POLITICAL IDENTITIES AND THE FAILURE OF NATIONAL SOLUTIONS IN LEBANON

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ABSTRACT

Lebanon has suffered in its attempts to survive as a nation-state. In a country housing numerous ethnicities, co-existence has been a fragile balance of power-sharing set up through the constitution and an unwritten National Pact. Issues of political, economic, and social control have led to instability and conflict. In a sectarian society where maintaining control is vital, outside influences seem to play an extraordinary role. The problem of the National Pact and other attempted solutions, such as the Ta’if Agreement, rests in the primary presupposition that those who dwell in Lebanon have given up their primary identity for a nationally unified identity. Conflict resolution in Lebanon always involves building on sectarian loyalties but never transcends these to achieve the desired nationalistic Lebanese identity. Lebanon was built out of the roots of the Ottoman Empire, which allowed each community to run independently of the Empire. This mode of thought has continued to present day as Lebanon tries to administer a government in the confines of the Ta’if Agreement. The groups in Lebanon have a sectarian nature, but their loyalties are intertwined with the political
environment of this new era. As a result, their political ideologies are widely different from each other. This thesis argues that because of these entrenched political identities any attempt for peace that continues to hold a central theme of a unified Lebanon is bound to fail, and that Lebanon is in need for a different political formula in order for it to survive.
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CHAPTER 1
LEBANON IN HISTORY

Lebanon has seen tumultuous times of instability erupting overnight into chaos. Over the years of its short existence as a nation-state, the country has sought stability by trying to balance the power each religion has over the tiny area. The foundation of Lebanon as an independent nation was based on an unwritten pact that distributed power-sharing roles amongst the three largest religious groups. This pact also set the stage for Lebanon’s character as a unified nation. As the balance of demographics changed throughout the years, instability resulted.

This instability tended to force compromise between all the religious groups that were involved. Each attempt to develop a method of co-existence always referred back to the foundational pact. The current state of Lebanon is being held together by a rendition of the National Pact which first started this independent country, but the problem with any attempted solution lies in the primary presupposition that those who dwell in Lebanon have given up their religious primary identity for a nationally unified identity.
The Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies of the University of Durham has stated that:

Nationalism is a political concept originated and developed in Europe. Although Nationalism emerged as a modern ideology, it evolved in part as a result of the early separation of spiritual and temporal power in European polities. Whereas many European countries entered the modern era with a distinct separation between state and religion, in the Middle East no similar distinction existed...Although the National Pact may have sufficed as a temporary expedient in the process of nation-building, it could not serve as the basis for the subsequent development of a sophisticated modern democracy.¹

In other words, Lebanon could not develop into a modern democracy as it has never been able to rid itself of individual loyalties to religion and adopt a unified loyalty to Lebanon.

As a result, the peace attempts that continue to hold on to the idea of a unified Lebanon are bound to fail. Lebanon has developed as a modern country while holding onto its historical roots from the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire controlled the Levant area, which included today’s modern Lebanon. The Ottoman Empire was a Sunni government that allowed for each religious community to administer to its own internal affairs independently of the Empire.

The Ottoman Empire rose from Turkish tribes in Anatolia that grew in power as the Mongol power collapsed in 1335. The Ottoman Empire reigned from the time of

¹ D. Stoten, A State Without A Nation (Durham: University of Durham, 1992), 78.
the end of the Byzantine Empire in the 14th century to the establishment of the Turkey Republic in 1922. The Turkish tribes, out of Anatolia, were warriors who were known as Ghazis. They fought in the name of Islam against the Christian Byzantine Empire, and they also fought the Mongols who tried to overtake and invade Anatolia.

The Ottoman Empire grew in size through a mixture of war, alliances and purchases. The Ottoman expansion into the Levant area, where current Lebanon is situated, began with the conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Constantinople was the Byzantine capital of the East and when the Ottoman Empire took control, it was renamed Istanbul. In 1516-1517, the Mamluks were conquered. This defeat doubled the size of the Ottoman Empire and gave them control over Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Algeria.

Ottoman rule embodied a military, administrative and legal system. Although the military system began with a reliance on the nomadic people, it soon developed into a system of troops consisting of converted Christians, who generally came from the Balkans and were called the Janissaries. The Janissaries was a body of converted youths drawn from the poorest areas of the empire and who were then highly trained and educated. They were extremely loyal to the sultan; they answered only to him and their training demanded absolute obedience to him. Because of this, they were given vast amounts of power and key positions of control in the army and the government. This conversion practice became common due to the benefits involved. These converts
were often sent back to administer the territories from which they came and they helped maintain the culture and tradition of the area, which resulted in less hostile resistance from the population. Identifying as a Muslim was never demanded under the Empire, but since these benefits required you to be a Muslim, it remained a constant practice for many Christian youths to convert.

The administrative policy of the Ottoman Empire over the territories it controlled was entirely reliant on local leaders. The responsibility of these native leaders resided in paying annual tributes to the Ottoman governor, and providing men to serve in the army. By allowing the native leaders to remain in charge, the empire allowed for local customs and traditions to remain so that traditional life was fairly preserved throughout Ottoman rule. The territories were divided into sectors called mukata’a and there was a local office designated by the same name in charge of finances. The mukata’a would gather up its own revenue by collecting taxes. Its members also collected their own salaries. This system of using the mukata’as allowed for the Ottoman Empire to keep collecting taxes as it continued to expand. As to the local leaders, they used the mukata’as to gain power. Indeed, some of the taxes collected would be redistributed to the leader’s followers.

The legal system under the Ottoman Empire was a dual system of law. There was a religious law, Shari’ah, and there was a civil law, kanon. The religious law, Shari’ah, was not too descriptive on state organization or public law. It mostly covered
the personal behavior for Muslims and applied to the Muslim millets. The Christian and Jewish millets followed their own religious doctrine under the protection of Shari’ah law. The Ulama, or religious scholars, interpreted the religious laws. In theory, they could nullify secular laws or qanun, but that was very rarely practiced. The sultan was the one who issued the secular laws in order to keep his Empire well organized administratively.

The area of present day Lebanon has been under Muslim rule since the Umayyads, 661-750. It was during this time that Muslim religious schools were established in the area. By the 9th century the area was under Muslim Egyptian Dynasties, which constantly struggled with the Byzantine Empire, as the two powers fought to control the area. The Crusades had started in the eleventh century as an attempt by Rome to conquer Palestine. It was during this time that the Maronites, one of the main Christian sects in Lebanon, helped the Crusaders by providing troops. In turn, they received substantial protection from the Crusaders.\(^2\)

The battle that ended the Crusades was started by the Pope, who organized it by involving the assistance of Hungary and Venice. He assured these countries that they did not need to honor their peace pacts with the new rising empire, the Ottomans, because these were infidels. The crusade reached Varna, but the Serbs and the Venetians were too reluctant to follow through with the Pope’s crusade. The Serbs,

\(^2\) K. Salibi, “Maronite Historians of Medieval Lebanon,” vol. 34 of the Publication of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (Beirut: American University, 1959), 288.
whose orthodox tradition was persecuted by Rome, remained loyal to their treaties with the sultan, while Venice did not want to lose its established trade routes. The victory of the Ottomans opened the way to the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

As was previously noted, the administration of the Levant area under Ottoman rule allowed for different practices. The Ottomans were governed by Shari’ah law, but they allowed non-Muslims to form self-governing communities and to maintain their own culture, tradition, and religious practices. These communities were called millets, or protected religious minorities, and they included those who were previously persecuted by the Greek Orthodox Church. The millets maintained their particular religious traditions, language, and religious leaders who represented them in Istanbul; as to the local communities, they had their own local leaders, normally a prominent local family, who were responsible for the application of both secular and religious laws. As a result of this system, the protection of each religion benefited the Ottomans and increased their power and wealth.3

There was then mutual benefits to the Ottoman Empire and to the social and religious leaders who maintained their leadership through the millet system. These communities’ chieftains preserved their rule by collecting taxes, maintaining social organization and establishing peace. They were responsible for paying the taxes of the community. Along with the local religious leaders, they administered all social

3 The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.vv. “Lebanon, Ottoman Empire.” Most of the information in the first chapter comes from this source.
matters, such as marriage, divorce, birth, funeral rites, health care, education and social justice as society at large was segregated and divided under different religious laws. Each local leader was responsible for maintaining civil obedience and preventing insurrections and uprisings. The millet system helped stabilize Ottoman rule by employing a tax system that allowed each community to remain protected from external impositions.

The population that resided in the area that would become modern Lebanon consisted of a variety of sects. Except for the Sunnis, who lived in the main cities on the coast, Lebanon developed as a land of refugees from persecuted religions. These were minority sects that took refuge in the high Lebanese mountains, which provided protection from attacks. In the seventh century, persecuted Maronites settled in what is today northern Lebanon. By the eleventh century the Druze sought refuge there as well, while Shiites found solace in the agricultural land of south Lebanon and the central plain of the Bekaa. The Druze and the Maronites vied for the control of the mountains, unleashing centuries old feuds and wars between the two sects.

One of the main sects, the Druze, developed from an Isma’ilite teaching, which was a branch of the Shiite sect of Islam. This type of teaching actually combined Jewish, Christian, Gnostic, Neoplatonic and Zoroastrian elements into its core beliefs. Hamazah ibn ‘Ali was the messenger of this new faith. It originated under the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt in 1017. This faith arose during the reign of al-Hakim, a Fatimid
caliph. Hamazah ibn ‘Ali and his messengers propagated the divinity of al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, which essentially means “Ruler by the Command of Allah.” It was about five years after al-Hakim disappeared that the divinity of al-Hakim was being preached. The Druze believe that the sixth caliph will return and reign again in the Golden Age. The Druze acquired their name from one of the most famous missionaries of this sect, Nashtakin al-Daraziwas.

The Druze faith is a strict religion and its followers are known within their circles as Unitarians. The main goal of this religion is to obtain all knowledge. The hikmah, or the religious doctrine of the Druze is a secretive doctrine and is not widely known and studied even within the Druze community. Very few Druze have knowledge of it, but those who do are known as the “knowers” or ‘uqqal. The Druze do not allow converts into their religion either through acceptance of their belief structure or through marriage. There is no religious intermarriage allowed in Druze religion. The Druze are extremely loyal to each other. The Isma’ilite teaching that gave rise to the Druze is considered by orthodox Muslims heretical.

The Maronites constitute another religious sect that has had a long standing in Mount Lebanon. They derive their name from St. Maron, who was a Syrian hermit in the late fourth century. This is an independent religion but maintains traditions in line

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5 Ibid., 34.
with Orthodox Christians, and they have close ties with both Rome and France. The Maronites fled persecution and ended up in Northern Lebanon where they developed their own social structure and identity. In the Twelfth century, during the Crusades, they aligned themselves with the Catholic Church and its beliefs, but even though they are under Rome’s papal supremacy, they are allowed to elect their own patriarchs and conduct their own unique ceremonies. They moved into the Kisrewan region after the Shiites moved south. They lived among the Druze and eventually overtook power in Mount Lebanon.\(^6\)

The population of the coastal regions of today’s Greater Lebanon consisted mostly of Sunnis. The whole of Lebanon has actually been under the rule of Sunni dynasties, as Sunnis had always been the majority throughout history. Lebanon, like the rest of the near east, has always been ruled in the past by Sunnis, whether the Umayyads, the Abbassis, the Mamlukes or the Ottomans. The two main sects in Islam are the Sunnis and the Shiites. The Sunnis are the largest Muslim group in the world. Religiously, they have in common the five pillars of faith with the Shiites as well as most of the religious doctrine and law, but the Sunnis and the Shiites differ in their doctrine of the leadership of the community.

The major difference between the two groups started over who should succeed the Prophet Muhammad. Muhammad did not have a son and arguments arose over the

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legitimacy of the next leader. The Sunnis claimed that the Caliph should be elected. On the other hand, the Shiites desired succession based on blood ties and they wanted the prophet’s cousin, Ali Ibn Abu Talib to be the Caliph, but three caliphs were elected before him.\(^7\)

The Sunnis consider that the first four leaders known as the “Rightly Guided Caliphs” were all close to the Prophet and they are agreed to be adequate conveyors of the life and teachings of the Prophet.\(^8\) The last three of these leaders were all assassinated, but the Shiites claimed that the Caliphate should only go to the fourth Caliph’s descendents. They challenged the Sunni government and they were persecuted as a result. The Shiites in Greater Lebanon migrated from Egypt after the demise of the Fatimide dynasty of Egypt, which was a Shiite dynasty. The Shiites settled in the farm land of Lebanon and remained a poor, underdeveloped ethnic group in the greater context of Lebanon as a whole. All these sects in Lebanon preserved their distinct religious identity but they have in common their ethnic Arab identity.\(^9\)

The Ottoman Empire was in decline by the time World War I started and had been giving up control over its territories in the form of concessions to France and England. In 1536, a treaty had been established called the Capitulations treaty; it was


\(^8\) Ibid., 14.

an agreement between the Ottoman Empire and the French king and it allowed the French to travel and trade in most of the Empire. However, as the Empire weakened, France and England obtained greater capitulations that allowed them direct control over the Christian and Jewish populations in the Ottoman Territories and control over local manufacture and trade terms. In North Africa, they established direct colonial rule over former Ottoman territories.

These concessions allowed France and England to establish protectorates over the sects in Lebanon, which created a clientele relationship with the colonial powers. There were also issues and tension developing in Mount Lebanon between the Druze and the Maronites, and that enabled and facilitated Western interference. This started around 1842. Each of these groups had been unable to settle their disputes; they did not have enough power and the areas they claimed to rule were ethnically mixed. The Druze ruling class and the Maronite ruling class were vying for the same area by the mid-19th century. European intervention became a frequent occurrence with a weak Ottoman Empire unable to resolve the conflicts.10

The conflict between the Druze and the Maronites in Mount Lebanon involved European intervention so frequently that by 1861 an agreement was signed on June 9th. This agreement was a written reorganization of how Mount Lebanon would be

administered. The agreement established a new jurisdiction called the Mutasarrifate. The arrangement established the area of Mount Lebanon with a foreign European appointed Christian governor. Under the agreement, European powers were allowed to intervene and appoint new governors at will. The pretext behind the Mutasarrifate was to stop the intense fighting that had been killing numerous citizens; in reality it gave the colonial powers greater control of the area. The collection of taxes and fiscal accountability was now handled by these European appointed governors.\footnote{Charles Winslow, \textit{Lebanon War & Politics In A Fragmented Society}, 41.}

The governor and local leaders would choose a controller over each district, and their agreement divided the area into six districts. Some of the larger and more populated districts were broken down further into mini-districts and then even further into smaller sections where the religious representatives were in direct control. This established system matured into the religious representation that has remained in the political system of present-day Lebanon.\footnote{Ibid.}

Although European interventions were present in the political affairs of Lebanon before World War I, it was not until after WWI that they had a direct impact on Lebanon. There were secret meetings during WWI which mapped out the dividing of the Ottoman Empire between the allies. France, Britain and Russia were the main powers behind these secret plans. This plan later became known as the Sykes-Picot
agreement. The agreement was named after Sir Mark Sykes of Britain and Georges Picot of France. This agreement was made in secret despite the formal promises by Britain and France to the Arabs that they will give them self-rule if they sided with them during the war. Instead, the secret agreement provided that the colonial powers will take over and rule directly the Arab lands. The agreement created new countries in the near east and drew their frontiers. Syria and Lebanon were given over to France while England took over Jordan, Palestine and Iraq. The agreement placed Lebanon under the military control of France, and reneged on any previous promises to yield administration of the land to the Arabs. The Arabs were not only left out of the secret meetings, but they were also left out of the distribution of the land.

The division of the land was not Arab inspired; rather it was in the interests of the European powers. Despite European powers attempts at land distribution conflicting interests among the various sects involved pose an unresolved problem even today, but the Maronites were also involved in the division of the land. They had heard of the promises given by the British to the Arab leaders, but they were strongly opposed to submitting to Sharif Hussen, Guardian of the Holy Places in Mecca, or to any other Arab entity. The Maronites contacted their strong ally France for help. France came prepared to back the Maronites in the secret meetings that led to the Sykes-Picot agreement. The British gave France the administration of Lebanon even
though they had promised the land and governance to the Arabs for helping the British conquer the area from the Ottomans.\textsuperscript{13}

The division of Arab land and the take-over by the colonial powers was declared a ‘liberation’ of the people. Meetings were held under the title “peace conference” to implement the new agreement. Prince Faisal attended them for he had been promised by the British to be King of Syria. However, for every trip Faisal made to try and secure his claim there, the Maronite Patriarch made one to prevent it from happening. This resulted in Faisal being proclaimed King of Syria, only to be forced out of the area days later. Britain tried to give Faisal a consolation prize by making him King of Iraq.\textsuperscript{14}

Ultimately, both Lebanon and Syria were placed under French Mandate. However, because of the protectorate, France had stronger ties with the Maronites in Lebanon than with Muslim Syria and it purposely changed the frontiers of Lebanon when the Syrians revolted against their rule. This increased the area under the control of Mount Lebanon, where the Maronites resided. In this way, the Sunni coastal towns and the Shiite areas in the south and in the Bekaa were grouped with Mount Lebanon to form the new country of Greater Lebanon under the French Mandate.

\textsuperscript{13} Charles Winslow, \textit{Lebanon War & Politics In A Fragmented Society}, 59.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 58.
Greater Lebanon comprised now additional coastal regions and other districts in addition to the already formed Mount Lebanon in 1861. It was actually not until 1923 that the League of Nations handed over Lebanon to France. The Maronites had a lot to do with this decision being made because they had such strong pro-French ties. However, increasing the territory to include the surrounding areas would eventually change the balance of power. The coastal cities had been independent for centuries. Expanding the territory of Lebanon by bringing in areas dominated by Sunni and Shiite sects and placing them under a Maronite government controlled by the French met with a massive resistance. In spite of this resistance, Greater Lebanon was officially recognized in the Lausanne Conference in 1923, which confirmed the boundaries of the territory under the Mandate.\textsuperscript{15}

The new Greater Lebanon has many different types of terrain, despite being such a small country. The mountainous region of now Greater Lebanon, known as Mount Lebanon, is populated by mostly Druze and Maronites, but the Greater Lebanon area now also included the coastal region, which is made of largely Sunni dwelling areas. The coastal region is a narrow strip down the coast of Lebanon. Each town in this region has remained in the past autonomous in its affairs and customs and somewhat segregated from other nearby towns. The farm land of the Bekaa valley was populated mostly by Shiites. The new country was however not self-sustaining because only small parts of the land were worked out and the villagers had few

\textsuperscript{15} Charles Winslow, \textit{Lebanon War & Politics In A Fragmented Society}, 62.
resources and no advanced technology. As a result, a large amount of the vegetables and meats had to be imported into Lebanon.

With multiple cultures and peoples now living in a tiny country, many issues had to be resolved. Now that Greater Lebanon existed it needed to become a sovereign and independent country. In 1936, a Franco-Lebanese treaty was signed but never ratified by the French. The treaty essentially allowed for the country to be sovereign, yet maintain close ties to France. As elections were held, the Chamber elected the new President, Bishara al-Khuri and the Prime Minister, Riyad al-Sulh. Al-Khuri and al-Sulh wanted to initiate constitutional changes that would permanently eliminate French control. France would not leave without a fight and began to protest the idea of the loss of control over the area. The French began arresting government officials and the British had to intervene.

Eventually, however, Lebanon was given independence from France. By 1945, the French and British troops had left the area of Lebanon. France had created the Lebanese political system and established a constitution on the basis of French law in 1926, but the newly forming Lebanese political structure had to take account of the social structure of the region and it had to be amended several times to adapt to the diverse population.

This Constitution remains the formal law of the country today. It established procedures for an appointed cabinet, an elected Chamber of Deputies, and a President
elected by the Chamber of Deputies. It also launched the first cabinet of many to follow. The Constitution was drafted to address the multitude of communities and to give all representation in public offices. The Constitutional framework was a parliamentary system with representation determined by religious affiliation according to the US embassy in Lebanon.

The Constitution provides that Christians and Muslims be represented equally in Parliament, the Cabinet, and high-level civil service positions, which include the ministry ranks of Secretary General and Director General. It also provides that these posts be distributed proportionally among the recognized religious groups. The constitutional provision for the distribution of political power and positions according to the principle of religious representation is designed to prevent a dominant position being gained by any one confessional group.16

The Constitution’s main contribution was the formal inclusion of confessional interests into Lebanese politics. It ensures the protection of the Maronites from a Muslim majority by having the religious representation determined by a set ratio of 6 Christians to 5 Muslims. The legislative branch was held by parliament, known as the National Assembly. The Assembly had to represent the 6 to 5 ratio of Christians to Muslims, and thus always be a collective group divisible by eleven. This affected not only the political parliamentary system but the 6/5 ratio was also used in the administration and all sectors of the government. The president had a six year term and was elected by the Chamber of Deputies, who had a four year term. There would

be no re-election after the president served his six year term. The President had the executive power and formed the cabinet that was to be religiously balanced along the established 6/5 ratio. The prime minister was chosen by the president.

Although the cabinet and the prime minister do have some executive powers, however they are not able to conduct policies without the approval of the president. Moreover, the president himself was the one who designated the ministers and chose the prime minister. The role of the Cabinet was designed to be a balanced religious representation that would check the executive powers of the President, but in fact there was such great internal dissension in the cabinet, that foreign involvement and intervention were constant. There was no real unity in the cabinet and no agreement on any important matter, and therefore no real government could be achieved.

There was also a local administration established to maintain order at the regional level. The Greater Lebanon was divided into governorates, or muhafazat. These muhafazats included: Beirut, Jabal Lubnan, ash-Shamal, al-Junub, al-Bekaa and an-Nabatiyah. The muhafazat was administered by a governor, or muhafiz. The muhafiz was the central government representative and was helped by a district chief, or qa’im-maqam. The district chiefs were in charge of their divided districts within the muhafazat. Each community would elect their own councils, and the council members elected its leaders. These leaders controlled their local area and served for four year terms.
Religious representation among all branches of government and public office was designed to balance the various religious identities living in the newly established Greater Lebanon. Each sect had its own set of beliefs and principles, making unification impossible. Only the largest religious sects were represented in the high ranking positions within the government, even though there were numerous other sects existing within the borders of Greater Lebanon. The represented sects included the Druze, the Maronites, the Sunnis, the Shiite, the Greek Orthodox, the Greek Catholics, and the Armenians.

Although the newly formed country was trying to balance the religious communities in order to achieve stability, many internal and external issues would arise to test the foundation of this nation-state. Such issues could not be resolved within the framework of the power-sharing structure without further compromises and deals. Eventually, even the compromises were not enough and the structural imbalances would lead Lebanon to times of great turmoil.
CHAPTER 2

THE FAILURE OF THE NATIONAL PACT

Co-existence amongst differing beliefs, cultures and ideologies can be challenging, even in the best circumstances. Not only is Lebanon positioned on a hotbed of contentious internal activity, but it is also affected by varying loyalties to outside influences. The political system was set up with the three largest religious sects represented, each with its respective political position. This was conducted on the basis of an unwritten pact, called the National Pact, and was promoted by France to secure Maronite leadership.

The governance of the state, revealed in the content of the National Pact, was given in an inaugural address to the Chamber of Deputies on the 21st of September 1943. This verbal agreement was an attempt to distribute power proportionally based on the numerical weight of each sect. It maintained that the president would be a Maronite, the prime minister, a Sunni, and the speaker, a Shiite. It outlined the representation of the communities and detailed the power structure of the state.¹ The National Pact was designed to give direction and stability to an environment in which co-existence could flourish. Instead, it turned out to be an elite arrangement of power sharing that never reached the masses or brought about the desired functional unity in Lebanon.

¹ D. Stoten, A State Without A Nation (Durham: University of Durham, 1992), 8.
The Maronite’s real power came from the fact that they controlled the presidency, which held most of the executive powers, as well as the leadership of the army. Abul-Husn explains the executive power given the Maronite president:

The constitution gave a large measure of authority to the chief executive, who was designated by the 1943 National Pact to be a Maronite. Article 18 gave the president the power to propose legislation, Article 57 enabled him to veto legislation, Article 76 authorized him to propose amendments to the constitution, and Article 53 permitted him to appoint and dismiss the prime minister and any other minister as well.²

The Maronites’ method of control was also based on the practice of using the traditional elite of each sect against the interests of the others by providing them with political and economic opportunities. This gave them overwhelming influence with executive decisions and weakened popular opposition. The office of the president was given to important Maronite families, while the office of prime minister has mostly been held by four prominent Sunni families, namely the al-Sulh, Karami, Yafi and Salam families.³

Foreign policy was the other main topic outlined in the National Pact, which declared Lebanon to be an independent nation. It provided that, though Lebanon would be part of the Arab world, it would be free from any Arab state intervention and


it would not align itself with any Arab nation. Rather, Lebanon would maintain its particular unique character, which involved special relations with the Western world and Western civilization. Although the claimed intention was to free Lebanon from any outside influence, whether Western or Arab, the special relations with the West was to be maintained according to the National Pact.

Although independence from the French had now become a reality, the Maronite elite heavily relied on them in the face of the sharp divisions that soon appeared between the Christians and the Muslims concerning Lebanon’s foreign policy. A desire to be tied to the rest of the Arab world was in the hearts of most Muslims. That is because the whole area had all been under Muslim rule ever since the spread of Islam in the Near East and the boundaries that were drawn by the colonialists did not represent the social reality there: the people who lived in the area were linked through ancestry, history, language, religion and heavy intermarriage. There was natural identification of the part of the Muslims with the rest of the Arab Muslim world. The Christians, though, wanted to remain attached to the Western world. The content of the National Pact actually declared a vague and contradictory foreign policy, and claimed Lebanon to be an entirely independent and unique nation-state.

The National Pact provided that Lebanon’s declared foreign policy would have an Arab face and that Lebanon’s official language would be Arabic. However, although it would be part of the Arab world, it had its own particular characteristics—-
except that these were never specifically described. The foreign policy of the National Pact provided that, as an independent republic, Lebanon should cooperate with all Arab states and actually become a member of the Arab community. However, all the while, Lebanon should never attempt to side with one party over another. Despite the Arab identity it proclaimed, the Pact maintained that culturally and spiritually it was tied with the Western world. This was due largely because of Western contributions to Lebanon’s creation, as well as a Maronite desire for Western ties.4

The goal of the National Pact was to give rights to all religious groups and provide for power sharing among all. However, most religious groups within Lebanon were not even consulted as to how this new power sharing policy should develop. Although there were good intentions rooted within the National Pact, many problems developed as a result and were not easily resolved. These problems arose in all areas of life: social, economical and political. One of the main issues was that it was based on the assumption of Christian majority, which was challenged by the other religious groups.

The demographics represented by the National Pact’s repartition of political office were based on the country’s only census, which was conducted in 1932. Another census has never been conducted, as it might have upset the elite’s political privileges and so it was only normal that problems over power sharing would start and

4 Latif Abul-Husn, The Lebanese Conflict Looking Inward, 24-25.
continue to mount. The 1932 Census defined the demographics of the area in political representation at the time, but did not represent the changing dynamics of the state. Several factors have affected the population, making it difficult to adequately reevaluate the demographic changes. Christians have emigrated at a much higher rate than any other sect, while the birthrate among the Shiites is by far greater than most other groups.\textsuperscript{5} As a result, hostility mounted amongst many sects toward the political structure of the state as they lacked adequate representation.

The set up of the political system in Lebanon resulted in intra-communal tension that affected every sect. Moreover representation was limited to the elite in each sect; traditional tribal leadership meant that in every area, there would be political competition between two major families over the leadership of the local sect and political office. The election winner would obtain resources and jobs to dispense, which inevitably reinforced their power and influence within their sect. Each community saw their leaders fighting their own co-religionists to gain access to the resources and influence that came with political power. The main focus of many of the politicians was just to get the votes and then pay the supporters with the acquired resources and jobs.

In this way, the control of the economic system became linked with political power. A system developed in which businessmen influenced the policy makers by

\footnote{Kamal Salibi, \textit{Lebanon and The Middle Eastern Question} (Oxford: Center for Lebanese Studies, 1988), 6.}
providing resources that helped the politicians get into office, and these politicians would in turn provide special economic deals and favors to their own followers. After a while, this led to an unbalanced distribution of resources, which led to dissatisfaction with the political system amongst a large number of Muslims.

Since there were a select group of families that controlled the resources and business development, there was an increase in monopolies and oligopolies in the 1960’s. The increase of this type of control dramatically limited the opportunities for the middle class, which at the time constituted the majority in the cities. The outlying areas of the cities and the countryside were mostly populated by the poor, who were finding it virtually impossible to find employment. Especially since the few families who controlled the economy and the state also acquired most of the agricultural land. The oligopolies, producing sugar, poultry, textiles and building materials, refused to allow other factories to open, which further limited the number of jobs available to the people.

After World War II, Lebanon emerged with an economy rooted mostly in service and trade. The money that came into Lebanon increased during the war, but it mostly remained within the private sector because taxes were not being enforced properly. The lack of production made the country dependent on imports, which were soon taken over by monopolies set up as exclusive agencies. The economy was run by
families that were only interested in realizing profit, so that there was neither an economic plan nor an attempt to redistribute wealth and establish welfare policies.

This emphasis on gaining profits only made an existing economic gap worse. The private sector tended to be controlled by select Sunni and Christian families. Because of the take-over by political families of the important businesses in the country, these families tended to congregate and live in or near Beirut, which allowed for the development of Beirut while the other cities lagged behind.

However, the capital city had also its share of economic decline among the middle class and the poor as inflation mounted and jobs disappeared because of the economic abuses of the elite. However, the rest of the country was generally much worse off than the capital city. Agriculture began to replace people with machines in order to increase profit margins. This emphasis on profits hindered a number of farmers in other ways too. New policies were set by the banks that were giving out guaranteed loans to those willing to invest in agriculture. In order to obtain these loans, an applicant would have to meet a set of regulations which actually prevented non landowning farmers from obtaining any such loans. The farmers were unable to succeed in the changing environment. The banks’ complicated procedures used to gain these guaranteed loans allowed the notables to become the major landowners and to control the agricultural sector.
The land-owning notables soon began to force the small time farmers off the land; usually Shiites living in the Bekaa valley and in the south. The poor and often uneducated Shiite Muslims migrated to the Beirut suburbs in search of non-existent jobs. The out-lying areas of Beirut, especially to the south, became slums that lacked water, electricity, roads and telephone services. As will be seen later, this area was further affected by the presence of poor Palestinian refugees and, moreover, by constant bombing from Israel, who was trying to rid the area from an increasingly militarized Palestinian presence.

The Shiites who did migrate ended up in a suburb of Beirut that became known as the “Belt of Misery.” The increased migration led to increase in real estate prices, which affected also middle and lower class citizens. Inflation jumped, leaving the masses unable to survive within the normal confines of the society. As the masses grew dissatisfied, attempts for change became the norm. The desire for social change manifested itself into new political ideologies, namely Nasserism and Communism.

Nasserism was named after Gamal Abdel Nasser, the popular President of Egypt who had led a revolution against the royal family there and implemented socialism. The Nasserists in Lebanon adopted Nasser’s political program which was based on Arab Nationalism, socialism and enmity to Israel. As a result, the Nasserists were intent on tearing down the old system of governance that the National Pact had fostered. This ideology attracted mostly disgruntled Sunnis because it challenged the
Maronite lordship and sought the unification of the Pan-Arab Sunni community. It also fostered the involvement of other Arab Nationalist parties from the rest of the Arab world. This involvement continually influenced the balance within Lebanon and impacted the stability of the nation state. Christians were naturally unwilling to give up their political supremacy but by the end of the 1960’s, the ideology of Nasserism posed a serious threat to Maronite control.

Communism, on the other hand, became popular among the Shiites and poor Maronites because it followed a non-sectarian approach to development. The Shiites could relate to the idea of Communism because it spread wealth and resources equally, as they were the poorest segment of the population, partly because of the National Pact which gave them the least representation and partly because the local sect’s elite helped keep the Shiite population in poverty. The poor Maronites and the Christians from the other Christian sects who were not represented in politics could relate to it because it did not involve Arab Muslim Nationalism.

Although Lebanon was an independent and sovereign republic, unattached to any other state, the term nationalism meant an entirely different thing to each and every sect and ethnic grouping within Lebanon. These differences could be generally categorized into two greater ideological camps, which were built on the sectarian identity that the National Pact reinforced. These two ideological camps can be

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6 D. Stoten, A State Without A Nation, 41.
primarily broken down into Christian nationalists and Arab nationalists. The Christian nationalists wanted a country with a Christian majority and leadership and they relied heavily upon a Western European approach in their policies, which could be described as a capitalistic tendency. The goal of the Christian supremacists was to remain in a position that enabled them to control economic and military decisions. This group largely consisted of Maronites.

The Arab nationalists, or Nasserites, consisted generally of Muslims and Palestinians. Unlike its capitalistic counterpart, this group had a tendency to lean more toward socialism. The Arab nationalists drew from the concept of *Umma*, or Islamic community, which was a single organic entity subordinate to God. Nasserism, which developed in the 1960’s, evolved into Arab nationalism with a focus on socialist economic development. The rise of Nasserism paved the way for the Muslims to reassert their power in the face of the predominantly Christian leadership. This influential ideological camp became a force with a direction that was contrary to the goals of the National Pact.

Nasserism was a unifying ideology that attracted the Sunnis and the Druze, and it provided them with a political program and direction in a time riddled with deep division, and it focused on the rejection of the National Pact. The imbalance of the political distribution and economic resources was now being seen through an ideology
based ultimately on the sectarian identity which pitted Muslims against Christians. This sectarian identity became the actual motivating force behind the civil war.

The political problems that Lebanon faced were numerous. Cabinet members were changed too frequently to be effective agents for their sect, and they were being used as pawns against each other by the executive power of the President. Moreover, the rise of Nasserism and other ideology based politics made it increasingly difficult for the traditional elite to buy their way into office. Along with the intense rivalry, corruption in the political realm was a widespread regular practice, and included such things as bribery for votes. The electoral laws did not keep up with the changing environment. Thus, for example, the Shiites who moved to the suburbs of Beirut were unable to vote and were thereby unrepresented in office.\footnote{D. Stoten, \textit{A State Without A Nation}, 84.} Political corruption in Lebanon had become a common practice and involved a variety of methods such as counting the votes of those who had died, misinforming people about the elections and even paying for votes.

The political system was therefore failing in ways other than the general imbalance provided by the sectarian distribution of power. There was no adequate functioning state in place to provide for the needs of the people. Allowing the mingling of the private sector and the political process also affected the justice system. Misconduct by the politicians was never challenged in court and it seemed as if they
were not held to the same laws as the rest of the society. This led to gross misconduct and corruption at the highest levels of operation. The wealthy and powerful were exempt from the same stipulations that applied to the masses.

Frustration over the injustices that were taking place would probably not have resulted in civil war if there had been an adequate state army to hold the peace. The state army was ineffective at diffusing tensions, which made outside intervention necessary to stabilize the country. The army was supposed to represent all of the population according to the National Pact, but in fact it was segregated and would eventually fall apart along religious lines. A state without an army cannot enforce its rule. Amine Gemayel, a Maronite, who headed the Kataeb party, or Phalange, and was President of Lebanon after his brother’s assassination in the early 1980’s said as follows:

One of the assumptions we made was that Lebanon’s weakness is its strength. The Lebanese believed that the creation of a strong army would be seen as a threat by others. The absence of such an army would be an earnest of our dedication toward peace, it was believed, guaranteeing that we would remain outside regional hostilities. This philosophy left us unprepared, unequipped and unable to deal with the anomic forces that exploded in Lebanon in the early 1970’s. ⁸

There was no hiding the fact that Lebanon did not possess a real army, and that could only lead eventually to chaos.

At first, some minimal compromises were made on certain policies and procedures to prevent the outbreak of civil disputes. Yet, the policies that had formed under the National Pact did not stimulate the progress toward a healthy developing country as intended. National unity, which was the main goal of the National Pact, rested solely on the assumption that each side had given up their loyalty to outside powers in order to pursue the progress of an independent and sovereign state. The loyalty to Lebanon was supposed to supersede the loyalty to any other outside force. The National Pact intended to promote loyalty to the country as a whole, not to narrow confessional identity, which nevertheless is exactly what happened because of the sectarian nature of the Pact.
CHAPTER 3
CIVIL WAR AND THE TA’IF AGREEMENT

The outbreak of the civil war developed from a number of internal and external circumstances. Internally, the population’s frustrations with the economic, social and political injustices were mounting. These frustrations became part of an ideology of resistance to the state, which started affecting the political scene and instilled fear in the Maronite powerbase. While the co-existence in the multi-ethnic society remained in a fragile state, outside factors penetrated into the very fabric of Lebanon, disrupting the delicate balance and precipitating the civil war.

The flood of Palestinian refugees into the country started with the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. Palestinians living in the new Israeli claimed area fled to the neighboring countries of Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. In 1967, the six day war, in which Israel gained a large amount of land, increased the number of refugees within each of these countries. This war was fought with Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. Lebanon was the only country bordering Israel that did not get directly involved in the war or lose any territory. The main reason for this was Lebanon’s lack of military capabilities. Although Lebanon refrained from joining the war, there were within
Lebanon demonstrations from the Muslim masses over the lack of aid for their Arab neighbors.¹

By 1970, Lebanon had received an overwhelming amount of Palestinians, creating a new demographic within the confessional based country. The PLO was founded by the Arab states in a summit meeting in Cairo, which declared a goal of liberating Palestine through armed struggle. In 1970, the PLO had staged a revolt against the Jordanian government which resulted in the PLO being driven out and fleeing into Lebanon and Syria. Now there was not only vast numbers of Palestinian refugees, but also an armed group determined to fight to regain its homeland, which increased the tension within the tiny country of Lebanon. The Maronites feared losing their powerbase because most of the Palestinians were of Sunni origin. The increased threat of Israeli retaliation against the Palestinians also caused fear within Lebanon.

The Palestinian issue was the main external factor disrupting the country and leading it into war. The Palestinian presence in Lebanon exasperated the problems of co-existence within Lebanon in a dramatic way. They created their own mini state within Lebanon that was constantly under attack by Israel. The years leading up to the civil war reveal the large impact the Palestinians had upon Lebanon’s own civil war.

By the end of the 1960’s Israel had become a permanent presence in Lebanon, which caused a cycle of violence that continued for years. Examples of Israel’s excessive force are numerous. One instance that took place before the war was in December of 1968 when Israeli helicopters blew up 13 passenger jets of Lebanon’s national airline carrier, Middle East Airlines. The Lebanese army was helpless and could deal neither with the Israeli threat nor the Palestinian disruptions. It is as if Israeli leadership were saying, handle the Palestinians, or we will.

Israel was constantly disrupting the delicate balance of operations within Lebanon as they tried to serve their own purpose and drive out the Palestinians permanently. It was not long after the mass migration of Palestinians to Lebanon that the Israelis started violating Lebanese territory to rid it of its new “problem.” The constant bombardment and violation of air space created an unstable border, which instilled fear in the southern residents. Thousands of people were uprooted, predominately Shiites, who made their way to safer ground. The Lebanese government was powerless and could not counter Israel’s raids and assassinations.

The Palestinian issue polarized the Lebanese debate. Both Christians and Muslims were against the presence of the Palestinians. Amending the citizenship laws in order to allow for the integration of Palestinian refugees would mean drastically disrupting the demographic balance the country was founded on. The Muslims denied

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2 David Hirst, Beware of Small States: Lebanon, Battleground of the Middle East (New York: Nation Books, 2010), 93.
the Palestinians legal assimilation on the basis that it would counter to the main goal of preserving the right of return to their Palestine homeland. The Christians were wary of any Palestinian military presence because they feared they would be unable to subdue them. With 400,000 Palestinians within Lebanon and 95% of them Sunni Muslims, the Palestinian problem remained unresolved.

In the face of these problems, the Lebanese government resorted to the shadowy Lebanese military intelligence group, the Deuxieme Bureau, which had been set up by President Shihab to try to bypass the gridlock sectarian politics tended to create. The Deuxieme Bureau was a way for Shihab to include the army into his own core political group and use it against his political foes. Yet, the Palestinians were not under the army’s supervision and their camps were practically independent of the state. The Bureau tried on their own to handle the issue by entering into the camps to subdue the unruly Palestinians, but they were taken hostage instead.

There were differing opinions within the Lebanese government on how to gain control of the Palestinian situation. The Muslim prime minister supported the guerrilla attacks against Israel, while the Christian president wanted to disarm Palestinians and establish military control over the refugee camps. This internal dilemma resulted in a need for outside intervention. On November 2, 1969, Yasir Arafat, head of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Lebanese Army commander met in Egypt.

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with Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser who as the promoter of Arab Nationalism, wanted to advance and protect the Palestinian cause. They set out to determine how the Palestinian resistance would be regulated in Lebanon, as it was causing the country great turmoil. This agreement declared the Palestinians’ right to conduct their own affairs within their refugee camps and continue resistance operations against Israel, but they had to remain under Lebanese control outside their refugee camps. The enactment of the Cairo Agreement meant to stabilize the growing clashes occurring within Lebanon. The Cairo Agreement was an attempt to prevent a civil war from breaking out, but it nonetheless happened five years later.\footnote{David Hirst, Beware of Small States, 97.}

The Cairo Agreement, first and foremost, allowed for the justification of continued force by Israel inside Lebanon. It also changed the mood within Lebanon. The ever increasing radicalization of the Palestinians caused frequent clashes, which occurred mostly with the Maronite political group, the Phalange. The Phalange known as Kataeb in Arabic was founded by Pierre Gemayel as a political party in 1936, but now they started forming a militia in the face of the Palestinian threat. It was a conservative party that sought to uphold Maronite domination. These outbreaks led to mounting fear in an already tense environment and the clashes would polarize Christians and Muslims and bring about catastrophe.
The Cairo agreement’s attempt at stabilizing the country was also hindered drastically by Israel’s constant use of force against the Palestinians in Lebanon. Although the Palestinians were directly involved in the civil conflict, many other aspects to the civil war need to be addressed. A growing fear of Maronite control was being felt, especially by the Sunnis. The Sunni’s lack of representation was increasingly felt by the people and the Sunni elite that held political office in association with the Maronites was not able to exert control over its own communities. The Sunni masses in the large towns of Tripoli, Sidon and Beirut were increasingly swayed by independent leaders grabbing a hold of Nasser’s ideology. During the civil war there was certainly a sectarian side to the fighting, but there was also a struggle between city and state, which complicated matters further.\(^5\)

During the civil war there was also a breakdown in the balance of the government branches due, in part, to the sectarian side of the fighting. The three main branches of government were the Christian presidency, the council of ministers headed by a Sunni and the chamber of deputies, or parliament, headed by a Shiite. However, because they were all divided by sectarian ratios, they were unable to agree on policies and the government proved ineffective as the fighting continued.

The sectarian side of the fighting, however, was not the only aspect of the conflict. There were social and economic inequalities, which led to the adoption of

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leftist ideologies and the problem with Israel was seen as the continuation of
colonialism, which led to a rise in Arab Nationalism. Ideology played an ever
increasing role within Lebanon’s brutal civil war. The lack of a unified foreign policy
and the differences over which role the Lebanese were to play in the region contributed
to the unrest and the fighting. There were many different interpretations of Lebanon’s
role in the region concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Palestinian movement, and
Lebanon’s relationship to Syria. The National Pact and the Arab character of Lebanon
were viewed very differently by each group.

The Arab character of Lebanon was seen by the majority of Lebanese
Christians as being restricted to geography, linguistics, and culture. It was never seen
as having a political voice, though they did not mind becoming active in the Arab
League. The Muslims, on the other hand, felt differently and on the three pressing
issues of Israel, the Palestinians and Syria, their loyalties clashed. Some Muslims felt
they should join with the other Arab countries and fight their share of the battles with
Israel as they felt the Palestinians should not be fighting alone. They backed the
Palestinians’ right to fight Israel from Lebanon. Lebanon’s relationship with Syria was
seen a very strategic relationship, and they wanted to strengthen it. Some authors,
however, have questioned the reason for this loyalty and believe that in fact, the
various Muslim groups felt it necessary to join forces with Syria only when it specifically benefited their particular interests.\textsuperscript{6}

The national army also suffered severely. It was too sectarian to be effective. Thus, the government was reluctant to use the army to control any of the outbursts developing across the country. There was a central administration of political power, centered in and around Beirut, dominated by the Maronites. The Maronites distributed the high ranking positions within the army to other Maronites. This created an increasing problem as the fighting spread along sectarian lines.\textsuperscript{7}

Multiple parties within Lebanon were involved in the internal conflict during the civil war, which lasted from 1975 to 1990. Many different clashes developed in those fifteen years shaping the course of the war. Although the civil war consisted of many different conflicts, the most important one was the fight between two main political groups. These two main opponents at the onset of the civil war were the Lebanese Front and the Lebanese National Movement.

The Lebanese Front was considered the status quo group because it sought to maintain the political order set forth by the National Pact. It consisted of the various Maronite political groups. It was led by Maronite Bashir Gemayel, who was a new


\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 72.
force in the Maronite community. He was the son of Pierre Gemayel and he took over the Phalange party and militia. His attempts to deal with the Palestinian issue went strictly by military means. He sought security before reform through the suppression of the Palestinians.

The Lebanese National Movement was thought of as the reformists. Its leadership rested on Kamal Jumblatt, who was a strong personality for the Druze. They wanted reform before anything else, and their desire was for the abolition of sectarianism. Their main goal was to eliminate any Maronite supremacy in the country. The National Movement included a variety of parties that only agreed on a handful of items, such as the abolishment of sectarianism within the bureaucracy and military. Although its leader was a Druze, with Pan-Arab Nationalist leanings, it consisted of a variety of ideological groups such as the communists, the Nasserists, and the Baath party and it held a Sunni majority.

There were also intra-communal conflicts which developed within the sects, as well as ideological conflicts and ethnic conflicts. With the rise of clashes occurring and the inability of the state to manage any of them, chaos slowly took hold. Under pressure, the government began dismantling the Deuxieme Bureau, which had been used to neutralize any of the radical opposition and had led the Lebanese masses to rise up against the state army. The dismantling of the Deuxieme Bureau was considered,

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by the Maronites, as a concession in the face of the frustration developing over excessive Maronite control. This move, however, only allowed the armed militias to become even stronger.

There were now many militias forming, and each usually had a foreign sponsor that further fragmented an already divided society. Among the Christians, each major traditional elite formed its own tribal militia. There were the Phalange led by Bashir Gemayel, the Marada Brigades that protected the Franjieh family, the South Lebanon Army led by Saad Haddad and the Tigers led by former Lebanese President Camille Chamoun. The Sunnis, who were helped by Libya and Iraq, and mostly followed Nasserist or Pan-Arab ideologies, generally did not form militias. Murabitun was a Sunni militia that was mostly ineffective and relatively small in comparison; it was quickly defeated during the civil war. There were also small religious Sunni groups that took up arms, like the Tawhid Movement, but they played no role in the civil war.

The Druze were united behind the Progressive Socialist Party, led by the Jumblatt family. Druze and Sunnis were also part of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, which advocated unification with Syria. There were also non-religious militias, like the two Baath parties, one pro-Iraqi led by Dr. Abdul-Majeed Al-Rafei a Sunni and the other led by a Greek Orthodox Christian, Nicola Y. Ferzli. The Palestinians had their own militias. The Palestinian Liberation Organization led by Yassir Arafat, had a militia called Fatah. There were also the Popular Front for the Liberation of
Palestine and a splinter group called the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The Shiites would later on form their own militias, Amal and Hezbollah.

These groups were the actors of the civil war, which began in the early part of 1975. January had seen Israeli raids in the south, where the incapable Lebanese army remained uninvolved. However, it did get involved in a civil incident in the predominately Sunni town of Sidon. On February 26\textsuperscript{th} 1975, a social protest was held against the Protein Company, which was part owned and operated by Camille Chamoun, an influential Maronite and President of Lebanon from 1952 to 1958. The company was perceived by the local fisherman to be destroying their livelihood, as the fishing industry was the main livelihood of many Sunnis in this area. This new corporation was using machines to fish the waters thereby depleting the waters of fish for local fisherman.\footnote{D. Stoten, \textit{A State Without A Nation}, 48.}

Maarouf Saad, who was a popular Nasserist deputy in Sidon, was shot in a quarrel which involving the army, which had been deployed to monitor the protest demonstration. His killing caused the conflict perceived by many as the poor Muslims versus the rich Christians to become an even greater conflict.\footnote{Charles Winslow, \textit{Lebanon War & Politics In A Fragmented Society} (London: Routledge, 1996), 180.} Protest strikes started all over Lebanon as the Sunni communities blamed the predominately Maronite police...
for injustice. The army at this time was predominately under the control of the Maronite president, and he had the ability to use it in protecting his own interests. The Sunnis, whose frustrations were mounting, protested with strikes.

As conflicts broke out across the country, the Palestinian militias made their way into the conflict. On April 13th, 1975, two unidentified men in a passenger car killed four Phalange militiamen and a body guard of Pierre Gemayel. The attempted assassination created a violent response and a bus with a number of Palestinians going to a refugee camp at Tel al-Zaatar was ambushed. Twenty seven Palestinians were killed, including women and children, in the Phalangist retaliation.\(^\text{11}\) Although the assassination attempts on Pierre Gemayel were carried by unidentified men, the slaughter of innocent Palestinians on their way back to the refugee camp was justified by the Phalangists as a response to previous incidents and attacks.

The civil war that resulted affected every aspect of Lebanese life: socially, economically, and politically. A political attempt to restore order was initiated by the government. A National Dialogue Committee was formed, which met from the end of September to November 1975. However, the increased fighting nullified any attempts at peace. In December 1975, a conflict arose in Beirut on a day that would forever be known as Black Saturday. The conflict started as a local fight but Phalangist militiamen went on a killing spree using roadblocks, stopping passers-by and killing

\[^{11}\text{Kamal Salibi, Crossroads to Civil War: Lebanon 1958-1976 (New York: Caravan, 1976), 97.}\]
them if their identity card showed them to be of Muslim or Druze faith. They claimed this was to try to regain security. More than two hundred were killed. The use of roadblocks and identity card killings became a daily reality in Lebanon. Muslim leftists, who were Palestinian sympathizers, responded to this “security” measure by overtaking three major hotels in downtown Beirut which the Phalange frequented and where they conducted business. This action by the Muslim leftists led to a retaliation that is best termed “ethnic cleansing” of the slums in which thousands of Shiites and Palestinians died at the hands of militant Phalange militiamen.¹²

In January 1976, in East Beirut near the port of Karantina, the Phalange militia attacked Palestinian refugee camps and Lebanese slums that harbored communist elements. Four hundred Palestinians and one hundred Muslims died. Off the coast of the Shouf in Damour-Jieh that same month, the Palestinians retaliated by attacking Chamounists fighters, the Christian Tiger militia; 500 Christians and 50 Palestinians died.

To save the country from chaos, President Frangieh proposed the ‘Constitutional Document,’ which was essentially a modification of the National Pact. On February 14, 1976 this ‘Constitutional Document’ was approved by most politicians because it gave Muslims an equal 5/5 representation, even though Maronite dominance remained intact. However, the leftists groups who wanted structural

¹² David Hirst, Beware of Small States, 111.
change in the country and an angered Sunni general, who was continually overlooked for promotion by Maronites, rejected this ‘Constitutional Document.’ They started the Lebanese Arab Army, which was joined by many and which dismantled once and for all the national army.\textsuperscript{13}

This action eliminated any hope for resolution. The president was now being pressured by the Sunnis to resign. On March 23\textsuperscript{rd} 1976, Jumblatt’s forces attacked the presidential palace. With pressure for resignation mounting from the Chamber of Deputies, the president agreed to hold presidential elections before the month of August when they were supposed to be held.\textsuperscript{14}

The early elections resulted in the election of Elias Sarkis who indeed received the majority of votes. He was not a traditional candidate in Lebanese politics and was strongly associated with Syrian interests. He was seen by Muslims as the only Maronite candidate with Muslim links. It was with Sarkis that Syria’s intervention began. Syria played a large role in the conflict as the fighting persisted. Not only was Syria in close proximity to Lebanon, but it had long standing historical ties to Lebanon. Both countries gained their independence at around the same time, but they developed extremely different foreign policies. As the years went on Syria played a leading role in the conflict resolution within Lebanon.

\textsuperscript{13} David Hirst, \textit{Beware of Small States}, 112.

\textsuperscript{14} D. Stoten, \textit{A State Without A Nation}, 59-60.
In May of 1976, Syria sent troops to Lebanon at the request of President Frangieh to help the Lebanese Front.\textsuperscript{15} Syria’s intentions were questioned by many at the time. They were intervening on behalf of the predominately Maronite group in order to get rid of the Palestinian radicals taking over parts of Lebanon, as they had tried some time earlier in Jordan. By June, the Arab League was meeting in Cairo to discuss Syrian intervention. Syria had always been considered to be the ally of the Muslim left, but Syria opposed the left’s tactics, which refused any compromise with the Maronites. Their help allowed the Maronite militias to regroup and escape defeat, but that led the militias to attack indiscriminately their Palestinian and Muslim enemies. Thousands died as sieges were made on the slums and camps of Tal al-Za’atar at the hand of Christian militias.\textsuperscript{16}

It was in September of 1976 that Elias Sarkis assumed the presidency. Proposal talks began, and at the request of the Arab League, an ‘Arab Deterrent Force’ was sent to try to instill peace. However, of the 30,000 troops, 22,000 were Syrian, which simply justified their presence within Lebanon. The problem with sending 30,000 troops to Lebanon lay in the fragile pan-Arab cooperation required to successfully establish peace; it was therefore necessary to cooperate with Syria.


intervening Arab countries also had their own interests that further complicated matters, but because of the numbers and its close relation to many parties in Lebanon, Syria was the most influential.

Syria’s continued presence almost completely wiped out the power of the Lebanese National Movement, and it left at first the Lebanese Front in a dominant position. With the assassination of Kamal Jumblatt in 1977, who was the dominant leader of the Muslim leftists, the tables turned, and Syria would eventually turn on the Christian militias. Syria’s motives was not to allow any party to dominate over all others in Lebanon.

However, on March 11, 1978, Palestinians infiltrated Israel and killed 37 Israelis. The Israeli retaliation, called Operation Litani, was named after the river that marked the Israeli invasion. Three days after the Palestinian attack, Israel invaded the Litani River and destroyed military structures. This resulted in two thousand Lebanese casualties, mostly Shiite, with only four hundred Palestinians dead. Crops in the south were destroyed and a mass migration occurred. Syria never stood up against Israel. Yet, Israel failed to destroy the Palestinians. The United Nations issued UN Security Council Resolution 245 demanding that Israel withdraws and establishes a UN peacekeeping force in south Lebanon. Israel withdrew after establishing in the

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17 D. Stoten, A State Without A Nation, 69.
south a Christian militia, the South Lebanon Army under the leadership of Major Saad Haddad.

As Israel withdrew, the Maronite militias fell into a struggle for power against each other. East Beirut was mostly controlled by Bashir Gemayel and his Lebanese Front, but Camille Chamoun had some control over the area as well. The Phalanges ambushed Chamoun’s forces and massacred them along with their relatives. Then in June 1978, they attacked Frangieh’s residence, killing Tony Frangieh, his wife and their child. In this way, Bashir Gemayel emerged as the sole Christian militia leader.

This led to a change in Syrian policy. After crushing Palestinian sympathizers, Syria’s efforts were now directed toward the control of the overly powerful Christian leadership. In July 1978, Christian militias were attacked by Syrian forces. This however was not anymore in the interest of Israel who was counting on the Maronites to fight the Palestinians and it started planning a full scale invasion of Lebanon.

Israel went on punishing the Lebanese for any Palestinian presence still remaining. The bombing of a PLO headquarters in the Fakhani neighborhood took place on a Friday during rush hour and more Lebanese died than Palestinians. Six hundred civilian deaths were cited in one single air raid. Finally, in June of 1982, Israel invaded southern Lebanon and set a siege to Beirut. They went with extreme

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force into Lebanon; armed with ninety thousand men and thirteen hundred tanks. This was twice the size of the army that had crushed the Egyptian army. The Israelis were up against the Palestinians and their allies, who numbered around ten to fifteen thousand, with only four thousand of whom were actual fighters. After a seven week siege they had not manage to enter Beirut, but they still cut off all provisions of any kind. After negotiations with the United States which gave guarantees of safety to the Palestinian refugee camps, Arafat agreed to leave Lebanon with the PLO. In this way, the Palestinian military movement was crushed.\footnote{David Hirst, \textit{Beware of Small States}, 141-142.}

By September, Bashir Gamayel, who had promised Israel he would alleviate Lebanon of the Palestinian problem permanently, was killed by a remote controlled bomb. The bomb went off in the Phalange headquarters where Gamayel was making his last speech before taking presidency. Israel’s intentions with Lebanon were crushed. Despite the American guarantees, Israel moved in West Beirut. Israeli leaders then met with Phalange leaders to talk about ways to control West Beirut.\footnote{Ibid., 152.}

Israel allowed the Phalange troops to enter the Palestinian refugee camps. It was decided that the Phalange would do most of the dirty work in order to spare Israeli lives. Both Israel and the Phalange wanted to get rid of the Palestinians and the Israelis set up roadblocks to let the Phalange enter the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila.
The killings started at sunset on a Thursday and continued until noon on Saturday. Thousands of women and children were killed. It was these killings that provoked the birth of the Islamic Lebanese resistance movement.

Israel withdrew from Beirut but occupied the south up to the Litani River. During the war, the Israelis lost two hundred and sixty-nine men in just three weeks, but they killed twenty thousand Lebanese civilians. Israel tried to establish a peace pact with Lebanon which was signed by the brother of Bashir, Amine Gemayel, who had been elected after Bashir’s death. Yet, all the parties that formed the Lebanese National Movement allied themselves with Syria and caused the peace pact with Israel to fail. The Maronite militia of the Phalange became independent and was taken over by Samir Geagea. It became known as the Lebanese Forces. Now the fighting went on in the north between the Maronite militia and the Muslim parties, while the south battled Israeli occupation.

The occupation of the south by Israel led to the development of the Shiite resistance. The Shiites had formed the Amal Movement during the civil war. Amal had been established in the late 1970’s by an Iranian cleric al-Sayyid Musa al-Sadr. It was the militia to his movement, the Movement of the Deprived. In 1978, al-Sadr flew from Beirut to Tripoli to pay his respects to the Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi who had come to power in 1969. Al-Sadr never made it to the ceremony and his
disappearance has remained a mystery.\textsuperscript{21} Amal leader Nabih Berri quickly took over the militia and the militia was actively opposed to the Israeli occupation in Lebanon.

The events that followed involved continued fighting throughout the country with sectarian battles and intra-communal conflicts. Since the Palestinians had re-armed themselves, Amal, which had become Syria’s main ally, besieged and attacked the refugee camps, killing hundreds of Palestinians. With the Druze, they also attacked and defeated the Murabitun in order to take control of West Beirut; but later there were fights between Amal and the Druze. In this way, the Muslim National Movement became as divided as the Maronite Lebanese Front. As to the Lebanese army, it had split along sectarian lines and what remained consisted mostly of Maronites who would attack the Muslim and leftist parties. The fight for the control of Beirut went on as all groups fought each other. The situation in Lebanon seemed out of control.

Israel had dismantled the Palestinians’ leadership, but the invasion of Beirut, the killings of the Palestinians in the refugee camps and the occupation of the south led to the rise of a new movement and a new ideology among the Shiites. This ideology was based on the religious duty to resist all oppressors with jihad. The birth of this resistance went mostly unnoticed due to the constant chaos within the country, and it was an almost exclusively Shiite affair. This ideology developed with the help of Iran which sent Revolutionary Guards and Iranian trainers into Shiite territory within

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Lebanon. The new resistance movement rejected the state of Lebanon as an artificial colonial development and considered it to be beyond reform, but the primary aim was to initiate jihad against Israel.

This Islamic resistance stood against any imperial power that was deemed an oppressor. In 1983, the US and French barracks were bombed by the resistance and two hundred eighty Americans, as well as fifty French died. This resistance was deemed a new instigator on the scene by Israel and the West, and this meant retaliation would continue now against the resistance instead of the Palestinians. At first Amal saw this new movement as a challenge to its power, and soon, the south was in a new intra-communal war of its own. The Shiites took battle against each other as this new resistance group took over control from Amal. Nonetheless, the new movement spread like a wild fire in the devastated country.22

With the south occupied and the north in continuous turmoil and fighting between the various militias, an end to the brutality and the continual cycle of war was desperately needed in Lebanon. It was obvious that the violence would stop only after a formal amendment was made to the Lebanese constitution and the unwritten National Pact, providing the various groups a better representation in the political system. Arab countries rallied in order to develop a solution for Lebanon. Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia established the Tripartite Arab Committee. The chiefs of state from Saudi

Arabia, Algeria and Morocco developed the cease fire plan that was to take place. Under the auspices of the Saudi and the Syrian governments, the Lebanese parliament, or what was left of it, was invited to re-write the Lebanese constitution at Ta’if in Saudi Arabia. The deputies were held there until they had agreed on a new agreement, the “National Accord Document for Lebanon” in October of 1989.

The “National Accord Document for Lebanon” is also called the Ta’if Agreement because it took place in Ta’if, Saudi Arabia. The initial plan of implementation was hindered from the onset because some of the international members were distracted by a new crisis on the horizon, namely, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Those that were left to implement the Ta’if Agreement, primarily Syria, gave their own priorities attention without addressing all the other issues.

The situation before the implementation of the Ta’if Agreement had been dismal. With Amin Gemayel’s presidential term coming to a close in 1988, the remaining members of parliament could not decide on a successor and two rival groups each claimed legitimacy. In East Beirut, General Michel Aoun moved into the presidential palace. He used his ‘legitimate’ military might to try to reestablish Lebanon’s political structure under the National Pact, as a sovereign and independent Lebanon. For him, this meant the complete withdrawal of both Syrian and Israeli forces, and it set him against the Syrian forces. In West Beirut, the Prime Minister
Salim al-Hoss set up a rival administration with another army commander. Since Aoun refused to accept the Ta’if Agreement, fighting erupted between the Syrians and Aoun and West Beirut was heavily shelled as a result.

The primary implementer of the Ta’if Agreement, Syria, struck the presidential palace where Aoun was residing and invaded the Maronite quarters of East Beirut. They dismantled Aoun’s hold and forced him to flee first to the French embassy and finally to France. East Beirut was now under the full control of the Syrian army. Syria proceeded to set up elections for a new president and implement the Ta’if Agreement.

While ambiguity is certainly a feature that hindered the Ta’if Agreement, it did set the direction for progress to be implemented. However, it could not be implemented without the military force of Syria. The main concern was to control the instability that had rocked the country for the last fifteen years. Disarming the militias was the first assignment Syria took on. The state army was deemed ineffective. Therefore outside help was specifically addressed and called for in the Ta’if Agreement. A time table of six months was set to disarm the numerous militias and take control of the ports that were being used illegally for access to arms and resources. With the departure of its commander, General Aoun, the army was dismantled. However, Syria would later form, arm and train a new National Lebanese Army.

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23 Zahar, Ending Civil Wars, 577.
The dissolving of militias was not enough; they had to be integrated into civilian life. This was part of the second stage and included incorporating them into the new Lebanese army and the Internal Security Forces. Yet, while Syria was determined to dissolve the militias, it specifically allowed Hizbullah to remain a resistance movement to combat the Israeli aggressors. This allowed Syria, which was under international scrutiny, not to be directly involved with Israel. The PLO was the only non-Lebanese militia that violently protested any disarmament. They were subdued and their military strongholds were overtaken. However, they were allowed to keep their weapons within the camps.

Although Syria was given by the international community the right to see through the implementation of the Ta’if Agreement, a time table was set up for how long their assistance would be deemed necessary. A two year maximum was established in the Ta’if Agreement, but the details were very ambiguous. The agreement stated that a second agreement would determine the future of Syrian and Lebanese relations. One of the details left out of the agreement was the size of the Syrian force to be used. The exact positions they would have and their essential role within Lebanon were never clearly stated either. The entire agreement was based on the “special relations” of their common histories. As no second agreement was made, their stay was inevitably prolonged.

24 Zahar, Ending Civil Wars, 578.
With fighting under control and Hizbullah as the only resistance group left in the country, certain issues needed to be specifically addressed. The instability in Lebanon had affected the central state authority, which needed to be reestablished. Since the economic and social situation was in shambles, the socio-economic development and the political sectarianism of the country was also addressed in the Ta’if Agreement.

The Ta’if Agreement had called for the decentralization of the state’s executive power in order to include the participation of the general public in all the districts. The focus of implementation was to develop legitimate leadership though national elections. This required a new electoral law, which redrew the administrative map. The law established larger districts to increase public involvement. In certain areas however, Syria retained smaller districts in order to maintain their influence. Since it had military control over Lebanon by virtue of the Ta’if Agreement, Syria was able to influence every Lebanese election.

The first elections that took place in 1992 were boycotted by an overwhelming number of Maronites. The ministers who were selected were predominantly pro-Syrian, and the Maronites now felt powerless and without control over the state. The Syrian control over the elections was deemed “legitimate” under Ta’if Agreement standards because the candidates were freely elected, but the methods Syria used to put
their candidates into office was blatant. There was no actual true democracy as was stipulated by the Ta’if Agreement. Corruption dictated elections in Lebanon.\(^\text{25}\)

The Ta’if had determined that councils be established to oversee a more just and fair election process. These councils were to interpret the constitution and settle election disputes while the long awaited higher court was being established that would try presidents and ministers. There was however, no initiative taken by these councils to prevent Syrian influence over the election process.

Power distribution had always been an issue that needed to be readdressed since the onset of the war. The Executive branch was redistributed again along sectarian lines. This reinforced the confessional politics Lebanon had always known. The President’s powers were reduced and given to the Prime Minister who implemented the policies of the cabinet. The Prime Minister was now required to co-sign everything initiated by the President, except for the appointment of the Prime Minister and the acceptance of the resignation of the Cabinet.\(^\text{26}\)

The President’s powers were reduced and given to the cabinet, which was now able to watch over the implementation of laws and supervise state agencies. The president could no longer control and manipulate the army for his own purposes. The army was now under the authority of the cabinet. The main position of “commander-


in-chief” of the army still remained a Maronite position though. The parliament seemed to take into account the demographic changes while drawing a new administrative map with larger districts. The larger districts allowed for semi relief of the problem of mass migration, which had affected political representation. The representation in parliament was now a 5/5 ratio, which replaced the 6/5 previously stipulated under the constitution.

The socio-economic crisis that had launched Lebanon into a civil war had also been addressed in the Ta’if Agreement. Lebanon was plagued by inflation and unemployment, but what further limited any progress was the fact that all the economic and educational structures were in Beirut. The outlying areas remained virtually cut off from any type of infrastructure, and the mass migration of displaced families from Israel’s bombardments further aggravated the country’s economic crisis.

The Ta’if Agreements response to the socio-economic development of Lebanon was found in the creation of a socioeconomic council for development. However, this council lacked focus on social justice especially where it concerned displaced families. The Ta’if Agreement’s only statement on the issue was as follows:

The problem of displaced persons shall be solved in depth, and the right of each Lebanese person displaced since 1975 to return to the place from whence he was displaced shall be recognized; laws that will ensure these rights shall be enacted and the means to help in their return shall be provided.  

\[27\] Zahar, Ending Civil Wars, 572.
The council did however focus intently on educational issues. Education was deemed obligatory for all at least the elementary stage. Private education was to be protected and state oversight of private education and their school materials was to be strengthened. The Lebanese Universities were to be given aid, especially in areas of technical trade assistance, to help support the reconstruction effort. All curricula would be reviewed in order to emphasize unity among all citizens especially in regard to a common history.

The sectarian nature of politics within Lebanon had certainly created turbulence. This is why the Ta’if Agreement specifically states that the solution to the political instability and sectarian politics will be the progressive elimination of confessionalism. It specifically stated, “Abolishing political sectarianism is a fundamental national objective.” The steps it outlined for achieving this elimination start with the creation of a council that would draw up a proposal to abolish sectarianism, to be presented to the Chamber of Deputies and the cabinet. The proposal should include theabolishment of sectarian representation in all public jobs, except the top-level positions which shall be shared equally by Muslims and Christians. There will also be the elimination of sect and denomination on identity cards. Those were the ambitious main goals of the Ta’if Agreement for Lebanon and measures for its implementation were started but problems of execution as well as problems internal to the agreement were going to lead to its failure.
Lebanon has done anything but eliminate confessional politics from its system. It is a deep seeded tool that fragilely holds the varying sects together. The Ta’if Agreement essentially supported the continuation of confessional politics rather than effectively eliminating it. The interests of all Lebanese are not being fully met, nor is the country stabilized as long as it is under the direct supervision of Syria. The remaining armed resistance group is still outside of the state’s control, and thousands are not able to return home who have been displaced. Councils have been set up to overlook the maintenance of their designed projects, but the implementations of these projects are too ambiguously detailed. Lebanon has yet to be sovereign, free, and independent.
CHAPTER 4

AFTER THE TA’IF AGREEMENT

The purpose of the Ta’if Agreement had been to replace the unwritten National Pact, outline a method for achieving a balanced state that can function properly on non-confessional grounds and rebuild the economic infrastructure of the country destroyed by the war. In this chapter, the economic, social and political developments that affected the country in relation to the Ta’if Agreement will be surveyed.

There was an economic challenge to the implementation of the Ta’if agreement. One of the principles of the Ta’if agreement was to establish a free economic system that guarantees individual initiative and private ownership. This led to one of the first tasks of the new government, rebuilding the war ravaged country. However, the first government established after the Ta’if agreement did not seem to augur an age of stability and prosperity.

Instead the elected president, Rene Moawwad, was assassinated and the government of Prime Minister Karameh was not homogeneous. Problems with Syria’s influence continued to create tension: with Aoun in exile, Samir Geagea was the main representative of the Maronites and he turned against the government, and a banking crisis precipitated the collapse of the Lebanese pound. The first problem was eliminated when a bomb exploded in a church; Samir Geagea was accused and
(although exonerated in that particular case) imprisoned for his previous crimes, opening the way for the participation of other Maronites allied with Syria. To deal with the economic crisis, Syria appointed Rafiq Hariri to the post of prime minister.

Hariri was a native Lebanese who was born in Sidon and had gained a large amount of personal wealth as a contractor in Saudi Arabia during the oil boom years. He established himself first through his philanthropic work in the war ravaged country and with close relations with the Syrian minister responsible for following the implementation of the Ta’if agreement, Abdel Halim Khaddam. As a result, he became prime minister in 1992 and retained the post most of the time until his death in 2005.¹ He had a huge impact on the political and economic life of Lebanon’s post war. Hariri had an ambitious economic and political plan that would establish Lebanon as a prosperous country focused on financial and business services rather than on industrial and agricultural production, and he set out to implement his economic reforms accordingly.

However, his reconstruction plans placed on the country a very large national debt that would eventually consume Lebanon. The fiscal reform and reconstruction efforts according to the UN cost nearly twenty five billion. Hariri developed a ten year reconstruction plan that had two phases. The first focused on infrastructure while the second focused on education, healthcare, agriculture and industry, but the problems

¹ David Hirst, Beware of Small States: Lebanon, Battleground of the Middle East (New York: Nation Books, 2010), 246.
with the first phase were such that the second phase was never reached. Although the first phase of Hariri’s reconstruction efforts were attempted despite the major setbacks, its focus was on rebuilding the basic infrastructure in Beirut and its downtown district. This included rebuilding the basic necessities such as the airport, providing electricity, sewage, etc. In some cases, the rebuilding efforts were given by contracts at a much higher cost than was actually needed. This along with corruption and bribery caused inflation far beyond the financial capacities Lebanon was able to manage.

Moreover, a number of issues hampered the rebuilding efforts. Some of the major problems came from the stagnant population level, the high rate of immigration and the lack of skilled labor. These factors hindered the reconstruction efforts that were pursued. The population of Lebanon was stagnant from 1975, when there were 2.6 million people in Lebanon, to 1989, when there were 2.7 million. The stagnant population growth could have resulted from a few different things. There were certainly casualties during the long civil war, but also many of the wealthy and upper privileged of society emigrated elsewhere in the world during the late seventies or in the eighties. There was even a low fertility rate during the civil war that stunted the growth of the population.2

A stagnant population hurt the country’s attempts toward prosperity for numerous reasons. The war casualties that have wiped out huge sections of the  

population caused bitterness and resentment and led many people to flee. When there has been no adequate punishment for the brutal murders and deaths that took place during the civil war, the willingness to remain in a country and work to recreate it can be affected. The emigration of the most wealthy and privileged in society left the country without the human resources necessary for an effective reconstruction. The low fertility rate in the country caused a shift in the reconstruction focus. There was a new demographic balance among the sects and the unequal standards of living between them played a role in the reconstruction projects.

The demographic balance was disrupted by the internal population displacement; hundreds of thousands from the south had migrated toward the heavily populated towns in the north. When half the population of a country has been uprooted, the effects on reconstruction are enormous. Before the war, districts were mixed with a balanced number of Muslim and Christian communities, usually with a slight majority in one direction or another; but with the war, the uprooted migrated to the suburban areas of the major cities such as Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon and Zahlel. This increased the segregation because the people tended to congregate along sectarian lines for protection and ended up forming ghettos. This undermined Lebanon’s efforts toward co-existence and the possibility for the creation of an equal society.\(^3\)

Because of the emigration that occurred during the civil war, bankers, contractors, traders and the financiers had all moved out of the country. The vast majority of those who emigrated were Maronites, which did lead to a more evenly distributed Muslim/Christian balance in the financial and merchant areas of business, but deprived the country from the wealth accumulated by the wealthy Maronite class. The middle class had also been affected by the high rate of emigration, and that was a major factor affecting reconstruction, as there was no entrepreneurial class left in the country.\footnote{American Task Force for Lebanon, \textit{Working Paper}, 102.}

Instead of encouraging business opportunities for the youth, the Hariri reconstruction efforts seemed to focus on the wealthier parts of society through the reduction of income and corporate taxes, and the favoring of certain family businesses. This focus on the wealthy caused a large number of youths to leave the country in search of better lives.\footnote{Marie-Joelle Zahar, “Peace by Unconventional Means: Lebanon’s Ta’if Agreement,” in \textit{Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements}, ed. Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth M. Cousens (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 585.} With so many youths leaving the country, a growing dependence on foreign support was inevitable. The external help Hariri sought came with Western ties with the United States and determined the political path of his
administration, which would eventually lead to the later clash between those who favored American policies and the backers of Hizbullah.\textsuperscript{6}

The social and administrative developments after the civil war also brought its own challenges. One of the main principles of the Ta’if Agreement had been the fostering of social justice through the proper social and economic reforms. However, with the rebuilding efforts concentrated on the capital and select business elite, it was inevitable that the ignored and underprivileged sectors of the population would take matters in their own hands.

In Lebanon there was a traditionally weak public sector. Housing, education and healthcare were something the state was unwilling or unable to deliver at the basic levels or that were provided to some areas but not others. Most Lebanese unfortunately could not afford private healthcare, education and had no benefits in a state with an extremely high unemployment rate. Therefore, greater participation by all communities and self-reliance was needed to solve the social gaps that had contributed to the civil war. This in turn, weakened the state more, and it eventually became a vicious cycle.

Because of their need to organize their armed resistance, Hizbullah was one of the main political parties that got involved in the social building of their community.

\textsuperscript{6}Judith Palmer Harik, \textit{Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism} (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 189. US desired Hariri to dismantle Hizbullah and freeze all their assets, but most in the country even pro-Western Maronites stated that Hizbullah fighters were not terrorists but citizens.
They offered a range of public services and building projects that helped Sunnis, Christians and Shiites. They provided the basic services of the state such as hospitals, schools, low-cost housing and irrigation. Especially in the Dahiya region, Hizbullah was responsible for the water, electricity and sewage.\textsuperscript{7} Because the Hariri plan concentrated on Beirut, the development of what could be described as a state-within-a-state was inevitable.

In addition, other problems were still plaguing the social reconstruction of the war torn society. Public freedoms had been strongly hindered by the civil war but the situation did not improve as the government attempted to curb public protests to its economic ventures. Freedoms were diminished through government regulations and bans. Demonstrations were banned by the government in 1994, and by 1998, they were allowed in principle, but through permits that were usually denied.

Media was also affected greatly by government regulations. Hariri shut down As-Safir in May 1993, which was a left-wing independent paper. By 1996, the Higher Council of the Audio-Visual Media (HCAVM) gave licenses to only four privately owned television stations and eight radio stations. Anyone without a license was given a six week deadline to shut down broadcasting. In addition, the political involvement with the operating television stations was undeniable. Exceptions were eventually made for Al-Manar, Hizbullah’s television station and Christian Tele-Lumiere. By

\textsuperscript{7} David Hirst, \textit{Beware of Small States}, 240.
August 1997, additional licenses were granted. It was through constant struggle that media and public freedoms could be maintained.⁸

One of the most important reasons for the failure of the economic and social reforms was the failure to create a stable political environment and to withstand the pressure of external political factors. The Hariri plan had one major setback which rested on presupposing that Lebanon would remain at peace. Peace would lead to a drive for international investments, which would stimulate the reconstruction efforts proposed in Hariri’s ten year plan. However, Lebanon remained in a turbulent environment, which kept the country in a deficit. The Arab-Israeli conflict limited Hariri’s success due to a lack of investment and confidence from much needed outside sources.

The economic and social developments were directly linked to the political developments. These developments included the instability in the south, Syria’s dominance, Syria’s eventual withdrawal and the political divisions that resulted. The political instability was partially a result of Hizbullah acting as a state within a state, and Israel’s continual operations in this region.

With the instability in the south due to Israel occupying ten percent of Lebanese land as a ‘buffer zone’, Hizbullah arose as the country’s largest political organization with 200,000 members, although they only had about fifteen hundred fighters that

⁸ Zahar, Ending Civil Wars, 582-583, 589.
specialized in guerilla warfare. Hizbullah had legitimacy as a resistance group and the backing of the Lebanese government because Israel still occupied the land of Lebanon. There were disagreements in the government about allowing Hizbullah to stay armed. At one time in 1993, Lahoud, who was the army general commander, was ordered by Hariri to disarm Hizbullah. Lahoud did not want to harm the citizens of Lebanon, so he went to Syria where Hariri said the orders originally came from. Hafez Assad said he gave no such orders, and then intervened forcing Hariri to legitimize Hizbullah.

The government in the early years after the Ta’if Agreement essentially stated it ‘couldn’t stop legitimate acts of national resistance from Lebanese soil’ nor was it their job to ‘guard Israel’s frontiers.’ Israel felt the need to keep their soil protected by continuing their occupation in the south of Lebanon. With the growing resistance of Hizbullah, Israel retaliated every few years with operations that devastated the south of the country and its population. Operation Accountability in July 1993 was the first of these operations to occur after the enactment of the Ta’if Agreement.

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Operation Accountability destroyed seventy villages along with roads, bridges, water systems and electrical networks.\(^{12}\) Along with the infrastructure damage, one hundred and forty Lebanese citizens died. The major result of Israel’s retaliation was the three hundred and fifty thousand that fled to Beirut. The Israelis no longer conducted their usual ground invasions. They were now bombing from afar to rid the land of Hizbullah and to try to persuade the Lebanese state to curtail Hizbullah’s activity against Israel by punishing the Lebanese civilians.\(^{13}\)

Operation Grapes of Wrath in April 1996 was Israel’s next retaliatory operation. Two hundred and thirty one attacks carried out with only a two hour notice, occurred against civilians living in the south. This led to half a million heading to Beirut.\(^{14}\) Operation Grapes of Wrath occurred only four months after the Lebanese government had put one billion dollars into an electricity grid, during which Israel targeted Beirut’s three power stations. In sixteen days, there were over twenty five thousand artillery rounds fired and over two thousand air raids conducted by Israel. This resulted in only thirteen Hizbullah fighters dying. It was once again the Lebanese citizens who suffered the brunt of the retaliation. This was Israel’s primary goal. However, it failed to accomplish its objective of turning the nation against Hizbullah.


Operation Grapes of Wrath actually led the Lebanese state to justify Hizbullah’s presence as an armed resistance group. Yet, Hizbullah stepped up their attacks on Israeli civilians whenever Israel attacked Lebanese civilians. Nasrallah stated that if Israel ever hit civilians within Lebanon then Hizbullah would hit Israelis with Katyushas. Since then, the threat of military retaliation stopped Israelis from indiscriminately bombing Lebanon whenever they wanted, as they had done previously.

By July 2000, Israel had withdrawn from most of Lebanon. Hizbullah now controlled the former security zone once occupied by Israel, and the South Lebanese Army that had been stationed there surrendered. This had a great impact on the political dynamics within Lebanon. Hizbullah was seen as victorious with the withdrawal of the Israelis from the Security Zone. There was a vacuum of armed presence in the south when no Lebanese troops were sent to the area. Hizbullah filled the vacuum with armed forces and public services such as: public works, reconstruction, health care, and agriculture programs. With basic services provided and Israel gone, tens of thousands of exiled southerners came back to the south.

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However, some Lebanese land was still being occupied by Israel and this became mired in controversy among the Lebanese. While ten farms in the Sheb’a area were seen as belonging to Lebanon by the Lebanese, Israel saw the Sheb’a farms as Syrian. Regardless, it was not Israel’s land, yet it has still been occupied by Israel since 1967. The Sheb’a farms controversy allowed Hizbullah the justification they needed to remain an armed presence in southern Lebanon. The farms consisted of twenty five kilometers which were adjacent to the Golan Heights. All maps of the area agree that the area did not belong to Israel, but the issue was complex and needed arbitration on who actually owned the area Syria, Lebanon or both. The situation caused Hizbullah to shift tactics. Hizbullah’s focus was now on getting Israel out of the Sheb’a farms and freeing the nineteen Lebanese still held in Israeli prisons.  

Hizbullah argued in a national debate in regards to its right to be an armed presence in Lebanon. This had been a major issue as the Ta’if Agreement called for the state to be the only armed presence. Since the Lebanese army was incapable of fighting Israel due to lack of weapons and training, Hizbullah could remain intact as an armed resistance at least until the army became capable of handling Israel. Hizbullah stated that they would give their arms over to the army when the latter was adequately trained and equipped, but the US prohibits its allies from selling even light armament  

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to Lebanon. Hizbullah’s stance is seen in the statement, “When the state fails in carrying out some of its functions, society must help the state in carrying it out—even if the state doesn’t ask!” Nasrallah refused to merge his fighters with the army due to a lack of confidence in the Lebanese government.

Syria has used the instability of the south to prolong its stay in Lebanon and deems its presence necessary for Lebanon’s security. The Ta’if Agreement had allowed Syria’s involvement after the civil war, and no clear definitions were made on the length of their stay. The Maronites led the campaign against Syria by decrying Lebanon’s ‘loss of sovereignty’ and the ‘hegemony imposed on all its institutions.’

Even the Druze, who were a longtime ally of Syria, seemed to have had enough of their influence within Lebanon and wanted them out. Despite the long bond Syria had held with the Sunnis in Lebanon the Sunnis who sided with Hariri also wanted to end Syria’s influence in Lebanon. Hariri had a long time friendship with the vice president of Syria, Abdel Halim Khaddam, who had recently resigned and was living in exile,

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which left Bashar Assad interfering in Lebanese politics. This significantly hindered Hariri’s policy making decisions.\textsuperscript{21}

Syria seemed to prolong its stay in Lebanon to combat Israel without breaching any of its prior truce agreements with Israel. Syria had dominated the political scene in Lebanon from the onset of the Ta’if Agreement. When Syria’s ally, President Lahoud, was elected he was strongly against the economic policies of Hariri. He made policy making difficult for Hariri. Co-balance between the prime minister and the president was essential, but they differed in policy making decisions frequently. The United States, who had gotten involved with Hariri, demanded in May of 2004 that Syria end its ‘occupation’ of Lebanon to achieve ‘full restoration of its sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity,’ and to evict all ‘terrorists and foreign forces, including Hizbullah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.’\textsuperscript{22}

Syria was not interested in losing any of its influence over Lebanon and tried to extend President Lahoud’s term for an extra three years. This would call for a constitutional amendment. President Lahoud was unpopular among half the population in Lebanon because they felt he gave Syria too much influence over Lebanon. Hariri had originally desired to stop the extension of President Lahoud. Lahoud’s extension needed two thirds majority in order for the Constitutional amendment to pass in the

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\item[\textsuperscript{22}] David Hirst, \textit{Beware of Small States}, 300.
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parliament. Syria pressured Hariri to change the constitution in August of 2004, and Hariri decided to push the amendment through parliament. Half of the Lebanese population was outraged with Hariri’s decision. The US drew up Security Council Resolution 1559, which called for the president to be chosen in a “free and fair electoral process…without foreign interference or influence,” for “all remaining forces to withdraw from Lebanon,” and for the “disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias.”

Yet, the Lebanese have held a distaste for US intervention in internal issues for quite some time and they extended Lahoud’s term for an extra three years. Syria announced that it would redeploy its army away from the capital, but many Christians and Druze at this time called for a full scale withdrawal of Syrian troops rather than their redeployment. The situation worsened when on February 14, 2005, twelve hundred kilos of TNT and plastic were detonated killing Hariri and twenty two others. The Sunni Future Movement of Hariri and its Maronite allies believed that an operation of this scale was bound to have had Syrian involvement and Lebanese intelligence. They demanded the removal of Lahoud and the punishment of intelligence officers.

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Sunni opposition toward Syria was nowhere near the level of opposition of the Christians and Druze since their national hero lay dead. Sunnis had in fact long viewed Syria as a country of support. However, a new outbreak of Lebanese nationalism arose, demonstrating the popular anger toward the abuse of power Syria conducted during its presence in Lebanon. This nationalism fervor arose from the Sunnis who backed Hariri and his movement. However, there were still Sunnis, like Prime Minister Omar Karameh in Tripoli, Prime Minister Salim Hoss in Beirut, and Ousama Saad in Saida, who were against Hariri and his policies and they sided with Syria. This division resulted in further demonstrations and counter demonstrations within the country. Syria finally was forced to withdraw from Lebanon because of the threats of international sanctions if they did not comply with the Security Council Resolution.

With Syria gone, Lebanese politics became ever increasingly unstable. Different reactions to the withdrawal were seen with opposing coalitions forming. Hizbullah was fearful of Lebanese pressure to disarm. The Shiites in support of Hizbullah held on March 8 2005 a demonstration in which up to a million participated. This is almost one third of the entire population. In response, the anti-Syrian parties held another rally on March 14 and assembled another million. Lebanon now seemed to have most of the Sunnis, the Maronites and the Druze standing against the Shiites. The two blocs became known through the dates on which their demonstrations were held. 8 March was Hizbullah and friends, including some Maronites like Sulayman
Frangieh, as well as some Sunnis. 14 March assembled all those who opposed Syria, even though they agreed on little else, and they consisted of Sunnis, Maronites and Druze. In the following parliamentary elections, the 14 March coalition won the majority of seats, that is, 72 out of 128. This was the first anti-Syrian majority in parliament since the civil-war ended.25

However, since the 14 March coalition could not win by themselves, they had had to make political alliances. This alliance formed a quadripartite agreement made between Future Movement leader Saad Hariri, Druze leader Jumblatt, Hizbullah, and the Amal movement leader Nabih Berri. The 14 March coalition needed the alliance in order to prevent general Aoun, who had come back from exile with the intention to fight corruption and the Hariri economic policies from winning, as the majority of the Maronites followed him.

This alliance allowed the 14 March to claim the most seats in parliament and a ‘National Unity’ government was formed. The term national unity was chosen because the government involved the major sects within Lebanon. However, the sects could not agree on most of the pressing issues and the government could be characterized by anything but unity. The unity government alliance prevented Aoun from gaining any representation even though he had the majority of the Maronites behind him.

Meanwhile Hizbullah thought that since they had helped the 14 March coalition to win the government, they would defend their right to keep their arms. However, soon the 14 March alliance began to put pressure on Hizbullah to surrender its weapons in accordance to the Security Council Resolution that drove Syria out. Now both Hizbullah and Aoun were being marginalized and pressured by the 14 March coalition. That is because when Aoun returned to Lebanon, he wanted to pursue all those who he felt were corrupt politically and economically. This put the Sunnis in opposition to him because they had been in charge of politics and the economy under Hariri.

The only party that agreed with Aoun’s proposals was Hizbullah. A pact was formulated between Hizbullah and Aoun which entailed agreement on certain reforms, along with a stipulation allowing Hizbullah’s right to protect Lebanese citizens and remain an armed resistance group. This pact brought the majority of Maronites into alliance with the Shiites, and the 14 March coalition now consisted of mostly Sunnis, with the Druze and some Maronites.26

This most unlikely alliance of Maronites in support of Hizbullah was put to the test when in July of 2006, Israelis decided that their retaliation against any aggression was going to be a military operation broad in scope. The aggressor, according to them,

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was Nasrallah who wanted Lebanese prisoners freed. Hizbullah and Israel had both
kidnapped soldiers on both sides, and Hizbullah decided to use the past method of
kidnapping Israeli soldiers in order to exchange prisoners. The exchange of prisoners
was not what Nasrallah and the rest of Lebanon received. They were hit with
overwhelming military might. The retaliation led to the July War or the Sixth Arab-
Israeli war.

According to Israel, Hizbullah was part of the Lebanese government and
therefore this act of kidnapping was seen as an act of war. That was how Israel
justified its decision to hit everything inside Lebanon including civilians and
infrastructural targets. However, Israel in all its might, failed to destroy Hizbullah or
its leaders. Hizbullah needed only to survive to win, which they did. Hizbullah
displayed long range missiles, which came as a shock to Israel who was used to the
short range Katuyshas. Along with the new weapons Hizbullah had, they also were
able to stay alive because of an underground bunker.

…40 meters below ground, with reinforced concrete roots a meter thick,
dormitories, bathrooms, hot and cold running water, medical facilities,
ventilation and air conditioning, and stock of food, it could comfortably
sustain and accommodate large numbers of fighters for weeks on end.28

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Although Hizbullah was able to survive the military air power of Israel, one million civilians in the south were forced to flee. According to the Lebanese government, seventy seven bridges were hit, nine hundred commercial buildings and thirty thousand residential dwellings were destroyed. There were thirty-one major public utilities hit with six billion dollars in damages after this sixth Arab-Israeli war.\(^{29}\)

Israel’s main goal was to rid the area of Hizbullah. They tried to turn the Lebanese population against Hizbullah. Israel used a practice called ‘target stretching’ to try to get rid of Hizbullah, and it involved targeting schools, mosques and community centers.\(^{30}\) Yet, the nation actually rallied behind Hizbullah after the war, according to the Daily Star. Israel’s frustration grew.\(^{31}\)

The end of the war came with UN Resolution 1701. Chapter 6 of the UN Charter was agreed to by Hizbullah, which allowed the Lebanese army to be visible in between the border and the Litani River. Hizbullah only agreed to this portion of the resolution because they knew the Lebanese army was incapable of dismantling Hizbullah alone. A national schism broke out after the war about whether or not to strip Hizbullah of their arms. Sectarian tensions at this time rose among the Sunnis and Shiites. The Lebanese government was too weak and divided to be able to carry

\(^{29}\) David Hirst, *Beware of Small States*, 349.

\(^{30}\) Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff, *34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah and the War in Lebanon* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2008), 122.

out any disarmament in the end. The majority of the 14 March coalition was outraged because, they claimed, it was the state’s job to declare peace or war, but no one had ever consulted them. They blamed Hizbullah for the war. Hizbullah responded that the right for the resistance to defend the country had been agreed upon and set in the government’s action plan.

There were other political developments at this time besides tensions over Hizbullah’s arms. The March 14 coalition wanted to seek the establishment of an international tribunal to find and punish the assassins of Prime Minister Hariri, while the March 8 movement was weary of international involvement. This caused great tension within the already unstable government, and resulted in Hizbullah’s exit from the government. Six ministers representing Hizbullah resigned from the cabinet. The government kept functioning nonetheless and refused to vacate, despite a strike by more than one million people, a third of the population, and it went ahead and requested from the UN the establishment of the international tribunal.

Nasrallah was frustrated that the government continued to function. He felt the government was not only unjust but illegal due to the lack of Shiite representation. He called for a one day strike and then ordered a sit-in -Beirut day where people, mostly

32 David Hirst, Beware of Small States, 368.

Shiites, camped in the capital. However, by January 2007, the government was still functioning. President Lahoud’s term came close to an end, but there was no agreement on the successor. Election Day, November 24, 2007 came and went without a successor. The problem became more profound when a date for parliamentary elections was set and subsequently postponed a total of seventeen times.

By April 2008, no more dates were being set to have elections, but the Siniora government, which was still in power, made a move on May 5, 2008, to declare Hizbullah’s telecommunications network an illegal act of aggression toward the state. The Siniora government went so far as to dismiss the airport chief of security, who was a Shiite army official, for not dismantling Hizbullah’s security cameras. It also asked the army to take measures concerning the communication network of Hizbullah, but the army refused to intervene.

Nasrallah responded to these challenges by having his men block access to the airport. Amal and the Syrian Socialist National Party helped invade the Sunni section of West Beirut. West Beirut, at this time, was under the control of “security firms”; these were in fact a Sunni militia set up by Hariri under the guise of security firms and they included about 10,000 Sunnis. Within four hours, however, the “security firms” were disarmed and turned over by Hizbullah to the army. Most of them were freed later. Turning over the militia to the army was in accordance with the general doctrine that held Hizbullah to be a resistance group, while all other armed factions were
militias, (even though in that case, the militia handed over was created by the party that held the government).\textsuperscript{34}

The Arab League and the state of Qatar intervened and sought to have all parties meet at Doha from May 16-21, 2008 in order to resolve the conflict. The agreement made in Doha called for a unity government to which all parties were committed and from which they would not resign. They also agreed on the president-elect, as well as on the electoral law to be followed in the following year’s parliamentary elections. Dialogue would be the method used to bring unity and sectarian language would not be tolerated. This agreement stopped both the fighting and the sit-in and helped establish a new ‘unity government.’\textsuperscript{35}

Within this unity government, Hizbullah and their allies received 11 seats out of 30. This was enough veto power to block decisions but not enough to push their own agenda. The issue of Hizbullah’s weapons was raised but put on hold until a new president was in place. The commander of the Lebanese army, General Michel Suleiman was elected president. An interim government representing all parties was installed to prepare the parliamentary elections of the following year. These elections

\textsuperscript{34} David Hirst, \textit{Beware of Small States}, 391.

took place in June 2009 and gave the 14 March coalition 71 seats and the 8 March coalition 57 seats.

A new ‘unity’ government was formed, with all blocs represented and retaining veto power, and the leader of the future movement, Saad Hariri (son of Rafik Hariri) was elected Prime Minister. Nevertheless, although things seemed to be getting along, problems arose by the summer of 2010, when it appeared that the international tribunal was about to issue its verdict incriminating members of Hizbullah. Hizbullah and its allies demanded that the government rejects the international tribunal and invalidates it, while the March 14 coalition and the prime minister refused. The government was again at the brink of imminent collapse.

The fragile political balance of the country relies constantly on international intervention to keep the country from yet another civil war. The reliance on intervention keeps the country from true independence. As these developments show, the Ta’if Agreement failed to provide for social and economic growth and for political stability. The reasons for this failure will be analyzed in the next chapter.
CONCLUSION

The Ta’if Agreement that had stabilized the country after the civil war outlined the nature and identity of Lebanon and set out a plan with nine general principles. It was in effect a constitutional amendment. However, for various reasons, none of these principles were in fact fulfilled.

The first principle stated that Lebanon was to be a sovereign, free, and independent country and a final homeland for all its citizens. The external problem of refugees has not been tackled. There still are today half a million Palestinian refugees who continue to live in Lebanon without basic rights as citizens; there was no Lebanese-Palestinian provision in place to resolve the issue of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians left unable to vote and without rights within the country. Yet, more importantly, the extent of foreign intervention in Lebanese affairs today and the active seeking by the Lebanese themselves of this meddling makes true independence difficult to achieve, even though Syria’s prolonged stay within the country has finally come to an end. Also, Hizbullah remains an armed party outside of state control, creating further difficulties.

The second principle set forth by the Ta’if Agreement stated that Lebanon was to be Arab in belonging and identity. As an active and founding member of the Arab
League, it remained committed to the league’s charters. It was also an active and founding member of the United Nations Organization and was committed to its charters as well. Lebanon was a member of the nonaligned movement and the state of Lebanon was to embody these principles in all areas and spheres, without exception. Yet, while there has been a definite reconciliation with the Arab identity on the part of the Maronites, many of them would still prefer stronger ties with Europe. Also, there remains a definite unease with the relations with Syria because of the Syrian occupation and because many Lebanese did believe that Syria was guilty of the murder of Hariri.

The third principle of the Ta’if Agreement stated that Lebanon was to be a democratic parliamentary republic. This republic was founded on respect for public liberties, the freedom of expression and belief, on social justice, and on equality in rights and duties among all citizens, without discrimination or preference. Yet, in fact, a large number of regulations against media and public demonstrations have been enacted to maintain the peace and they come at the cost to the public’s liberties and of the freedom of expression. The courts and councils that were supposed to protect the constitution and try politicians were not activated.

The fourth principle of the Ta’if Agreement stated that the people were the source of authority. They were sovereign and they should exercise their sovereignty through the constitutional institutions. Until recently, Syrian occupation made this
sovereignty non-existent. The government parties now have veto power over each other, but people within the country are still not the source of authority; the last election was arranged between the political parties so that only those from a certain party could run in a specific district. The people could not choose their representatives but rather they were only allowed to “agree” to the representatives who were already chosen in the political deal arranged at Doha.

The fifth general principle stated that the economic system was a free system that guaranteed individual initiative and private ownership. However, today, the country’s economic system is run by large business owners who are usually associated with the political elite. Hizbullah has also built up a monopoly of economic development in the Shiite dominated areas. Whereas there was definite improvement in the economic situation of the capital, the rest of Lebanon is still living in abject poverty. As was seen in the last chapter, abuse and corruption have led to deterioration in the employment possibilities and to a marked increase in the emigration of the youth.

The sixth principle stated that Lebanon should build a culturally, socially, and economically-balanced society, which will be the mainstay of the country’s stability. Yet as was seen, the state concentrated on funding and developing only a certain area of Lebanon and benefited only a very narrow class of businessmen. Hizbullah did step
up in the south and provide a balance in the under developed area to become on par with the rest of the country.

The seventh principle laid forth in the Ta’if Agreement outlines efforts to achieve comprehensive social justice through fiscal, economic, and social reform. The need for Syria to maintain its political control meant that there could be no social justice, and after Syria withdrew from Lebanon, the attempt by the various parties to keep each other from power meant that issues of reform and social justice were set aside. It has been the political parties like Hizbullah that have attempted to bring about social justice, rather than the government itself.

The eighth general principle of the Ta’if Agreement stated that Lebanon was a single, united home that belonged to all the Lebanese. Every Lebanese was entitled to live in and enjoy any part of the country under the supremacy of the law. The people could not be categorized on the basis of any affiliation whatsoever and there should be no fragmentation, no partition, and no settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon. Today, this principle is put to the test as some are demanding a confederation of semi-independent districts based on sectarian identity. Segregation is at an all time high in the larger cities where most tend to dwell. The semi-independence of Hizbullah from the state also challenges this principle.

The ninth, and final, principle of the Ta’if Agreement stated that no government violating the common coexistence charter should be legitimate. However,
the understanding of this differs from one sect to the other. The government of Siniora was accused of violating the charter because the Shiites withdrew from the government. Yet, the new government that was formed at Doha, in which there is no clear majority and everyone has veto power, could not agree on any effective policy because of the differences in economic, social and political agendas of the different blocs. So it was either a government that could rule but that was rejected by other blocs---or a government that represented all blocs, but that could not govern as a result.

Beyond the general principles laid out in the Ta’if Agreement, three major reforms were initiated. The first was the administrative decentralization which gave more power and authority to the different parts of the country. However, at present, the entire financial and economic infrastructure remains in Beirut. Smaller administrative units, to increase the local participation, have been hindered by continual corruption and an ongoing unstable environment in the south. Although all the parties say they are in favor of decentralization, the government has not been able to get effective agreement on the matter and decentralization has yet to take place.

The second major reform initiated by the Ta’if Agreement was the re-creation of a stable, strong and united army. This has actually been successful to some extent in that the army has not broken up under the intense sectarian political divisions and has managed to maintain itself at an equal distance from all parties. However, the army is
still run on sectarian basis, and it does not have the strength of either Hizbullah or any outside forces, such as Israel, which continues to threaten the homeland.

But by far the most important reform called for by the Ta’if Agreement was the abolition of sectarian politics as a ‘fundamental national objective’. It called for a national council with the sole task of implementing a phased plan to achieve this objective. Recently, the new President, Michel Suleiman, and Nasrallah stated that they believed that political sectarianism blocked Lebanon from the unity necessary to survive as an independent country. When Nabih Berri, the parliamentary speaker, pledged to establish the national committee called for by the Ta’if Agreement, and uproar occurred within the country. The majority of opposition came from both the ruling 14 March coalition comprised mainly of Sunni Muslims and secular Maronite Christian parties, as well as from the Maronite party of General Aoun that belongs to the March 8 coalition. They all seemed to fear the loss of power to the growing Shiite population. The pledge was quickly shut down by the opposition.¹

The Ta’if agreement has been unable to unite the Lebanese under a single Lebanese identity. With Hizbullah still armed and unable to trust the government, while the other blocs are unable to trust Hizbullah, the country has been on the verge of collapse from the moment the Syrians withdrew and the intense fight for power leads the country to continue to rely on international intervention while being driven slowly

into another civil war. The main reason for this failure is the continuation of confessional politics, and this was the largest failure of the Ta’if Agreement.

Lebanon has done anything but eliminate confessional politics from its system. The Ta’if Agreement essentially supports the continuation of confessional politics rather than effectively eliminating it. The interests of all Lebanese are not being fully met, nor is the country stabilized except artificially when it was under the direct supervision of Syria. However, that was not a viable system, as was shown after Syria’s withdrawal. The remaining armed resistance group is still outside of the state’s control, and thousands are not able to return home who have been displaced. Lebanon has yet to be sovereign, free, and independent.

While the Ta’if Agreement did result in an end to the civil war, it did not effectively stabilize the country. Another civil war may result from any unrest in the country because the country still consists of numerous opposed groups, each with their own beliefs. Lebanon is still a country with many identities and has yet to achieve a national identity that transcends them all. Perhaps the real problem is that the Ta’if is not any different from the earlier versions of the National Pact. That is because it is an attempt to create a nation with a national identity out of diverse and distinct identities, but these identities contradict the project of a national identity.

The question of whether or not a national identity is necessary for a stable Lebanon must therefore be asked. If the answer is yes, then Lebanon is bound to fail
because each sect has refused to give up their own sects’ identity for a nationally united one. A national identity limits the religious freedom that is held so dear to many living in Lebanon. For example, the state made the decision to permit the social act of civil marriage; however, certain sects do not permit this on the basis of their belief structure which trumps the state’s decision. Religious identity is a key component to any lasting solution involving Lebanon.

However, if a national identity is not necessary for co-existence and stability, then an approach that is unassociated with the National Pact or any other agreement must be attempted. That is because the foundational pact, and any agreement thereafter, has incorporated a national identity and the problem with these solutions is that no national identity that can transcend any of the varying individual identities can be created.

A suggested alternative model for this kind of situation comes from Arend Lijphart and his theory of consociational democracy. This form of democracy is for societies deeply divided societies along ethnic, religious and ideological basis. It differs from the conventional democracy in which the majority rules and it can be applied when there are no overlapping loyalties. He states that when the political
structure is fragmented, moderation tends to be absent in typical democracies, but stability can be achieved in a consociational democracy.²

Lijphart’s model has been used for mostly small, pluralist democratic states. Lebanon certainly falls within this model for a solution to be attempted. His model involves four major characteristics, although throughout the years he has added more, but for the sake of simplicity, I will stick to these four basic characteristics. The characteristics that are necessary for a consociational democracy include: grand coalition, mutual veto power, proportionality and the minorities ruling themselves.³

Grand coalition can be defined as power sharing; where each segment of society jointly governs. This would include the cabinet and a balanced executive-legislative relationship. This can be conducted legislatively with a second chamber in which certain minorities are represented. However, this second chamber must be elected on a different basis than the first to combat any inter-sect conflict.⁴ The idea behind the grand coalition is essentially that the elites represent their particular group and accommodate the others to bring about cooperation and stability.

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There is a presupposition to the grand coalition element, which would be that the elite members involved are committed to preserving the system. When you increase the number of parties represented and gives them equal power-sharing, a greater chance for stability is established. Economic resources must be equally distributed between all the represented parties to alleviate or minimize tensions.

Mutual veto power is the second essential element for a consociational democracy. This works through minority veto power instead of regular majorities. This allows the minorities’ vital interests to be maintained, and keeps them from social mobilization that could disrupt the stability of the state. In Lijphart’s theory, he proposes that the minority usually comprise about 5-10 percent of the population.\(^5\)

Proportionality is linked with these first two elements as they all are intertwined and necessary for the model to operate effectively. The masses must be represented by their leaders, or the elite, and the elite must represent the masses. Decisions are made only by the highest elite to avoid conflict and support compromise. This element focuses on the elite as the agent of stability.\(^6\)

Minorities ruling themselves is the final of the essential elements necessary for the model of consociational democracy. This essentially allows mutual veto to operate because the minorities rule themselves territorially or they are delegated to separate

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segments as much as possible. This is communally referred to by Lijphart later on as segmental autonomy, which is a geographically concentrated element. They have the ability to participate in the national processes as part of the represented body, but are conducting their own autonomous structure in more nonessential matters.\(^7\)

Lijphart’s model of consociational democracy can easily be applied to Lebanon, as it would imply only a slight adjustment to the present day political system. The proposed solution would reconstruct the confessional politics to a more equal distribution of power and economic resources. The minorities that feel threatened could protect their interests and focus on stability instead of survival. The problems of intra-sect division and the co-balance of the vast sects could be alleviated by using the tools provided in this model.

Beyond the essential elements to Lijphart’s model there are a few conditions necessary to help the society prosper. The first would be a balanced share of power, where no one group holds the majority. This falls in line with the grand coalition, but all parties are distributed equally. This is referred to as a multi-party system where all parties are minorities. If this were the case, it would make the balance of power more likely to succeed. The concept of cross-cutting cleavages is given a priority to provide the favorable conditions for this model to succeed. Lebanon has many different

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\(^7\) Arend Lijphart, “Non-Majoritarian Democracy,” 5.
ethnicities, religions and ideologies, and each group that represents its members must involve more than one of these cleavages.8

To create a successful society based on Lijphart’s model the elites would need to accommodate the vast interests and demands of the people. The necessity to transcend these cleavages is vital in order to join together in a common direction promoting stability to the region. The commitment from the elites is vital, and they would be required to understand the people enough to counter any fragmentation that might occur.

Although Lebanon is a unique and a highly volatile area, it is not beyond co-existence. For centuries, the area has been accommodating many different groups of people, albeit with times of conflict. For any solution to become effective, it must focus on the main issues that have long divided the tiny country, and incorporate them in the solution rather than try to eliminate them. The former pacts and agreements have focused on a national identity that has never allowed the multi-sect region to keep its individual heritage.

Lebanon is currently a member of both the United Nations and the Arab League. Membership within the UN is defined by countries that are peace-loving and apply to the charters of the UN. With Hizbullah as an independent armed force safety is a concern, not only internationally, but also within Lebanon, since it is not possible

for one minority to have weapons while the others do not. A proposed solution could include change the borders of the country that were imposed upon it and drafting up instead separate districts where each group can live at peace. This would become a confederation, but besides the fact that most Lebanese reject this solution, the population is already inter-mixed. The other solution would be to integrate Hizbullah into the national army, which Hizbullah had said it is willing to consider.

For the consociational model to work, a census that reflects the actual population within each district would be necessary. The census would allow economic and armed forces to be distributed equally among the districts. Since most of the cities are already divided along sectarian lines, the district as a whole supports those less privileged. Lebanon’s land is comprised of many types of terrain, and the economic and social conditions within each area are substantially unequal. However, if each group could contribute to a federal fund where institutions were put in place to distribute the necessary resources, then each group could govern their own area while helping some of the less adequately equipped areas.

A type of socialism for the economic resources would be instituted as taxes and armed forces would have to be pooled from all the districts based on their size and wealth and allocated equally among them. However, this socialism would not interfere with the governing and administrative aspects of the society. The secular nature of
socialism would not hinder the operating system within each district, which may or may not be religiously run.

The plight of the Palestinians who are currently unable to work and cannot become citizens would be temporarily alleviated with a work visa that is renewable every five years, as conditions in the surrounding area change. The balance structure that has currently prevented the Palestinians from assimilating fully into the system would no longer be affected. After the five years, the situation would be addressed and they would either be able to return to their homeland, or given another five year work visa.

Movement between districts would not be hindered as they would be collectively united under a federation that is responsible for the allocation of the armed forces and the taxes. Each district would have their own participation within the federation and its operation. This form of government would decentralize the power to each district allowing the communities within it to regulate themselves. The people would have more power in how the resources they receive would be used.

This model could be attempted if the co-balance at a national level is unattainable. Managing smaller districts and keeping the power closer to the people would perhaps alleviate some of the frustration that has kept the region in turmoil. Internationally this model would need to be accepted, as international intervention has played a large role in the stability of the region. Yet, since all other attempts have
failed, it may be a better option for Lebanon than to try yet another version of the National Pact.
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