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# **biiss papers**

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Number Two

December 1984

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**Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies  
Dhaka**

**biiss papers**

Number 2, December 1984

**Published by :**

**Bangladesh Institute of International  
and Strategic Studies, Dhaka**

The views expressed in the **biiss papers** are those of the author  
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Price : Taka 15.00/US \$ 2.00 ( including surface postage )

**For Correspondence please contact**

**Publication Officer**

**Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies  
1/46 Elephant Road Dhaka-2 Tele : 406234**

**Printed by :**

**Asiatic Press**

**C/o Civil & Military Press**

**4, Zindabahr 3rd Lane**

**Dhaka, Bangladesh**

**BIISS PAPERS**

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**THE CRISIS IN LEBANON  
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OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE**

**Golam Mostafa**

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## THE CRISIS IN LEBANON : MULTIDIMENSIONAL ASPECTS AND OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

### INTRODUCTION

One of the major problems of contemporary political history of nations in the developing world is the attainment of national integration and political stability when the nation concerned stands on a delicate ethnic balance. The problem is further compounded when intrusive forces not only prop one contending group against the other but also perpetrate their own interests. National integration and political stability thus become far-fetched. The tragedy in Lebanon, which has been ravaged by civil wars and external occupations, is a case in point.

Lebanon today is divided into numerous sub-national groups and factions with antagonistic religious, sectarian, political as well as ideological affiliations. Her territory has frequently been occupied by foreign troops having conflicting interests. The most tragic thing in Lebanon is the infighting among the Muslims, the Christians and the Palestinians. *As a result, it is not only the political stability of the country but also the very sovereignty and territorial integrity that is at stake which at the same time it threatens the peace and stability of the entire region of the Middle East.* Despite occasional flicker of hopes raised by peace initiatives and mediation efforts as well as by national reconciliation attempts, including the formation of National Unity Government in April 1984, future of Lebanon still remains murky.

The present crisis in Lebanon is deep-rooted, complicated and multi-dimensional in character. The basic cause of the crisis was the sectarian conflict between the Muslims and Christians which started

even before the emergence of modern Lebanon. The power-sharing arrangement within the framework of the National Pact—the unwritten Constitution of the country adopted in 1943—did not provide a lasting solution either. Simmering ethnic conflicts persisted throughout the subsequent decades. With the intrusion of external forces into Lebanon, particularly the Palestinians, the situation was aggravated and in the mid-seventies a civil war broke out in the Republic. In the wake of the civil war, Syrian troops intervened and the city of Beirut was *de facto* divided by “Green Line” into two parts—West and East

The crisis in Lebanon and for that matter, the Middle East crisis acquired a new dimension in 1982 when Israel invaded Lebanon and forced the Palestinian guerillas to withdraw from Beirut. But their withdrawal did not solve the crisis, contrary to the expectation in some quarters. The intensified sectarian conflict that ensued brought the US Marines along with the French, Italian and British troops into Lebanon for maintaining peace and security. But intense hostilities among various groups did not permit the multinational peace keeping forces to fulfil their mission in Lebanon. After sustaining heavy casualties in the flare-up they were forced to withdraw from Lebanon in early 1984. In the meantime Syria, which has been maintaining about 30,000 troops there since 1976, had tremendously enhanced her position in terms of military strength in Lebanon. She has reportedly been patronising the Muslim militias who have begun to have an edge over the Phalangists and posed a serious threat to the Government of Amin Gemayel. On the other hand, the Israelis also consolidated their position in South Lebanon from where they often launched attacks on Muslim positions in the mountain areas. In the midst of these confused scenario, intensive efforts were made for national reconciliation and a Cabinet of National Unity was formed in April 1984 where all the warring parties were represented. But fightings among different sectarian groups continued all the same. To what extent the National Unity Government of Prime Minister Rashid Karami can endure the political storm and effectively reconcile the conflicting interests still remains a question.

As things stand today, it is not only stability of the regime and for that matter, political stability in the country but also the very territorial integrity of Lebanon are at stake. The present paper aims at examining the various forces and factors bearing on the present crisis. In the light of this assessment an attempt would be made to portray an outlook for the future by bringing out the possible options for the parties involved. But since the current events in Lebanon are closely bound up with the emotions rooted in the past, the present crisis may be placed in perspective when viewed against its historical backdrop. The present paper is organised in five major parts in some temporal sequence : (i) Part One reviews the historical background of the sectarian conflict; (ii) Part Two analyses the various causes, both internal and external leading to the civil war in 1976; (iii) Part Three narrates the political and security developments since the civil war culminating into Israeli invasion in 1982 and subsequent deterioration of the situation; (iv) Part Four deals with the roles of external powers, including the superpowers and the Arab countries, in the Lebanese crisis. and finally ; (v) Part Five will look into the possible options for the solution of the crisis.

## 1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Present Lebanon is a new state in an old territory. Although the present state was created by France in 1920, the territory had a long glorious historical past. The area was ruled by Hittites, Phoenicians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Egyptians, Mamluks and Ottomans in different periods.<sup>1</sup> From 8th to 12th centuries the territory of present Lebanon was ruled by the Umayyad Caliphate. The importance of its coastal areas gradually increased because it was the passage way to holy Mecca and Medina. The coastal cities like Tripoli, Sidon and Tyre flourished in the 11th century and benefited from the commercial revival in the Mediterranean area, particularly in the Balkans and South of Italy. The importance of Lebanon

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1, For details see, *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th Edition 1978, Vol. 17, pp. 942-953

as a part of the Muslim empire was already enhanced during the period of Uthman—the Third Caliph of Islam. During these periods various tribes who were driven out from the Arabian Peninsula and Egypt settled in Lebanon. The Christians known as Maronites (the followers of Saint Maron, a 5th century Monk) also fled to the fertile land of Lebanon and Syria, settled in the mountain areas, occupied more and more areas and consolidated their position.<sup>2</sup> In this way, they began to come into increasing conflicts with the Muslims. A crack, however, began to be developed within the Muslim religious unity with the sectarian rift between the Sunnites and the Shiites. The emergence of the Druzes, an off-shoot of Shiitism preached by missionaries sent from Egypt by the Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim, further complicated the scene.<sup>3</sup>

After the victories of Sultan Saladin in the 12th century, the area fell under Mamluk's rule till its occupation by the Ottoman empire in the 16th century. During the Ottoman rule a number of administrative reforms were introduced in the territory of present Lebanon. It was divided into 4 provinces, viz. Damascus, Aleppo, Tripoli and Sidon; each was ruled by a governor<sup>4</sup>. But the Druze Muslims, mainly living in the Jabal-ad-Duruz south of Damascus, gradually became strong and powerful and declared one of their princes of Shiha-bid family as their governor and refused to pay taxes to the governor of Damascus. The Maronites, on the other hand, recognised the Pope as their spiritual leader and established close cultural relations with France which eventually brought many benefits to them.

During the Ottoman period, particularly in the 17th and 18th centuries, the economy of Lebanon improved considerably. Agricultural goods were produced not only for local consumption but also for export; Aleppo and Damascus gradually flourished as important centres of handicrafts and served as the market places for the desert

2. Daniel Pipes, "The Real Problem", *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1983, Vol. 51, P. 141.

3. *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th Edition 1978, Vol. 17, p. 952

4. *Ibid*, p. 953.

and countryside. Meanwhile, Sidon and Tyre became important centres of trade with Europe and gradually the Italian merchants were replaced by the English and French. At the same time, a class of local Christian and Jewish merchants emerged who developed contacts with Egypt, Italy, France and Britain.<sup>5</sup> Thus, throughout the 17th and 18th centuries deep-rooted changes took place in the socio-economic life of Lebanon. The position of the Christians and Jews improved in comparison with the Muslims who remained bogged down with internal conflict. The Catholics under the protection of France opened missions and schools and spread European culture and languages in Lebanon. On the other hand, the Muslims began to stagnate since the traditional Islamic education could only produce theologians.

In such socio-economic conditions obtaining in Lebanon in 1831 Egypt, with the help of the Muslims particularly the Druzes, occupied Lebanon and Syria. It was a threat to the Ottoman Empire. The European powers came forward to help the Sultan and to protect the interests of Christians and Jews in Lebanon. In 1841 the European powers militarily intervened in Lebanon, the British, Turkish and Austrian forces landed in the coastal area and the Ottoman rule was reestablished. Druzes did not accept the European intervention and continued their struggle against the Maronites—the local agent of the European powers. It is interesting to note, however, that the European powers did not have similar interests in Lebanon. France protected the interests of the Maronites while Russia that of the Orthodox Christians.<sup>6</sup> To counterbalance the French influence over the Maronites, the British assiduously cultivated close ties with the Druzes. The Anglo-French colonial rivalries in the region, in turn, exacerbated the already antagonistic relations between the Druzes, and the Maronites and helped to provoke the widespread civil strife between the two groups at a later stage. Meanwhile, Austria competing with France, Russia and Britain tried to acquire the sympathy of Greek, Syrian and Armenian Catholics. The Americans who

5. *Ibid*, p. 955.

6. *Ibid*, p. 957

entered into the Middle East politics at a later stage looked after the Protestants. In the economic field the European goods flooded the local market and replaced the products of local craftsmen. As a result, the Muslims, particularly the Shiites were seriously affected because most of them belonged to artisan class. On the other hand, it increased the prosperity of the Christians and Jews who were mainly merchants.

At last, tension and dissatisfaction of the Muslims burst out in 1860 when a civil war broke out between the Druzes and Maronites. Under the pressure of the European powers a European Commission was set up to study the future of Lebanon. According to the recommendations of the Commission, the Ottoman empire reorganised the administrative system in Lebanon and a new *Sanjak* (province) was created embracing the central part of Mount Lebanon and the coastal plain but excluding the town of Beirut and surrounding areas of Tripoli and Sidon. The new province was to be governed by a non-Lebanese Christian-governor who must be a subject of the Ottoman empire. He was appointed by the Ottoman Sultan but his appointment was subject to the approval of the European powers. A local council consisting of 12 elected members—4 Maronite, 2 Orthodox, 1 Catholic, 3 Druze, 1 Sunnite and 1 Shiite<sup>7</sup>—was formed to assist the Governor. So under the new administrative system the Muslims were again reduced to a subordinate position while the Christians became predominant in the new province of Lebanon.

The social life in Lebanon, particularly that of the Christians, was marked by increasing influence of European culture, education and traditions. In 1866 the American Protestant Mission opened a University in Beirut and in 1881 the French Jesuits opened the University Saint-Joseph.

Observing the growing Christian influence the Muslims were apprehensive that any future independent state in Lebanon would be

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7. Abbas Kelidar and Michael Burrell, "Lebanon: The Collapse of a State, Regional Dimensions of the Struggle", *Conflict Studies*, August 1976, No. 74 p. 1

dominated by the Christians. Arab nationalistic feeling gained ascendance in early 20th century, particularly after the revolution in Turkey in 1908, and various political groups were organised in different parts of Syria and Lebanon. The Muslims at first demanded an improved status within the Ottoman empire but, later on, they favoured the establishment of Syrian or Arab state. On the other hand, the Christians, particularly the Maronites and Catholics, wanted an independent Lebanon with extended frontiers and under French protection. In the meantime, World War I broke out and the British forces based in Egypt and a French contingent jointly occupied Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. The Christians and Jews welcomed the move but the Muslims, by and large, remained loyal to the Sultan of Ottoman empire.

According to the decision of the Paris Peace Conference, France got the mandate over Syria and Lebanon and the Greater Lebanon was created from parts of former Ottoman Vilayet of Beirut, together with Mount Lebanon, which was never recognised by Syria. The Christians who formed the overwhelming majority in the Mount Lebanon, hailed the establishment of Lebanon as a fulfilment of Lebanese national aspirations, while the Sunnites raised serious objections to being included in the Lebanese state.<sup>8</sup> In response to the demand of the Lebanese people the mandatory power adopted a constitution in 1926 in which the Greater Lebanon became the Lebanese Republic. But the new constitution could hardly remove the causes of the sectarian conflicts in Lebanon. The Muslims were convinced that the Christian community under French mandate had received an unduly pre-eminent position and in built prerogatives and they sought to change the system in their favour. On the other hand, the Christians regarded themselves as the founder of the new state and thought that they were the only people who could guarantee its viability as a sovereign political entity against the irredentist claims of the Pan-Arab or/and Pan Syrian nationalists. In that situation the constitution was suspended and the Chamber of Deputies was dissolved in 1932.<sup>9</sup>

8. *Ibid*, p. 3.

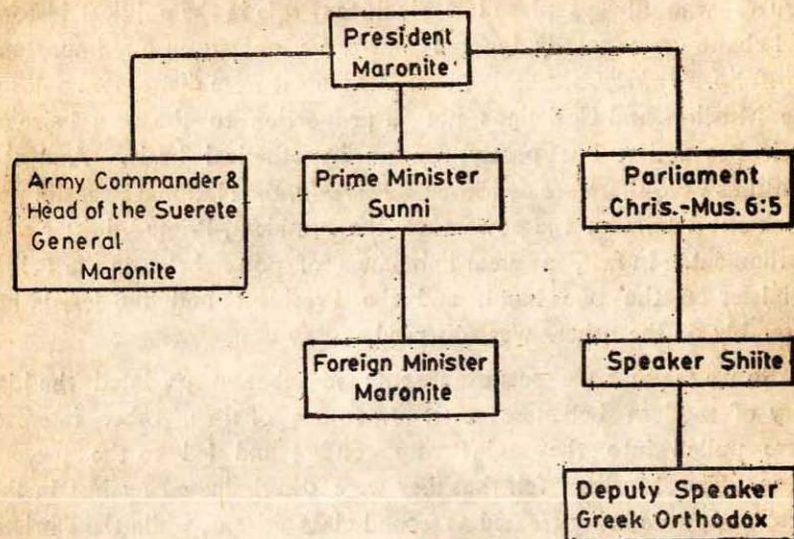
9. See author's article on "Lebanese Crisis and Peace Prospects" in *BIJSS Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1982, P. 63

The young Maronite groups strongly opposing any compromise with the demands of the Muslims formed the party known as Katai'b or "Phalange" in early 1930s on fascist lines drawing inspiration from the Nazi ideology of Hitler. In response, the young Muslims in Beirut set up an organization known as the *Najjada* party, a name which means assistance or succour in meeting the emotional needs of the Muslim community at that time.<sup>10</sup> While these groups remained active, they were joined by other more extreme groups such as "al-Murabitun" on the Muslim side and the "Guards of Cedars" on the Maronite side and gradually all these groups formed para-military forces. In this confused and complicated political situation in 1936 Lebanon concluded a treaty with France which envisaged the complete independence of Lebanon before the end of 1939. But as the World War II broke out the process was delayed and in November 1941 the independence of Lebanon was finally proclaimed. Meanwhile, Lebanon witnessed the political developments at a more fundamental level. The Christians of the Constitutional Bloc headed by the nationalist leader Bishara al-Khuri, an advocate of free West-oriented Lebanon reached a gentleman's agreement with the prominent Sunnite Muslim leaders of Arab nationalist persuasion on the Christian-Muslim co-operation in the country—an agreement later named as the National Pact. According to this Pact the Muslims accepted the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and dropped the demand for union with Syria, while the Christians admitted Lebanon's Arab identity and agreed to cooperate with the Arab states to the greatest possible extent (See Annexure-1). Accordingly, the Pact provided for power sharing among the various religious sects. The President of the Republic would be a Maronite Christian, while a Sunni Muslim would hold the office of the Prime Minister. The two important posts of Army Commander and head of the *Surete Generale* were reserved for Maronites.<sup>11</sup> The Shiites received

10. Abbas Kelidar and Michael Burrel, op. cit. p.5

11. For details of power sharing under the National Pact of 1943, see J.C. Hurewitz, *Confessional Democracy in Lebanon: The Military Dimension*, (London), 1969, pp. 380-382.

the post of Speaker in the Chamber of Deputies, while the Deputy Speakership went to the Greek Orthodox community. The seats in the Parliament were also divided in the ratio of 6 : 5 between the Christians and Muslims respectively. Details of power sharing may be seen in the following Chart.



So it seemed that within the framework of the National Pact adopted in 1943 the Muslims and Christians were able to share power among themselves to the satisfaction of each community, at least for the time being. But in the long run it failed to solve the age-old sectarian conflict in Lebanon because of some basic shortcomings inherent in this Pact. *Firstly*, there was a perception gap between the parties concerned. The Muslims treated the Pact as a transient arrangement that could be replaced by a better one at an opportune moment, while the Christians took it as a final document which must be respected by all parties in perpetuity.<sup>12</sup>

12. For further details see, J. Bayo Adekson, "Political Ethnicity and Military Disintegration: Comparative Case of Contemporary Cyprus (1960-1974) and Lebanon (1943-1975)", *IDSA Journal*, (Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis), New Delhi, Vol. XIII, No. 2, 1980, p. 260.

*Secondly*, the National Pact was an outcome of a consensus between a section of Christians and the Sunnite Muslims but not on the basis of an overall Christian-Muslim consensus. Other interest groups remained at the periphery of the arrangement. For example, the Druzes who always played a significant role in the political history of Lebanon were totally ignored and were not given any important portfolio. *Thirdly*, the seats in the Parliament were distributed among the Muslims and Christians not in proportion to the actual size of their population but purely on an hypothetical basis. And the Muslims were therefore aggrieved. *Fourthly*, the National Pact did not work out details on the powers of the President, Prime Minister and Parliament. In fact, a great imbalance of power between the Prime Minister on the one hand, and the President and the legislative assembly on the other, was observed.

So we see that the sectarian strife in Lebanon predated the history of modern Lebanese state. In course of time, other interests were pulled into the mainstream conflict and led to the present crisis. The Muslims felt that they were discriminated against in the Pact and were being treated as second class citizens, while the Christians considering the Pact as a source of their power were strengthening their position in the day-to-day affairs of the state. From the above historical review certain other facts also become evident. In the first place, the sectarian conflict between the Christians and the Muslims was basically on power struggle over control of the state of Lebanon to promote the interest of the respective community. *Secondly*, in this power struggle the Christians in general and the Maronites in particular obtained strategic support from the European powers. Even the external economic linkages with European powers promoted the economic power of the Christians. While the Muslims also obtained external help, such help did not seem to be commensurate with their expectations. *Thirdly*, the striking feature about the external support is that while divergent powers' assistance to divergent intra-Christian sects did not affect an ever-arching Christian identity, the same was not true for the Muslims. External support from differ-

ent sources did, in fact, strike marked division among different Muslim sects. And finally, all attempts at reconciliation in retrospect, were aimed at power sharing rather than national integration. The perceived imbalance in power remained and through outbursts from time to time, different groups tried to redress the imbalance.

## II. CAUSES OF THE CIVIL WAR IN 1975-1976

### 1. Internal.

Despite certain inherent shortcomings the 1943 National Pact provided a mechanism of power sharing between the two dominant groups in Lebanon—the Christians and the Muslims. Consequently, Lebanon would maintain some semblance of parliamentary democracy for many years. Sometimes the marriage of convenience between the Christians and Muslims proved to be an ideal one, particularly during the times of Khuri regime (1943-52) and Chehab and Helou regimes (1958-1970). But, sometimes it proved ineffective, for example, during the Chamoun (1952-58) and Franjieh regimes (1970-1975)<sup>13</sup>. The internal causes of the crisis could be traced to the very social formation, pattern of socio-economic development and sharpening of interests of various forces leading to intensified feuds and factionalism. The political stability of Lebanon between 1943 and 1975 depended on to what extent the ruling regimes accommodated the interests of the opposition and the minorities. During Khuri and Chehab regimes attentions were paid to alleviate the long standing Muslim grievances by associating the Muslims more closely in the government and administration and by attending to neglected peripheral region where Muslims dominated.<sup>14</sup> Internal stability was further promoted by the reestablishment and maintenance of good relations with the United Arab Republic. In 1964 Charles Helou formed the government in Lebanon and, although he was considered weaker than Chehab,

13. *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th Edition 1978, Vol. 17, p. 961

14. *Ibid*, p. 952

he, somehow, managed to keep peace and stability in the county. The situation in Lebanon was comparatively calm and peaceful during the period of 1958-69.

Meanwhile some significant social changes took place which, however, began to eat up the vitality of the semblance of stability. The pattern of socio-economic development that began much earlier increased social and regional inequality and it got mixed up with the perceived imbalance of social forces. The process of urbanization continued with rapid pace which brought 40 percent of the Lebanese population to the city of Beirut and the city failed to achieve integration of heterogeneous elements of its population. Beirut became a reflection of Lebanon as a whole but at the same time the urban-rural disparity increased dramatically. The rural economy suffered a serious set-back while the urban-based commerce was flourishing and urban citizens were becoming more affluent. As a result, the existing dissatisfaction was deepened between the urban Christians and rural Muslims. The overall economic situation was deteriorating and the government failed to control it. The country was caught in a severe inflation that enriched those on one side of the social chasm and exacerbated the distress and bitterness of those on the other side.<sup>15</sup>

In the political field the situation was equally complicated. The guerilla activities spread and various groups were strengthening their respective positions by forming their own militia forces. The government of Suleiman Franjeh failed to control the situation and the country was on the verge of a civil war in mid-70s.

## 2. External

2.1. *Arab Inputs* : The Lebanese crisis can not be viewed in isolation from the developments in Arab politics because any change in the Arab political scene has serious repercussions on Lebanon and in many

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15. William W. Haddad, 'Lebanon in Despair', *Current History*, January 1984 p. 15

occasions the nature of Lebanese politics was determined by external factors. The political turmoil in Syria in 1949 seriously affected Lebanon and after an abortive *coup* attempt in 1951, the Lebanese government was reportedly accused and it was widely believed that the Lebanese Prime Minister was assassinated by the Syrian Nationalist Party. The revolution in Egypt in 1952 which liquidated the monarchical regime encouraged the Lebanese Muslims and the regime of Bishara Khuri was overthrown. Meanwhile the creation of Israel in the midst of turbulent atmosphere of the Middle East politics complicated the situation and the Lebanese Muslims expressed their sympathy toward their Palestinian brethren and put continuous pressure on the government for stronger support to the Palestinian issue. The influx of about 90,000 Palestinians into Lebanon in 1948-1949 further consolidated the Muslim position. The sectarian conflict in Lebanon again aggravated in 1956 during the Suez War when the Lebanese Muslims urged the government to break off diplomatic relations with Britain and France which joined Israel in the war but the Chamoun regime refused to comply with. The situation again worsened in 1958 when Syria and Egypt formed the United Arab Republic (UAR). The Lebanese Muslims who opposed the Chamoun regime hailed the new union as a triumph of Pan-Arabism and strongly advocated that Lebanon should join the UAR. There were demonstrations and armed conflicts in different places and the army was called in to control the situation. But the army, composed of Christians and Muslims, refused to attack the insurgents out of the fear that it would split apart. Although President Chamoun sought US help and the Marines landed in Lebanon in 1958,<sup>16</sup> he could not stay in power and General Chehab, the Commander of the Army captured power. For the next ten years the situation in Lebanon remained stable and President Chehab was able to earn the confidence of Lebanese Muslims and Arab States.

16. In 1958, responding to a request from Lebanese President Camille Chamoun, President Eisenhower sent a force more than 14,000 Marines and soldiers to Lebanon to strengthen the Chamoun government against dissidents and to guarantee free election. That election resulted Chamoun's defeat and the US troops were withdrawn.

The Third Arab-Israeli war in 1967 and the humiliating defeat of the Arabs gave a new thought to the Lebanese Christians, mainly the Maronites, that Israel had emerged as the most powerful state in the region and Arabs, particularly the Syrians, could hardly play any meaningful role in further developments in Lebanon. Many Christians were convinced that the time had come to reassert their old demand to separate Lebanon from the Arab world. Keeping this in mind the Phalangists began to arm themselves extensively and prior to the civil war in 1975-76 they had about 7 to 8 thousand trained men with arms and possessed several hundred heavy machine guns, cannons and mortars. As alleged by the Muslims, particularly by the Druze leader Kamal Jumblat, since 1969 the Phalangists were negotiating with Israel, US and some European countries and receiving military assistance including intensive training.<sup>17</sup> The Muslims were strengthening their positions under the leadership of the leftist leader Kamal Jumblat with military support from the Palestinians. The Shiite Muslims who usually lived in the rural areas of the Bekka Valley and did not figure in the power sharing, organised themselves under the leadership of a Muslim Imam, Sayid Musa-as-Sadr. The main objective of his "Movement of the Deprived" was to establish Shiite political rights and economic justice in Lebanon.<sup>18</sup>

In this situation, fightings broke out in Lebanon in 1974 and 1975 among various rival politico-religious groups. The country was torn apart and the central government virtually ceased to exist. The Lebanese Army, the mainstay of the government, was immobilized by the nature of the conflict. Serious fightings broke out all over Lebanon which subsequently involved external forces to the conflict.

2.2. *The Palestinians* : After the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 thousands of Palestinians were forced to leave the country and about 90,000 of them took shelter in Lebanon as refugees. Their number

17. For details of Palangists linkage with Israel, see Kamal Jumblat, "*I Speak for Lebanon*" (Beirut) 1977

18. Marius K. Deeb, "Lebanon: Prospects for National Reconciliation in the Mid-1980s" *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 2, Spring 1984, p. 270

subsequently increased due to the Arab-Israeli wars in 1956, 1967 and 1973.<sup>19</sup> The Palestinians who were expelled from Jordan in 1970 and other Arab states also got shelter in Lebanon. The actual number of Palestinians in Lebanon is not known but it is estimated that in 1980 there were about half a million Palestinians in Lebanon.<sup>20</sup> They usually lived near factories or industrial areas and provided cheap labour forces for Lebanon. But eventually they realized that if they were to return to their homeland they would have to fight with Israel. Gradually they strengthened their position in Lebanon and formed strong guerilla forces. Since they were not liked by the rich Christians, they found a natural ally in South Lebanon inhabited by the poor and neglected Shiite Muslims. Thus, in late sixties an alliance of the 'have nots' was formed in Lebanon which culminated in outbreaking the civil war between 'haves' (The Right) and 'have nots' in 1975-1976.<sup>21</sup> The Palestinians always tried not to be involved in the sectarian conflicts in Lebanon. But the very nature of the Lebanese crisis did not permit them to remain neutral. The Muslims welcomed their intrusion and were trying to strengthen their position drawing on the military strength of the Palestinians, while the Christians took the Palestinians as an added burden on Lebanon and were trying to get rid of them. Meanwhile, the Palestinians formed a strong guerilla force in Lebanon to continue the armed resistance against Israel. Wars broke out between the PLO guerillas and Christian militias and Lebanese armies in late sixties. The Palestinians demanded free movement, right to carry arms and launch attacks on Israeli targets from Lebanon. But the Lebanese government for obvious reasons objected. At last in 1969 an agreement was reached in Cairo under the mediation of President Nasser between the Lebanese government and the Palestinians by which PLO guerillas were permitted to carry arms only in the southern part of Lebanon.<sup>22</sup> However, it could not solve the

19. Edgar O Ballance, "Lebanon: Still a Flash Point" *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal*, Vol. 110, No. 1, January 1980, p. 16

20. *Monday Morning*, May 1980, p. 32.

21. William W. Haddad, op. cit. p. 16

22. For details of the Cairo agreement, see Abbas Kelidar and Michael Burrell op. cit. p. 6

problem and the Palestinian refugee camps became the targets of Phalangist attacks in early seventies. In 1975 as the Phalangists attacked a bus carrying the PLO guerillas the left wing Muslim forces attacked the Christian positions and the civil war broke out.

2.3. *The Syrian Israeli Marriage of Convenience:* With the outbreak of the civil war the Palestinians along with the Lebanese Muslims fought a furious battle against the Christians and at one time it seemed that the Christians were losing and they might be defeated. It was widely suspected that either Lebanon would be constituted as a Muslim dominated or Palestine oriented state or would be divided. Syria was afraid that in either case the possibility of Israeli intervention would increase<sup>23</sup>. So Syria, who from the very beginning of the war supported the Muslims, withdrew her support for the Muslims and favoured the Christians. In fact, with the outbreak of the civil war in Lebanon the positions of various parties to the crisis changed radically. Both Syria and Israel, though opposed to each other on the broader area of Middle East crisis, took up the cause of the Lebanese Christians with essentially the same tools.<sup>24</sup> Syria supplied the Christians with arms and prevented the Palestinians from taking over strategic points, while Israel blockaded Sidon and Tyre through which the Palestinians were getting arms. Hundreds of Christians were trained in Israel and were provided with tanks and other ammunitions. In the summer of 1976 the Israeli forces occupied a sizeable portion of South Lebanon while from the East the Syrian military units entered the country with about 459 tanks and 20,000 soldiers. With the help of Syria and Israel the Christians strengthened their position, launched attacks on the Palestinians and the fate of the war was undecided. The city of Beirut was divided into two parts by the "Green line" which passed through the

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23. For details about Syrian involvement in Lebanon, see Karen Rasler, "A Dynamic Analysis of the Syrian Intervention in Lebanon", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 27, No. 3, September 1983, pp. 421-456

24. Ze'ev Schiff, 'Lebanon, Motivations and Interests in Israel's Policy, *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 2, 1984, p. 222

centre of Beirut. In the Eastern part of the city a Christian government was formed while in the Western part the Lebanese Muslims and Palestinians formed a government led by Kamal Jumblat. Repeated attempts were made to bring the parties together with a view to ending the war, but the bid failed and at last on the decision of the Arab League summit in Cairo in 1976, an Arab peace keeping force of 30,000, (70 percent of whom were the Syrians) known as the Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) was permitted to stay in Lebanon to maintain peace and security.<sup>25</sup>

The peculiar alignment of Syria with Israel led to two new developments in the region: *Firstly*, with the Syrian support to the Lebanese Christians Libya, Iraq and Egypt moved closer to PLO. President Sadat sought closer relations with PLO in order to win PLO's support in favour of the Sinai disengagement agreement with Israel in 1975 for which she was strongly criticised in the Arab world. *Secondly*, it brought the Lebanese Christians closer to Israel and the Israelis subsequently made a stronghold in South Lebanon by creating a buffer zone called "Haddad's land".

### III. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANON SINCE THE CIVIL WAR.

#### 3.1. Internal Political Developments

With the outbreak of the civil war some internal political developments took place in Lebanon. In 1975 a six-member reconciliation government under Rashid Karami was formed in which some ex-Presidents, including Chamoun, were taken in and since the Muslim Prime Minister was not the President's choice but was imposed on him by Muslim agitation and Syrian pressure, the government lacked cohesion and unity of purpose. The country was, in fact, run by a dual administration, one in Beirut with Karami as its head, and the other in

25. *Kessing's Contemporary Archieve*, (Longman Group Ltd) 1976. Vol. XXII. p. 27765.

Sidon with Franjeh as its head. The governmental crisis was, somehow, overcome by electing Elias Sarkis as President in September 1976. Although the government of President Sarkis tried to assert its authority to resolve the problem, he failed. The general security situation remained tense in view of continuing sectarian violence and clashes. The Lebanese Front (comprising of the main Christian parties) proposed for a system of political decentralization by dividing the country into defined Christian and Muslim areas in order to eliminate the friction. The main Christian parties were not in complete agreement over the geographical delimitation of the regions but they cooperated in establishing a certain degree of autonomy in a separate Christian area north of Beirut. The left-wing Muslim groups rejected the partition plan and opposed the political decentralization plan put forward by the Christians with the accusation that the sectarian division plan would pose a threat to the Lebanese national unity and under this arrangement Lebanon would lose her Arab identity. Thus a tense situation was prevailing in Lebanon which deteriorated in March 1977 when Kamal Jumblat, the leader of the Progressive Socialist Party, was assassinated. Following the incident heavy fightings broke out between Christians and Druzes in the Chouf mountain area and hundreds of Christians were massacred.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the crisis in Lebanon gradually deepened and various groups and parties involved in it became more and more dependent on external powers. The Christians moved closer to Israel and the Muslims to Syria. The Arab Deterrent Force failed to maintain peace in Lebanon. On the contrary, they were involved in the crisis.

The Arab Deterrent Force was sent to Lebanon as a peace keeping one to work under the overall command of the Lebanese President headed by a Lebanese Sunnite officer. However, Syria, taking the advantage of the weakness of the government of Elias Sarkis, took over the total control of the ADF and strengthened her position

26. For details of the political developments in Lebanon after the assassination of Kamal Jumblat in 1977, see, Kessing's *Contemporary Archives*, (Longman Group Ltd, London), Vol, XXIII 1977, pp. 28733-40.

in Lebanon. The other Arab states who joined the ADF subsequently withdrew their troops. From 1978, with the complicating situation in Lebanon, the Syrians changed their policy and supported the Lebanese Muslims and the Palestinian forces Al-Saiqa were sent to South Lebanon to help the Muslims which ultimately encouraged Christians to become more closely associated with Israel.

3.1.1. *Political Parties and Groups* : For an objective analysis of the complicated nature of Lebanese politics it requires a close scrutiny of political parties, groups and factions, their interaction and alignment pattern. In the early seventies two groups emerged in the political arena of Lebanon popularly known as 'Chehabists' and "Chamounists" from their identification with two former Presidents of the Republic. The 'Chehabists' were mostly Muslims, left of the centre inclined toward pan-Arabism and supported the Palestinians. The 'Chamounists' were largely Christians who demanded that Lebanon should be west-oriented with a Christian flavour. In regard to the Palestinian issue their position was, "if possible to support them only on political level."<sup>27</sup>

Among the religious sects the Muslims were more diverse and divided into various groups. In 1975, during the civil war, the Christians were treated as "Right-wing" and Muslims as 'Left-wing'. But these terms were extremely misleading because there were also Christian leftists and Muslim rightists. In 1977 largely left-wing and increasingly pro-Syrian Muslim parties were loosely grouped into a National Front coalition, while a number of Muslim groups were allied with the Palestinian elements in a leftist National Movement. In September 1978 the National Front and National Movement announced the formation of a joint Committee for National Action in Lebanon as a "first step towards merger" of the main leftist groupings.<sup>28</sup> But the move failed because there were extremist groups both in National Front and National Movement who frequently fought with each other. Only in the National Movement there were 16

27. For details see, Abbas Kelidar and Michael Burrell. op. cit. pp. 3-8

28, *Political Handbook of the World*, 1979, edited by Arthar S. Banks, p. 30925

factional groups including a pro-Nasserite group, two Communist factions and the pro-Iraqi Baath party. The situation was further complicated in 1979 after the revolution in Iran, when the Shiite community in Lebanon developed a new political and military cohesion. The Shiite political group 'Amal', founded in 1974, had gradually increased its number of trained militia men and by mid-1980 its number was about 4,000 who mounted opposition to Palestinian guerillas active in and around Shiia villages in various parts of the country.

The Shiite unity in Lebanon further strengthened in 1978 when their spiritual leader Moussa-as-Sadr disappeared during his visit to Libya.<sup>29</sup> Shiite animosity toward pro-Iraqi elements in Lebanon further complicated with the escalating situation in the Iran-Iraq relations. The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war further complicated the situation in Lebanon and the infighting among pro-Iraqi and pro-Irani elements intensified. But the question is whether the Shiites, who are considered to be the single largest religious community (about 27 percent) in Lebanon, support the ideals of the Islamic revolution in Iran and are ready to accept Imam Khomeni as their spiritual leader? Most probably not, because the Shiites in Lebanon are also not united in their political views. Within the community there are two main trends; one for secular politics headed by Nabih Berri while the other for religious politics and believe in Islamic fundamentalism.<sup>30</sup>

Among the Shiite leaders Nabih Berri, as a Lebanese nationalist, is widely respected as a political leader and strongly believes in national unity. About Ayatullah Khomeni he respects him as a spiritual leader but not ready to accept his political ideals. On the other hand, the radical Shiite leaders, mostly clerics, do not subscribe the idea of a multi-confessional Lebanon rather demand for an Islamic republic of Lebanon on Iranian model. The Iranian Revolutionary Guards who

29. *Kessing's Contemporary Archives*, (Longman Group Ltd, London) Vol. XXVII, 1981, p. 30925

30. For details of Shiite politics in Lebanon, see, Marius K. Deeb, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-272

were sent to Lebanon in 1982 as volunteers to fight against Israel are also playing as catalyst forces for strengthening the hands of Shiite radicals. One of the outspoken Shiite leaders who strongly attacks Nabih Berri for not adhering to Khomeini's edicts is Hussain Mussavi who broke away from Amal in 1982. His pro-Iranian policy is also shared by other radical groupings like Jundullah and Hezbollah led by Sheikh Muhammad Fadlallah.<sup>31</sup> Both in Southern Lebanon and in Bekka Valley—the most important strategic places—the militant forces are trying to take control over and propagating the ideals of Khomeini among the local population. But the success of pro-Irani Shiites in Lebanon will depend on a number of factors. *Firstly* on the balance of forces among the radical and moderate Shiites in Lebanon. *Secondly*, on the nature of future political developments in Lebanon, particularly on the alignment and realignment patterns of internal forces. And it is most likely that the moderate section of Shiites may join hands with other nationalist forces including the Christians and Sunnite Muslims to counter the growing Shiite fundamentalism in Lebanon. *Thirdly*, on the position taken by the external forces who are directly or indirectly involved in Lebanon. But the moderate Arab states and the West, particularly the United States, having their bitter experience of the Islamic revolution in Iran, will obviously not like a Shiite control over Lebanon. Even Syria, one of the few Arab supporters of Iran, will most probably not allow a Shiite-dominated Lebanon with Iranian influence. Under these circumstances, the possibility of Shiite control over Lebanon and the establishment of an Islamic state of pro-Iranian model seems to be bleak, at least in near future.

Like the Shiites, the Druzes are also divided in their socio-political views. There were two major groups in the Druze community—the Jumblat clan and the Arslan clan. Kamal Jumblat, the founder of the Socialist Progressive Party had always a political ambition which was not only confined to the Druze community but also to become a

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31. *South*, September 1984, pp. 26-27

national leader and assume the highest office of the Republic—Presidency. And he worked actively in that direction until 1976 when he clashed with the Syrian leadership. He was a well-read and inspiring intellectual and a man of charisma. In 1976 he was able to form the Lebanese National Movement by drawing the progressive left-oriented political parties and groups in Lebanon and provided them with a clear programme for democratic reform.<sup>32</sup> His assassination in 1977 seriously affected the interests of the Druze community,<sup>t</sup> he National Movement gradually collapsed and since 1982 its remnants had been completely subordinated to Syrian regime.

The Arslan clan traditionally supported establishments irrespective of whosoever was in power and were interested to share power with the regimes. Even in 1982 this clan supported the Israeli invasion in Lebanon and, later on, demanded the withdrawal of all foreign troops including the Syrians and to form a strong government in which they supposedly would have sufficient role to play.<sup>33</sup> After the death of Majid Arslan in September 1983 this clan however, failed, to play any effective role in Lebanese politics.

On the other hand, the Jumblat group under the leadership of Walid Jumblat, son of Kamal Jumblat, strengthened their position in the Chouf area and with the help of Syria in Summer 1983 they were able to drive away the Lebanese Forces from the area. With their victory over the Phalangists they grew more ambitious and in November 1983 they demanded the establishment of a Senate with its Presidency given to the Druzes.<sup>34</sup> In the national reconciliation process and in the new power-sharing in April 1984 the Druzes played a significant role but all this was achieved under the shadow of Syrian umbrella and it appeared that the fate of Walid Jumblat was tied with Syria. From the past experiences of Syrian attitude toward Druzes it is very difficult to forecast as to what extent Syria will support their cause

32. Marius K. Deeb, op. cit. p. 277

33. *International Herald Tribune*, 12 July 1982

34. *Monday Morning*, 22 August 1983

and whether the Druze leadership will be able to extricate itself from Syrian patrons.

The Palestinians, like other groups, were divided into multiple factions supported by various Arab states during the civil war. The moderate groups, headed by Al-Fatah under the leadership of Yaseer Arafat, were in favour of establishing a Palestinian state in the Israeli occupied areas, while the "Rejectionists" insisted on the "Liberation" of whole Palestine including Syria, Lebanon and Iraq by revolutionary means.<sup>35</sup> But it will be too simplistic to divide the Palestinians in Lebanon into moderates and rejectionists. There are a number of factions within the same group with divergent interests who take recourse to fighting one another for supremacy. Even within the Al-Fatah group which controls more than 80 percent of the PLO guerillas there are dissidents who from time to time threaten the unity and credibility of the Organization.

The Christian community in Lebanon, unlike the Muslims, are more homogeneous, less diversified and usually act as more cohesive group. In early 1970s the Lebanese Christians, being concerned about the inability of the government to carry out the tasks imposed upon it by mutually antagonistic elites, by various segments of population and by pressures from external environment, formed the Lebanese Forces by bringing together the confessional groups of nationalist orientation. One of the main objectives of Lebanese Forces was to ensure the evacuation of all foreign troops from Lebanon. But since its fire power was not strong enough to fight the Syrians, its leadership established covert cooperation with the Lebanese government with a view to strengthening its authority and thus to ensure the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon.<sup>36</sup> However, the subsequent political developments in Lebanon and their linkage with Israel did not allow them to accomplish the objectives.

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35. Abbas Kelider and Michael Burrell, op. cit. p. 4

36. Lewis W. Snidar, "The Lebanese Forces: Their Origins and Role in Lebanon's Politics", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 1. Winter 1984, p. 7.

Nevertheless, the Lebanese Forces gradually strengthened their position by developing the organizational mechanism. A unified permanent command structure was formally established in August 1976 with the creation of a Joint Command Council and Bashir Gemayel, son of Pierre Gemayel, was elected commander.

In the political field the Christians made a significant success in 1976 when all the rightwing parties formed the National Front. The Front was mainly composed of a mixture of 'historic' party leaders and heads of militias<sup>37</sup> with a view to uniting themselves and protecting their interests. But soon Christian unity proved to be fragile due to the infightings among various groups. The friction between Lebanese Forces and the Marada Brigade, led by Tony Franjeh (son of Suleiman Franjeh) ended with the death of Tony and his family in 1978.<sup>38</sup> Another bloody clash occurred in July 1980 when the Lebanese Forces attacked the barracks, offices and other strongholds belonging to Camille Chamoun's Tiger militia which reportedly caused about 500 people dead.<sup>39</sup> With the killing of Tony Franjeh and the elimination of Chamoun's Tiger militia forces, the Phalangists emerged as the single dominating force in the Lebanese Forces in August 1980. The Chart in the next page shows the evolution of Lebanese Forces since 1976.

The Phalangist victory over other militia forces seriously affected the political equation in Lebanon. Dory Chamoun, the eldest son of Camille Chamoun, reportedly resigned from the National Liberal Party while the younger brother Dony Chamoun announced to relinquish the leadership of Tiger militia and to leave politics. And, later on, he joined hands with Franjeh, who already broke away from

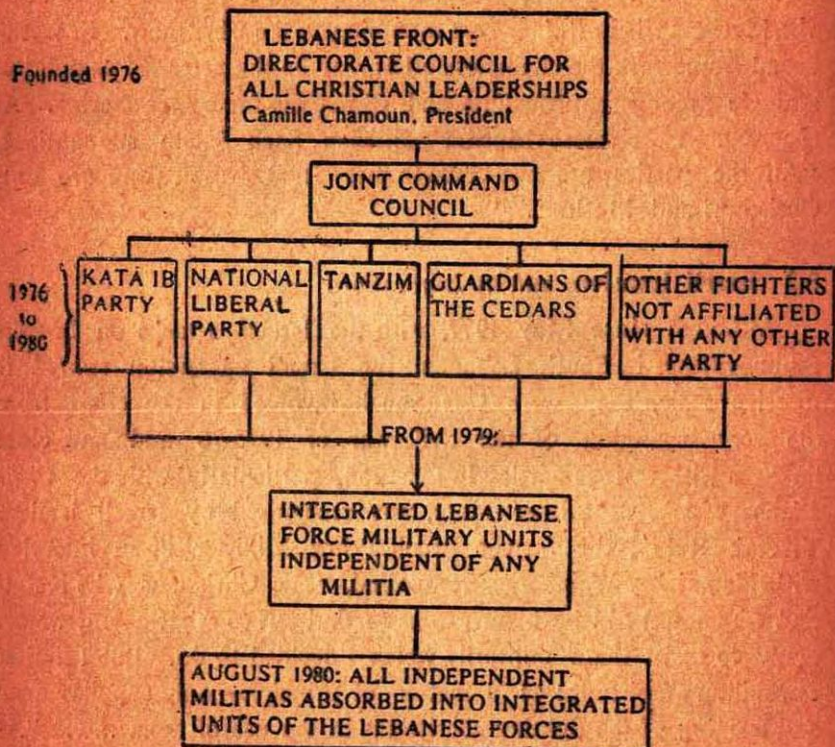
37. The Front was composed of Camille Chamoun, leader of NLP, Pierre Gemayel, President of Kataib Social Democratic Party, Edouard Honein, Secretary of the Front and a former member of National Block Party, Abbott Boulos Na'aman, head of the Permanent Congress of the Lebanese Monastic Orders, Dr. Charles Malek former Foreign Minister and Dr. Fuad Ephrem Boustany, Lebanese historian and writer.

38. Lewis W. Snidar, op. cit. p. 8,

39. Jonathan C. Randal ; *Going All the Way : Christian War Lords, Israeli Adventurers and the War in Lebanon*, New York 1983, pp. 135-138.

the Christians and made a rapprochement with the Sunnite leadership in Tripoli, had talks with Walid Jumblat and Yaseer Arafat and expressed willingness to continue the struggle against the Phalangists in order to, "save the Christians from those blood-thirsty madmen"<sup>40</sup>

#### EVOLUTION OF LEBANESE FORCES. 1976-1980



In analysing the nature of Christian politics in Lebanon one can argue that inspite of all anomalies, personal rivalries, family feuds and mutual hatred and mistrusts, the Christian groups in Lebanon have over time developed a commonality of interests and on

40. *Kessing's Contemporary Archive*, London, Vol. XXVII 1981. p. 30924

basic issues, like power-sharing or changing the National Pact of 1943, they may raise voice, together proving their sectarian loyalty stronger than political alliance.

In the final analysis of political anatomy of Lebanon one should take into cognizance fact that the present struggle among various religio-political groups in Lebanon is not based on ideological issues. The Christians long have struggled to stave off the Muslim rules while the Muslims tried all their best to subjugate the Christians. In fact in broad framework the Lebanese crisis may be characterised as political struggle among the Muslims and Christians for power-sharing. As the veteran Lebanese Muslim politician Saeb Salam summarized, "All the parties are non-sense to me. In Lebanon there are only Christians and Muslims."<sup>41</sup>

### 3.2 Israeli Invasions and its Implications

Although since May 1977, with the Israeli attacks on Muslim Shiite villages in South Lebanon, the Israeli aggression started in massive scale, they were very much involved in the crisis from the very beginning of the civil war of 1975-76 and had close linkages with various parties in Lebanon, particularly with the Christians which, at a later stage, was recognised by Israeli leaders. Yitzhak Rabin, the former Israeli Prime Minister in an interview with Naomi Joy Weinberger recognised, "The Christians (the Kataib and Chamoun) did both turn to us to find out to what extent we are ready to assist them militarily which I decided to do. But I limited our military assistance as a matter of principle—only supplies arms and training of the fighting Christians in the use of them .....".<sup>42</sup>

After Prime Minister Begin assumed office in 1977 he voiced strong Israeli commitment to Christian interests in Lebanon. Since

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41. Quoted in, Daniel Pipes, "The Real Problem". *Foreign Policy*, No. 51, Summer 1983, p. 141

42. Naomi Joy Weinberger, "Peacekeeping Options in Lebanon". *The Middle East Journal*. Vol, 37, No. 3, Summer 1983. p. 347.

March 1978 Israel was directly involved in Lebanon when, in response to a Palestinian guerilla operation, Israel invaded South Lebanon and established a six-mile "security belt" against PLO 'infiltration'. The Israeli act in South Lebanon was strongly criticised all over the World and the UN Security Council immediately voted to create a 6000-strong United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) with the objective of "confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security and assisting the government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area."<sup>43</sup> But in the process of its activities UNIFIL seems to have failed to fulfil its mission for a number of reasons. The UN resolution did not define precisely the area of operation within which UNIFIL would function or its capabilities for dealing with challenges to the performance of its mission. Israel refused to permit the deployment of UNIFIL up to the international border rather they created an enclave upto the river Litani usually known as "Haddad Land", ruled by Major Sa'd Haddad, a renegade Lebanese army officer, who had received total Israeli assistance since 1976 and served Israeli interests by keeping the Palestinian guerillas away from the Israeli border.

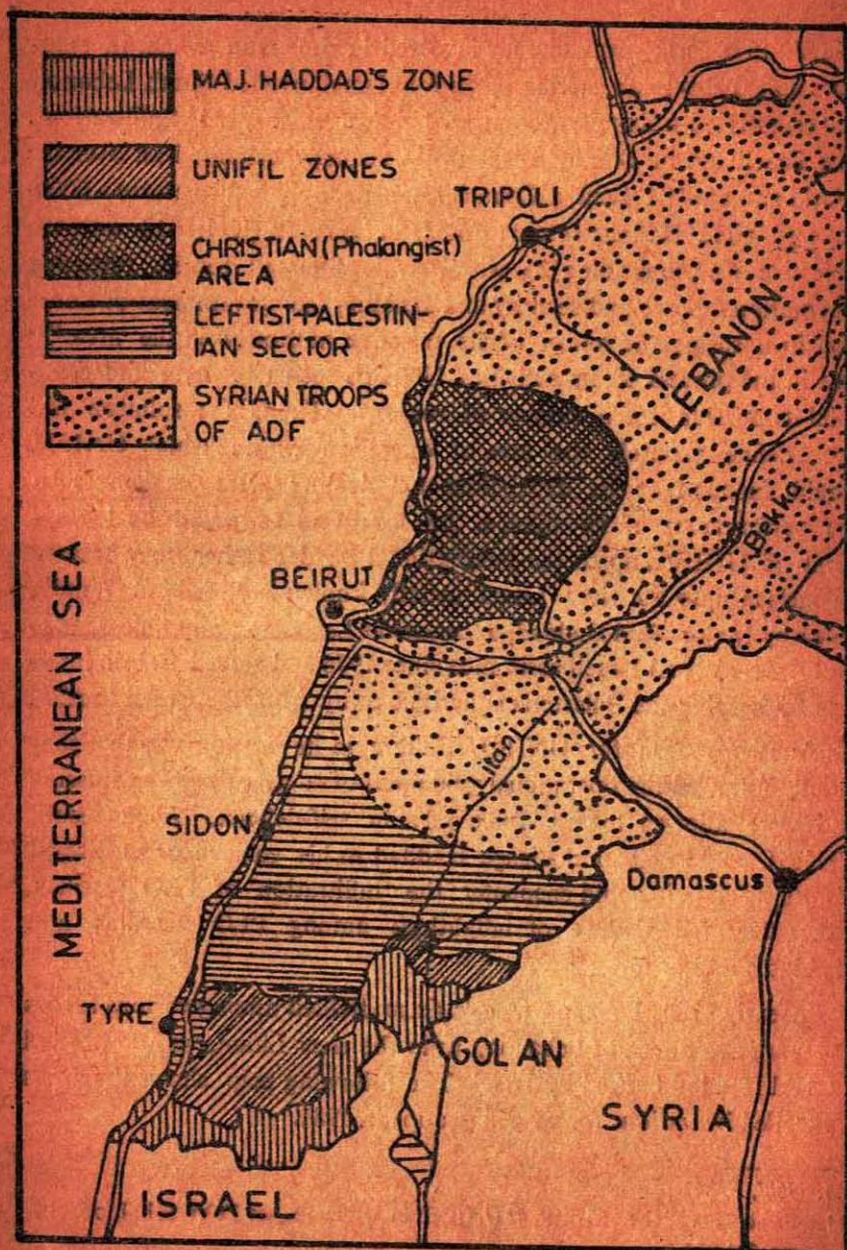
Another reason for UNIFIL's failure in its mission was that they strictly followed the operational guidelines of a peace keeping mission and were allowed to use force only in self-defence. As a result, UNIFIL could neither challenge Haddad in his enclave or to disarm his militia nor it could encounter the 'infiltration' of PLO guerillas, rather they fell victims of infightings among PLO guerillas and Haddad's militia forces.<sup>44</sup>

In early 1980s Lebanon was *de facto* divided among various forces and parties. South of Lebanon, upto the river Litani, was controlled by Sa'd Haddad backed by Israel. The following map shows the areas controlled by various forces and groups in 1981.

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43. *Ibid*, p. 342

44. For details of the activities of UNIFIL in Lebanon, see Ze'ev Schiff, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-224



Map-1. Areas Controlled by Various Forces and Groups, 1981

North of Haddad's "Free Lebanon" the territory was under the nominal control of the UNIFIL. Along the coast the Palestinians controlled the area to the north of UNIFIL location plus the cities Tyre and Sidon. The eastern half of was controlled by the ADF. The Lebanese forces controlled the territory to the West of the ADF area and North of Beirut.

The complex political situation was further compounded by the severe economic crisis that the country suffered since the civil war of 1975-76. For the three successive years, 1978 through 1980, the official budget showed a deficit of roughly about 35 percent. In 1980 the public debt was about \$ 1 billion i.e., more than an entire year's government expenditure. The government income, mainly the foreign aids, had been falling and as a result the government could not pay attention to the development activities or building up the country's crumbling infrastructure. But it should be mentioned here that the actual flow of foreign aids to Lebanon was not diminished, rather it increased significantly but because of the weakness and ineffectiveness of the government almost all the aids were given to the political factions for specific purposes from the donors' side, and all that money was spent to buy weapons which ultimately intensified infightings in Lebanon.<sup>45</sup>

Meanwhile, the relations between two external forces involved in Lebanon—Syria and Isreal—deteriorated in mid 1981 over the crisis known as "Missile Crisis" which was defused by shuttle diplomacy of US special envoy Philip Habib. However, the situation in South Lebanon remained volcanic which erupted again in summer 1982 with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The Israeli invasion of 1982 caused a massive and horrifying destruction of life and property. Thousands of civilians, mostly women and children, were killed or maimed and many rendered homeless. For a long spell of time the survivors were denied food, water and medicine with electric supply shut down while the Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations with

45. For details of the nature and implications of foreign aid in Lebanon, see Adam Zagorin, "A House Divided", *Foreign Policy*, Number 48, Fall 1982, pp. 114-115

the urgently needed materials were not permitted to enter the besieged city. In spite of intensive diplomatic efforts, including in the UN, the Israelis refused to leave Beirut and for months West Beirut, where the Muslims and Palestinians were living was seized.<sup>46</sup> The situation improved in mid-August 1982 with the withdrawal of 6000 PLO guerillas from Beirut along with its leadership.<sup>47</sup>

The tiny Lebanese army, affected by sectarian conflicts for so long a time, was unable or rather did not try, to resist the Israeli invasion. Although the Muslims supported the Palestinians and wanted to keep them in Lebanon, they were subdued by the military might of Israel.

### 3.3. Political Developments since Israeli Invasion

In August 1982, the Lebanese Parliament elected Bashir Gemayel, the leader of the right-wing Phalangist militia forces, as the President of the Republic. The Israelis agreed to withdraw 5 km. from the city of Beirut. The crisis took a turn for the worse when President-elected Bashir Gemayel was assassinated only after 15 days of his election and the Phalangist militias with the help of Israel entered into the Palestinian refugee camps in Sabra and Shatila (West Beirut) and massacred thousands of Palestinians, mainly women and children.<sup>48</sup> This complicated the situation and Amin Gemayel, the elder brother of the assassinated President-elect, was elected new President. The Multi-national Peace keeping forces who earlier supervised the withdrawal of PLO guerillas were recalled to Beirut with a view to maintaining peace and security, helping the central government in consolidating its position, forming a strong national army and restoring the control of the government all over Lebanon.

The UN Security Council adopted a number of resolutions calling the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon but Israel refused to accept the UN resolutions. The Lebanese government could not con-

46. For details, see, *Gulf News*, 3 August 1982

47. For details of the tripartite agreement for withdrawal of PLO guerillas from Beirut, see *The Bangladesh Observer*, 20 August 1982,

48. For details of the massacre in Sabra and Chatila, see *Palestine Digest*, September 1982, pp. 1-20

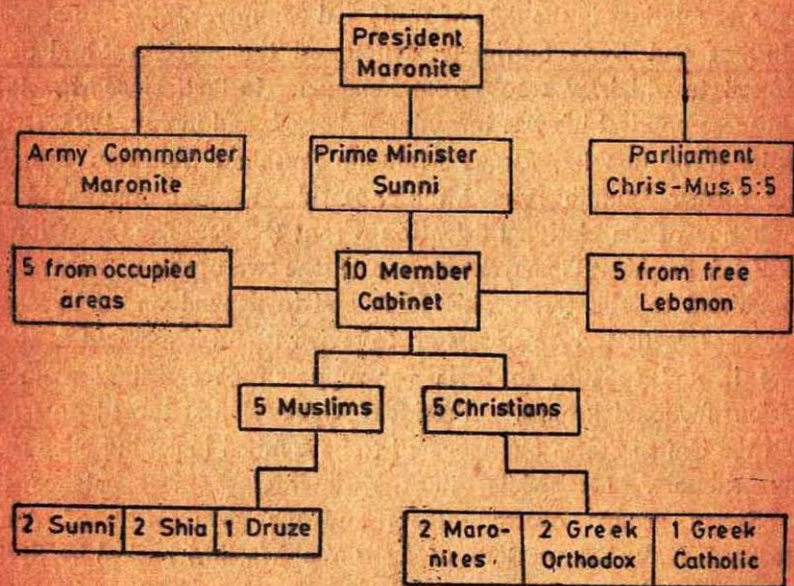
trol the situation and fightings were continuing. In December 1982 the Lebanese-Israeli negotiation, sponsored by the US regarding the withdrawal of troops, started which ended in May 1983 with the signing of a troops withdrawal agreement between Israel and Lebanon. Under the treaty Israel agreed to withdraw its forces from Lebanon within six months while the government of Lebanon agreed to establish security arrangements for Israel in South Lebanon, including the creation of a security zone extending 45 km. from Israeli border. It was also agreed to form a joint liaison committee with participation of Lebanese, Israeli and US officials to monitor the security arrangements in South Lebanon. The parties also agreed to maintain a liaison office in each other's territory to assist the implementation of the agreement and to improve relations in the field of trade and commerce.<sup>49</sup> The Lebanese Muslims and Syria outrightly denounced the agreement and Syria refused to withdraw troops from Lebanon. In fact, since May 1983 Lebanese political life was becoming polarised and in July 1983 Druze leader Walid Jumblat, former Maronite President Suleiman Franjeh and former Snnnite Prime Minisier Rashid Karami announced the formation of the National Salvation Front (NSF). The formation of NSF left President Gemayel with one of the two options, either to be committed to the treaty with Israel and to depend on the Lebanese Forces, Israelis and Americans or to review it and if required to abrogate it and to turn to Syria for support for reconciliation among various factional groups.<sup>50</sup> President Gemayel first turned to Israel and the United States but appeared to have failed in getting encouraging support. Meanwhile, in the internal political balance the pro-Syrian groups overrun others and the government of Amin Gemayel, under the pressure of Lebanese Muslims backed by Syria, was compelled to review the troops withdrawal agreement with Israel in February 1984. The national reconciliation talks that started in

49. Details of the Lebanese-Israeli troops withdrawal agreement of May 1983 may be see, in *Kessing's Contemporary Archives*, (Longman, London), Vol. XXIX, 1983. pp. 32408-10

50 William B. Quandt, "Reagan's Lebanon Policy, Trial and Error", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 2, Spring 1984, p. 245.

December 1983 failed because of the incompatible stands and insurmountable demands of the parties concerned.<sup>51</sup>

Meanwhile the US Marines were withdrawn and President Gemayel had no option but to seek Syrian help to solve the crisis in Lebanon. And in the process he had to make some important concessions, namely, to abrogate the troops withdrawal treaty with Israel signed in 1983 and to accept Rashid Karami, a pro-Syrian Sunni Muslim leader, as Prime Minister. A Cabinet of National Unity was formed with the consultation of Syria by drawing equal number of Ministers from both the communities and by distributing the seats in the Parliament equally. The following Chart shows the distribution of power in



the Cabinet of 1984. At the initial stage there were difficulties because the two key leaders Nabih Berri and Walid Jumblat refused to serve the Cabinet until they had been made members of the Higher Defence

51. *Kessing's Contemporary Achieves*, (Longman, London) Vol. XXX, 1984, pp. 32645-46, 32891-92.

Council, charged with carrying out reforms in the national army.<sup>52</sup> The Cabinet represented by all political parties could not solve the problems due to sporadic clashes and violences. In June 1984 when the Parliament was reconvened Prime Minister Karami requested it to grant the government special powers to rule by decree for nine months.<sup>53</sup> A new security plan was also adopted for strengthening the national army and ensuring peace and security in Lebanon. The new Lebanese government initiated persistent efforts for implementing the plan and a number of measures were taken to reinforce the authority of the national army and the government. But still a number of major issues, including the presence of foreign troops, are unresolved. At the same time the coalition of heterogeneous and conflicting elements in the new Cabinet also appears to be fragile and vulnerable and the future of the uneasy truce remains unpredictable, given the sporadic clashes breaking out from time to time in Lebanon.

#### IV. INVOLVEMENT OF EXTERNAL POWERS IN THE LEBANESE CRISIS

**4.1. The Superpowers.** The superpowers, were very much involved in the Lebanese crisis like in almost all the issues in the Third World countries and seriously influenced its course of events. Sometimes one superpower outshone the other and played the dominating role while at other period the another one got the upper hand with the help of its clients in Lebanon. But from the overall developments of superpowers involvement in Lebanon it appeared that the US presence was overt, or atleast more visible, than that of the Soviet Union.

**4.1.1. The United States :** A careful analysis of US policy in Lebanon leads one to doubt whether the US had any well - designed and clearly thought longterm policy in Lebanon. The US Marines intervention in 1958 to help the Chamoun regime ended in fiasco and the situation

52. Roger Owen. "The Lebanese Crisis : fragmentation or reconciliation ?" *Third World Quarterly*. October 1984, Vol. 6. No. 4, p. 935

53. *Kessing's Contemporary Archives*, (Longman, London) Vol. XXX, 1984 p. 33061

was brought under control by overthrowing the US supported regime by the Lebanese army. As the internal situation in Lebanon was comparatively calm and stable during 1958-1975 the US was indifferent or rather less cared about Lebanon. With the outbreak of the civil war in 1975 a senior US official was sent to Beirut to talk with leaders of various political factions. The outcome of the visit was that a number of Lebanese leaders particularly the Christians requested US intervention to save the Christians from "slaughtering", while the Muslim leaders described the developments in Lebanon as internal affairs of the country and advised US not to repeat the performance of 1958. The US supported Elias Sarkis, the Syrian backed candidature, for Presidency and in September 1976, when he assumed office, US sent a secret note expressing the US support to Lebanon's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, readiness to assist Lebanon in building up a strong national army and willingness to participate in the reconstruction of Lebanon.<sup>54</sup>

The Carter Administration because of its preoccupation in the Camp David process ignored or kept the Lebanese issue in a low key profile and accepted the Syrian dominance being convinced that they (Syrians) were serving the Christians vis-a-vis the US interests in Lebanon.

The Lebanese issue, however, got prominence in the US foreign policy during the Reagan Administration. In fact Reagan eyed Lebanon from strategic point taking consideration of the US-Soviet confrontations at various parts of the world. Reagan was concerned about Lebanon more than any American President since Eisenhower in 1958. In the like manner, the former US Secretary of State Alexander Haig in his speech before the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations defined Lebanon as the number one priority of US policy in the Middle East.<sup>55</sup> The main US objective in Lebanon was to oust Syria and to form a strong pro-West Christian government. And in that direction US sought assistance from her allies in the region. But the US blue-print failed and Washington was afraid that Syria, who enjoys

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54. *Gulf News*, 18 October 1982

55. *Arabia : The Islamic World Review*, September 1984, p. 34

a special significance to Moscow and its strong ties with PLO and Lebanese Muslims, would form a political force to reckon with. However, the US attitude encouraged Isreal whose leadership offered that only a "major surgical operation" in Lebanon by Israeli army could serve the US interest in the region. Israel was preparing to attack the Syrian positions in Lebanon since 1981 which culminated in the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June 1982. Although Washington was in favour of ousting the Syrians and Palestinians from Lebanon a full scale Israeli strike in Lebanon put her in an awkward position. According to a survey conducted in early August 1982, 60 percent of the Americans did not support the Israeli offensive in Lebanon, 43 percent wanted military aid to Israel suspended or stopped and 48 percent believed that US should hold direct talks with the PLO.<sup>56</sup> Under tremendous pressure to review its policy in Lebanon the US government immediately sent special envoy Philip Habib to mediate the crisis by arranging a ceasefire agreement among the parties concerned. The US Marines were sent to Lebanon to ensure the peaceful withdrawal of the Palestinian guerillas from Beirut and to help the Lebanese government to restore peace and stability. However, the sending of US Marines to Lebanon was not undisputed in the United States. General David Jones, who retired as Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, opposed the US move and advocated that US should do something in the region without US troops there,<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, US intended to broaden her participation in Lebanon and in October 1982 President Amin Gemayel, for the first time of a Lebanese President, was officially received by the American President<sup>58</sup>. During the talks US offered her "honest brokership" to solve the Lebanese crisis which was viewed by many observers as a part of US policy for attaining strategic objectives and diplomatic goals in the Middle East within the framework of the "new opportunities" supposedly created by the Israeli invasion in Lebanon.

56. *The Bangladesh Times*, 10 August 1982

57. *Gulf News*, 14 June 1982

58. *Gulf News*, 18 October 1982

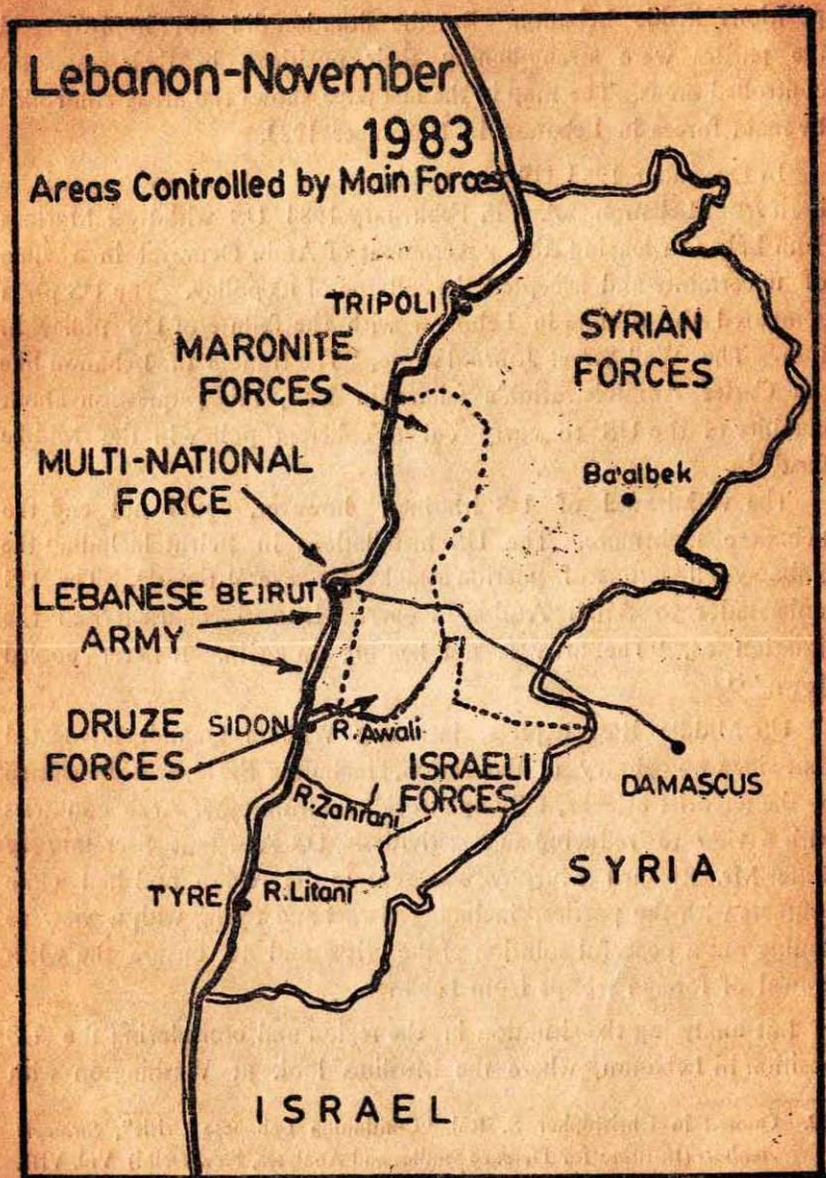
By extending the presence of US Marines in Lebanon and cooperating closely with the Christian dominated government of Amin Gemayel US set forth before her some goals, (i) removal of all foreign troops from Lebanon (ii) extension of the Government's authority throughout the whole country (iii) rebuilding the Lebanese army and (iv) increasing the Israeli influence in Lebanon. From the subsequent developments it appeared that Washington failed to achieve any of these objectives. Neither she was able to ensure the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon nor was able to strengthen the authority of the Government of Amin Gemayel by rebuilding the national army, rather she became the scapegoat of her own policies and Israeli ambition in Lebanon. The signing of troops withdrawal treaty between Lebanon and Israël in May 1983 encouraged Washington and the Administration hoped that the treaty might break the ice of the stalemated Lebanese situation. However, Syrian rejection of the treaty and the formation of the NSF frustrated Washington and, in fact, in the second half of 1983 US had no other options than to think seriously how to deal with Syria, either to make some concessions to her in Lebanon and adopt a flexible policy or to be tough with Damascus and seek Israeli assistance. The second view, strongly supported by the Secretary of State George Shultz won<sup>59</sup>. But tougher position adopted by the Administration in regard to Syria did not bring any positive result, rather the US installations repeatedly became the targets of guerilla attacks and in October 1983 the Marines headquarters was attacked causing 241 killed.<sup>60</sup> In that complicated situation after a lengthy policy discussions on October 29, 1983 President Reagan signed National Security Decision Directive III, the main essence of which was to revive the US-Israeli cooperation with a view to putting effective pressure on Syria.<sup>61</sup>

At the end of 1983 Israeli planes attacked the Syrian positions in the Bekka valley while US also launched retaliatory raids against Syrian

59. William B. Quandt, *op. cit.* p. 247

60. For details about guerilla attacks on US installations in Beirut, see *Time*, 10 October 1980, p. 23

61. *Ibid*



Map-2, Areas Controlled by Main Forces, 1983

positions inside Lebanon. But the situation did not improve and the parties were strengthening their positions in their respective controlled areas. The map in the last page shows the areas controlled by main forces in Lebanon in November 1983.

In December 1983 US was seeking ways and means to extricate itself from Lebanon. And in February 1984 US withdrew Marines from Lebanon leaving the government of Amin Gemayel in a state of uncertainty and accepted the collapse of its policy. The US press compared the trauma in Lebanon with the failure of US policy in Iran. The Wall Street Journal wrote, "The trauma in Lebanon like the Carter Administration's failure in Iran, raises question about inability of the US to carry out a coherent policy in the Middle East"<sup>62</sup>.

The withdrawal of US Marines, however, could not end the Lebanese nightmare. The US installations in Beirut including the embassy fell victims of guerilla attacks for several times<sup>63</sup>. The US ambassador to Saudi Arabia Robert Neuman characterised the situation as, "The area is not heating up again. It never cooled down."<sup>64</sup>

US Middle East experts, including William Quandt, advocated that since no country in the region, including Syria, was benefitted by the terrorist attacks, US might seek help from other Arab countries with a view to reducing such activities. US Assistant Secretary of State Mr. Richard Murphy was sent to the region and had close contacts with the parties, including Israel and Syria, with a view to finding out a peaceful solution of the crisis and to ensure the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon.

But analysing the situation in the region and considering the US position in Lebanon, where the Muslims look at Washington with

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62. Quoted in Christopher S. Raj, "Continuing Lebanese Crisis", *Strategic Analysis* (Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi) Vol. VIII, No. 2, 1984, p. 152

63. *Time*, 1 October 1984, p. 23

64. *Ibid*

doubts and suspicions and the Christians feel themselves abandoned by the US, to what extent the Murphy mission will be successful in rebuilding the US confidence in Lebanon is in big doubt. The obvious question that may arise is what are the reasons for failure of US policy in Lebanon? *Firstly*, the US policy in the Middle East emanates from the philosophy of Reagan's world view which tends to see all regional developments in terms of East-West conflict. *Secondly*, US tried to play a unilateral role in Lebanon by undermining or underestimating the USSR. *Thirdly*, US failed to evaluate the Lebanese situation correctly including her history, socio-economic and political factors, cultural, ethnic and religious values and traditions and above all miscalculated the nature and strength of the forces and factors interacting in Lebanon. *Fourthly*, underestimated the regional forces and over-expected from her allies in the region. *Finally*, Reagan Administration from the very beginning was in a dilemma about the Israeli role and apparently failed to coordinate its policy with Israel regarding Lebanon.

4.1.2. *The Soviet Union* : The Soviets were very much involved in the Lebanese crisis from the beginning. Although their presence was not visible, they played a significant role in Lebanon, from behind the scene, through their allies in the region. But sometimes Moscow had to face dilemmas in chalking out its policies toward Lebanon. For example, in 1976 when Syria actively supported the Christians against Lebanese Muslims and Palestinians, Moscow demonstrated its disapproval to the Syrian act. But at the same time she did not come forward to help the Palestinians directly because the Kremlin was afraid that it would antagonise Syria and in the long run she might turn to the US. The Soviet policy toward Lebanese Civil War affected the PLO-Soviet relations which further deteriorated in late 1970s when the Soviets refused to supply PLO with sophisticated arms including SAM batteries.<sup>65</sup>

65. Galia Golan, "The Soviet Union and the Israeli action in Lebanon", *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs, London), Vol. 9, No. 1, Winter 1982-83, p. 7

The moderate policy pursued by Yaseer Arafat in late 1970s and early 1980s was not liked by Moscow. In fact Yaseer Arafat and his Al-Fatah organization, characterised as a "bourgeois" group heavily influenced by Muslim roots and closely allied with Saudi Arabia, was not Moscow's best choice. However, since Fatah is the key organization in the PLO and believes in the political solution of the Middle East crisis, conducive to Moscow's position, Kremlin had no choice than to support it.

In June 1982 when Israel invaded Lebanon, swept away Palestinian strongholds in Southern Lebanon and brought Israeli troops to the gates of Beirut, the Soviet response was quite cautious and reserved. Because Moscow was apprehensive about an open Syrian-Israeli war which would provide the first strategic test of the Soviet-Syrian friendship treaty signed in 1980.<sup>66</sup> The first official Soviet statement, however came only in June 14, 1982, more than a week after Israeli invasion, when the Syrians and Palestinians had suffered crippling losses. The Soviet statement warned Israel about the Soviet geographical proximity to the region and also put forward demands, apparently directed at the US, for "urgent effective measures" to hold Israel's "criminal act of genocide" against Palestinians and to bring about Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. Later on, in an interview with *Pravda* in July 1982, President Brezhnev expressed the view that armed forces could not solve the Middle East crisis but only a political settlement would do.<sup>67</sup>

In fact, the Soviet Union was never in favour of a military solution of the Middle East conflict in general and the Lebanese crisis in particular. In policy formulation toward Middle East they are guided by a number of considerations. *Firstly*, a major section of Kremlin leadership opposes a massive Soviet involvement with the Palestinians or in the region as a whole. Their argument is that the

66. Cristopher S. Raj, "Israeli Blitzkrieg of Lebanon", *Strategic Analysis*. (Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi), Vol. VI, No. 4, July 1982, p. 250

67. *Pravda* (Moscow), 27 July 1982

Soviet clients in the region are unstable, uncertain and not sufficiently reliable. So in any war-like situation the Soviets either will have to be confronted with the United States or will have to lose modern sophisticated arms. *Secondly*, some Kremlin leaders believe that to support the non-Marxist groups is a worthless investment in the long run, while another group favours development of state to state relations no matter how progressive or Marxist the non-ruling groups are.<sup>68</sup>

The initial Soviet indifference to the Israeli invasion in Lebanon in 1982 may be explained from different considerations. From the past experiences Moscow realised that more critical would be the situation of the Arabs closer they would turn to the Soviet Union. Another explanation may be that Moscow wanted to use the Lebanese card most effectively and to get maximum gains out of it. Many Soviet analysts hoped that the Lebanese crisis would encourage Egypt to normalise its ties with Moscow.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, the Soviets consider Lebanese crisis as only a part of the overall Middle East crisis and it seems that they are not ready to sacrifice or to play out all cards on a single issue. But it, in no way, means that the Soviets have no interests in Lebanon or overlook the development of the situation. It is true that at one time it appeared that the Soviets were ambivalent to the Lebanese crisis and allowed the US to play unilateral game in Lebanon, but it merely be a tactical position rather than a concession to the US.

Soon the Soviets significantly increased their influence in Lebanon through pro-Syrian elements there, who in turn, under Soviet patronage, not only challenged the authority of US sponsored Christian government of Amin Gemayel but at the same time threatened the US presence by undermining her peacekeeping role. In fact, under the covert Soviet support the pro-Syrian Lebanese groups were able to compel the US to withdraw Marines from Lebanon, put effective pressure on the government to abrogate troops withdrawal treaty with

68. Galia Golan, op, cit. p. 15

69. *South*, September 1982, p. 29

Israel and to accept the Syrian mediation. And since February 1984 it appears that the United States who from the beginning tried to play a unilateral role without recognising the Soviets, has withdrawn from the Lebanese scene or subsided by the Soviets. Since the present situation in Lebanon is conducive to the Soviet interests, it is most likely that Moscow will prefer to maintain status-quo and will not take any risk that may help Washington to reinstate her position in Lebanon. The fact remains that Moscow is, for obvious reasons, not interested to solve the Lebanese crisis rather she prefers to use it as a front in relation to the US and at the same time to use pro and con of the Lebanese conflict for her global interest in the region.

We see that both the super powers have a number of stakes in Lebanon and, in fact, the country has become the theatre of super power rivalry. So much of the solution of Lebanese crisis will depend on the mutual relationship of the superpowers and on global negotiations.

#### 4.2. The Arab Countries and the Lebanese Crisis

In previous chapters we have seen that historically some Arab countries were directly involved in the Lebanese crisis. The intra-Arab politics also, in many occasions, had direct bearings on Lebanon. A number of factional groups in Lebanon are very closely associated with some Arab countries and heavily dependent on their masters both politically and economically. There are reports that many Arab countries, particularly Syria, Libya, Iraq and Iran, show significant financial aids to their client armies in Lebanon. The Saudis, who usually prefer to maintain a status quo and are afraid of any radicalization, help almost all factional parties at one time or another.<sup>70</sup> The Islamic revolution in Iran and the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war complicated the factional politics with the intensification of fightings of pro-Iraqi elements with the pro-Syrian, pro-Irani and pro-Libyan elements in Lebanon.

70. Adam Zagorin, *op. cit.*, p. 115

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 was a serious challenge to the Arabs. In fact the Israeli strike on Lebanon came at a time when the Arab world was at its weakest position in recent history due to dissension, rivalries and political uncertainties. Although the Israeli invasion took place in June 1982, untill September the Arab League failed to hold a Summit to discuss the issue. One reason of the Arab indifference might be that most of the Arab countries particularly the moderates were more concerned about the escalating situation in the Gulf war than what was happening in Lebanon. As one Arab official, later on, put it as "The Lebanese crisis concerns us but the Iran-Iraq war terrifies us."<sup>71</sup>

However, it does not in any way, mean that the Arab states were not concerned about the situation in Lebanon. The general Arab public feeling over the situation was more intense than the leaderships. As a Kuwaiti professor, who was working on the effects of Lebanese war on Arab Public, said "The man in the street had more intense feelings about the war than any other war in Arab-Israeli history."<sup>72</sup>

It is true that the Arab actions, in many occasions, contributed to intensifying the crisis but at the same time some Arab states also took effective mediation efforts to ease the tense situation in Lebanon. In June 1981, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Syria formed an Arab League follow up committee to end the bloodshed in Lebanon.<sup>73</sup> And the committee with the help of US special envoy Philip Habib was successful in signing a cease-fire agreement between Israel and PLO in South Lebanon-first ever a direct negotiation between PLO and Israel. The committee also initiated the process to arrange the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon in 1981 and convinced the Lebanese Forces to sever ties with Israel by making an open declaration. But the bid failed because of some procedural problems and Syrian reluctance to withdraw from Lebanon.

71. *Newsweek*, 20 February 1984, p. 21

72. *Dawn* (Pakistan), 8 December 1982

73. *Dawn* (Pakistan), 4 September 1981

In September 1983 when the situation in Lebanon seriously deteriorated with the intensification of infightings, Saudi Arabia with the help of Syria and US Middle East envoy McFarlane managed to arrange a cease-fire which was accepted by all Lebanese factions.<sup>74</sup> At the initiative of Saudi Arabia another peace offensive was launched in January 1984 when the Lebanese, Syrian and Saudi Foreign Ministers held a meeting in the Saudi capital to discuss the situation in Lebanon.<sup>75</sup> But the meeting failed to make any headway because of the basic differences in the positions of the parties concerned. And it appeared that the Saudis, inspite of their significant financial assistance to Syria, failed to put sufficient pressure on her to withdraw troops from Lebanon. Meanwhile, the Saudi mediation efforts apparently was not liked by many Lebanese factions particularly by the radicals. Saudi Embassy in Beirut was attacked and Saudi diplomats were either harrassed or killed.

The Arab countries, overoccupied with their bilateral and multi-lateral problems, in fact, have very little or no leverage on Lebanon. For the moderates the main problems are, (i) with their bitter experiences of Shiite revolution in Iran they can not support any move that may lead to the emergence of Shiites as single dominant force in Lebanon, (ii) because of the very obvious reasons they can also not afford the total dominance of Syria—a Soviet ally and one of the few Arab supporters to Iran—over Lebanon.

## V. OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

The problems of Lebanon is so complicated, deep-rooted and things happen so fast and dramatically that it is extremely difficult for observers to make an objective assesement of the outlook for future peace and stability. It will not only depend on the external forces that are directly involved in Lebanon but mainly on a workable reconciliation among various internal religio-political groups actively

74. *Kessing's Contemporary Archieves* (Longman, London) Vol. XXIX, 1983, p. 32535

75. *Ibid*, p. 32890

working in Lebanon. There seem to be two possible ways of solving the Lebanese crisis : at first stage to ensure the withdrawal of all foreign troops and in the second stage an internal solution i.e. reconciliation among all political groups and factions.

### 5.1. Withdrawal of Foreign Troops

5.1.1. *The Palestinians*; With the withdrawal of 6000 PLO guerillas from Beirut in 1982, it was widely expected that the Lebanese crisis would be solved but it did not happen so. Even after the withdrawal of PLO guerillas from Beirut there were a good number of Palestinian fighters in various parts of Lebanon. Meanwhile most of the guerillas evacuated from Beirut returned to Lebanon, joined the sectarian clashes and started launching attacks on the Israeli positions. For PLO Lebanon is the only place from where they may continue armed struggle against Israel taking the advantage of the political confusion and weakness of the government of the country. In fact, in Lebanon's wild anarchy the Palestinians were able to build up a state within a state where they could freely write, speak and plot.<sup>76</sup>

Meanwhile from past experience it is almost sure that the countries bordering Israel (Egypt Syria and Jordan) will not permit the Palestinians to use their land for launching attacks on Israel. So PLO, particularly the radical groups who still plan to solve their problem through armed resistance, will obviously prefer a troubled Lebanon, without any strong central government so as to continue their struggle and get the leftwing Muslims as their ally. The Palestinians have very little to gain but more to lose if they withdraw from Lebanon because the dispersal of PLO guerillas to distant Arab countries far from Israeli borders will weaken their strength. So unless and until the Palestinian problem will be solved and they will be able to return to their homeland with honour and dignity, it will be quite difficult to evacuate them totally from Lebanon.

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76. Adam Zagorin, op, cit, p. 115

5.1.2. *The Israelis* : Israeli support to the Maronites and her invasions in Lebanon should be viewed in global historical perspectives. As observed earlier the Christian-Jewish alliance in Lebanon predates its birth as a state. Israel invaded Lebanon not so much to save the Christians as to further her own interests as may be outlined below :

a. The first Israeli objective in Lebanon was to ensure the security of Galilee because since 1970 the PLO guerillas were launching attacks on the Israeli positions. Many Israeli leaders, including the former Defence Minister Sharon, believed that the liquidation of PLO forces from Lebanon would ensure the security in the northern area of their country.

b. The second Israeli objective was to destroy the Syrian installations in the Bekka Valley. Because the Israelis took the Syrian forces as an obstacle to the liquidation of the Palestinians and concerned over the growing Syrian influence in Lebanon, including the missiles in the territory of Lebanon close to the Israeli border.<sup>77</sup>

c. The third Israeli objective was to establish a strong pro-Israeli government in Beirut, to sign a peace treaty with Lebanon thus to neutralize another Arab country next to Egypt from the Middle East anti-Israeli politics.<sup>78</sup>

d. The fourth Israeli objective was to weaken the fighting strength of PLO by driving them out of Lebanon.

Furthermore, the Israelis had long term economic interest in Lebanon. The rich fertile land, water resources and lucrative market of Lebanon had long drawn the attention of the Zionist state. Many Israeli officials dreamt of turning Lebanon into market for Israeli goods.

The political developments in Lebanon after the Israeli invasion in 1982 took a different turn. The Israelis, with their dream of establishing a new order in Lebanon, convinced that the evacuation of PLO guerillas would solve the age-old problem and allow them to

77. *The Guardian Weekly*, 18 June 1982

78. For details see, *International Herald Tribune*, 16 August 1982

form a pro-Israeli government. But they seriously miscalculated the strength of Lebanese Muslims and Syrian influence over Lebanon and at the same time they overestimated the strength of Phalangist militias and were too optimistic about the US peace keeping role.

The Lebanese Muslims particularly the Shiites getting support from Syria gradually consolidated their position, posed serious threats to the Lebanese government and, at one stage, emerged as the decisive factor of the Lebanese crisis. Although, Israeli troops have been withdrawn South to the Awali river, they have failed to stem the rising tide of guerilla activities, rather the Israeli positions are frequently being the targets of attacks by Palestinian guerillas, Shiite and Druze militias and suicidal fanatics which Israel never encountered before.<sup>79</sup>

In fact the Israeli position in Lebanon seems to be difficult, uncomfortable and the maintaining cost of the forces in Lebanon is very high. So far more than 500 Israeli soldiers have been killed-the highest casualty suffered by the Israelis in any Arab-Israeli war. The Lebanese invasion has proved to be too costly to the Israelis. The country with its 400 percent annual rate of inflation has been caught with severe economic crisis. The internal political pressure for withdrawal of troops from Lebanon have tremendously been increased. But at the same time the Israelis seem not to be ready to overlook their security concerns in South Lebanon and are afraid that the withdrawal from South Lebanon would bring the Syrians and PLO guerillas close to their border. However, to get out of the situation the Israelis were trying to form a pro-Israeli militia force (by that time Haddad died) to protect the Israeli interests in South Lebanon. And in April 1984 it was reported that Israel had appointed Antoine Lahad, a Maronite Christian, retired from Lebanese Army with the rank of Major General, as the new commander of

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79. Jim Muir "Arena of Conflict, Crumble for Peace" *The Middle East Journal* Vol, 38, No. 2, Spring 1984, p. 226

'South Lebanese Army'.<sup>80</sup> However, negotiations between Israel and Lebanon continued for withdrawal of troops and in the process the Israelis dropped their earlier demand—the simultaneous withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon rather demanded the guarantee that Syria or the Palestinian guerillas would not occupy the territories evacuated by Israel. Syria refused to provide any guarantee. Israel also optioned for partial withdrawal from Western and Central Lebanon while remaining in the Eastern part facing the Syrian troops but it was rejected by Lebanon and Syria. And as a retaliatory measure the Israelis intensified their attacks on Shiite villages in South Lebanon.

So in these circumstances, inspite of all difficulties, problems and internal pressures, it will be highly unexpected that Israel will withdraw from South Lebanon unless and until the security of their northern border will be ensured either by Syria and Lebanon or by the United States.

5. 1. 3. *The Syrians* : In June 1982, during the Israeli invasion in Lebanon the Syrians seemed to be indifferent and avoided very cautiously a direct confrontation with Israel. They did not even resist the Israeli troops from occupying Beirut. But within a very short time Syria with the help of Lebanese Muslims consolidated her position in Lebanon and with the help of Russia she was able to replace the missile positions in the Bekka Valley which were destroyed by Israel. By her continued military presence in Lebanon she enhanced her influence over both the Lebanese Muslims and the PLO, which also added to Syria's clout in intra-Arab politics. She had succeeded in overthrowing the moderate PLO section, including the leadership, from Lebanon with the help of PLO radicals to strengthen her position within the PLO.<sup>81</sup> She also, with the help of her allies in Lebanon, was successful in creating sufficient pressure on the Lebanese Government to abrogate the troops withdrawal

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80. For details of the "South Lebanese Army" see Christopher S. Raj, "Continuing Lebanese Crisis" *Strategic Analysis* (Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi), Vol. VIII, No. 2, May 1984, pp. 159-160.

81. Ze'ev Schiff, op, cit, p. 235

agreement with Israel. And in the process President Assad outmanoeuvred the Americans and proved himself more experienced in the Middle East politics than the Americans. Syria could not allow an Israeli influenced Lebanon as was expressed by the Syrian leadership, "Syria could not approve something which was detrimental to Lebanon's independence and hence harmful to Syria's security and interests"<sup>82</sup> Since 1983, Syria emerged as the dominant party from where she could dictate or at least strongly influence the terms and conditions for the solution of the Lebanese crisis. But as observers widely believe Syria does not want a total US defeat in Lebanon, rather the leadership in Damascus may need US as a counter weight to the Russians.<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, the Syrian success in sabotaging the efforts to resolve Lebanon's dilemma proved to be continued the pivotal part of Lebanon's strategic puzzle.

The pertinent question that could be raised is what are the Syrian objectives in Lebanon or in other words, what does she want out of the Lebanese crisis? Syria has two main objectives in Lebanon; *firstly*, as discussed earlier, territorial ambition to form a "Greater Syria" or Syrian dominated Lebanon and to create such a political atmosphere as to make central government of Lebanon dependent on Syria and it was recognised by Syrian leaders from time to time. President Assad once recalled that, "Throughout history, Syria and Lebanon had been one country and one people".<sup>84</sup> If this is the Syrian attitude the logical question that follows is : to what extent she will support left-wing Muslims who seem to be the dominant force in Lebanon? If we recall the events of 1976 we see that when the Lebanese Muslims strengthened their positions and were about to defeat the Christians, Syria came forward to help the Christians because she was afraid of strong Muslim dominated left oriented Lebanon. Although at present Syria is supporting the Lebanese Muslims there is still room for doubt to what extent she will continue

82. *Al Ba'th* (Syria), 8 May 1983,

83. *The Guardian Weekly*, 11 March 1984, p. 1

84. BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, part-4, ME/5266/A/2, 22 July 1976

her support. The Syrian position in the negotiation process on Lebanon indicates that Syria does not want to see the Christian dominance to be collapsed or be replaced by the Muslims. Under the Syrian pressure the Muslims ceased their demand of the resignation of President Amin Gemayel and agreed to join the cabinet of national unity formed in April 1984. The Syrians are quite adamant that if any external influence is to be exercised in Lebanon it must be Syria, no one else. But at the same time it is preferable and less costly for Damascus to attain this position through political means, through manipulation of Lebanon's domestic political environment rather than military means.<sup>85</sup> Secondly, Syria wants to use her position and influence in Lebanon as a bargaining chip with Israel and the US to get back the Golan Heights lost to Israel or at least have the issue back to the negotiating table. Taking into account the very strategic location of the Golan Heights and the present Syrian-Israeli relations it will be far from easy to make Israel agree on the Syrian proposition.

In fact, the withdrawal of all the foreign troops from Lebanon will not be an easy task because all the external forces were either invited or their presence was tacitly approved by one or other factions in Lebanon. And almost all the political factions in Lebanon are heavily dependent on external powers, either regional or extraregional, for their survival. So as long as it will continue and one group will seek external assistance, the others by mixed ambition and paranoia would be obliged to follow the suit. And in that case it will almost be impracticable to make Lebanon free from foreign intruders.

## 5.2. Internal Solution of the Crisis

Considering the complicated nature of Lebanese politics and the endemic violence which has become a common phenomenon in the country, one can assume that the crisis may move in one of the

85. Rashid Khalidi, "The Palestinians in Lebanon; Social Repercussions of Israel's Invasion" *The Middle East Journal* Vol. 38, No. 2, Spring, 1984, p. 260

three directions: (i) to divide the country along communal lines and create Maronite, Sunnî, Shiite and Druze mini states, (ii) to foster enough cooperation between various communities for a national reconciliation and adopt a new National Pact more acceptable to various groups and sub-groups for sharing powers, (iii) to transform the country into a unitary state where the central government will have the authority to govern the state and individuals will be treated as equal citizens of an independent state not as members of particular religious community.

Among the three possibilities the last seems to be most unlikely. Because the question may be raised how to build up a strong unilateral government in Lebanon? It may be formed in two ways; either each and every community will have to surrender all powers to the central government, including the disband of militia force or one community will have to defeat others. But in the present situation in Lebanon none of the two options seems to be viable. After years of fightings, mutual misgivings and mistrusts one cannot expect a sudden rapprochement among the communities. There is also uncertainty whether the sectarian groups will agree to disband their militia forces totally which are the actual source of their strength. Already such doubts were expressed from different quarters. As an official spokesman of the Phalange militia said in 1983, "we cannot take a chance on disbanding ... .. (if we do), the country will go back into anarchy."<sup>86</sup> At the same time from the present balance of power among the militia groups and their external linkage it is unexpected that one group may overrun the other and take the over all control of the country.

Of the two other options, historically, the partition plan was more acceptable to the Christians. During the civil war in 1975-76 they supported the plan which subsequently got Israeli approval. The Christians supported the plan because they thought that they were more advanced in all respects and occupy important strategic areas, including Mount Lebanon, coastal areas and South Lebanon, while the Israelis convinced that a Christian state in Lebanon would

86. Daniel Pipes, *op. cit.*, P. 147

become their natural ally and serve their interest best in the region. In 1983 Phalangist commander Prem also proposed that the Christians would form their own canton in the Chouf, the Shiites in the Southern Lebanon and the Sunni Muslims in the Tripoli area and in North of Lebanon. It assumed that the cantonisation option was favoured by the Druzes. But the Shiite Muslims and Syria rejected the idea and strongly criticised the move as a Zionist conspiracy initiated by the Lebanese Christians<sup>87</sup>

As the situation stands today inspite of all problems there are powerful factors that may push Lebanon to be united. The politico-religious forces of disintegration in Lebanon after long infightings appears to have become weary. Moreover, they are bitterly disillusioned with all outsiders in Lebanon. The Phalangists who emerged as the dominating force in Lebanon, after defeats to the Shiites in Beirut and in the battle with the Druzes in the Mountains, are not sure whether they can reemerge and reinstate their dominance over other groups.

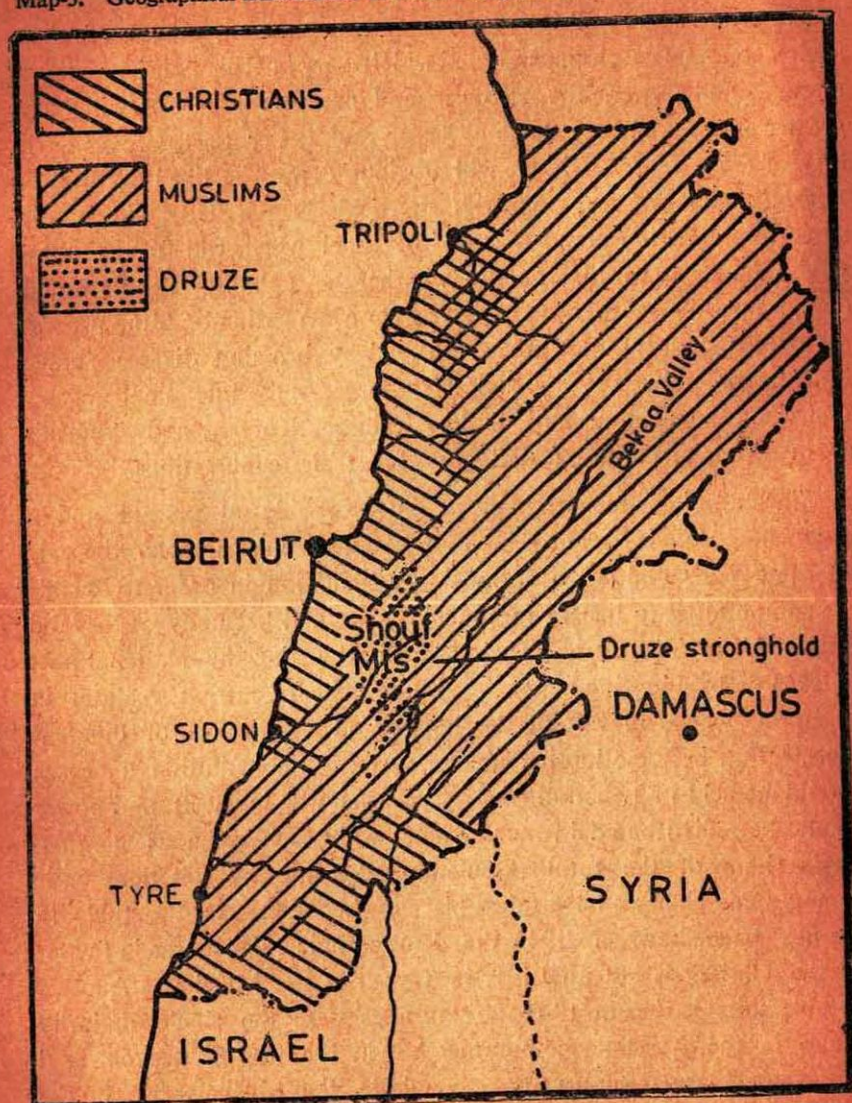
Although the Shiite community has emerged as the largest and strongest group because of their geographical locations and high ambition to control all over Lebanon they will hardly subscribe the disintegration idea.

The Druzes, with their victory over the Phalangists in the Chouf Mouniains and establishment of their own entity, will hardly agree with a cantonization policy because of their political and economic vulnerability derived from their size of population and geographical location.

Nevertheless, even if the parties agree to the partition plan there will be a number of problems. *Firstly*, how would the boundaries be determined given that the communities are not neatly separated geographically. For example, the Druzes live among Maronites and the Shiites live among Sunnites. The map in the next page shows the geographical locations of main religious sects in Lebanon. Furthermore, how to divide the city of Beirut where all the communities live. *Secondly*,

87. Christopher S. Raj, op. cit. p, 158

Map-3. Geographical Distribution of Main Religious Sects



the partition of Lebanon would almost inevitably turn the mini states into clients of Syria, Israel or some other external powers who may

use them as proxies in the larger Middle East conflict. *Thirdly*, since the various religio-political groups are at different stages of their socio-economic developments and widely vary in their politico-military strength and power, the stronger and prosperous groups will have greater stakes and may demand larger and better parts of the territory of the country which will obviously not be liked by others. *Fourthly*, the Western countries, particularly the US, will hardly agree to a partition plan sponsored by Israel which will further antagonise the Arab world. *Finally*, whether the Lebanese people would accept a permanent division of their state when nation building process all over the world are being achieved by bringing diverge people into larger units not by dissolving larger units into smaller parts and when the dividing nations like Chinese, Koreans and Yemenis are in favour of initiating dialogues for their reunifications.

Since a unitary government is not workable at present and a fragmented state is likely to be unstable and unacceptable, the only alternate is to find out a national reconciliation in order to enable the communities to live in reasonable peace and harmony as they did upto 1975. It may be achieved through changing the National Pact of 1943 or by adopting a new one in the light of current realities in Lebanon, which may fulfil the hopes and aspirations of different sects.<sup>88</sup> But, before adopting any new pact or constitution, a census should be held in Lebanon (the last census was in 1932) and power should be redistributed in accordance with each religious community's share of the total population. Because by this time basic demographic changes have taken place in Lebanon. As the table in the next page shows, in 1943 the demographic balance was in favour of the Christians but now it is in favour of the Muslims. Another notable thing is that in 1943 the Sunnites were the single majority group in the Muslim community but in 1983 the Shiites emerged as the single largest group not only within the Muslims but in the total population of Lebanon.

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88. Roger Owen, op, cit. p. 937

Table - 1. Overtime Changes of Population in Lebanon by Religious Sects (in %)

	Christians			Muslims	
	1932	1983*		1932	1983*
Maronites	29	23	Sunnite	22	26
Greek Orthodox	9	7	Shiite	20	27
Greek Cateolic	6	5	Druze	7	7
Other Christians	7	5			
Total	51	40		49	60

\*estimated

Sources; David R. Smock and Andrey C. Smock, *The Politics of Pluralism; A Comparative Study of Lebanon and Ghana*, (Elsevier Scientific Publishing Co. New York), 1975, p. 76, and *South*, November 1983, p. 20

But since the country is still occupied by foreign troops and the nation has seriously suffered from civil war and external aggressions and many left the country or/are working in clandestine, it will not be easy to hold a census in Lebanon at present. However, in any new arrangement (National Pact or Constitution) the Arab entity of Lebanon must be guranteed and at the same time a provision for peaceful relations with Israel will have to be ensured, otherwise it will be difficult to get an over all support from the Muslims and Christians.

But even after the Christian-Muslim consensus there will be a number of other significant issues calling for a cautious and flexible approach for their peaceful solution. One such important question is the status and position of the Palestinians who have been living in legal limbo in Lebanon for 37 years. The Christians demand that they immediately leave Lebanon, while majority of the Muslims want that until and unless they are able to return to their homeland they will live in Lebanon. So there is a pertinent question as to whether the issue will continue to poison Christian-Muslim relations or the Christians will be reconciled to the permanent settlement of the

Palestinians in Lebanon as several decades earlier they also welcomed Armenian Christians with a view to adding their strength.

However, in early 1984 the parties made a headway in the reconciliation process when the Christians, who always refused to share power with the Muslims and were deadly against of any change in the National Pact of 1983, agreed to equality in power sharing with the Muslims as compared to the earlier arrangement, (for earlier arrangement, see Annexure-1) while the Muslims ceased their demand of the resignation of President Amin Gemayel. Rashid Karami, a pro-Syrian Sunnite Muslim leader was elected Prime Minister and a 10 member Cabinet of National Unity was formed drawing leaders of all major political parties and groups in Lebanon. (see Annexure-2). The new Cabinet had to face a number of difficulties, however, the most significant and remarkable thing was that the warlords of Lebanon for the first time in last 10 years were able to form a representative government and to sit face to face at the negotiating table to discuss the future of their ill fated motherland. There are antagonistic views and opinions and the parties differ in their perceptions but these may be narrowed down gradually through negotiations and a national consensus can be achieved on a more profound basis. But for reaching such a consensus Lebanon requires a basic institutional changes in socio-economic and political structure, otherwise the present marriage of convenience prove to be fragile and unworkable.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The crisis in Lebanon is rooted deep in history and has been severely complicated over the years by the inputs of various internal and external factors and forces. The sectarian conflict in Lebanon between the the Muslims and Christians was basically a power struggle over the control of the state and in that struggle both the Christians and Muslims obtained strategic assistance from external sources. The political developments in the Arab world seriously affected Lebanese politics and has direct bearing on sectarian conflicts in Lebanon.

2. In the power sharing process within the framework of the National Pact the Muslims had to make serious concessions to the Christians and the Christian-Muslims marriage of convenience did not last long. The continuous sectarian clashes and political feuding led to the civil war and subsequently brought the foreign troops into Lebanon which, in course of events, turned to be the main impediments to the peaceful solution of the crisis.
3. Considering the stakes of both Syria and Israel and the supports they are getting from various groups and factions in Lebanon, it would be very difficult to ensure their total withdrawal from Lebanon. Not only that, observing the past experience and considering the very nature and characteristic of Lebanese politics the future of the mediation efforts from different quarters, including the UN, does not seem to be encouraging.
4. Although the government of national unity has initiated a number of steps toward national reconciliation, the future of the current uneasy truce remains unpredictable, given the antagonistic views and opinions of the parties and sporadic clashes among various sectarian groups.
5. For an effective and permanent solution of the crisis, Lebanon needs basic institutional changes in politics, including power sharing between the Muslims and Christians.
6. The reality is that neither the Christians nor the Muslims can expect to gain dominance over each other, despite the fact that each has its own leverage to pull on the other. The sooner that realisation dawns on both the contending parties, the easier could be the path of reconciliation. What is most important in Lebanon, now, is patience, tolerance, flexibility and concerted efforts from all quarters for a peaceful solution of the crisis which caused one of the worst human tragedies in history.

## ANNEXURE—1

## THE LEBANESE NATIONAL COVENANT 1943

In 1943 an understanding was reached between Christian and Muslim leaders which became known as the National Covenant and may be termed Lebanon's unwritten constitution. It laid down the following principles :

1. Lebanon to be a completely independent sovereign State. The Christians to forego seeking foreign protection (i.e. Western and in particular French) or attempting to bring the country under foreign control or influence. In return Muslims to forego making any attempt to bring about any political union with Syria, or any form of Arab union.

2. Lebanon was a country with an Arab "face" and language and a part of the Arab world—with a special "character." Despite its Arabism, however, it would not cut off its cultural and spiritual ties with Western civilisation, which had helped it to reach an enviable degree of progress.

3. It was to co-operate with all the Arab States and to become a member of the Arab family, provided the Arab States recognised its independence and sovereignty within the present boundaries. In its relation with the Arab States, Lebanon should not side with one group against another.

4. Public offices would be distributed equitably among the recognised confessions, but in technical positions preference would be given to competence without regard to confessional considerations. The three leading positions in the country were to be distributed according to the following convention: President of the Republic, Maronite; the Prime Minister, Sunni Muslim; the President (Speaker) of Parliament, Shi'a Muslim.

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Source : Abid A. Al Marayati : *Middle Eastern Constitutions & Electoral Laws* (New York, 1968), pp. 2456.

## ANNEXURE—2

# THE LEBANESE CABINET OF RASHID KARAMI MAY 1984

Rashid Karami (Sunni) Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Camille Chamoun (Maronite Christian) Minister of Finance and of Housing and Cooperatives

Pierre Gemayel (Maronite Christian) Minister of Post and Telecommunications and of Health and Social Affairs

Joseph Skaff (Greek Catholic) Minister of Information

Abdallah Rassi\* (Greek Orthodox) Minister of the Interior

Victor Kassir (Greek Orthodox) Minister of the Economy and of Industry and Oil

Adel Osseiran (Shia) Minister of Defence and of Agriculture

Nabih Berri\*\* (Shia) Minister of State for South Lebanon and Reconstruction

Salim El Hoss (Sunni) Minister of Labour and of Education

Walid Jumblatt (Durze) Minister of Public Works, of Transport and of Tourism

\* Refused to accept his post and his duties taken over by Joseph Skaff

\* Initially appointed as Minister of Justice and of Hydro-electrical Resources  
Source, *Third World Quarterly*, October 1984 Vol, 6, No. 4, p. 949