to show America’s willingness to defend allies, and action in Lebanon would have been a perfect way of sending this message to “anti-Western forces in the Middle East and elsewhere.”<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, during the meeting the economic consequences were taken into account. Should the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid 81

<sup>26</sup> Ibid 77

<sup>27</sup> Ibid 79

United States intervene, Secretary Dulles believed Egypt would deny Western access to Suez, withholding oil to Europe which could cause an oil crisis.<sup>28</sup>

On what basis intervention was necessary, the meeting discussed the extent to which the Eisenhower Doctrine, which promised aid from outside aggression, could be used as a justification of American intervention. Though the conflict escalated due in part to Arab nationalism and formation the United Arab Republic, it could not be argued that the Republic was under communist control, as President Nasser's Soviet relationship was not clear. The Doctrine therefore could not be directly applicable to Lebanon and could at most be indirectly used as a means for intervention.<sup>29</sup> Dulles believed it was not necessary to relate it to the Doctrine, as Eisenhower had authority to intervene in order to protect American citizens.<sup>30</sup> The meeting had ended in the conclusion that the Doctrine outlined no commitment for the United States to intervene.. On informing Chamoun what he could anticipate, which his basic question was in the first place, the meeting did enforce changes to show Chamoun what he could expect. "American combat forces were placed "in a state of readiness "and U.S. Marines moved "toward the Mediterranean" in what was announced as "a routine maneuver."<sup>31</sup> Following the meeting, the State Department told Ambassador Robert McClintock to tell President Chamoun "that the United States was prepared to consider dispatching military forces to Lebanon if such assistance was requested by the Lebanese government."<sup>32</sup> The administration was cautious, however, not to make any commitment to intervene based on any fact beyond the saving of American lives.

The meeting concluded that intervention was not necessary and the government in Lebanon could handle the situation if they chose to. Given this fact, the meeting outlined main

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid 78

<sup>29</sup> Ibid 82

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Ibid 79

<sup>32</sup> Ibid



points that the Government of Lebanon had to satisfy in order for the United States to respond to Chamoun's request; the points would delay the need for action given that they required time, and would also establish a political outline for intervention if it did in fact reach the point of necessity. First the administration would not intervene to uphold Chamoun's will to seek another term which "could intensify anti-Western sentiments in Lebanon,"<sup>33</sup> especially from the opposition who did not support another term for Chamoun. Second, the administration wanted Lebanon to file an official complaint with the Security Council about the United Arab Republic's interference inside Lebanon; this would provide a shield for possible intervention.<sup>34</sup> Third the Eisenhower Administration wanted Lebanon to get support for American intervention from at least two other Arab nations.<sup>35</sup> Finally, the administration wanted any request to be based on the need to assist in protecting American citizens and safeguarding Lebanon's independence, without any reference to the Eisenhower Doctrine.<sup>36</sup> Doing so would cause regional backlash to intervention based on the fact the Eisenhower Doctrine was a strictly pro-Western document, meaning others would believe that the United States was only acting in order to enforce Western principles on the area.

### **The June White House Meeting**

Another meeting convened in mid-June after President Chamoun again posed the same question, how would the United States respond if Lebanon had asked for assistance. By this time, Chamoun had fulfilled the conditions laid out by the Eisenhower Administration, leading President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles to believe that Chamoun was extremely close to

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid 81

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

actually asking for assistance.”<sup>37</sup> A formal complaint was submitted to the Security Council, Jordan and Iraq had specified they would support intervention, and the cabinet of Prime Minister Riad Solh had even announced “it would not introduce a constitutional amendment to allow Chamoun to stand for reelection.”<sup>38</sup>

Assessing the meetings, one conclusion could be made in terms of the United States goal, that the United States had no intention of intervening in Lebanon. This conclusion can be made on the fact that the United States believed the conflict could be resolved domestically without outside assistance. The United States was caught between two conflicting policies; the fact that a Western ally’s leadership could be jeopardized if they did nothing, while on the other hand intervention could cause greater negative repercussions from the Middle East. The meeting, however, came to the conclusion that American intervention was not needed, and that the government in Lebanon would come to quell the situation on its own. Many factors led to this assessment but all led the administration to believe that the conflict should take its course. The first and major reason was due to President Chamoun and the Administration’s belief that he was not doing enough to subdue disturbances. First in terms of direct action, the Administration was confused and frustrated as to why Chamoun would not call on the Lebanese forces to help deal with outbreaks of violence. However, General of the Army Fouad Shehab feared that the army would disintegrate along sectarian lines given the country’s delicate situation.<sup>39</sup> The Administration recognized that Shehab’s popularity was so strong that Chamoun could not dismiss his position, yet the Administration remained irritated. After the June 15 meeting Ambassador McClintock was notified to inform President Chamoun that American forces would

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid 88

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Ibid 93

only intervene if they could “count upon the Lebanese security forces themselves exerting maximum effort.”<sup>40</sup>

Next the administration was frustrated at Chamoun’s political restraint. President Eisenhower preferred that Chamoun speak to his people and clear up the issue of his second term<sup>41</sup>. Chamoun had never explicitly stated that he was seeking another term, but never denied it as well which sent the message that he was in fact planning on it. Failure to do so while the situation continued to escalate was only making the problem worse, as opposition had a source of contempt on which they could continue to oppose the government. Another reason, playing on the fact that Lebanese military could quiet the situation, was the fact that the Administration believed that the situation was not as dire as it was made out to be. Ambassador McClintock had said that the situation was not as bad and “less disturbing” than Chamoun made it seem.<sup>42</sup> The military attaché of the American embassy said “only sporadic fighting” had been observed and opposition forces had made no attempt to take over neither the capitol nor the government.<sup>43</sup>

This policy was only reaffirmed when President Chamoun did in fact publicly announce that he would not seek another at the end of June. Though it would seem as though this public statement would help pacify the situation, the Government of Lebanon would not discuss the formation of a new government until opposition had arranged to end disturbances, causing the opposition to continue to believe that Chamoun would try to hold on to power despite his statement. Regardless, in early July, just two weeks before the United States decided to intervene in Lebanon, it still had no intention to interfere. On July 1, Secretary Dulles even stated in a press conference that “the presence in Lebanon of foreign troops...is not as good a solution as

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid

<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> Ibid 92

<sup>43</sup> Ibid

for the Lebanese to find a solution for themselves.”<sup>44</sup> Eisenhower as well later noted that by early July he believed that the Lebanese crisis would pass without Western assistance.

### **Iraqi Coup**

Just two weeks later, however, all of these policies were now irrelevant as President Eisenhower decided on July 14, 1958 to request American military intervention in Lebanon. The decision came right after the Iraqi coup led by General Abdul Karim Qasim which overthrew the pro-Western Iraqi government on the same day. Qasim was a member of the Free Officers who opposed Western influence and supported the Arab cause. King Faisal and Prime Minister Nuri al Said were major British allies and tightly controlled opposition to the government.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, Arab nationalism was on the rise in Iraq as it was in Lebanon. Three major incidents increased the Iraqi population’s opposition to the pro-Western Iraqi Government which soon led to the coup. First, Iraq joined the Baghdad Pact which Egypt strongly disagreed with, and Nasser “implored the Iraqi military to overthrow the British-backed Iraqi monarchy.”<sup>46</sup> Second, given Iraq’s relationship with the British, the monarchy supported Britain during the Suez Crisis, while on the other hand, many in Iraq felt sentiment with the Egyptians. Iraq’s support for the Arab Union, which could be defined as another United Arab Republic with a pro-West stance also helped lead to the coup.<sup>47</sup> Iraq was critical for the United States for many reasons; it was the United States’ major ally in the region and only Arab member to the Baghdad Pact, the home of the Pact’s headquarters. Up until 1958 U.S. military assistance to Iraq had far surpassed any amount given to any other Arab nation.

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<sup>44</sup> Korbani 43

<sup>45</sup> Hunt, Courtney. *The History of Iraq*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2005. 72. Print.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid 75

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

The coup that occurred was met with surprise and skepticism. In terms of Iraq itself, not enough information was known on the new leader's political orientation. The Administration did believe that no Soviet influence had aided in the coup that occurred; but as far as it was concerned the coup was against a pro-Western government, meaning Arab nationalists and anti-Westerners were responsible. As we can see, many parallels existed between Lebanon and Iraq. A pro-Western leader had been in power, contrary to much of the populations pro-Arab anti-Western sentiments. Iraq joined the Baghdad Pact, a Western document, just as Lebanon had embraced the Eisenhower Doctrine. Iraq how now succeeded in overthrowing the regime, which could have had the effect of motivating the opposition in Lebanon to further their aspirations of doing to same thing to their pro-Western government. The United States, following the coup and these parallels, had no choice but to take action.

### **The United States Takes Action**

Two White House meetings, both on July 14 at 10:30 am and 4:30 pm were held to discuss intervention in Lebanon. The meetings were not to discuss possible intervention because as Eisenhower later stated "his mind was practically made up" to intervene prior to the meeting.<sup>48</sup> Rather, the methods and tactics at which intervention should occur was the main point of the meetings. The first issue was how the forces should be deployed. Eisenhower wanted the decision to remain completely secret until the forces had actually arrived in Lebanon. Secrecy would prevent the opposition from forming in order to oppose the Marines.<sup>49</sup> Secrecy would also reduce pressure from the international community to avoid military action. However, the Administration had symbolically acted in Lebanon and had come to this decision in order to respond to the coup that occurred in Iraq for reasons that will be discussed later, and diplomatic

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<sup>48</sup> Alin 107

<sup>49</sup> Ibid 108

efforts could not achieve suppressing the negative repercussions the coup would cause. It was also decided during the meeting that forces would arrive in Lebanon the next day at 9:00 am on July, 15.<sup>50</sup>

Another major point of the meeting was to decide on what basis intervention was justified. The Eisenhower Administration emphasized that the United States was acting to support international law and justice which peace and stability depended on. Furthermore, also taken into the account was the fact that the United States was acting in their right to protect the American citizens that abroad, and the Lebanese crisis threatened the lives of these 2,500 American citizens.<sup>51</sup> Lastly in terms of legal justification, the Eisenhower Administration argued that the most plausible justification was the fact that the Lebanese Government had specifically asked for assistance. Despite opposition to the president's legitimacy, Chamoun was still the national leader and the administration chose to emphasize that he had been chosen in "free elections" by the Lebanese people.<sup>52</sup> Eisenhower released this message to the American public:

*"United States forces are being sent to Lebanon to protect American lives and by their presence to assist the Government of Lebanon in the preservation of Lebanon's territorial integrity and independence, which have been deemed vital to United States national interests and world peace...After the most detailed consideration, I have concluded that, given the developments in Iraq, the measures thus far taken by the United Nations Security Council are not sufficient to preserve the independence and integrity of Lebanon. I have considered, furthermore, the question of our responsibility to protect and safeguard American citizens in Lebanon of whom there are about 2,500."*<sup>53</sup>

One day after the arrival of forces, Deputy Undersecretary of State Robert Murphy was sent to Beirut. The administration denied Murphy's role as political. Secretary Dulles stressed the fact that Murphy's role was only technical and was to "establish better relations as among our own military and diplomatic people, Lebanese military, and the Lebanese government, as well as

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> Ibid 114

<sup>52</sup> Ibid

<sup>53</sup> Korbani 43

to “pave the way for sending a political advisor if necessary.”<sup>54</sup> However, Murphy himself said that his directions given to him by Eisenhower were vague and within a couple of days of his arrival was in fact playing political mediator. He was able to convince to the United States that the only way to end disturbances was to find a compromise settlement that would please all parties. Finding someone less Western friendly than Chamoun to succeed him would please the opposition and would not seriously jeopardize American interests in Lebanon or in the Middle East.<sup>55</sup> Murphy met with opposition leaders who believed the United States intervened to prolong Chamoun’s tenure and was reportedly able to convince them that intervention was only in an effort to preserve Lebanon’s political integrity and that the United States did not support another term for Chamoun.<sup>56</sup>

In effect, a July 31 election cause parliament to choose General Shehab as the person to succeed Chamoun. Shehab was seen as a perfect candidate, given he was a moderate leader and one of the few Christian ones who was respected among the majority population, including Muslims. After the July, 31 elections, an easing of tensions took place during early August. Opposition and government leaders had made efforts to cease disturbance as the government had told its employees to return to work, and opposition leaders upposedly ordered followers to lay down arms.<sup>57</sup> Shehab had assured Murphy after the election that he wanted to retain friendly relations with the United States. Chamoun did not want forces to withdraw prior to the expiration of his term and insisted that they remain. Though many opposition leaders wanted Chamoun to resign right after elections as a symbolic reference, he continued out the rest of his term. On

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid 119

<sup>55</sup> Ibid 120

<sup>56</sup> Ibid 121

<sup>57</sup> Ibid 132

September 24, Shehab was inaugurated and the last American forces withdrew on October 25, 1958.

### **Conclusions on 1958 American Intervention**

We can conclude that the U.S. national interest in Lebanon during that time was, first and foremost, maintenance of a pro-Western government that distanced itself from other more radical regimes. The administration had to give and take on this prospect, based on the fact they did not support extending Chamoun's term because doing so would cause backlash against the U.S. among the Lebanese population that wanted Chamoun out. At the same time, the U.S. supported a balanced government in Lebanon that was representative of all Lebanese factions and able to sustain good relations with other Arab nations. This way Lebanon would sustain good relations with the West and their image in the Arab World would not be damaged. This is evident in Murphy's aid that helped choose Shehab as Lebanon's next president, given that Shehab struck the perfect balance needed among Lebanon's population, the West and the Middle East.

In assessing the decision to go into Lebanon, the first conclusion that can be made is that it was without a doubt in response to the Iraqi coup that occurred the same day. Secretary Dulles later stated that "up to the time of the Iraq coup we had not felt there would be a need for our action...we had thought that up to the coup...the prospects of sending troops into Lebanon were extremely unlikely."<sup>58</sup> The coup was the spark that led to the intervention, given the fact that by the time Eisenhower had convened the two White House, meetings he had already made up his mind to go into Lebanon. The similarities that existed between Lebanon and Iraq were obvious and inaction would cause the effects of the Iraqi coup to spread, most rapidly to Lebanon where much of the same realities were occurring.

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<sup>58</sup> Korbani 40



The main effect brought about by the coup was fear. The events in Iraq had taken the Administration by surprise given the short period of time it took. If such an overthrow of a regime could take place so relatively easily against a pro-Western government in the region, especially the biggest United States ally, what could stop other pro-Western Middle Eastern governments from being met with the same fate? The coup was then looked at as an event that could cause a domino effect in the area and could greatly affect the United States' prospects in the region. Anti-Western forces, the Administration believed, would be watching the United States response to the coup very closely; failure to do anything on the part of the United States would exert an image of weakness and a notion that the United States does not necessarily care about allies in the area. Action, especially military action, would send a clear message that the United States was ready to intervene in defense of their allies and pro-Western governments in the Middle East. Fear was also guided by other negative repercussions that the coup may cause. With Western influence diminished by the domino effect that many feared, room for Soviet influence could expand as they would have a window of opportunity. Other pro-Western governments like Lebanon and Jordan could fall to anti-Western, Arab nationalists and the Soviets would use this as a period to expand relations with these countries.<sup>59</sup> The cost of non-intervention was also an issue. With the loss of allies, economic advantages, especially those based on oil would be forfeited.

We are able to see that the decision to intervene in Lebanon was clearly symbolic. Eisenhower wanted to resort to military action, in this case sending troops, in order to send a message to the greater Arab world that the United States is a strong contender that helps allies in the time of need. Lebanon was the perfect area to send this message; Lebanon had specifically asked for assistance and the issue was disturbances brought about by opposition to a pro-Western

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<sup>59</sup> Alin 106

government. Going in to Lebanon would only communicate that opposition to another pro-Western regime was not in the best interest of the resistance. The issue as it pertained to Lebanon itself was less of a matter. President Chamoun was disappointed that American forces were not forcibly suppressing the opposition, and this only proved how symbolic the intervention was given that their methods of action were not forceful ones. The message to the Middle East was sent just by sending the troops to Lebanon, and the secondary issue of political settlement was conveyed secretly, as the administration stressed that Murphy was not there for political purposes. Murphy was, however, essential in creating a settlement between the opposition and the government itself. Conveying to the world that an American official was playing such a role in political affairs would send the message that the United States was meddling in domestic Lebanese politics and wanted to make sure their best interests were arrived at by a settlement.

*The Lebanese Civil War*

Understanding the Lebanese Civil War is no easy undertaking, however crucial in order to recognize the United States subsequent intervention in 1982 and the climate and nature of Lebanon upon the decision to send Marines. The war contained so many complexities, involved many different parties and the results were disastrous to say the least. The 1958 crisis was luckily handled in time, before any major conflict could occur; but the Civil War lasted years. Third, fourth and fifth parties were now brought into the issue over this period of time, and long standing disagreements along Lebanon's fragile internal makeup exacerbated any kind of tension. Problems that occurred along factional lines in 1958 were nothing compared to the issues that tested and eventually led to the destruction of Lebanon's structure. One thing is certain; Lebanon, a tiny country in the Eastern Mediterranean was a place where others chose to fight their wars and in the end no one won and Lebanon was the biggest loser of them all.

### **The PLO**

It is interesting to note how the Palestinians played no role in the 1958 crisis, but were the most influential group in the escalation of the war in Lebanon, mainly because of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and its recognition of the Palestinian cause. Though the Palestinians and the PLO could be looked at as an outside factor bringing strife to all of Lebanon, in reality they were catalyst to a crisis that had previously existed and again brought factional groups against each other, as we saw in the 1958 crisis. Palestinians have resided in Lebanon since the Nakba or catastrophe in 1948 with the creation of the state of Israel. Thousands of Palestinians fled to neighboring Lebanon and today the numbers of these refugees have amounted to over 400,000 persons. They still hold refugee status and live in refugee camps all over the country. When the PLO was created in 1964, Lebanon fit the description of a breeding ground for PLO forces as they could have easily found support among these Palestinian refugees situated in every part of

Lebanon. Furthermore, the Palestinians in Lebanon, who were initially politically passive, were now drawn into the idea of pan-Arab politics that was popular during the time, and would have welcomed the PLO with open arms.<sup>60</sup> However, Arab countries decided absolutely no PLO military bases would be set up in Lebanon as they had been in other Arab countries, due the country's fragile political structure; therefore Lebanon would be unable to deal with PLO military operations. However this did not cease Fateh (section of the PLO) from creating secret cells inside Lebanon, and by 1967 secret training bases were established in at least four refugee camps.<sup>61</sup>

The PLO produced their first significant attack on Israel from inside Lebanon in June 1968. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (another section of the PLO) also attacked an Israeli airliner in Athens later that year. Israel retaliated to PLO attacks in December 1968 by blowing up "13 Lebanese civilian airplanes" at Beirut International airport. Retaliation was done by Israel in order to warn "Lebanese authorities to exercise greater control over PLO guerrillas."<sup>62</sup> This is the incident that brought the two groups against each other. Some Lebanese showed support for the guerrillas; however, others were shocked at the retaliation attack as it had been the first time Israel had produced such an attack in Lebanon. Throughout 1969 several clashes took place between the Lebanese troops and armed Palestinians. The clashes became more severe as the number of Palestinian guerrillas increased, numbered at 4,000 by mid-1969. Lebanese lower class showed support for the PLO while other more prominent Lebanese groups did not. Prominent Muslim leaders called for freedom for the Palestinian fighters in order for

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<sup>60</sup> Khazen, Farid El. *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon: 1967 - 1976*. London [u.a.: Tauris, 2000. 133. Print.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid 136

<sup>62</sup> Ibid 140

them to accomplish their goals, while Christian leaders believed PLO operations were detrimental to Lebanon.<sup>63</sup>

Different entities of the Lebanese political system were now split on the PLO question because, as noted earlier, the government is based on religious affiliation. Continued clashes that led to death on both sides caused the PLO's Yasser Arafat to demand freedom for guerrilla operations in Lebanon which mostly included taking control of the camps. However, the government refused knowing it would cause increased attacks on Israel and therefore Israeli harsher retaliation against Lebanon. Talks went nowhere and more severe clashes continued. As the Lebanese troops tried to suppress guerrilla activity, other Arab countries condemned the Lebanese government for "suppressing the Palestinian revolution." The result was a Lebanese delegation, headed by Commander Emile Boustany, who met in late October 1969 in Egypt under the direction of President Nasser to form a solution. The end agreement was the Cairo Agreement, which in essence allowed the PLO "freedom of political and military action wherever they were in Lebanon."<sup>64</sup> The Cairo Agreement would come to be the beginning of Lebanon's decline.

In September 1970, the PLO was becoming a stronger militarily armed group in Jordan, separate from the government. King Hussein decided to crack down and expel them, fearing they might try to overthrow the Hashemite Monarchy. Jordan was the PLO stronghold before that time and this was a major blow to the group, and now they viewed Lebanon as their main base. Huge numbers of guerrillas entered Lebanon after this. PLO offices were soon distributed all over the country. Intelligence, political and financial offices were found throughout the different PLO sections. Training centers would train refugees throughout the camps. With stronger input,

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid 148

<sup>64</sup> Ibid 160

PLO rocket attacks on Israel from inside Lebanon increased in the early 1970's. This caused further Israeli raids in retaliation resulting in a high number of casualties. Increased violence strained Palestinian and Lebanese relations, and PLO guerrillas continued to clash with the Lebanese army. In one incident the PLO kidnapped three army soldiers and large scale fighting between both parties in 1973. The Christian groups wanted to crack down on the Palestinians to enter the camps and control the guerrillas. However, Muslim groups supported the guerrillas, and without Muslim support, army action against the guerrillas was impossible. Though Christian groups were supportive of the Palestinian cause just as the Muslims were, they differed on how to support it. The Christians did not want to compromise Lebanon's security and sovereignty because of Palestinian attacks.<sup>65</sup>

### **The Maronites and the Lebanese National Movement**

The result in the following years leading up to the civil war was increased attacks on Israel, tension between the Lebanese and the PLO, as well as rising differences between different Lebanese factions, those that supported or wanted to suppress the resistance. Prior to the prewar scene though, no two Lebanese groups "were engaged in armed conflict."<sup>66</sup> As the PLO got stronger, Lebanon was the one suffering the consequences as Israel began retaliations in light of attacks from PLO bases into northern Israel. The Kataeb party or Phalangists as they are called in English, the most influential Christian party at that time, began to crack down using their own militia, wanting to suppress guerrilla activity and the freedom of action they possessed inside Lebanon. The boiling point came in 1975 on April 13 when a car whose license plates were covered by PLO guerrilla slogans forced its way through a church event in the village of Ain el Rummaneh in Beirut. Armed men then shot at members of the Kataeb party they knew would be

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid 149

<sup>66</sup> Ibid 328

there, killing 4 people. Pierre Gemayel, founder of the Kataeb party, was there and was believed to be the target. But three hours later, a bus carrying Palestinians was attacked killing 27 people. The result was devastating; clashes erupted with the PLO taking bases in Muslim areas of Lebanon while also finding support among Lebanese leftists, dividing the nation.

Many Maronites argued that the Army should be used against the PLO and extend its power over them, especially in the Arqoub region of South East Lebanon where they controlled much of the area. However, this is the problem that occurred in 1958 where General Shehab refused to deploy the army fearing it would disintegrate along sectarian lines; therefore, consensus based upon the National Pact was the only option. In the case of the PLO the army became so passive that it was quite humiliating. When Israel attacked across the border in response to PLO activities the army was always ordered to do nothing “because they knew if they did not interfere no harm would come to them.”<sup>67</sup> Maronite grievances prompted the Phalangist Party’s own militia to take initiative against the PLO in the years leading up to the civil war, appointing themselves “the guardian of Lebanese sovereignty.”<sup>68</sup> The Phalangist party as well had become so anti-Palestinian prior to the outbreak of violence that “many Maronites managed to convince themselves that the PLO and its Lebanese allies were plotting to take over the country.

Kamal Junblatt, on the other hand, influential Druze leader and foremost Arab nationalist Politician in Lebanon sided with the PLO. Junblatt, as we read earlier was influential in the aiding domestic grievances against the Lebanese Government which led to the 1958 crisis. Junblatt was head of the Lebanese National Movement which was the main opposition to the government. Junblatt promoted sectarianism and disagreed with the confessional system of the

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<sup>67</sup> Gilmour, David. *Lebanon, the Fractured Country*. New York: St. Martin's, 1983. 100. Print.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid 98



country; for example he disagreed with the fact the president must be Christian. Maronites feared Junblatt's National Movement as well as other Lebanese leftist groups because they were drawn to the Palestinian Resistance, even though in the years leading up to Civil War the leftist parties were in no way a serious threat. Furthermore, the National Movement was only pushing for mild reforms like "the abolition of confessionalism, proportional representation and so on."<sup>69</sup> Following the church incident Junblatt bashed the Phalangist party and even demanded the two Phalangist ministers in cabinet be dismissed. The National Movement military faction was mediocre but found strength among the divided groups of the PLO. Throughout 1975, Arafat had kept Fatah, the main PLO group out of fighting. He was aware of the devastation it would cause based on what happened in Jordan. So the National Movement found support among other PLO factions such as the PFLP and the Arab Liberation Front. When the Phalangists decided to escalate the crisis in December to January 1975 by surrounding the refugee camps in Beirut, Arafat warned Fatah would be brought into the fight to save the camps. With Fatah now in, the National Movement was given further support against the Maronite factions surrounding the camps.

## **Syria**

Syria now enters with the escalation of violence in Lebanon. President Hafez Al-Assad had sent his foreign minister Abdul Hamid Khaddam earlier while things were relatively calm to help with disputes within the fractured government. Assad even went in September and encouraged the formation of a committee for National Dialogue.<sup>70</sup> Now with the outbreak of chaos in early 1976 Syria became involved even with the PLO and the Lebanese National Movement becoming a stronger force. Syria did in fact see itself as the heart of the Arab cause

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid 101

<sup>70</sup> Ibid 129

and prided themselves on being the strongest supporter of the Palestinians. In this aspect the Maronites were the aggressors and Syria naturally sided with the Palestinians and the National Movement in Lebanon because they were on the defensive. However, in the case of Lebanon national unity was the only option and the Movement and a PLO takeover was not a possibility in terms of Syria. Firstly, a victory for Junblatt and the PLO would be unacceptable to Israel and this would lead to an invasion. An Israeli presence in the south “would have dislocated Syria’s defenses on the Golan front and enabled the Israeli army to outflank the Syrians through the Arqoub and on the foothills of Mount Hermon.”<sup>71</sup> On the other hand, a separate Maronite enclave in Lebanon would be anti-Arab and pro-Western and a natural ally of Israel.

Syria again sent Khaddam in January to help with the situation and offered the idea of a Constitutional Document which introduced mild reforms. Junblatt argued the reforms were too timid and was passive during the next few weeks while Khaddam tried to organize a national unity government that would accept and carry out Syria’s program.<sup>72</sup> It is believed that his passiveness was decoy; Junblatt was waiting timidly for the Muslim officers in the Lebanese army to rebel to his side, which he believed would happen. This did in fact occur at the end of January when the first junior Sunni officer name Ahmed Khatib revolted. By March the army had begun to disintegrate and the option of any Syrian backed document was gone. It would seem as though Junblatt wanted this to happen. He never did mention his support for the great option the Syrians were offering and showed ambiguity throughout the process. Furthermore, he did not even condemn a rebellion at the presidential palace that occurred in February. It would seem, in retrospect that Junblatt realized the Maronites could be defeated and was no longer

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid 130

<sup>72</sup> Ibid 132

looking for a compromise. It was an opportunity that could not be missed, one that could “transform these confessional and outdated institutions into truly secular and democratic ones.”<sup>73</sup>

Syria, though it initially saw the Maronites as the aggressor, was becoming increasingly annoyed with Junblatt. Another problem though was on the forefront. President Suleiman Frangieh resigned after parliamentary deputies signed a petition for his resignation.<sup>74</sup> Syria wanted Elias Sarkis as president believing he would be open to their ideas of national unity. Junblatt, however, wanted Raymond Edde, a liberal and anti-Syrian war hero. Thus Junblatt accused Syria of “imposing their candidate on the deputies,” and Junblatt’s deputies then boycotted parliament as a result, causing Sarkis to win a strong victory. Following the outcome, the National Movement stepped up hostilities. The PLO, National Movement and Khatib’s rebel army group struck areas of Beirut and the Damascus highway and advanced into the Maronite strongholds of Lebanon. It is important to note that Arafat was cautious in terms of Syria relative to Junblatt. Arafat understood Syrian positions and what they could eventually do, and tried to persuade Junblatt to be more cooperative when it came to Syria. Arafat understood the possibility of Syrian interference while Junblatt only saw victory as a reality now more than ever before and chose to disregard Syria this way. Given Junblatt’s political power it was seen as though the PLO and the Movement had the same beliefs when in fact they differed on the use of force. Junblatt’s position though made him the spokesmen of both groups, however, and Syria began to blame the PLO in Lebanon as well.<sup>75</sup>

With Maronite positions taken over, Phalangist leader Pierre Gemayel pleaded with Syria for help. On June 1, 1976, 12,000 Syrian troops entered Lebanon. American praised the action given it would suppress the PLO gaining strength, but Arab criticism was strong. How could

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid 134

<sup>74</sup> Ibid 136

<sup>75</sup> Ibid 138

Syria of all countries try to eliminate the PLO? Arab ministers met in Cairo and called for a peacekeeping force and the removal of Syrian troops. Assad could have quickly finished the task in a matter of days, but he hesitated and withdrew troops to the coast. However, the Maronite rhetoric increased and they continued the fight. Syrian again joined in September and had pushed their opponents back. Syria believed they had been victorious and encouraged the PLO to break off its alliance with Junblatt. In October the Syrian position was accepted among the Arab states and 30,000 soldiers would enter Lebanon under the Arab League Force as peacekeepers. Most of them, however, were Syrian and troops from other Arab countries mostly posed as a “cosmetic effect.”<sup>76</sup> Syria had achieved their goal, Israel would not invade and the country would not be divided, but this was only for a short period of time.

### **Israel**

Syria’s intervention turned out to be ineffective in the long run as Israel did soon invade and the country became even more divided then before. Syria had only succeeded in deterring the situation from becoming worse, but did not effectively use its influence to make things better. Walid Junblatt was killed in the spring of 1977, which was rather pointless as his “power had already been broken by the Syrian army.”<sup>77</sup> The Chtaura Agreement was signed in July by Syria, Lebanon and the PLO which was supposed to control the Palestinian presence in Lebanon, but this soon fell through mainly because of the Israel-Maronite relationship. The main error on Syria’s part was not taking over Maronite positions in Lebanon, and soon the Maronites that had once pleaded for Syrian intervention were the ones most opposed to them in the country. With Israel funding and aiding the Phalangists and other Maronites excessively, this was inevitable.

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid 142

<sup>77</sup> Ibid 145

Some sources say that by the end of 1976, Israel had funded the Maronites with \$100 million.<sup>78</sup> Now after the war was thought to be over, the Phalangists had arranged “their own police force and were levying their own taxes.”<sup>79</sup> They also began to criticize the Palestinian presence even harsher, even wanting to send all refugees to other Arab countries. Leader of the Phalangists Pierre Gemayel, though against the PLO, wanted to reunify Lebanon. However, his son Bachir had now become commander of the Maronite forces and actually preferred an autonomous state.<sup>80</sup>

This autonomy, one based upon Maronite control, pleased Israel as they could secure another ally in the region. Also important was the end of the PLO presence. Thus Israel was also aiding and training Maronite militia in the South, the PLO stronghold under Major Saad Haddad.<sup>81</sup> With Menachem Begin coming to power as prime minister in Israel in 1977 things changed. Begin’s right wing Likud party had a tough hard-line approach to the Lebanese problem. Israel had attacked Lebanon for many years, trying to create a situation like Black September in Jordan, where the attacks would provoke the government to crackdown on the PLO. Lebanon had failed and was so close to defeat until Syria intervened. Then Israel began aiding the Maronites hoping they would attack the PLO themselves. Begin, however, wanted to deal with the issue quickly and was waiting for a pretext to intervene. That came in March, 1978 when Fatah guerillas landed in Haifa, seized an Israeli bus and drove along the highway “firing from the windows” and by the end 37 Israelis and 9 guerrillas were killed.<sup>82</sup> Four days later, 25,000 Israeli forces crossed into Lebanon with the plan to create a security belt. Soon the whole area south of the Litani River had been captured.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid 146

<sup>79</sup> Ibid 145

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

<sup>81</sup> Ibid 147

<sup>82</sup> Ibid 148

The Israeli invasion was actually a failure. Israel's main objective was to "defeat the guerrillas and to prevent them from launching further raids against Israel."<sup>83</sup> None of this was achieved; during the operation not many PLO fighters were killed and most of the casualties were civilians, which reached 2,000. Despite the security belt, most of the fighters were able to withdraw north of the river with their equipment and from this area rocket attacks could still reach Northern Israel. The U.N. Security Council passed resolution 425 which called upon Israel to withdraw as well as another which created UNIFIL, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon.<sup>84</sup> Israel would completely withdraw from Lebanon on June 13, but not before Begin gave this area to their ally Major Haddad allowing him to control the border. UNIFIL would prevent clashes between Haddad's forces and the PLO in the border region, the area Haddad called "Free Lebanon." However, since Haddad was an Israeli puppet separate from the government this denied the government from extending any power over the region because Haddad's army, supplied by Israel, would not allow the government to.

If any hope at reconciliation existed, it was lost with Israel's invasion and only brought past allies against each other. Bachir Gemayel, leader of the Phalangist forces, became somewhat radical, believing National Unity had to be imposed by force and not through dialogue. Gemayel wanted to establish "total domination" and opposed anyone who did not share his views. Now retired President Frangieh aligned himself with Syria and Gemayel even ordered the Phalangist militia to attack Frangieh's mountain stronghold which killed his son Tony Frangieh, as well as Tony's wife and daughter.<sup>85</sup> Syrians then attacked the heavily populated Christian area of Beirut. Maronites, who once asked for help, were now vehemently opposed to Syrian presence. Syrian and Phalangist fighting increased in Zahle in Eastern Lebanon. Syria withdrew from Zahle when

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid 149

<sup>84</sup> Ibid 150-151

<sup>85</sup> Ibid 154

the Lebanese government said they would create a police force in the area. Instead Phalangists started arriving in large numbers with heavy artillery and began to build a road that would connect Zahle to the Maronite mountains in the west.<sup>86</sup> Syria could not allow this as Zahle was near the Syrian border and was an area of strategic importance. A Phalangist stronghold meant an Israeli stronghold as well. Syrian troops therefore “moved against the militiamen and defeated them,” which caused Israel to shoot down two of Syria’s helicopters. Syria then set up antiaircraft missiles to protect their air force in Zahle and the Bekaa valley. Though far from the Israeli border, Begin was angered by this and demanded its removal.

The action provoked Israel to attack Palestinian areas which it did through various air raids in the spring of 1981. American diplomacy now enters the picture with special envoy Philip Habib who was successful in establishing a cease-fire. The cease-fire was actually a nightmare for Israel who had been planning to yet again enter Lebanon for another chance to destroy the PLO. PLO refusal to break the cease-fire was Defense Minister Ariel Sharon’s worst nightmare as they had waited for a pretext to enter. Israel even provoked the PLO on numerous occasions but it failed to end with Palestinian retaliation who refused to attack. Instead, Israel’s pretext came on June 4, 1982 after “anti-PLO Arab gunmen” attempted to assassinate the Israeli ambassador to London.<sup>87</sup>

On June 6, 70,000 Israeli forces entered Lebanon in a mission called Operation Peace for Galilee with the objectives of placing “all the civilian population of the Galilee beyond the range of the terrorists’ fire from Lebanon.”<sup>88</sup> The area was supposed to be 25 miles but in less than 48 hours the forces had reached the outskirts of Beirut. Though Israel says its main objective was to clear Lebanon of the PLO, it is foolish to think that the PLO posed that much of a threat to Israel

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid 159

<sup>87</sup> Ibid 160

<sup>88</sup> Ibid

as they had killed 2,000 Palestinian fighters within four days of fighting. It is important to note that Israel had other objectives other than just going into Lebanon creating a 25 mile buffer zone. Israel wanted to go as far north as they could; this would help clear the PLO entirely out of Lebanon, not just in the south. The area of West Beirut was also a PLO stronghold, estimated that 9,000 PLO forces were there. Going that far in to Lebanon would also help to clear Syria out of Beirut as well as other parts of Lebanon which would pave the way for a strong Phalangist regime that would make peace with Israel. Israel, however, was creating much havoc as they surrounded the area around Beirut and bombarded constantly. The death toll is even too staggering to mention. The PLO was suffering, but more so were the civilians and the United States began to frantically search for a solution. With Israeli presence deep inside Lebanon and in around the capital, the United States enters the volatile Lebanon arena.



*The United States and 1982 Intervention*

## **The United States and Lebanon**

United States involvement in the issue now comes into place with Israeli forces in Lebanon. As mentioned earlier, Special Envoy Phillip Habib was sent to set up a ceasefire in 1981; but now realities had changed and Israel was an actual force inside Lebanon and now had the capital surrounded. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and Secretary of State Alexander Haig were at odds on what to do with the Israeli invasion. Weinberger wanted to condemn Israel's invasion of Lebanon in the strongest of terms. Haig, however, was sympathetic towards Israel and their position against the PLO; invading would send a clear message that PLO had to withdraw with there being no other option. Similarly, Ambassador Habib wanted to take a stronger approach against Israel as Weinberger did, stating that Israel's actions in Beirut were "out of proportion."<sup>89</sup> Vice President Bush on the other hand told Arab nations that the US would convince Israel to stay out of Beirut. On a side note, Haig resigned later that month and reportedly complained that President Reagan "had no right to run the foreign policy machinery himself" and was "tired of four or five people running foreign policy."<sup>90</sup> This is the first indication of poor leadership on the part of the Reagan administration, due to the confusion and the lack of cohesiveness on clear cut foreign policy which Haig openly criticized. Reagan himself did not know how to settle the question of Israeli intervention, and caught up between differing views of his advisers he chose not to attack publicly attack Israel based on their invasion of Lebanon. This was the climate of the American political situation in the period leading up to American involvement.

Before Haig's resignation, he sent Ambassador Habib to negotiate a settlement which would end the fighting and also achieve the following objectives: "the withdrawal of all foreign

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<sup>89</sup> Korbani 69

<sup>90</sup> Ibid

forces from Lebanon, strengthening of the Government of Lebanon in order to restore its sovereignty and a secure Northern border for Israel.<sup>91</sup>” Haig had basically sent these instructions without presidential authority but Reagan did not change any instruction for Habib and went with the plan. The goal here is that Haig sought to trust the Israeli ally and wanted to refrain from doing anything that would take away its credibility in trying to destroy the PLO in Beirut.<sup>92</sup> This is because the last point of the goal basically gave Israel the go ahead to continue to do as it pleased until their Northern border was secure. Haig wanted a clear cut policy which favored consistency, and this is what Reagan’s administration lacked. Unfortunately, the situation in Beirut continued to worsen and Reagan was practically furious over the bombardment of Beirut and the consequences to civilians. Haig’s plan had begun to falter as President Reagan condemned, in the nicest terms, Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel during his visit to the White House on June 20. Haig was reportedly furious when the White House made public a pledge by Begin in which he would not “overrun Beirut.”<sup>93</sup>

Now with Ambassador Habib shuttling between Lebanon, Israel and Syria he was under pressure from Reagan’s concerns over the civilian death toll, contrary to his instructions from Haig which supported Israel and their effort to remain, cutting off the PLO. Haig then resigned and stayed on as interim Secretary for two weeks before George Shultz would replace him. With the situation in Beirut not getting any better, Ambassador Habib initially offered a plan in which the Lebanese army would go into West Beirut, the PLO would hand over all of their heavy arms and a U.N. peacekeeping force would be deployed to assure the safe evacuation of the

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<sup>91</sup> Hallenbeck, Ralph A. *Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy: Intervention in Lebanon, August 1982-February 1984*. New York: Praeger, 1991. 10. Print.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid

<sup>93</sup> Ibid 11

Palestinians.<sup>94</sup> The plan, however, was rejected as the parties believed the UN forces would not be effective. Habib also testified, based on his discussion with Israel, that Israel would not trust any force to mediate evacuation unless the United States was involved in some way. Similarly the Government of Lebanon expressed the same opinion; a symbolic power was needed to oversee the evacuation as they were incapable in any way to do so.<sup>95</sup>

Before noting the PLO's view on the issue of withdrawal it is important to state why the PLO would accept any sort of agreement to withdraw from their military and political base, because it is not usually mentioned. Though it may be obvious, the PLO was now under extreme pressure in light of Israel's invasion and the cut off Beirut with its army surrounding the city. The consequences were now unfathomable as the PLO and the fighters had nowhere to go, being locked up inside the capital. Not agreeing to leave would only work against them, as well as against all Lebanese who were continuing to suffer because of Israeli forces. Though the United States could not talk to the PLO because of its designation as a terrorist organization, Habib did negotiate indirectly through Lebanese intermediaries.<sup>96</sup> As Israel did not want a UN force, they tried to persuade the Palestinians into rejecting a proposal as they were the ones who would be evacuated. Ironically enough, though, Yasser Arafat, head chairman of the PLO, was the one to suggest using American troops. Arafat believed that the Palestinian fighters' departure from Lebanon would not be met with any Israeli interference during withdrawal if the United States were to oversee the withdrawal. It was the "only guarantee that the PLO would not be attacked by the Israelis and the Phalangists."<sup>97</sup> The issue of the Palestinians that remained in Lebanon was also looked at. The safety of the Palestinian refugees that remained after the PLO was gone was

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<sup>94</sup> Korbani 80

<sup>95</sup> Hallenback 14

<sup>96</sup> Korbani 7

<sup>97</sup> Ibid 81

important because there would no longer be fighters competing in their favor by using their forces to protect the camps. Arafat believed a U.S. force would help secure the Palestinians safety.

After much negotiation the plan for evacuation followed through smoothly. On August 2, Phillip Habib assured Israel that the PLO had agreed to leave Beirut. Crucial as well is the fact that Habib guaranteed in his plan that the safety for the Palestinians that remained in Lebanon, in this case the civilian population that mainly lived in camps. Three days later the Lebanese reported the PLO submitted a timetable for withdrawal of their forces from the city, while on August 8, Habib presented a joint United States, French and Italian plan to Israel which proposed the PLO fighters to evacuate, which Israel accepted on August 10.<sup>98</sup> Israel agreed on the basis that the number of PLO fighters leaving Beirut approximately equaled the number estimated to be there. The plan, however, only mentioned the withdrawal of the fighters while PLO could symbolically retain their bases in other parts of Lebanon like Tripoli. The original instructions given by Haig which called the evacuation of all foreign forces from Lebanon were not part of any plan as Israel and Syria made no agreement to withdraw from Lebanon in any way. Lebanon formally requested the U.S., France and Italy to supply troops through the Lebanese Foreign Minister in a letter to the U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon.<sup>99</sup>

### **Evacuation Plan for the PLO**

In terms of the PLO fighters' withdrawal the plan agreed that the departing fighters were "permitted to carry one sidearm each (pistol, rifle or submachinegun) with ammunition" while all remaining weaponry would be turned over or their location would be made known to the Lebanese Armed Forces. Israeli prisoners captured by the PLO would be turned over to the

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<sup>98</sup> Thakur, Ramesh Chandra. *International Peacekeeping in Lebanon: United Nations Authority and Multinational Force*. Boulder: Westview, 1987. 90. Print.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid 91

Lebanese authorities.<sup>100</sup> Eight countries were on board to accept the fighters, Jordan, Iraq, Tunisia, North and South Yemen, Syria, Sudan and Algeria.<sup>101</sup> The land trip for those going to Syria from Beirut had to occur in one day. Convoys that were moved had to occur only during the day and could not occur at night. The PLO departure would take no longer than two weeks.

### **The United States Enters Lebanon**

In light of the fact that all three parties, Lebanon, Israel and the PLO had requested U.S. oversight, it was Ambassador Habib who requested American involvement in any peacekeeping mission. Habib did testify before the House Armed Services Committee that he recommended this plan of action to Reagan. According to an official, sending troops “was one of the bargaining chips that Mr. Habib asked for, and the President gave Habib approval.”<sup>102</sup> Different parts of government were split on the decision to intervene in Lebanon. The State Department as well as the National Security Council favored intervention by the part of the United States. The decision was because these two groups favored a globalist approach and intervention would help increase United States image and power among the area. Given the fact that the Government of Lebanon as well as the PLO wanted the U.S. presence during the mission, the U.S. would be seen as sensitive to Arab demands. The Defense Department, however, had other fears and Weinberger had expressed them. The United States was willing to offer a small number of contingents to oversee withdrawal and this “force was too small to fight successfully if required to do so, but too large to avoid being visible, and therefore vulnerable to acts of terrorism.”<sup>103</sup> Conversely they looked at the situation as harmful to Arab-American relations.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid 93

<sup>101</sup> Hallenback 13

<sup>102</sup> Korbani 83

<sup>103</sup> Hallenback 14

Reagan understood Weinberger's concerns but also recognized that the United States need to be involved as the Government of Lebanon and the PLO wanted them to be. Furthermore, the evacuation plan for the PLO was due to American efforts because of Ambassador Habib. Reagan, however, agreed to some of Weinberger's demands in the subsequent intervention that would occur. Habib and Secretary Schultz wanted the Marine's duration in Lebanon to be 60 days but Reagan cut this period of time to no more than thirty days. Also, Beirut was split along a very dangerous and volatile area called the green line which separated Christian East Beirut and Muslim West Beirut. The Multi-National force that was set up would include French and Italians who eventually arrived before the Americans did and pushed through the port towards the green line. Habib wanted the Marines to join them in this task but Weinberger did not want this and believed the Marines need not to be exposed to any "more than was absolutely necessary."<sup>104</sup> Reagan agreed and the Marines would remain in a safer area of Beirut.

In terms of the mission, the United States was opting for less of a task than was originally elected for by Haig. The United States would only oversee the evacuation of the PLO and no agreement had been reached on the Israeli and Syrian withdrawal as laid out by Haig. So the United States was accepting a mission in which it believed would bring progress to the situation by expelling PLO fighters. Reagan and Schultz did stress constantly that PLO evacuation was only the first step and the withdrawal of other forces were part of the major plan. For now though the United States would accept half the mission so to speak. Reagan officially ordered 800 Marines on August 20, 1982 and they landed in Beirut on August 25.<sup>105</sup> The evacuation of the PLO fighters went through with almost no incident. On September 1, the last PLO troops had left Lebanon. Lebanese officials estimated that "14,420 Palestinian fighters had departed from Beirut

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid 15

<sup>105</sup> Thakur 95

during the twelve-day evacuation.”<sup>106</sup> With the mission completed so successfully, Weinberger said that the role of the Marines was “pretty much done.”<sup>107</sup> Reagan also announced that the forces would leave Lebanon within two weeks, very short of the 30 day commitment period that Reagan had initially announced.<sup>108</sup> Prime Minister Shafiq al-Wazzan was critical of Reagan’s decision to prematurely withdraw. He felt as though the United States had only helped the Israelis in reaching their objective of ejecting the PLO and insincerely turned on any offer to help the fractured Lebanon following this accomplishment. Wazzan said that “there was another purpose—the protection of both the civilians and the Palestinian [refugees]”<sup>109</sup> Nevertheless, the Marines withdrew on September 10 and the French followed on September 13.

### **Assessing the Decision to Enter and to Withdraw**

In the end, we are able to see that the United States decision to send troops into Lebanon was a quick fix. Going in would get rid of the PLO fighters and help assuage the situation around the Beirut area which Israel surrounded. Also, the United States could be the only mediator given that all sides requested their presence. Furthermore, the consequences would be minimal; Reagan promised Congress that the Marines were not there to fight and they would be withdrawn if the PLO did not leave as scheduled as well as if hostility was present. Reagan’s decision to leave earlier than expected surprised all sides, including the French and Italians who thought they would stay the entire 30 day period. Habib wanted to stay the entire time as well, but Weinberger believed the force had accomplished its mission. Many believed that chaos would erupt following the Multi-National Force’s departure; however, Lebanon’s domestic political issues were out of the scope of the United States Marines. The small force left behind

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<sup>106</sup> *ibid*

<sup>107</sup> *ibid*

<sup>108</sup> Hallenback 16

<sup>109</sup> Korbani 87



would be unable to deal with any violence, and the fact that Lebanon was susceptible to unrest only added to the belief they must withdraw. Lebanon had been at war for years at this point and the only way the Marines could stay to help with Lebanon's domestic issues were if they agreed to remain for a long period of time, and this was not possible given the Marine's initial task.

Two things are important when assessing the role of the United States in the Multinational Force. First, the fact that the United States played a bigger role in the process than was intended to, but this was inevitable given the fact that Habib was the main negotiator in the process and was the most influential person in reaching an agreement. All wanted the United States to play an important role; however, at the same time, the promises that were made on the part of security were out of the scope of the United States unless they wanted to maintain a presence in Lebanon. The plan outlined by Ambassador Habib proposed that the Palestinians would be protected after the withdrawal of the PLO. Reality shows us that promises are meant to be broken, and though the Kataeb agreed to not enter the volatile West Beirut after the PLO's withdrawal this did eventually happen, causing complete chaos. The fact that the United States was the major broker of this plan was what would put the blame on them should anything occur. Next, their early withdrawal made it seem that they were going back on their promises. Peace and order could not be maintained no matter how much other forces promise to use restraint unless another force was there to help. The Multinational Force should in this aspect have stayed the full term symbolically showing they were there to help keep the peace despite the fact the mission was accomplished. Since the United States decided to leave early, this left a two week gap of time in which the Government of Lebanon as well as the French and Italians forces believed they would still be in Lebanon. Had things not gone so wrong mere days following the

forces withdrawal the United States could not have been at fault in any way, but things did not go as smoothly.

### **Post Withdrawal**

In only a matter of days following the withdrawal of the Multi-National Force, things unraveled quickly in Lebanon. Bachir Gemayel had been elected president at the end of August and his inauguration was set for September 23. Pierre Gemayel, Bachir's father, was founder of the Kataeb party, as mentioned earlier. Israel and Gemayel had a special relationship and Israel funded the Kataeb party as the right wing Christian militia group strongly opposed PLO operations in Lebanon. Bachir had been warned several months before Israel's invasion that they planned to uproot the PLO in southern Lebanon, and warned the PLO of this. Gemayel had even met with Begin and then Defense Minister Ariel Sharon on September 8 who were intent on getting Gemayel to sign a formal peace treaty with Israel at that time. Gemayel's role is extremely important; many hated him as much as they loved him at the same time because many Muslims and leftists were fearful of his relationship with Israel and the support he received from them. Christians on the other hand felt Gemayel had been doing the right thing as support for the Lebanese forces was needed gravely in its attempt to free Lebanon of foreign forces. Gemayel, though, had to remain cautious as Syria was aware of his relationship with Israel. Syria even proclaimed, following Bachir's election, that should Gemayel propose a peace treaty with Israel Syria will be at war with Lebanon.<sup>110</sup>

Israel wanted the Lebanese forces to assist IDF in their mission against the Palestinians but Gemayel refused to assist an invading power. Furthermore, Gemayel vehemently refused Begin and Sharon's peace treaty deal during their meeting because Gemayel wanted to reach a national consensus on the matter. Gemayel was also troubled by the Multi-National Force's early

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<sup>110</sup> Fisk, Robert. *Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon*. New York: Atheneum, 1990. 365. Print.

departure and felt he needed support and a peacekeeping force to assist him while he united the country following the PLO's departure and beginning his term. We can see that Gemayel, though he was supported by Israel and had differing views from much of his country he did have the right idea in mind to bring peace to Lebanon. It seems as though he used Israel only as a form of backing to get elected and turned against them once this happened; because earlier on it would have seemed as though the first thing Gemayel would do is the treaty with Israel after his election. Though he knew of Israel's intent to invade and uproot the PLO, he warned them because he was trying to play both sides fairly. Signing a treaty would have brought more chaos to Lebanon at that time, even more so because Syria would be opposed to it and was a force inside Lebanon. Though Bachir did accept aid from Israel and would have preferred a peace treaty, he realized consensus among the fractured nation was the only way to go about the process. His main belief coming into power was to unite the nation despite long years of indecisiveness and finding a middle ground even though Israel was looked at as the enemy in many aspects. Gemayel was assassinated on September 14 after a bomb exploded in the Kataeb headquarters, and his death is what eventually led to the return of the Marines.

Israel then entered Beirut following Gemayel's assassination claiming that their forces were needed "to maintain law...and to clean out remaining PLO terrorists who were being harbored in the city."<sup>111</sup> The refugee camps were surrounded due to the belief that the PLO had carried out the attack on Gemayel and the Kataeb headquarters. On September 16, as the IDF stood around the Sabra and Shatila camps in Beirut, Kataeb militiamen were allowed to enter the camps to "search for terrorists."<sup>112</sup> Though the number is contested, it is believed that over the period of two days more than 3,000 Palestinian refugees were killed. Though today it is accepted

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<sup>111</sup> Hallenback 21

<sup>112</sup> *ibid*

that Israel did not carry out the action, many indirectly put the blame on the Israeli Defense Forces as they were the ones surrounding the camps and allowed the forces to go in. As many had predicted, the withdrawal of the Multi-National Force led to more problems than solutions. Lebanon in its many years of civil war was now at one of its lowest points, left without the strong leader whose implications were to unite the fractured country, while another force had entered into its capital.

### **Multi-National Force II**

Following the quick unfolding of events that occurred, the Lebanese government requested the return of the Multi-National Force to Lebanon in order to regain control and stability. The United States was outraged at the events that transpired and condemned Israel and demanded their withdrawal from the capital. Reagan also expressed “outrage and revulsion” at the massacre that transpired in the camps.<sup>113</sup> 1,200 Marines landed in Beirut on September 28, a little over two weeks since they had initially withdrew while French and Italian troops had arrived a few days earlier. Again, Weinberger was against the redeployment of the Marines arguing that the six points of the use of military force were not met. These include “the action involve vital national interests, that it be related to clear-cut political-military objectives and that it follows the determination that all other means had failed.”<sup>114</sup> Taking the last point into account the Pentagon argued the “United States should use its diplomatic and economic clout to persuade Israel to withdraw its forces from Lebanon, and...undertake a major effort to bolster the capabilities of the LAF to exert more control over the military controlled areas of Lebanon.”<sup>115</sup>

Many believe on the other hand that Reagan was quite passive on the issue of intervention and his role in the decision was limited, not only in terms of Lebanon but in foreign

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<sup>113</sup> Thakur 98

<sup>114</sup> Korbani 92

<sup>115</sup> Ibid 93

policy in general. It seems through Korbani's assessment that Reagan used his ignorance of foreign policy as his shield and relied too much on his cabinet and used a "delegated system" to make major decisions.<sup>116</sup> Through this aspect, the decision to intervene once again in Lebanon "was made on the spur of the moment and implemented without any consultations or involvement of Congress."<sup>117</sup> In his letter to Congress which is dated the day after the Marines arrived in Lebanon, Reagan notified Congress of the intention to send Marines back as part of the Multi-national force and his reasons for doing so.

*Their mission is to provide an interposition force at agreed locations and therefore provide the multinational presence requested by the Lebanese Government to assist it and the Lebanese Armed Forces. In carrying out the mission the American force will not engage in combat. It will, however, exercise the right of self-defense and will be equipped accordingly. These forces will operate in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, as well as with comparably sized French and Italian military contingents in the Multinational Force. Although it is not possible at this time to predict the precise duration of the presence of U.S. forces in Beirut, our agreement with the Government of Lebanon makes clear that they will be needed only for a limited time period to meet the urgent requirements posed by the current situation.*<sup>118</sup>

Also, all three governments participating in the Multinational Force "declared that their troops would stay in Lebanon this time until all other foreign forces had withdrawn."<sup>119</sup>

A couple of conclusions can be made in the reasoning behind sending troops back to Lebanon. The first conclusion being that guilt played a factor. The Sabra and Shatila Massacres that occurred defied any promise Habib made to Arafat that the Palestinians would be safe following the departure of the PLO fighters. The disaster at the camps was not the first or last catastrophe that ever occurred; but the fact that Israel had actually now gone into the capital and

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid 95

<sup>117</sup> Ibid

<sup>118</sup> United States. President (1981-1989 : Reagan). *Use of United States Armed Forces in Lebanon: Communication from the President of the United States Transmitting a Report on the Use of United States Armed Forces to Facilitate the Restoration of Lebanese Government Sovereignty and Authority, Pursuant to the War Powers Resolution of 1973 (Public Law 93-148)*. By Ronald Reagan. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 1982. Print.

<sup>119</sup> Thakur 99

were the ones surrounding the camps could not be pushed under the rug. Israeli forces were also stationed on the rooftop of the Kuwaiti Embassy, which coincidentally directly overlooked the camps. The future goal, as Reagan noted in his message to congress during MNF 1, was the United States' mission to free Lebanon of all foreign forces. The United States sent Marines and was successful in the PLO's withdrawal; ironically though their early departure is what indirectly led to Israel's invasion and the subsequent tragedy at the camps. The quick fix that the administration believed had helped actually ended up making things worse. The United States could now not sit aside and do nothing while the prospects of their future goals of clearing Lebanon of foreign forces and bringing peace to the country were being crushed. Israel entering Beirut would only prolong Syrian presence and bring Lebanon into further disarray.

Important to note though is that at no point during this period did "the United States signal an intent to punish the Israelis economically, militarily, or politically as a means to actually force their departure from Lebanon."<sup>120</sup> This pressure would happen soon after, but for now intervention was in this way an effort to show displeasure with Israel's actions. This is also the period following Reagan's September 1 peace proposal in which Reagan wanted to show that the United States hoped to play a major role in the Arab-Israeli peace process and recognized Arab grievances. The plan sought to give Palestinians in the West Bank autonomy under a Jordanian association but the plan was rejected by both Israel and Arab states. Not doing anything following Israel's advancement into Beirut would only portray that U.S. as not committed to playing a part in the peace process. Sending the Marines back, however, would resonate to the Arabs the U.S.'s willingness to show support on their side and against Israeli aggression in Lebanon's capital. In this aspect intervention would help "convince Arabs that

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<sup>120</sup> Hallenback 23

Washington was actually going to play a decisive role in the peace process.”<sup>121</sup> This is a major point in the decision to reenter. Withdrawal of all foreign forces in Lebanon was a prerequisite for a broader goal of brokering a peace deal with Israel congruent with the Camp David Accords.

However, the decision to reenter was contradictory in of itself. The United States at that point did not have much of a choice but to do so given the fact they played such an important role throughout the whole process. Things had unfolded quickly and they could not say no to an urgent plea from the Government of Lebanon following the chaos that ensued. At the same time, though, the decision needed more deliberation and thought. Lebanon’s domestic woes were beyond any scope of a Multinational Force and the three governments could not promise to have all foreign forces removed given all of their interests in Lebanon. Though they could not have known this then, it still was a big mission to take on and one they should not have promised to solve. Had this been the case the force would have stayed in Lebanon until 2005 when Syria did in fact finally withdraw. Reagan gave no time period in his letter to Congress and could not predict any period of time either way given the situation.

### **Post MNF II Deployment**

Things looked rather hopeful actually following Multi-National Force II, but only on the Arab side, excluding Syria. The Arab League made it known that they were willing to reconsider Reagan’s peace plan contingent though on Israel’s withdrawal from Lebanon. In Lebanon many things were taking place. The Lebanese Armed Forces entered East Beirut in November. Now President Amin Gemayel, Bachir’s brother, wanted to slowly integrate the newly formed army into Beirut. Bachir had the Phalangist army under his wing and was the uncontested leader of the forces. Amin, however, was less drastic, especially on the issue of Phalangist power and took on Bachir’s plan that he opted for before his death, which preferred a national unity among all

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid

Lebanese. The United States offered \$150 million in military aid to help the army. By the end of the year the Marines had even began an extremely small training program for soldiers in the Lebanese armed forces. The United States section of the Force had begun working closer with the Lebanese forces with both forces creating joint checkpoints.<sup>122</sup> However, throughout this period the main objective was to get to an agreement where all forces would agree to withdraw from Lebanon.

On the Israeli and Syrian sides, however, things were not going as well. Beginning with Syria, President Assad began to feel that United States was becoming less of an influence in ending Israel's presence in Lebanon.<sup>123</sup> Assad also felt that Israel would be able to make concessions in which they would be able to retain their position, most likely in the South of Lebanon. Initially, Assad was hopeful following the ceasefire and the PLO's evacuation that Israel would leave. However, Assad now became less convinced the US could broker a solution. In this aspect, Assad refused to cooperate with a deal in which he would have to withdraw his forces. Also, Assad was "upset that U.S. leaders seemed to be treating Syria as an aggressor state...and he pointedly and repeatedly reminded Habib that the Syrians had been invited to Lebanon."<sup>124</sup> In fact though, this is exactly what Assad detested because his mission was to prove that "Syria was a major power in the region entitled to participate in any negotiating process."<sup>125</sup> On the other hand, it seemed that the Soviets were rearming the Syrians and thousands of technicians from the Soviet Union were helping create new Syrian air defense

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid 43

<sup>123</sup> Ibid 46

<sup>124</sup> Ibid 47

<sup>125</sup> Korbani 63



network.<sup>126</sup> This was a major no in terms of the United States; however, there was a dilemma because any Syrian withdrawal was contingent on Israeli withdrawal as well.

On the Israeli side, the United States was annoyed at the lack of cooperation that Israel was showing in trying to come to an agreement. Habib had offered Israel an increase in U.S. forces to the Multi-National Force. Furthermore, he offered U.S. troops to control the border area to alleviate Israel's fears of that region. Habib wanted Israel to leave by February 15 but Israel objected to both options.<sup>127</sup> Israel was aware of the United States' irritation as Reagan sent a letter to Begin postponing his visit to the United States until an agreement was reached in which the Israeli forces would withdraw. Tension amounted further when Secretary Weinberger reportedly restricted the United States force to make contact with the Israeli forces inside Lebanon as well as turned down Israel's offer to share intelligence concerning Syria's Soviet equipment. Reagan even went so far as to withhold F-16 aircraft from Israel on April 1 until Israel agreed to withdraw.<sup>128</sup> This was also due in part to the PLO's official rejection of Reagan's plan on March 30; withholding of the arms was a mild attempt at getting Arafat to reconsider.

### **American Embassy Bombing**

On April 18, 1983, the American Embassy in Beirut was attacked. The attack killed 57 people, 17 of whom were Americans. Secretary Shultz left for the Middle East on April 24, without a doubt with the goal of returning with an agreement.<sup>129</sup>

Assessing the role of the United States after the bombing of the Embassy in Beirut, we can see that Reagan felt the need to act decisively on the matter. Negotiations could not be slowed down but rather amped up based on the bombing. Part of this was because progress had

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<sup>126</sup> Hallenback 46

<sup>127</sup> Ibid 49

<sup>128</sup> Ibid

<sup>129</sup> Ibid 51

been made by Ambassador Habib during March. The Knesset in Israel had endorsed Habib's plan for withdrawal. Habib was also successful in creating a gentlemen's agreement in which a "Trilateral Commission" would supervise the border area. Israel wanted their main ally Major Haddad to remain and control the area; however, the Lebanese did not want Haddad's army to exist separately from the Lebanese Forces which would curtail the government's control of the South where Haddad was stationed. Habib was even successful in creating a solution in which Haddad would be incorporated into the Lebanese Armed Forces. The timing of the bombing could not hinder any progression that was achieved. Though it is obvious that the bombing was a complete sign of opposition to the U.S., Reagan could not let the chance of an agreement to slip by given that withdrawal of forces was the main objective. The bombing was therefore motivation to speed up the process and come to a settlement.

The settlement that was sought after was reached in what is known as the May 17 agreement. Before noting the main objectives of the agreement, we must look at the way Shultz brokered both the Lebanese and the Israelis into such an Accord. First, when Shultz visited Israel he agreed to sign a general statement which was a "Memorandum of Strategic Understanding" which stated the "common U.S. Israeli interests with respect to countering the intrusion of Soviet military influence into the region."<sup>130</sup> This is important because this statement was clearly against Syria as Soviet support and aid for the nation was known to be increasing. On the Lebanese side, Prime Minister Wazzan was fearful of any agreement and backlash that it would cause from other Arab states. Furthermore, Wazzan was fearful that any agreement would not satisfy Syria. Shultz, however, was successful in convincing Wazzan that no Arab states would shun Lebanon.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid 54

<sup>131</sup> Ibid

However, on May 8, Syria strongly condemned any Accord but Shultz convinced Lebanon that Arab states would support the agreement and Syria would leave after the Israelis did. If they did not, Syria would be isolated for their occupation of Lebanon.<sup>132</sup> The agreement was signed, with the most important clause agreeing to end the state of war between them. The agreement also stated Israel would be based in two security arrangement centers in the South of Lebanon.<sup>133</sup> Syrian defiance was extreme and announced that they would not withdraw their forces “until the Gemayel government repudiated the Accord.”<sup>134</sup> Israel was achieving its objectives of creating peace with Lebanon while nothing was being said about Syria and its security. The agreement, Assad believed, rewarded Israel for invading Lebanon and undermined Lebanon’s sovereignty because of the fact a small part of Israelis could stay in the south. A week later Syria fired on Israeli airplanes to show their defiance and Assad barred Habib from coming to Damascus.

First and foremost, the United States’ biggest mistake was not including Syria in the agreement between Lebanon and Israel. Given Syria’s role, the U.S. was well aware of their influence and they should have given more attention to create parallel talks between Lebanon and Syria in brokering an agreement. Instead the U.S. took the position that if Israel would begin to withdraw Syria would as well. The Lebanese were skeptical but were convinced to take the American position for two reasons, the first being that peace would be made with Israel but only symbolic peace, not formal. Second, doing so would allow Lebanon to remain part “of the Arab family.”<sup>135</sup> The United States was so wrapped up in the idea of reaching some sort of agreement and took the option of diplomacy in terms of Israel. The administration knew that one side had to

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid 54-55

<sup>133</sup> Fisk 482

<sup>134</sup> Hallenback 55

<sup>135</sup> Korbani 72

do something they did not want to do and forcing an accord brought hope that the Israelis would make the first move and begin to withdraw. This course, however, despite the nature of the agreement, did not occur; the Israelis would withdraw minimally but this led to further problems as will be mentioned. Thus in looking at the Marines, they could not be withdrawn despite an attack on the American Embassy while the Lebanese were signing an agreement which was the product of American diplomacy.

After this period, Robert Macfarlane replaced Habib as special negotiator in July 1983. Macfarlane continued to pressure Israel for a complete withdrawal but instead they agreed to a limited withdrawal up to the Awali River.<sup>136</sup> Part of this is because of the loss of Israeli soldiers they were experiencing in the Shouf mountains further north. The area of the Shouf Mountains, however, soon became significant because Israeli withdrawal meant the lack of a buffer between the Lebanese forces and the Druze and their Syrian allies. The Druze were fearful Gemayel would send in the Lebanese Forces to massacre them, and therefore Syria began sending rockets to their Druze allies. The area that became important was Souq El Gharb, a part of the Shouf Mountain area strategically overlooking Beirut. Now, the Druze with help from Syria could effectively take down the Lebanese Forces giving them a way into Beirut to overthrow the government. This would be detrimental to the United States and the entire peace keeping mission. The battle at Souq El Gharb is important because the U.S. had no choice but to supply and “lend gunfire support to the Lebanese army.” Furthermore “American warships would have to shell the Druze lines at Souq al-Gharb.”<sup>137</sup> Now this meant, despite official statements that the United States was to remain out of hostilities, they were now directly involved in the clashes of civil war.

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<sup>136</sup> Hallenback 69

<sup>137</sup> Fisk 505

## **The Barracks Bombing**

On October 23, 1983, in the early morning hours a truck approached the barracks, which housed the French and American forces, the truck then accelerated through the entrance and “exploded with the effective force of 12,000 pound of TNT.” A second truck also exploded moments later. The death toll was 241 Americans and 59 French while 150 others were wounded.<sup>138</sup>

On October 27, Reagan would address the nation about the events in Lebanon and commit the Marines to stay. The address was quite informative and revealed much insight into Reagan’s decision to remain in Lebanon, and brought other issues to the forefront, ones that we had not taking into consideration before.

Reagan put peace in Lebanon into the context of achieving a broader regional peace. Reagan noted “the area is key to the economic and political life of the West” and “its strategic importance, its energy resources, the Suez Canal...all are vital to us and to world peace.”<sup>139</sup> Reagan also asked “what of Western Europe and Japan's dependence on Middle East oil for the energy to fuel their industries?”<sup>140</sup> We know that Lebanon is not vital to the West, neither in terms of energy nor resources. Reagan was specifically mentioning his greater goal of achieving peace for Israel He mentioned that “at stake is the fate of only the second Arab country to negotiate a major agreement with Israel” and noted the accomplishment of the May 17<sup>th</sup> agreement.

Another major point Reagan mentioned was that the United States could not “stand by and see the Middle East incorporated into the Soviet bloc” after stating that “Syria has become a

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<sup>138</sup> Hallenback 108-109

<sup>139</sup> "Miller Center." *Speech to the Nation on Lebanon and Grenada (October 27, 1983)*-. Web. 18 Apr. 2012. <<http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/5860>>.

<sup>140</sup> *ibid*

home for 7,000 Soviet advisers and technicians who man a massive amount of Soviet weaponry, including SS-21 ground-to-ground missiles capable of reaching vital areas of Israel.”<sup>141</sup> This statement was again fear of the threat to regional peace and for Israel’s security, but on the backdrop of the Soviets. The cold war had never seemed to play a part in the Reagan Administration’s decision making process in Lebanon. The main objective was to clear Lebanon of other forces, secure its territory and setting up a stable government in order to further Reagan’s peace plan by getting Lebanon to sign a peace treaty with Israel. Now, though, it seemed as though Soviet aggression through Syrian territory was one of the biggest obstacles the administration faced.

Another point worth noting is Reagan’s reference to the fact that he understands American grievances and why they would question the Marines continued presence following the barracks bombing. Reagan said that “If we were to leave Lebanon now, what message would that send to those who foment instability and terrorism...what chance would there be for a negotiated settlement, producing a unified democratic Lebanon”<sup>142</sup> In this aspect, Reagan most likely felt that the mission was making progress and that the United States could not leave given the amount of effort invested into Lebanon. This was exacerbated by the Battle of Souq El Gharb that had just occurred less than a month prior. Reagan said in his speech that the Marines were aiding and helping the Lebanese army who were “able to hold the line and maintain the defensive perimeter around Beirut”<sup>143</sup> during the Battle at Souk El Gharb. Furthermore, leaving would be accepting defeat and the US would have failed in its mission

We can see that Reagan felt he could not leave Lebanon after the bombing of the barracks for three reasons. 1) Israel and the goal of greater peace in the region given his peace plan. 2)

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<sup>141</sup> ibid

<sup>142</sup> ibid

<sup>143</sup> ibid

The Soviet threat which was now creating another problem for the administration through Soviet aid to the country of Syria who played a direct role in Lebanon. 3) The time and effort invested into trying to reach a solution and the perceived notion that progress was being made would all be gone by accepting defeat and leaving without accomplishing the mission.

However, things would take a turn for the worse following the bombings and despite Reagan's hopes. On November 4, the Israeli military headquarters were attacked and Israel immediately retaliated.<sup>144</sup> U.S. Pod Systems or TARPS were deployed to collect photo intelligence of military positions in areas "held by hostile forces."<sup>145</sup> Soon after Syria attacked these TARPS flights and coincidentally (not by US plan) Israel and France produced air strikes in the Bekaa Valley, the Syrian stronghold.<sup>146</sup> Furthermore, Syria pressured Lebanon to cancel the May 17<sup>th</sup> accord at the Lebanese National Reconciliation Conference and Lebanon agreed to neither ratify nor abolish the agreement. By early December and upon President Gemayel's visit to Washington it became clear that Gemayel wanted more military support for the army or he would cancel the agreement.<sup>147</sup> Reagan, however, would tell Gemayel that the agreement would continue to be "the centerpiece of the U.S. strategy and that Gemayel's role...was to facilitate reconciliation between" the government and the disagreeing Lebanese factions.<sup>148</sup>

On the American side throughout the month of November, disagreements were again visible in the Administration. Negotiator McFarlane wanted to keep the Marines in Lebanon and continue to explicitly support the Government of Lebanon and the Armed Forces. Furthermore, he sought to strengthen the Marine's position where they were stationed around Beirut International Airport, giving them the capability to "pound any adversary that had the temerity to

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<sup>144</sup> Hallenback 112

<sup>145</sup> *ibid*

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid* 113

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid* 118

<sup>148</sup> *ibid*

attack either the Marines or the Government of Lebanon/Lebanese Armed Forces.”<sup>149</sup> Secretary Shultz shared McFarlane’s views while Defense Secretary Weinberger wanted the Marines to leave Lebanon altogether and the barracks bombing only made him more adamant. The Joint Chiefs of Staff would agree with Macfarlane and Schultz to give aid to the Lebanese Forces; however, this was decided on in January 1984 and the plan for aid would fall through with the deterioration of the situation in Lebanon.

In November, the date for the second Reconciliation Conference meeting was postponed indefinitely and Reagan announced in Mid-December that the U.S. Force would withdraw should Gemayel’s government collapse. However, this was to push Gemayel to get on with the Conference.<sup>150</sup> By late December, congressional leaders were “asking President Reagan for a Lebanon policy review.”<sup>151</sup> Reagan would reply by sending a letter to Congress “warning that any premature withdrawal of the Multinational Force would “call into question the resolve of the West to carry out its responsibilities to help the Free World defend itself.”<sup>152</sup> January, though, would not be a good month for Lebanon or the Multi-National Force. Heavy fighting was ongoing throughout January in the Shouf and South Beirut areas and the Marines were under constant attack. Shiite militiamen would surge into Beirut on January 30, causing the Armed forces in the Bekaa Vally to defect, causing other Shiite soldiers to defect in large numbers. By February 4, Prime Minister Wazzan resigned.<sup>153</sup>

Shiite forces now controlled South and West Beirut and, on February 7, Reagan announced a gradual withdrawal of U.S. Forces.<sup>154</sup> Reagan would admit that the Government of

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid 115

<sup>150</sup> Ibid 122

<sup>151</sup> Ibid 123

<sup>152</sup> Ibid

<sup>153</sup> Hallenback 127

<sup>154</sup> Ibid



Lebanon was not “representative of the Lebanese population,” but reaffirmed his continued support for the Lebanese Armed Forces.<sup>155</sup> It is interesting to note that just a few days earlier, on February 3, Reagan rebuked House Speaker O’Neill’s call for an immediate withdrawal of U.S. Forces.<sup>156</sup> However, in a matter of days of Reagan’s call for limited withdrawal, Druze militia would overtake Northwest Beirut, surrounding the U.S. Embassy as well as the port, and by February 14, the actual Government of Lebanon would only control the Christian area of East Beirut.<sup>157</sup> With the U.S. Embassy surrounded, Reagan announced on February 14 that the U.S. Force would withdraw within 30 days.

### **Summary and Conclusions on 1982 Intervention**

We can also see that Reagan had no intention to leave Lebanon prior to the outbreak of violence and the deterioration of the Lebanese Armed Forces. Reagan called for a gradual withdrawal on February 7, indicating that he was still not ready to abandon the mission or the Government of Lebanon completely. The decision to completely withdraw came one week later when the area in Northwest Beirut which housed the U.S. Embassy was surrounded by hostile forces. Reagan was putting too much emphasis on the May 17<sup>th</sup> agreement that was actually not put into action or ratified nor was it leading to any kind of solution acceptable to the initial goal. The agreement was bound to fail given Syria’s defiance and yet that is the only kind of progress that the United States could actually have claimed to achieve. It was clear far prior to the announcement that the Marines would leave that the objective of clearing Lebanon of all foreign forces was not a possibility, nor could they have helped create a government based on national consensus.

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<sup>155</sup> *ibid*

<sup>156</sup> *ibid*

<sup>157</sup> *ibid*

The only option was to help assist in facilitating a limited withdrawal to retain the agreement as well as the United States' credibility and their diplomatic efforts. It was clear long before that Israel and Syria had no intention of actually leaving, and given the fact that both of their withdrawals were contingent on the other only proved this. Even so, the events of February 1984 signaled that the majority of the country was not supportive of the Gemayel government given they had now surrounded the capital. The United States could not continue to use their Marines to show their support for a government that was not popular and on the brink of unraveling.

Lack of agreement and a clear foreign policy initiative also led to the failure and withdrawal of the troops. The Administration knew what they wanted to do, for the most part, but did not know the ways to do it. It was clear following May 17<sup>th</sup> that the troops were not leaving so that meant that political consensus was not a possibility. Reagan expressed to Gemayel that he needed to reconcile all of Lebanon's opposing factions, but that was completely dependent on foreign forces within the country and this needed to be cleared first; they could not be done simultaneously. With Syria inside and controlling a major area, you had much of the population supportive of their presence and receiving assistance as we saw in the Battle of Souk El Gharb. This changed the United States role as the Marines could no longer be looked at as a peacekeeping force. It could be argued the Marines were acting in self-defense because the area surrounding where they were stationed was most likely to fall into the wrong hands; however, they were actually supporting a certain Lebanese group opposed to the Druze and therefore opposed to Syria as well. With foreign forces inside, you did not have the option of creating reconciliation and the United States should have expected a breakdown after they realized the May 17<sup>th</sup> agreement would not hold up. Even a limited withdrawal would not have helped.

Furthermore, Lebanon was put into the context of a broader peace initiative throughout the entire Middle East region as well as through the context of Soviet aggression. Lebanon, however, was never a crucial player in the peace process or the Arab-Israeli conflict until the PLO, who were not Lebanese, entered the picture. So Lebanon was seen through a broader lens because it lacked the importance of other nations, as if an outsider was looking into Lebanon. This was proven by the May 17<sup>th</sup> agreement, because the main issue here was creating an accord that only helped the broader cause of regional peace, when in fact the agreement was beyond Lebanon's fractured capabilities. An agreement of that scope could not be signed by Gemayel when much of the Lebanese population did not support him.

Lebanon, therefore, should have been looked at within a smaller lens, one from inside Lebanon looking out. With the PLO gone the main focus should have been Lebanon domestically and Lebanon only. Reagan did in fact see this, as he pushed Gemayel to move forward with the National Reconciliation Conference, but more effort should have been put into this process. This is contradictory since Lebanon's only importance to the United States was how its presence played into the more important countries in the region. However, at the same time, Lebanon's domestic issues were the only things that affected the way the United States perceived the country, from an outsider looking in standpoint. In this aspect the United States National interest was Lebanon's domestic issues, not the broader goal. This is where the mistake lays in the U.S.'s efforts because they only saw the broader goal and worked backwards as a result. The United States should have pushed for national consensus first, rather than emphasizing the withdrawal of all forces.

Lack of consensus on the issue of aid to the Lebanese Armed Forces was another subject and one that should have been agreed on prior. Reagan and McFarlane understood that aid to the

Forces was important and mild programs were introduced to help them. Schultz, on the other hand, wanted the Marines to withdraw after the barracks bombing and this caused confusion among the Joint Chief of Staff on whether or not to help the forces effectively. Even so, real and effective assistance should have been implemented beforehand because when it was actually approved the defection of the army was inevitable. The aid that was agreed upon was only in response to the barracks bombing, but the administration should have realized long before that if they wanted a strong central authority, they need to help equip an army loyal to that government.

The United States was thus asking the Marines to support a government that did not have dedication of its own people, nor was the U.S. making an effort to make this a possibility. Given that the initial task of overseeing the withdrawal of the PLO early on in MNF I, the Administration knew all too well that the PLO did not leave long beforehand due to the weak Armed Forces unable to crack down on their presence. That was the entire reason that Syria and eventually Israel invaded and what led to MNF I as well, the weak Lebanese forces. This did not happen in Jordan in Black September because the Jordanian Forces were strong and loyal to King Hussein and would not defect. In Lebanon, you had different Lebanese factions themselves who were brought against each other; Ambassador Habib knew this all too well given he was trying to negotiate PLO withdrawal among Israeli intervention who supported the Kataeb and their Christian forces who opposed Syrian and PLO presence. The basic line is you cannot expect national consensus with a weak army while other extremely stronger armies are present in the country.

So we can conclude that any sort of agreement was never a possibility. Each goal inside Lebanon was contingent on contradiction. The United States, first and foremost, needed to create national unity among Lebanon's political scene. However, this was based on whether or not

foreign forces would withdraw. However, Syria's withdrawal depended on Israel's withdrawal and vice versa and neither would make the first move. The United States needed to aid a Lebanese Force that would adhere to the Government of Lebanon and did so by supporting Gemayel. However, the government was not reflective of the Lebanese population and therefore the Lebanese Forces were bound to defect. Even so, with no clear consensus, there was no clear opposition; meaning the Forces had no clear objective either way.

## *Current Policy*

The results of civil war, no matter how long ago it may have been, linger today. The greatest of these outcomes was the creation of Hezbollah, a militant group created in Southern Lebanon during the Civil War intent on expelling Israeli occupation. Each outcome of the war outlined what is most important to the United States in terms of Lebanon today; which is countering Hezbollah. The United States interest in Lebanon is doing everything possible to delegitimize Hezbollah and counter the group by supporting those groups in Lebanon who disagree with Hezbollah. The mixed methods Hezbollah uses to gain support has proven to be a challenge for the United States. Although the United States views Hezbollah as illegitimate, their success in government and support from the public cannot be ignored. Because of changes in the political landscape of Lebanon throughout the years, the United States' ongoing policy in Lebanon is counterterrorism; but the changing government puts the United States at a crossroads in their efforts to implement this prospect. Now with Hezbollah taking a bigger role in government last year, the United States is at a turning point in their policy towards Lebanon.

### **Hezbollah**

Hezbollah arose as a group intent on countering Israeli occupation following Israeli intervention in Lebanon in 1982. Israel, despite the United States' efforts would remain in Southern Lebanon as an occupying force and would not leave until the year 2000. The south is also where the majority of the Shiite Lebanese population lived. Lebanon's demographic landscape is what caused Hezbollah to become a group run by a radical Shiite population. The revolution in Iran and the prospect to support Islamic groups supportive of Shia ideologies caused Iran to throw its support behind Hezbollah. Hezbollah was created due in part to the aid it received from Ayatollah Khomeini's supporters, and today Hezbollah continues to receive support from Iran. Furthermore, the Taif Accords, that officially ended the war in Lebanon in

1990, called for disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militia. Syria as well, despite American efforts was still an occupying force in Lebanon at that time and had much control over the country. Despite the agreement calling on the militia to disband, Syria allowed Hezbollah to maintain their arms and control the Shiite areas of Southern Lebanon. In the early days of the end of the Civil War, we are able to see the support Syria had for Hezbollah by allowing them to continue to operate as an armed resistance movement. Hezbollah still receives support from Syria despite Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005.

Hezbollah, like the PLO, was able to become another armed resistance group in Lebanon, separate from the Lebanese government due the support and aid it has received from Iran and Syria. Though Hezbollah's original objective was to counter Israeli occupation, it gained legitimacy in other ways. The group "portrays itself as a defender of the oppressed and the weak against what it regards as the injustice of the strong."<sup>158</sup> Hezbollah was able to win approval "by offering services that their...states were not providing, including health care and education."<sup>159</sup> Hezbollah has now grown into an armed resistance group that has seats in parliament and popular support among factions of the Lebanese population.

### **Hezbollah: Challenges and Takeover**

Hezbollah will be mentioned in every current policy venture discussed towards Lebanon because no matter the policy, countering the group is the United States' main objective. 2011 marked a shift in Lebanese politics and this is important to note in order for one to see that all policies for Lebanon that have been implemented over the last couple years and discussed in this paper may shift in the future as a result.

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<sup>158</sup> United States. Cong. *Hezbollah Background and Issues for Congress*. By Casey L. Addis and Christopher M. Blanchard. Cong. Bill. [Washington, DC]: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2011. 11. Print.

<sup>159</sup> Looney, Robert E. *Handbook of US-Middle East Relations: Formative Factors and Regional Perspectives*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print. 113



In the beginning of 2011 the pro-western government of Prime Minister Saad Hariri, son of late Rafik Hariri, was still in place. The United States had been completely supportive of the government; reasons for this support will be discussed later on. Funding for The Special Tribunal for Lebanon investigating the death of Rafik Hariri, which will be discussed later on in depth as well, was the question that toppled the government. Saad Hariri was faced with “pressure from the Shi’ite movement and its allies...to declare the tribunal politically tainted and to suspend all cooperation with it.”<sup>160</sup> Hariri could, however, not cut support and funding for a Tribunal put in place to investigate the murder of his father. At the same time, Hezbollah members were set to be indicted in Rafik Hariri’s murder; Hezbollah, who “made clear it would not allow any of its members to be arrested.”<sup>161</sup> All 10 Hezbollah ministers then resigned plus one other member. This meant more than one third of the 30 minister government had been dissolved, causing the toppling of Prime Minister Hariri’s government.

Hezbollah and their allies were then able to nominate new Prime Minister Najib Mikati; this meant a Prime Minister Hezbollah approved of; meaning one the United States was suspicious of. It was not until June 2011 that Mikati announced a government which consisted of 16 Hezbollah ministers and their allies out of 30, causing them to constitute a majority.<sup>162</sup> Saad Hariri “vowed not to be part of the new government. His Western-backed coalition is now the opposition in Lebanon.”<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>160</sup>“Behind Lebanon's New Political Crisis - TIME." *Breaking News, Analysis, Politics, Blogs, News Photos, Video, Tech Reviews - TIME.com*. 13 June 2011. Web. 20 Nov. 2011.  
<<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2042111,00.html>>.

<sup>161</sup>ibid

<sup>162</sup> "Hezbollah Rise in Lebanon Gives Syria, Iran Sway - ABC News." *ABCNews.com: Daily News, Breaking News and Video Broadcasts - ABC News*. 13 June 2011. Web. 21 Nov. 2011.  
<<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=13827310>>.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid

## **Death of Rafik Hariri**

Former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri's death has proved to be a major factor influencing United States policy towards Lebanon. Hariri will be mentioned in every policy venture the United States has in trying to counter Hezbollah, because his death was responsible for the implementation of these policies. Rafik Hariri was in office from 2000 until 2004 while Emile Lahoud was president. President Lahoud's term was set to end in 2004, but Lahoud was a staunch Syrian supporter. Syria at that time was still an occupying force in Lebanon, had a lot of control over the government and wanted to amend the constitution to extend Lahoud's term. This resulted in UN Security Council resolution 1559 in September 2004 which was sponsored by the United States. The resolution asserted that Syria "had imposed its political will on Lebanon and had compelled the cabinet and Lebanese National Assembly to amend its constitution...by extending the term of the current President."<sup>164</sup> The resolution called upon "all remaining forces to withdraw from Lebanon."<sup>165</sup> Rafik Hariri agreed with the United States and was against amending the constitution in Lahoud's favor. Hariri, therefore, though not outright able to claim so, was anti-Syrian, and subsequently an American ally. Despite all this, Lahoud's presidency was extended and Rafik Hariri consequently resigned as Prime Minister in October 2004. Then in February 2005, Hariri was assassinated in Beirut after a bomb implanted in his car blew up. Public outcry across Lebanon ensued following his murder. Hariri's death did not change United States foreign policy towards Lebanon; rather it paved the way for the United States to implement ways to counter Hezbollah.

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<sup>164</sup>"SECURITY COUNCIL DECLARES SUPPORT FOR FREE, FAIR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN LEBANON; CALLS FOR WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES THERE." *Welcome to the United Nations: It's Your World*. Web. 20 Nov. 2011. <<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/sc8181.doc.htm>>.

<sup>165</sup>Ibid

## **Syria-Out**

Syria in Lebanon meant strong support for Hezbollah. In 2003 Congress passed the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act which imposed “sanctions on Syria for its continued occupation of Lebanon.”<sup>166</sup> Though the main objective was to end the occupation of Syria in Lebanon, extreme support from the United States to end the occupation was due to the fact Syria supports Hezbollah. After Hariri’s death “anti-Syrian demonstrations in Lebanon caused Syria to end its long occupation of the country.”<sup>167</sup> Syria leaving Lebanon proved to be extremely beneficial to United States’ interests. The United States had lost a pro-western friend in Hariri, but gained the end of an occupation supportive of Hezbollah.

Going more in depth of United States support for Syrian withdrawal, the United States continues to condemn any actions taken by Syria in Lebanon. What is the United States interest in this prospect? Again, Lebanon is a small country lacking in resources important to the United States; what does it matter if a country similar in identity and culture were to cross over into its border? The answer lies again with Hezbollah and the United States counterterrorism strategy. Continued Syrian support for Hezbollah means stronger opposition towards Israel from Hezbollah in the form of weapons and military capabilities, with which Hezbollah can then attack Israel. Syrian withdrawal, though it seemed positive initially, has proved otherwise. In February 2009 DNI Blair said “Syrian military support to Hizballah has increased substantially over the past 5 years.”<sup>168</sup> Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee in April 2010, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffry Feltman said “The Syrian army’s 2005 withdrawal from Lebanon and Hizballah’s 2006 conflict with Israel deepened the strategic

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<sup>166</sup>Looney, Robert E. *Handbook of US-Middle East Relations: Formative Factors and Regional Perspectives*. London: Routledge, 2009. Print. 318

<sup>167</sup>Ibid

<sup>168</sup>United States. Cong. *Hezbollah Background and Issues for Congress*. By Casey L. Addis and Christopher M. Blanchard. Cong. Bill. [Washington, DC]: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2011. 17. Print.

interdependence between the Syrian state and Hizballah.”<sup>169</sup> Feltman went on to say that “time and time again, we have seen...Hizballah’s weapons and Syria’s support for its role as an independent armed force in Lebanon are a threat...to Israel, and to Lebanon itself.”<sup>170</sup>

Countering United States interest is Hezbollah leader and Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah who in 2009 said:

*Syria has taken a distinguished and steadfast stand in the conflict with the Israeli enemy. It has supported resistance movements in the region and stood by them in the most difficult circumstances, [ . . . ] We emphasize the need to maintain the distinguished relations between Lebanon and Syria, for they are a common political, security, and economic need dictated by the interests of the two countries and the two peoples, the needs of political geography, and the requirements of Lebanon’s stability and the confrontation of common challenges. We also call for an end to the entire negative climate that blemished relations between the two countries in the past few years, and we call for restoring those relations to their normal state as soon as possible”*<sup>171</sup>

Elliot Abrams, Senior Director for the Near East, at a hearing on Developments in Egypt and Lebanon in February of this year, said policy should be based on the new government implemented in Lebanon, referring to Hezbollah taking a bigger role in government earlier this year. Relations with Lebanon, Abrams said, should depend on if it complies “with UN security council resolutions 1559...which require disarmament and control of the Syrian border.”<sup>172</sup>

Similarly State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said that “The United States in the strongest terms condemns the transfer of any arms...from Syria to Hezbollah,”<sup>173</sup> after reports surfaced in April 2010 that Syria transferred scud missiles to Hezbollah.

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<sup>169</sup>Ibid 18

<sup>170</sup> Ibid

<sup>171</sup>Ibid 12

<sup>172</sup>United States. Cong. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. *Recent Developments in Egypt and Lebanon: Implications for U.S. Policy and Allies in the Broader Middle East : Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Twelfth Congress, First Session, February 9 and 10, 2011.* H. Bill. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 2011. 14. Print.

<sup>173</sup>United States. Cong. *Lebanon Background and U.S. Relations.* By Casey L. Addis. Cong. Bill. [Washington, DC]: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2011. 5. Print.

So we are able to see that withdrawal of Syria from Lebanon six years ago has not hindered United States policy of trying to expel Syrian influence. Rafik Hariri's death may have withdrawn Syria formally, but now border incursions pose an even bigger problem as Syria supports Hezbollah through actions of weapons smuggling. Hassan Nasrallah, based on his comments, continues to be extremely supportive of Syrian relations, proof of Syrian support for the military group. Now with Hezbollah taking over, the United States can no longer support a Lebanese government the way they used to given Hezbollah's role. Counterterrorism is the main objective and the United States countered Hezbollah by supporting an anti-Hezbollah government; which brings me to the next point of contention, United States assistance to Lebanon.

### **Assistance to Lebanon**

United States assistance to Lebanon is another policy due in part to Rafik Hariri's death. After Hariri's death, as noted earlier, Syria withdrew from Lebanon. Amid protest in which much of the population blamed Syria for Hariri's death, the pro-Syrian government of Prime Minister Omar Karami announced its resignation among growing pressure. The government's resignation came two weeks after Hariri's death. A public gathering was asked for by Hassan Nasrallah in support of Syria and Hezbollah on March 8<sup>th</sup>. On March 14<sup>th</sup>, six days later, hundreds of thousands of Lebanese marched in support of Hariri, pro-democracy and against Syria. This inevitably split the Lebanese population even further into two more groups: those supportive of a March 8<sup>th</sup> or a March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition. The March 8<sup>th</sup> coalition supports Hezbollah; while the March 14<sup>th</sup> supports a pro-western government, calls on Hezbollah to give up its arms, and believes that the Lebanese Armed Forces are the only group that should possess weapons in Lebanon. In April 2005, a new government was formed with 72 seats of the 128 members of

parliament supporting the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, and this is where United States assistance comes in.

The United States supports the March 14<sup>th</sup>, pro-democracy, anti-Hezbollah and anti-Syrian alliance of Lebanon. After March 14<sup>th</sup> won in government following Hariri's death, assistance to Lebanon from the United States increased. The point was again counterterrorism in supporting a group against Hezbollah. Elliot Abrams in the same meeting at the Committee on Foreign Affairs in February said he was

*Serving in the Bush Administration when the March 14<sup>th</sup> movement won the 2005 election...and the U.S. began a significant aid program for the Lebanese Armed Forces or LAF. Our hope was that we would strengthen the LAF as an alternative force to Hizballah, one that could limit Hizballah's power.*<sup>174</sup>

Similarly, the State Department asserted that United States security assistance to Lebanon would “promote Lebanese control over Southern Lebanon...The U.S. government's active military-to-military programs enhance the professionalism of the Lebanese armed forces.”<sup>175</sup> We are now able to see United States policy in assisting Lebanon is in the form of countering Hezbollah by supporting the Lebanese Armed Forces, which would adhere to a March 14<sup>th</sup> government. Now let us see exactly where the money goes.

“Foreign military assistance is the largest program through which the United States supports the LAF.”<sup>176</sup> Foreign Military Financing (FMF) is supportive of “the establishment of a weapon-free zone south of the Litani River and an end to weapons smuggling across the

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<sup>174</sup> United States. Cong. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. *Recent Developments in Egypt and Lebanon: Implications for U.S. Policy and Allies in the Broader Middle East : Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Twelfth Congress, First Session, February 9 and 10, 2011*. H. Bill. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 2011. 14. Print.

<sup>175</sup> United States. Cong. *U.S. Security Assistance to Lebanon*. By Casey L. Addis. Cong. Bill. [Washington, D.C.]: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2011. 2. Print.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid 3

Lebanon-Syria border.”<sup>177</sup> FMF’s main objectives are to completely counter Hezbollah. The area south of the Litani River in Lebanon is Hezbollah’s stronghold, and a weapons free zone in that area means a weapon free Hezbollah. The weapons smuggling across the border that the FMF is trying to end means ending weapon smuggling to Hezbollah from Syria. FMF assistance to Lebanon went from \$30.64 million in 2006 to a startling \$224.80 million in 2007 and \$100 million in 2010.<sup>178</sup> The International and Military Education (IMET) program is another State Department-Administered program providing assistance to Lebanon. The program funds military education and IMET training in Lebanon is designed “to reduce sectarianism in the LAF.”<sup>179</sup> IMET funding provided \$2.50 million for Lebanon in 2010.<sup>180</sup>

Section 1206 funds, which gives the Department of Defense authority to spend a part of its money to train foreign militaries to undertake counterterrorism, have been used in Lebanon. 1206 funds for Lebanon went from \$10.6 million in 2006 to \$33.6 million in 2010.<sup>181</sup> Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs assists the Internal Security Forces in Lebanon, which was neglected during Syrian occupation. The Internal Security Forces in Lebanon serves as the police force “and is responsible for law enforcement, physical security, crime prevention, and investigations.”<sup>182</sup> United States assistance to Lebanese Internal Security Forces “is designed to increase...capacity of the force to combat crime, prevent and respond to terror attacks, monitor Lebanon’s borders, and combat the infiltration of weapons and terrorists into Lebanon.”<sup>183</sup> Assistance to the ISF went from \$60 million in 2007 to \$20

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid 4

<sup>178</sup> United States. Cong. *Lebanon Background and U.S. Relations*. By Casey L. Addis. Cong. Bill. [Washington, DC]: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2011. 4. Print.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid

<sup>180</sup> Ibid 3

<sup>181</sup> Ibid 4

<sup>182</sup> United States. Cong. *U.S. Security Assistance to Lebanon*. By Casey L. Addis. Cong. Bill. [Washington, D.C.]: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2011. 5. Print.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid

million in 2010. All in all assistance to Lebanon from 2006 to 2010 has totaled an estimated \$1.357 billion.<sup>184</sup>

Increased support to Lebanon resulted from Hariri's death and a pro-western government coming to power. The United States support for the Lebanese government must now alter as their counter policy has backfired and Hezbollah now plays a bigger role in government. Howard Berman, Ranking Member in the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs, in the meeting on Lebanon asserted:

*As Hezbollah gradually assumes control [...] we must be both wise and firm in our response. I will be introducing legislation called the Hezbollah Anti-Terrorism Act [...] my bill will set rigorous requirements for the provision of foreign assistance to Lebanon during periods where Hezbollah is part of the Lebanese Government. The goal will be to ensure that none of our assistance to Lebanon benefits Hezbollah in any way. We certainly want to assist our friends in Lebanon, and we will. But we also want to make sure that we don't inadvertently help our enemies at the same time.*<sup>185</sup>

The venture of supporting the United States' friend in Lebanon is impossible as the government itself is becoming increasingly run by the enemy. Gary Ackerman, Ranking Member to Chair the House Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, stated at the same meeting that "I believe we have no other alternative but to suspend all of our assistance programs to Lebanon."<sup>186</sup> When Hezbollah did formally take stronger control of the government in June after Prime Minister Mikati set up a government, Chairman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen said that no more U.S. funds should be given to the newly formed Hezbollah government. Lehtinen stated:

*Now, Hezbollah and its cohorts will control the Lebanese government and likely benefit from the years of U.S. assistance, including to the Lebanese military... The U.S. should immediately cut off assistance to the Lebanese government as long as any violent*

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid

<sup>185</sup> United States. Cong. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. *Recent Developments in Egypt and Lebanon: Implications for U.S. Policy and Allies in the Broader Middle East : Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Twelfth Congress, First Session, February 9 and 10, 2011*. H. Bill. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 2011. 7. Print.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid 76



*extremist group designated by the U.S. as foreign terrorist organizations participates in it.*<sup>187</sup>

Years of support for the Lebanese government may end negatively for the United States.

### **Special Tribunal for Lebanon**

Again a United States policy towards Lebanon has been brought about by Rafik Hariri's death. The Special Tribunal for Lebanon was created in 2007 through UN Security Council Resolution 1757 which the United States voted in favor of. The Tribunal was set up in order "to prosecute persons responsible for the attack of 14 February 2005 resulting in the death of Former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri."<sup>188</sup> Funding for the Tribunal was appropriated as 49% given to the government of Lebanon and 51% would be received from "voluntary contributions from states."<sup>189</sup> The resolution was brought about by a request from Lebanese parliament in which a majority expressed support for the Tribunal.

The United States continues to be supportive of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. James Steinberg, then Deputy Secretary of State, at the House on Foreign Affairs meeting in February affirmed that "we attach enormous importance to the continuation of the tribunal."<sup>190</sup> Secretary of State Hilary Clinton noted that "Those who oppose the Tribunal seek to create a false choice between justice and stability in Lebanon; we reject this."<sup>191</sup> Hezbollah on the other hand is completely against the Tribunal and as mentioned before will not allow any members of the group to be arrested in Rafik Hariri's murder. The very collapse of the government earlier this

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<sup>187</sup> "Ros-Lehtinen Urges Cutoff of Aid to New Hezbollah-Controlled Lebanese Government Also Says U.S. Should Cut off Funding for Palestinian Authority." *U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs*. 13 June 2011. Web. 20 Nov. 2011. <[http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/press\\_display.asp?id=1864](http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/press_display.asp?id=1864)>.

<sup>188</sup> "SECURITY COUNCIL AUTHORIZES ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIAL TRIBUNAL TO TRY SUSPECTS IN ASSASSINATION OF RAFIQ HARIRI." *Welcome to the United Nations: It's Your World*. Web. 20 Nov. 2011. <<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sc9029.doc.htm>>.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid

<sup>190</sup> United States. Cong. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. *Recent Developments in Egypt and Lebanon: Implications for U.S. Policy and Allies in the Broader Middle East : Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Twelfth Congress, First Session, February 9 and 10, 2011*. H. Bill. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 2011. 90. Print.

<sup>191</sup> United States. Cong. *Lebanon Background and U.S. Relations*. By Casey L. Addis. Cong. Bill. [Washington, DC]: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2011. 1. Print.

year was due in part to the March 8<sup>th</sup> minister's adamancy to cut the 49% funding for the Tribunal that the Lebanese government is responsible for.

Hezbollah is most opposed to the Tribunal not mainly because of its flawed nature as they said it was. Rather, opposition to the Tribunal lies within the indications that the Tribunal is set out to indict members of Hezbollah in the murder of Rafik Hariri, given United States support for it. After an indictments were issued in January, Hezbollah said that the "United States was behind the release of the draft indictment." Hezbollah also accused Washington of "pushing the indictment ahead to light the fuse to blow up the bridges for a solution," and said "Americans control the indictments in form and content."<sup>192</sup> It is evident through media reports and speculation that the Tribunal is set to indict Hezbollah officials in the murder of Rafik Hariri, which is why the United States has been so supportive of it. The pro-western government who voted for the Tribunal in Lebanon was part of the original March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition that blamed pro-Hezbollah Syria for Hariri's murder.

Although the United States claims support for the Tribunal because the Lebanese people deserve the truth, it is merely an extension of the United States' anti-Hezbollah stance. Given speculation all along that the Tribunal planned to indict Hezbollah members in Rafik Hariri's murder, one could see that such support is a symbolic move to continue to undermine Hezbollah. In June of 2011 the tribunal submitted four indictments and arrest warrants to the Lebanese authorities, "A highly placed source in the Lebanese Army told CNN the four include Mustafa Badreddine, Hasan Oneisa, Salim Ayyah and Asad Sabra -- all Hezbollah members."<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>192</sup>Karouny, Mariam. "Prosecutor Files Hariri Indictment in Lebanon Crisis| Reuters." *Breaking News, Business News, Financial and Investing News & More | Reuters.co.uk*. 17 Jan. 2011. Web. 21 Nov. 2011. <<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2011/01/18/uk-lebanon-tribunal-idUKTRE70G4A120110118>>.

<sup>193</sup> "Hezbollah Leader Says Israel Was behind Hariri Killing - CNN." *Featured Articles from CNN*. 02 July 2011. Web. 21 Nov. 2011. <[http://articles.cnn.com/2011-07-02/world/lebanon.nasrallah.hariri\\_1\\_hezbollah-leader-hassan-nasrallah-imad-mughniyeh?\\_s=PM:WORLD](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-07-02/world/lebanon.nasrallah.hariri_1_hezbollah-leader-hassan-nasrallah-imad-mughniyeh?_s=PM:WORLD)>.

Nasrallah continued to dismiss “the court as a US-Israeli conspiracy against his ...party.”<sup>194</sup>

United States Policy in support for the Tribunal then is in essence, countering Hezbollah’s objections to the Tribunal; as well as bringing them down through accusing them of the murder of Hariri, shattering their name and image in the eyes of the Lebanese public.

The Lebanese people, in the name of justice, most definitely deserve the truth. Rafik Hariri was a man influential to the Lebanese people, loved his country and did everything he could to make Lebanon greater. Much of the aid to rebuild Beirut following the Civil war came from Hariri. He was loved among many, and Lebanon is acting out of righteousness in supporting the Tribunal. The harsh reality, though, is that if one looked at Lebanese history they would find that hundreds of Lebanese politicians were assassinated throughout the years. They would also find that justice was not served for these murdered politicians and efforts to find those responsible were not even implemented. Why did the United States not push for justice for the many politicians that came before Hariri? Hariri is a different case in that justice for him could most definitely undermine Hezbollah, which is again the U.S.’s main priority in Lebanon. Had indictments hinted that another group other than Hezbollah was responsible, the U.S. would not show much interest in the Tribunal, just as they have done in the past. Furthermore, Lebanon is now politically unstable and the population is defined by those supportive of March 8<sup>th</sup> or March 14<sup>th</sup>. Arrests of Hezbollah members in Rafik Hariri’s murder could throw Lebanon into another civil war. Nasrallah adamantly denies arrests of Hezbollah members and should this occur chaos may ensue. Hezbollah is not only a resistance group, but an armed resistance group capable of inflicting much violence. Hezbollah will find no trouble in attacking Lebanese

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<sup>194</sup>(afp), Jocelyne Zablit. "AFP: Lebanon Pays UN Court, Averting Crisis." *Google*. 30 Nov. 2011. Web. 30 Nov. 2011.  
<<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hZTMkdWSSAlpmVwMBxBjCCQLqodw?docId=CNG.2831b7d994b8b5098de31416da46b2ef.a51>>.

factions who do not support the group, and a bloodier, more violent civil war than the one before could follow.

### **Final Thoughts**

Many parallels exist today between Lebanon's past and the current situation. Hezbollah now exists, reflective of the Arab nationalist cause and the PLO that troubled the United States in the years 1958 and 1982, respectively. We have seen a repeat of history, where a group or cause has successfully brought the Lebanese population against each other; in this case with the March 8<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> coalitions. The only difference being Hezbollah is stronger than any past issues ever were. Hezbollah is actually a Lebanese group, has members in parliament and is popular among much of the population. The PLO shares many of the same qualities as Lebanon's current militant group; however, Hezbollah fighters cannot be forced to withdraw as the PLO had been nor can their power inside government be minimalized given their current strength. At least with the PLO, the Lebanese Government could have cracked down had they really wanted to and were not fearful of the disintegration of the army which was in fact likely. This is not true in the case of Hezbollah given it is an armed resistance group that actually has a major say in Lebanon's political issues.

This issue of the army was prevalent as well in 1958 when General Shehab decided not to use force against the opposition fearing the Lebanese Forces would defect along confessional lines. Eisenhower, though annoyed at the army's restraint, would grow to learn the reasons behind Shehab's thought process and his subsequent decision. This should have been the first indication that the United States needed to fully support and aid the Lebanese Armed Forces, given the likelihood of it would collapse. Had this been the U.S.'s main objective following the withdrawal of the Marines after 1958 the Lebanese Forces may have been able to crackdown on

the PLO. With a strong army that adhered to a strong central government fear of the collapse of the army would not have been an issue; the crackdown would have been a quick process like Black September in Jordan.

Israel would remain in Lebanon until 2000, but the biggest accomplishment they achieved was making the issue worse for themselves. Israel invaded in 1982 with the mission of clearing Lebanon of the PLO and securing its northern border with the hope that a peace deal would be signed with their allies in Lebanon. Israel remaining inside Lebanon, however, only created another PLO called Hezbollah, spiteful and hatred of Israel's presence. The border between the two countries is just as tense as ever even with UNIFIL troops stationed along the green line. Lebanon now claims to be the last country to ever sign a peace deal with Israel, and as we saw in 2006, another spark could start another devastating war between the two countries.

Syria still plays a factor in Lebanon's political affairs and in recent years we have seen the assassination of many anti-Syrian Lebanese politicians. Syria supports and aids Hezbollah just as they had supported the Arab Nationalists, the PLO and the Lebanese National Movement in Lebanon. Should Hezbollah's strength come to a point where they are on the brink of completely taking over the government, Syria may just as well invade Lebanon again. As we saw in 1976, Syria invaded as opposition to the PLO who they supported, but an invasion by Israel in Lebanon was not in Syria's best interest. Should the situation between the Lebanese factions reach a boiling point, Syria may once again directly intervene to help quell any tension, and that would only bring Lebanon's population at odds once again.

Many may argue that Lebanon was and is not crucial to the United States national interest and aid to the country was not essential at that time. However, if Lebanon was important enough in 1958 to have had Marines deployed to help assuage the situation, it was important enough to

continue to support. Yet, Lebanon was overlooked due to the fact it fit the United States' definition of an ally in the region. A pro-western regime as well as a minimal role in the Arab-Israeli conflict caused a disregard for any need for continued support. Instead, more important to the United States was focusing on other nations in the region who were not necessarily as pro-west as Lebanon was, yet who were more economically and regionally important. This disregard only allowed Lebanon to suffer under the guise of a seemingly perfect ally. However, domestic issues were in fact vital to the United States' national interest and even more so today due to the spillover effect these tensions caused.

We have covered much of Lebanon's history and have come full circle since 1958 when Marines were first deployed to the country. Despite the ever-changing realities present in Lebanon throughout the periods discussed, however, we can conclude that Lebanon is the same place it has always been. It is its own worst enemy, simply stuck as a consequence of its own design. No matter what the issue may be; whether it is pro-Arab or anti-Western sentiments, support for the PLO, Syria, Israel or for Hezbollah; Lebanon's population will be at odds and unable to reach a clear cut consensus on any issue. The United States may intervene, deploy Marines and even continue to support their allies in Lebanon, yet strong opposition to these American allies will always be present. So no matter what the United States' plan may be, as we have seen many times before, the plan may just as well backfire against the backdrop of Lebanon's domestic troubles.

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