

MERIA

TWILIGHT LEBANON, 1990-2011

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This article is an extract from William Harris, Lebanon: A History 600-2011 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Surveying Lebanon's communities through fourteen centuries and the modern country from its origins after 1800, the book closes with today's downbeat Lebanon. The extract features a twilight zone, between Lebanon's devastating war period of 1975-1990 and the implosion of neighboring Syria in 2011-2012. After 1990, the authoritarian Syrian regime commanded Lebanon, faltering in 2005 with its partners--Lebanon's Hizballah and theocratic Iran--looming larger. Economic reconstruction coexisted with corruption, confrontation between Hizballah and Israel, political murder, and environmental degradation. Looking ahead, resuscitation of a credible Lebanese democracy depends on pluralism in a new Syria.

SYRIAN HEGEMONY, 1990–2005

In 1990, the Syrian regime reversed 1920. In place of a French high commissioner overseeing Syria from Beirut, the Syrian president commanded Lebanon from Damascus. The Asad regime had always wanted predominance on the seaward flank of its capital; Lebanon and Syria were two states for one people. In exasperation in the mid-1970s, Khaddam let slip that if Greater Lebanon could not function, the answer was not shrinkage to Mount Lebanon but Syrian absorption of everything.¹

In the 1990s, however, Hafiz al-Asad knew that the pretense of two states was de rigueur. After all, his mandate in Lebanon came from the United States, sole superpower after the Cold War, and the Americans had just reversed Iraq's absorption of Kuwait. In the last decade of the twentieth century, the United States valued cooperative autocrats in the Arab world even as it pressed democracy elsewhere. Presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton indulged the Syrian regime in its manipulation of Lebanon. For his part, unlike his son Bashar in 2003–2005, Hafiz al-Asad tested the superpower short of outright defiance.

Syrian hegemony perpetuated the communal sensitivities of the war years.

Having devastated themselves, the Maronites retired into indignant impotence. The Maronite mountain had to be watched, but it ceased to be an obstacle for Damascus. Nonetheless, Christians remained more than one-third of the Lebanese population, and alienation of most of them was problematic for Syria. Otherwise, Syria balanced Sunnis and Shia, who had drifted apart after Shia factions moved into largely Sunni West Beirut in February 1984. In the 1990s, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri's concentration of investment on central Beirut, and the Sunni premier's ties with Saudi Arabia, grated on Shia. Syria had Hariri's government and Hezbollah limit each other between 1992 and 1998, constraining both Saudi and Iranian influence. Syria also encouraged the Maronite president, the Shia parliamentary speaker, and senior ministers to constrict Prime Minister Hariri. Such divide and rule fed sectarian rancor.

Otherwise, warfare intensified after 1990 in southern Lebanon, where Hezbollah organized Shia military activities against the Israelis and their proxy SLA in the Israeli occupied "security zone." Israel ignored the opportunity to withdraw in 1989–1990, while the Syrians were preoccupied and Hezbollah fought Amal. Hezbollah could therefore re-inflate, courtesy of Israel's presence, and displace Amal as the leading Shia faction. Throughout the 1990s,

space expanded for Iranian penetration of the Shia, and despite its ambivalence about Iranian influence, Iran's Syrian ally could not resist taking advantage of Hezbollah and Iran to put pressure on Israel.

Genies let out of the bottle after 1967--sharpened Lebanese sectarianism, Syrian intervention, and Israel's collision with the Shia--plagued Lebanon into the twenty-first century.

High Hegemony, 1990–2000

Syria was in a hurry to cement its hold at the end of 1990, with regime institutions, security, and bilateral relations being the priorities. Economic affairs did not at first register despite Lebanon's prostrate condition: Syria allies had their pickings; the lower orders were destitute but not starving; and the population was too dazed to protest.

Hafiz al-Asad picked Umar Karami, brother of the assassinated Rashid, to head a National Unity Government, which was formed in December 1990 and staffed by the old elite, warlords, and Syria's loyalists. It included the Kata'ib and LF, but the latter quickly felt marginalized, and Geagea resigned in March 1991.

The Syrians supervised disbandment and disarmament of militias by mid-1991, with Hezbollah exempted because of its role against Israeli occupation. Hezbollah had to release surviving Western hostages. Army commander Emile Lahoud oversaw reintegration of the Lebanese army, with sectarian mixing in new brigades and overhaul of the officer corps. The army received aid from both Syria and the United States. The Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination, which was signed on May 22, 1991, concretized Lebanese/Syrian "privileged relations."² It established a "higher council," with committees for "prime ministerial coordination," foreign affairs, defense and security, and economic and social affairs. The Syrians only dropped the word "integration" because of American objection.³ On September 1, a Defense and Security Pact committed Lebanon to "the highest level of

military coordination" and "banning any activity or organization in all military, security, political, and information fields that might... cause threats to the other country."⁴ Syria sidestepped the Ta'if recommendation that Syrian forces redeploy in late 1992 out of Beirut to the coastal mountains. The Lebanese defense minister indicated that the army could not take over despite the capability shown in its July 1991 operation in Sidon to push Palestinian guerillas back into the Ayn al-Hilwe camp.

Lebanon's August 26, 1991, Amnesty Law expressed shared interests of the ex-warlords and Syria. The "law" endorsed impunity for criminality. It declared amnesty for war crimes committed from April 1975 to March 1991, only excepting assassinations of political and religious leaders. It sent out the message that the Lebanese state had no concern for ordinary citizens, who had best forget massacres and disappearances. The exception of high-profile assassinations gave the Syrians and the Lebanese regime the potential weapon of show trials, using cases for which the Syrian regime was not itself the prime suspect. Otherwise, no one expected activation of judicial files. By 1992, the economy could wait no longer. Destruction in East Beirut, where most industry and commerce operated in the late 1980s, reduced Lebanon's per capita GDP in 1990 to less than 40 percent of that in 1987.⁵

Rebooting the country was beyond the Karami government; in early 1992 the currency collapsed. On May 6, 1992, rioters marched on the prime minister's residence. Karami resigned, and a caretaker government managed Syria's immediate concern: the first postwar elections for the new 128-seat chamber of deputies set for August/September 1992. Governorates as five or six large constituencies, which was agreed at Ta'if, gave way to a gerrymander mixing large and small electorates to suit Syria's candidates. A voter boycott backed by Michel Aoun reduced turnout to less than 25 percent, but this only assisted Syrian and regime command of the parliament. Thereafter, Syria swallowed its doubts about the billionaire Lebanese/Saudi

Rafiq al-Hariri. A prime minister “capable of bringing foreign aid and loans to help stabilize Ta’if,” in the words of Syrian Vice President Khaddam, was the only option.⁶

Hariri had a vision to revive his country as regional commercial hub and alone had the dynamism, Arab and global contacts, and personal resources to drive such a vision. By natural progression, this new Lebanon would one day escape the Syrian regime. In the meantime, Hariri bowed to a division of functions. He would deal with reconstruction and finances, but accept Syrian primacy in defense and security and tolerate a financial rake-off for Syrian personalities and their Lebanese subordinates. Starting in 1993, Hariri and his partners in the Solidere Company pushed ahead with the rebuilding of central Beirut, the centerpiece of infrastructural investments in and around Beirut, to supply the physical base for Lebanon’s commercial resurrection. Hariri stabilized the currency, lowered inflation, and provided annual per capita GDP growth of 7 to 8 percent from 1993 to 1995.⁷

By the early 2000s, the restored center of Beirut was considered a great planning and architectural achievement for the prime minister and his team. However, the price was massive expansion of public debt, from 39 percent of GDP in 1993 to more than 100 percent in 1998, subsequently ballooning to 159 percent in 2005.⁸ Despite GDP growth, the 1995 GDP was still only 60 percent of that in 1974, and after 1995, growth faltered into the new century, in part because of the pressure of public borrowing on interest rates.⁹ The economy really only boomed in property, the banking sector, and a narrow range of services. The poor stood still as the rich and the new rich prospered: in 2002, 60 percent of bank deposits were in the hands of 2.4 percent of depositors.¹⁰ Most seriously, young people with professional and technical expertise had better prospects abroad, and about 100,000 individuals emigrated throughout the 1990s.¹¹

The rebuilding of downtown Beirut, as well as the new highways and other infrastructure, required the return of Syrian labor. After declining to insignificance in the 1980s,

Syrian worker numbers recovered to 200,000 in 1992, reflecting peace-time openings for cheap labor even in stagnant conditions, and climbed to about half a million by 1995 as Hariri’s reconstruction gathered momentum.¹² Similarly to 1970, this represented about one-third of the total labor force. The numbers then halved by 2000 because of recession. The Syrian regime no longer had any interest in job or social security for Syrians; it shared the Lebanese free market approach.¹³ Reconstruction and other possibilities in Lebanon--from shop assisting to baking, metalworking, and taxi driving--relieved Syrian unemployment and generated up to \$1 billion in annual worker incomes remitted to Syria. Fearful of dismissal, Syrians accepted depressed wages.¹⁴ In the late 1990s, with the economy tightening, they also faced new resentment from poorer Lebanese. While businessmen profited from the Syrians, ordinary Lebanese faced wage cuts and job losses. The average Lebanese “salary” was \$400 per month.¹⁵ I was in a minibus in the poor Shia quarter of Hay al-Sulam in late 2001 when the Shia driver spotted Syrian workers and exploded: “they have destroyed Lebanon” (*kharrabu lubnan*).

Hariri had trouble with both the Shia and Maronite “streets.” This arose from the liberal capitalist orientation of reconstruction, which was unavoidable in its initial stages. Both Shia and Maronites suspected colonization of Beirut by Saudi and other Sunni Arab oil money. Shia loss of the finance ministry in the first Hariri government and rumors of shanty clearance in the southern suburbs in favor of a ring road brought Hezbollah protests. Shia *alim* Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah accused Hariri’s cabinet of converting Lebanon into “a joint stock company of the rich.”¹⁶ Fearful of Shia militants, Hariri spent \$15 million on fortifying the government palace and in 1996 opened the Elissar project for redevelopment in the southern suburbs to Amal and Hezbollah patronage.¹⁷

The Syrian regime used its Lebanese counterpart for disciplinary purposes. On September 13, 1993, Damascus endorsed the authorities when the army shot dead nine

demonstrators at a Hezbollah rally. In early 1994, the government banned the LF and arrested Samir Geagea, who was thereafter tried and convicted on murder charges for the 1987 assassination of Prime Minister Rashid Karami. Geagea spent the next eleven years in the basement of the defense ministry, only being released after Syria's 2005 withdrawal from Lebanon. No other ex-warlord faced such treatment; for Syria, the LF was an old foe, and its leader declined to serve the new order.

In December 1996, the authorities detained Aoun supporters and Tripoli Sunnis after an assault on a Syrian mini-bus. Many detainees ended up in the Syrian military intelligence center in Beirut (the Beau Rivage Hotel), where torture was routine.¹⁸ Extraordinary corruption in postwar Lebanon frustrated Hariri. Lebanese and Syrian officials and personalities diverted several billion dollars every year out of loan money, government expenditure, private investment, and assorted illegal enterprises, probably equivalent to one quarter of GDP.¹⁹ For example, at least \$500 million of \$2 billion, spent uselessly on trying to reduce Lebanon's electricity generation deficit in the 1990s, disappeared as kickbacks.²⁰

The Syrian leadership manipulated the appetites of Lebanon's Maronite president and Shia parliamentary speaker to constrain the prime minister. Asad rewarded Amal leader Nabih Berri with the speakership in 1992 and cultivated President Hirawi. Berri and Hirawi defended their "shares" of the bureaucracy, wrecking Hariri's plans for administrative reform. Politicians recognized that "the present republic is fragmented and that what links its pieces is the Syrian thread."²¹ In the other direction, Hariri's personal relations in Syria were more with prominent Sunnis--Khaddam and chief of staff Hikmat Shihabi--than with the Alawite Asads. Hariri developed a friendship of sorts with Ghazi Kana'an, the veteran Alawite head of Syrian military intelligence in Lebanon, lubricated by money, but Asad's son and heir apparent Bashar favored Lebanese army commander Lahoud.

In July 1993 and April 1996, Israel helped entrench Syria in Beirut and strengthened Hezbollah when it unleashed large-scale bombardments of southern Lebanon (operations "accountability" and "grapes of wrath") in response to Hezbollah rockets. On both occasions, hundreds of thousands of Shia fled north, and the Americans turned to Asad to help with cease-fires. In April 1996, Israel reaped opprobrium when artillery shells killed 102 civilians at a UN post during an exchange of fire with Hezbollah. The Israelis settled for an arrangement by which Hezbollah would refrain from firing into the Galilee as long as Israel did not retaliate against Shia villages for attacks in the "security zone." Hezbollah's prestige soared, especially when it wiped out an Israeli commando unit near Tyre in September 1997. Under a clever new young secretary-general, Hasan Nasrallah, after 1992, when the Israelis killed his predecessor Abbas Musawi, the Party of God entered the Lebanese parliament and invested heavily in social services. For example, al-Mustafa schools, under Hezbollah's Foundation for Islamic Religious Education, enrolled 8,091 students in 2001.²² Nasrallah sought a deepened social base, and Iran built up the party's arsenal.

Into the late 1990s, Syrian hegemony coexisted with Lebanese pluralism in the media, professional organizations, the union movement, and the universities. In July 1995, the regime broke a general strike and in November 1996 limited television and radio licenses. Syria toyed with the constitution and parliamentary elections and in 1998 selected army commander Lahoud as president, a shift toward a Syrian-style security regime.

President Hirawi's six-year term ended in 1995; Asad plainly felt that Lahoud was not yet ready, and Khaddam opposed a military president.²³ Ghazi Kana'an chose the September 1995 engagement party of Umar Karami's son to announce that parliament would override the constitution and vote Hirawi in for three more years.²⁴ Damascus had a similar no-nonsense approach to the July/August 1996 parliamentary elections. Hariri and Berri got substantial blocs for the

sake of stability; the Christian opposition was enticed and then decimated; Syrian nominees swept Mount Lebanon, the north, and the Biqa; and Hezbollah got cut back to placate the Americans. *Al-Nahar*'s Sarkis Na'um awarded Damascus an Oscar, and his newspaper noted the 1996 results put the infamous 1947 elections in the shade for "intimidation, forgery, and abuses."²⁵

In late 1998, the guard changed. Asad was nervous about Maronite hostility, as articulated by Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir, so a Maronite president with more weight than the ineffectual Hirawi would suit. Also, Lebanon's economy was sufficiently revived to allow experimenting with a prime minister other than Hariri. Change reflected the rising star of Bashar al-Asad, who took charge of Syria's Lebanon file. Following orders, Lebanon's parliament elected Emile Lahoud president on October 15, 1998. Deputies with channels to Bashar maneuvered for a new prime minister; Hariri withdrew from contention, and Salim al-Huss returned.²⁶ Lahoud and al-Huss curried public favor with corruption allegations against Hariri's group. In June 1999, sources close to Lahoud abused Hariri, accusing him of running the state as a "private company" and colluding with Israel to curb Hezbollah.²⁷ In parallel, Lahoud and his Syrian backers intended the Lebanese presidency to anchor a "security regime" through which intelligence chiefs would emasculate civilian politics. Although no fan of Lahoud, Syria's local proconsul, Ghazi Kana'an, saw virtue in a bumped-up Lebanese/Syrian security apparatus monitoring all parties.

Lahoud's behavior and Bashar's intrusion provoked Hariri and Druze leader Walid Junblat, hitherto firm Syrian allies. In December 1998, Junblat sarcastically asked al-Huss if his austerity would include "military, security, and intelligence agencies," and joined Hariri in opposition.²⁸ A "security regime" was foreign to Lebanon's freewheeling pluralism, so different from Ba'thist Syria, and the Huss cabinet failed to arrest the economic deterioration heralded by slowing growth before Hariri left office.

Syrian Ba'thist hegemony hardened, but difficulties loomed. In Syria, Hafiz al-Asad's increasing frailty raised the prospect of less-adept Syrian management. In Israel, Ehud Barak and Labor came to government after May 1999 elections, displacing the Likud, which Syria had found usefully status quo-oriented since 1996. Barak declared that Israel would abandon the occupied "security zone" within one year. This was to liquidate a liability and to push Syria and Lebanon toward general peace. Israel's departure would remove a primary justification for Syria's military presence in Lebanon. Syrian officials hoped Israel was not serious, believing "Israel will not withdraw... in a unilateral manner, because it will create a vacuum."²⁹ Hezbollah had no such fear and relished its approaching triumph.

In March 2000, at a summit in Geneva with U.S. President Bill Clinton, a sick Hafiz al-Asad rejected ideas for an Israeli/Syrian breakthrough regarding the Golan Heights. Israel was left with no option but to implement Barak's promise to leave southern Lebanon.³⁰ Israeli forces pulled out of the "security zone" between May 21 and 23. Hezbollah spread through the area, and the Lebanese army stayed out. One thousand SLA personnel fled to Israel, and another 1,500 surrendered. On June 16, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan confirmed that Israel had retired behind the "blue line," the UN-defined international boundary. Meanwhile, Hafiz al-Asad died on June 10, and his son Bashar ascended to the Syrian presidency. Lebanon faced the new millennium with a new Syrian master, and, according to the international community, with no Israeli troops on its territory for the first time since 1982.

Careless Hegemony, 2000–2005

Lebanon's July/August 2000 parliamentary elections took place in an atmosphere of new possibilities and hope of an economic rebound. For the public, money talked, and Hariri was again man of the hour. For Sunnis, the dour Salim al-Huss did not register as a credible leader, and they wanted an assertive

prime minister back. Lahoud and Kana'an crafted an electoral law to hobble Hariri's bloc by splitting Beirut, but Hariri swept the board in the capital, and al-Huss lost his seat. On the one hand, Hariri never questioned Syrian hegemony even when sorely tried. Furthermore, Hariri's ally Junblat owed his own electoral success to Syrian-promoted fragmentation of Mount Lebanon, in defiance of the Ta'if accord. Therefore, Hariri and Junblat still played within the Syrian game. On the other hand, discontent existed that was not just Christian. Hafiz al-Asad always observed appropriate courtesies in relations with Lebanese politicians and preferred aloofness in dealings with the Lebanese.

Bashar al-Asad would soon exhibit less care about the niceties and had already chosen favorites. Up to 2004, Lebanese politics under Damascus comprised three elements--Syria's clients, Syria's allies, and Syria's opponents. Clients and allies were the totality of the regime, and virtually the totality of parliament, although there were gains for allies at the expense of clients in 2000. President Lahoud, the intelligence agency chiefs, and ministers and deputies close to Syria's Alawite leadership represented the core clients after 1998. A trusted military man with Arab nationalist credentials who headed an enhanced security machine, Lahoud clawed back presidential authority, but everyone knew this derived from the Asads. Therefore, contrary to Syrian hopes, Lahoud did not dent Maronite alienation. Other clients included the SSNP, the Syrian Ba'th, and the Faranjiya faction. Despite autonomous pretensions, Parliamentary Speaker Berri and his Amal bloc were also clients. Allies differed from clients in having serious external relations beyond Syria. The large Hariri bloc remained an ally despite its Arab and Western connections and Lahoud's hostility. Hariri carried with him the majority of the Sunni community, Druze leader Junblat, and moderate Christian deputies.

Although the Syrian regime still depended on Hariri for a profitable Lebanon, it needed Hezbollah as a lever on Israel and the Americans and to constrain Hariri. Hezbollah

was the Lebanese face of revolutionary Iran, Syria's partner. It received financial and training support through Iranian revolutionary guards. The Syrian regime gave Iran access to the Levant, and Iran inflated Syria's weight in the Arab and international arenas. After Israel's retreat in 2000, Syria and Iran backed Hezbollah's conversion of southern Lebanon and part of southern Beirut into fortified enclaves. Hezbollah was not a foreign body like the PLO. In the early 2000s, it had an elite professional force of two thousand to three thousand, which was better armed and trained than the much larger Lebanese army.³¹ They were all Shia.

Syria and Hezbollah were not to be cheated of legitimacy for the latter's private army by Israel's withdrawal. In April 2000, through Amal leader Berri, they asserted continued Israeli occupation of eight square miles of Lebanon, the so-called Shebaa farms. The UN initially insisted that this sliver of the rocky flank of Mount Hermon was not Lebanese but rather part of the Syrian Golan captured by Israel in 1967. The Lebanese government adopted the Shebaa farms claim, with Syrian oral approval, but Damascus held back the critical written endorsement. Hezbollah thereby had Lebanese legitimation of indefinite resistance, the Lebanese army kept out of the way, and little danger existed of the UN spoiling this happy outcome by persuading Israel to satisfy the new Lebanese demand.

Hezbollah benefited from its leader's personal rapport with the new Syrian president. Bashar al-Asad was infatuated with Hezbollah's exploits. Equipped with a flood of missiles from its Syrian and Iranian patrons, Hezbollah regarded itself as a Middle Eastern power. According to Nasrallah, "the party has outgrown the country and the [Shia] community."³² In fact, it was stuck within the Shia third of Lebanon's people and had no alternative program for Lebanon's prosperity. Hezbollah's leaders and activists were from religious families and the artisanry, and these were economically conservative. Basically Hezbollah shared Hariri's commercial

orientation but, like Bashar and his circle, loathed Hariri's external connections.

By definition, opponents of Syrian hegemony had no place in the political system. Nonetheless, they represented the predominant mood among Christians and an undertone among others. With their leaders either exiled (Aoun and Amin Gemayel) or in detention (Geagea), Syria's opponents and Christians in general lacked leadership from the early 1990s. The Maronite church stepped into the breach; Patriarch Sfeir backed the Ta'if accord, but he and the bishops denounced Syrian steerage of Lebanon.³³

In late 2000, Druze leader Junblat edged toward opposition. Throughout the 1990s, Junblat worked as Minister for the Displaced to patronize a slow Christian return to the Shuf. By the late 1990s, only about one-fifth were back, and Christians complained about the money that went to pay off Druze squatters.³⁴ During and after the 2000 elections, Junblat courted the Maronites by slamming Syrian electoral interference. Given that his share in parliament since 1992 had rested on a Syrian endorsed gerrymander, this incurred special "Syrian anger."³⁵ In November, Junblat noted that the new Hariri government's policy statement did not mention Syrian military redeployment. Syrian officials indicated that he was *persona non grata* in Damascus. For the Syrians, Junblat compromised their portrayal of opposition as merely Maronite recidivism.

In March 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell signaled unchanged U.S. approval of Syrian hegemony when he declined to meet Patriarch Sfeir in Washington. The Lebanese/Syrian security machine struck almost immediately. Syrian troops entered the Shuf, and the family of Junblat's associate Akram Shuhayyib received a mail bomb. In August 2001, after Sfeir visited Junblat amid excited crowds, Lahoud's agents arrested activists and Bashar dispatched reinforcements. Syrian defense minister Mustafa Tlas stressed that Damascus "stands beside President Lahoud and brotherly Lebanese army commander Michel Suleiman" in facing "suspicious movements."³⁶ Neither

Lahoud nor Bashar consulted Hariri. Junblat sought cover from Hariri's Syrian friends, hosting Vice President Khaddam in Mukhtara in May 2002.

For Khaddam, Lahoud's treatment of Lebanon "as a barracks" was simply crass.³⁷ Hariri came under increasing siege. In 2002 and 2003, Lahoud frustrated the prime minister's privatization plans. Hariri also had problems with Hezbollah, which resented his reservations about its clashes with Israel in the Shebaa farms.³⁸ In November 2002, the prime minister obtained aid and debt restructuring worth \$7 billion, helped by his friend French President Jacques Chirac, but the financial relief simply enabled his adversaries to stall reform. In December, Bashar eliminated autonomy within Syrian military intelligence in Lebanon, replacing Ghazi Kana'an as overall chief with Rustum Ghazale, a crony of Bashar's brother-in-law Asef Shawkat. Like Khaddam, Kana'an was outside the new elite around Bashar after 2000.

The Anglo-American occupation of Iraq in March/April 2003 opened a new phase for Lebanon. Again departing from his father's practice, Bashar al-Asad improved relations with Saddam Hussein after 2000. Bashar's regime assisted Saddam to smuggle oil and break UN sanctions and profited by more than \$1 billion annually. In 2003, Syria rode the wave of hostility to the United States. Bashar allowed "volunteers" through Syria to fight the Americans, sheltered Iraqi Ba'athists, and criticized the George W. Bush administration in intemperate language. At the October 2003 Islamic summit in Malaysia, Bashar described the U.S. government as a "group of extremists" who used the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States "to assault humanitarian values and principles."³⁹

Lebanon was well locked down for the crisis to Syria's east. Confidence in Lahoud's security apparatus enabled a reduction of Syrian troops from 30,000 in 2000 to 16,000 in early 2003, probably the basic level for holding Syria's flank and keeping Hariri and Hezbollah in line. With the patriarch snubbed in Washington, a Syrian military draw down in Christian areas, and French and Vatican

disapproval of the Anglo-American takeover of Iraq, Maronite opposition to Syria faltered. In December 2003, Bashar al-Asad summoned the Lebanese prime minister to a conclave in Damascus.⁴⁰ The Kuwaiti daily *al-Ra'i al-Am* described Hariri's humiliation:

"Syrian officials and officers comprehensively attacked Hariri, accusing him of secretly meeting a high-ranking American official in Lebanon and working against Syria.... A close former aide of Hariri says that the prime minister felt ill and went to hospital before returning to Lebanon."⁴¹

Contemptuous of American staying power, Bashar took little heed of the shifting mood toward Syria in Washington. In December 2003, President Bush signed the "Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act," which was passed by Congress. Just as U.S. President Bush senior had opened the gate to Syrian hegemony in Lebanon in 1990, rewarding Syrian cooperation against Saddam Hussein, so President Bush junior revoked approval of this hegemony in response to Syrian facilitation of attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq. Bashar's inclination to impose extension of Lebanese President Lahoud's constitutional six year term, due to end in November 2004, brought matters to a head. For Bashar, Lahoud had the advantages of proven reliability and fusion of civilian and security authority. In the end, no Maronite alternative compared. In mid-2004, Hariri and Junblat rejected extension, the former exasperated by Lahoud's sabotage and the latter provoked by the security machine. The affair reconciled Washington and Paris, which were at odds over Iraq, and rekindled Maronite opposition to Syria. Bashar's monopolization of Lebanon infuriated President Chirac; at the French leader's initiative, France and the United States pondered UN Security Council action against Syria.

Bashar summoned Hariri on August 27, 2004, and ordered him to have the Lebanese government and parliament put aside Lebanon's constitution in favor of three more years for Lahoud. According to Hariri, the Syrian president threatened to "break Lebanon

over his [Hariri's] head."⁴² The shaken prime minister arrived back in his mountain chalet above Beirut declaring: "to them [the Syrians] we are all ants."⁴³ Fear secured Lahoud his extension, lowering opposition in parliament from fifty to twenty-nine members.⁴⁴ Faced with defiance of their appeals for a new Lebanese president, the United States and France co-sponsored the UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1559 of September 2, 2004. The resolution required the termination of Syria's twenty-eight-year military presence in Lebanon; the disbanding of private armies, principally the military wing of Hezbollah; and a normal Lebanese presidential election free of foreign pressure. Syria, Hezbollah, and President Lahoud scorned the resolution. Hariri relinquished the premiership on October 20, 2004, after a murder attempt on Druze politician Marwan Hamade, who had resigned as a minister to protest the Lahoud coup.⁴⁵ Under Umar Karami, the government became an appendage of the security apparatus. In November, Bashar sent Hezbollah's Nasrallah to persuade Junblat to behave himself, but the Druze leader escalated his rhetoric. In late January 2005, Junblat referred to "a very dangerous Syrian/Lebanese mafia" in a speech at l'Université Saint-Joseph.⁴⁶

Hariri initially played a backstage role in constructing an opposition coalition including his Mustaqbal (Future) Movement, Junblat's PSP, the Qurnat Shehwan bloc of Christian politicians, and the Free Patriotic Movement of Michel Aoun (still in exile). He planned to overturn the Syrian-backed government during the internationally monitored May 2005 elections and recover Lebanese independence.⁴⁷ He told the Iranian ambassador to France that his problem "was not Hezbollah but the Syrian presence and its operations."⁴⁸ Nasrallah, solidly aligned with Syria and Iran, would not have been impressed. Syria tried to sidestep UNSC resolution 1559 through rediscovery of the 1989 Ta'if call for redeployment to the Bija, but a February 2, 2005, opposition conclave in Beirut demanded total withdrawal of Syrian troops and intelligence agents from Lebanon. This clearly had Hariri's imprint.

After a February 10 mission to Damascus, UN envoy Terje Roed-Larsen warned Hariri that he feared for his safety.⁴⁹ Bashar reportedly told Roed-Larsen: “Hariri is playing dirty roles against Syria.”⁵⁰ Four days later, Rafiq al-Hariri and twenty-two others died in a truck bomb explosion that demolished most of a street. Fury swept Lebanon’s Sunni Muslims. Hariri’s friend Abd al-Halim Khaddam was the only prominent Syrian who dared attend the funeral, at which thousands chanted: “There is no God but God, and Asad is the enemy of God.”⁵¹ February 14, 2005, would prove a landmark date; the killers probably never imagined that the event would be other than a momentary sensation, such as had been previous political murders. No one would have predicted that within two months there would be no Syrian troops in Lebanon or that Lebanon’s affairs would become intertwined with international justice.

A TALE OF TWO CAMPS, 2005–2011

After the Hariri murder, large crowds assembled on Mondays in central Beirut to pillory the Lebanese and Syrian regimes. They were heavily bourgeois and Christian, and Bashar al-Asad sneered at them.⁵² The electric atmosphere, however, was too much for Prime Minister Karami, who resigned on February 28. A caretaker cabinet took over to organize the May/June parliamentary elections. Reacting, Hezbollah brought out its crowd in an overwhelmingly Shia demonstration of about half a million on March 8, 2005, a date that branded the Hezbollah-led coalition. The party expressed its solidarity with the Syrian regime, provoking the anti-Bashar camp. On March 14, approximately one million Sunnis, Christians, and Druze came to downtown Beirut, along with Shia who were prepared to defy the Party of God. General Aoun’s Christian supporters stood together with the Hariris and Junblats. The March 14 gathering marked the first month after the murder and appealed for justice, independence, and Syria’s departure from Lebanon.

The United States and France headed the chorus of international outrage. The UN

Security Council commissioned a preliminary investigation of the Hariri murder. The March 27 report accused Syria of creating the atmosphere of intimidation preceding the crime, charged the Syrian/Lebanese security machine with negligence and covering up evidence, and recommended a full international inquiry.⁵³ UNSC resolution 1595 of April 7, 2005, authorized such an inquiry to identify the murderers. In the special circumstances of early 2005--U.S. and French fury over the Lahoud extension and massive Lebanese agitation--the international community became committed for the first time to the pursuit of political murder. The scale of the reaction briefly unnerved the Syrian leadership. Bashar gave way on Syria’s presence in Lebanon, and by April 26, all Syrian soldiers and identifiable intelligence operatives had left the country. The March 14 “independence” front soon split, however, with Michel Aoun and his Maronite supporters resentful of the new Sunni/Druze preeminence in the Lebanese opposition to the Syrian regime.

Aoun returned from exile in May 2005 in a truculent mood, not improved by a miserly offer of parliamentary seats on the March 14 candidate allocations, the March 14 rejection of having him as president, and Junblat’s tactical alignment with Hezbollah against Aounist candidates. In the May/June parliamentary elections, the first postwar poll free of Syrian interference, March 14 minus Aoun gained 72 of 128 seats; Aoun and friends won the Maronite heartland with 21 seats; and the Hezbollah/Amal combination swept the mainly Shia districts, taking 35 seats. It was a broadly accurate reflection of popular weight and sectarian differentiation. The March 14 rump--the “new majority”--led the new government under Rafiq al-Hariri’s colleague Fuad Siniora as prime minister. The March 8 camp, including President Lahoud’s Christian nominees, agreed to a bloc of cabinet posts one short of the one-third necessary to veto major decisions. Aoun declined to join the government and made it clear that he would not supply the votes necessary to tip Lahoud out of office.

For March 14, the remainder of 2005, dominated by the UN inquiry and more political murders, was a perilous high tide. The UN International Independent Investigating Commission (UNIIC) began work in Beirut in June under Berlin prosecutor Detlev Mehlis. More murders and attempted murders of Lebanese critics of Syria emphasized that Lebanon's future depended on international resolve. Murder targets included Defense Minister Elias al-Murr, son-in-law of President Lahoud, who revealed his falling-out with Syria's departed supremo in Lebanon, Rustom Ghazale.⁵⁴ In the first UNIIC report in late October, Mehlis noted "converging evidence" that the Syrian/Lebanese security machine was behind the Hariri assassination.⁵⁵ On November 10, Bashar al-Asad termed Lebanon's governing majority a "factory" for conspiracies against Syria, and on December 12, the same day Mehlis submitted his second report, a bomb blast killed Jibran Tuwayni, *al-Nahar* publisher, and the leading Christian activist in the March 14 parliamentary bloc.⁵⁶

The second UNIIC report, again the unanimous view of all seven international prosecutors in the team, defined unnamed Syrian officials as "suspects."⁵⁷ The UN Security Council proposed a tribunal of international and Lebanese judges, sitting outside Lebanon, to indict and try those identified as responsible for the Hariri murder and multiplying associated crimes. Advised that he could no longer operate in Beirut because of death threats, Detlev Mehlis withdrew as UNIIC head in January 2006 and was replaced by Belgian prosecutor Serge Brammertz.⁵⁸ Although Syria and Hezbollah remained on the defensive in early 2006, the advantage shifted. In February, Michel Aoun met Hezbollah chief Hasan Nasrallah, and Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) joined the March 8 front, handing Syria's allies cross-communal credibility. Perversely, the prospect of an international tribunal relaxed UNIIC pressure on the Syrians. Brammertz backed away from indictments assessed by Mehlis as almost viable and concentrated on reviewing evidence.⁵⁹ Syria

and Hezbollah could see space for a counter-strike just when a Lebanese "national dialogue" forced a consensus endorsing justice for Hariri and subjected Hezbollah to hitherto unheard-of questioning of its private army. Brammertz's June 2006 report focused on Syria and suggested a "multi-layered" murder conspiracy.⁶⁰ It was time for Hezbollah to turn the tables on March 14, to reiterate the primacy of resistance to Israel and deflate the threat of the Hariri case.

On July 12, 2006, Hezbollah raided across the Israel/Lebanon border in the Galilee, far from the disputed Shebaa farms, kidnapping two Israeli soldiers and killing three. Hezbollah claimed this was to compel release of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners, and Nasrallah later asserted he had not anticipated a large scale Israeli response. The latter was disingenuous because a challenge to Israel on its own territory of such a scale was certain to bring a conflagration. In the event, the destruction may have gone beyond Hezbollah's calculation of a small war for its convenience, but that is beside the point. The hostilities that Hezbollah triggered lasted five weeks, during which Israel used aerial bombardment and ground assault to degrade Hezbollah, causing devastation and approximately one thousand deaths in the Shia areas of Lebanon. Hezbollah suffered painful casualties among its small professional force but fired missiles into Israel until the cease-fire. It fought well and hid its losses, and its publicity organs trumpeted the "divine victory."

After the August 14, 2006, cease-fire, the struggle within Lebanon between the March 14 and March 8 camps intensified. Under the March 14 banner, most non-Shia Lebanese resented Hezbollah's war decision in disregard of the Lebanese government. The balance was ambiguous. The government, with its March 14 majority, survived. UNSC resolution 1701 fingered Hezbollah for initiating the fighting and reiterated the demand for an end to private armies. The party had to accept a boosted UNIFIL and Lebanese army deployment to the border with Israel. Most Lebanese Shia remained loyal to Hezbollah, although it

would be perilous for the party again to plunge them into the maelstrom. Hezbollah received new weaponry from Syria; the army did not dare challenge the party; and Iran bankrolled both civilian reconstruction and a new line of missile bunkers north of the Litani River.

On November 10, 2006, the draft UN protocol for a mixed international/Lebanese murder tribunal arrived in Beirut for approval by the Lebanese government and parliament. Rafiq al-Hariri's son Sa'ad, the March 14 leader, placed a copy on his father's grave. Hezbollah, Amal, and other pro-Syrian ministers resigned to derail official endorsement, but the government used its two-thirds quorum to pass the tribunal protocol. Hezbollah and its allies declared the government illegitimate and began street agitation. Prime Minister Siniora's rump cabinet endured from November 2006 until May 2008. The murder machine reappeared with assassinations of three more March 14 parliamentarians. Siniora's vindication came in June 2007; ignoring Bashar al-Asad's threats of violence in Lebanon, the UN Security Council bypassed the paralyzed Lebanese parliament and unilaterally established the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL).⁶¹ An uprising of Sunni Islamists in the Nahr al-Barid Palestinian refugee camp near Tripoli, involving Syrian military intelligence, promptly followed.⁶² The Lebanese army overcame the rebels by September, but their leader slipped back to Syria. Even with Palestinian population growth limited by emigration, the larger refugee camps remained lawless islands beyond the Lebanese state. The facilities of Syrian-aligned Palestinian groups, such as the PFLP-GC, infringed Lebanese sovereignty on the Lebanese/Syrian border, providing staging posts for armed infiltration.⁶³

Emile Lahoud departed office in November 2007, leaving a six-month presidential vacuum. Blocked on civilian options, March 14 proposed army commander Michel Suleiman for president. March 8 accepted his candidacy but refused his election unless they obtained the veto third in a new government. Hezbollah and Syria viewed Suleiman as a

weak person whom they could push around. Murder took a new twist with terrorization of Lebanon's military and investigative apparatus. On December 12, 2007, and January 25, 2008, car bombs killed, respectively, General François al-Hajj, an independent-minded officer likely to become army chief, and Captain Wissam Eid, head of communications investigations in the Hariri case. In parallel, a new president of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, sought a "realist" deal with Bashar, who could also look forward to a more accommodating U.S. president in early 2009.

In May 2008, the Siniora government confronted Hezbollah and tested Western backing by dismissing the Hezbollah aligned Shia officer in charge of airport security and launching a probe of the party's communications network. Hezbollah announced a threat to the "resistance" by those servicing Israel, and on 8–9 May, the party and Syria's armed clients invaded mainly Sunni quarters of West Beirut.⁶⁴ Hezbollah's "operation smashing the balance" [*amaliyat kasr al-tawazun*] demonstrated that the party would assault problematic Lebanese. Receiving no Western support, the government reversed its decisions. The Arab League then brokered a settlement in Doha. Suleiman became president, praising the "resistance," and March 8 achieved the blocking third in a new Siniora cabinet.⁶⁵ Thereafter, March 14 retained its parliamentary majority in the mid-2009 elections, but new Prime Minister Sa'ad al-Hariri became politically crippled when Druze leader Walid Junblat took his bloc out of March 14 in early 2010. Junblat, a bitter critic of the Syrian regime in 2005–2006, was convinced by 2009 that Syria and Iran had the upper hand and that the policy of the new U.S. President, Barack Obama--to "engage" Bashar al-Asad--meant that the West would betray its Lebanese friends. He reversed his positions and reconciled with Bashar and Hasan Nasrallah.

Sa'ad al-Hariri had no choice as prime minister of a "national unity government" but to go to Damascus in December 2009 to meet the Syrian president, whom he regarded as

complicit in his father's murder. The STL came into existence in The Hague in March 2009. The special tribunal's Canadian prosecutor, Daniel Bellemare, pursued telecommunications evidence that implicated Hezbollah in the Hariri murder. After 13 incidents, 58 deaths, and at least 335 injured, the post-Cold War world's most dramatic political murder series ended with the Eid killing in early 2008. This coincided with the assassination in Damascus of Hezbollah intelligence chief Imad Mughniya, possibly the link between Hezbollah and the Syrian leadership in the chain of responsibility.

In July 2010, Hezbollah leader Nasrallah said he expected STL charges against members of his organization. Hezbollah denounced the tribunal as an Israeli-American plot and, together with the Syrian regime, required that the Lebanese government disown it. Sa'ad al-Hariri refused, and on January 13, 2011, the March 8 camp left the government, forcing the prime minister to resign. Six months later, on June 13, Najib Mikati, the Sunni prime ministerial nominee of Hezbollah, Aoun, and Junblat, formed a government subordinate to Hezbollah. By mid-2011, however, Hezbollah and the Syrian regime faced a crisis that overshadowed their Lebanese coup. On June 29, the STL officially delivered murder indictments against Hezbollah members. Concurrently, the savagery of the Syrian regime against a popular uprising in its own country that began in March 2011 provoked repudiation of Bashar al-Asad by most Syrians. Hezbollah, party of the oppressed, backed repression in Syria. Within Lebanon, Prime Minister Mikati could not defy his own community by following Hezbollah against either the Syrian uprising or the STL.

Overall, the lack of social responsibility of the Lebanese high bourgeoisie alongside Hezbollah weapons hindered the progress of the Lebanese state into the new century. Modest gains for public education and social services in the 1960s were lost during wartime disruption. Neither received priority after 1990. This was the period of Shia growth and concentration in the southern suburbs of

Beirut, and Shia were left to themselves. The state similarly absented itself from the Sunni north. Christians could fall back on an older private education system, but many could not afford it.

As for the judiciary, Lebanon developed decent civil and criminal courts on the French model, a legacy of the mandate and the mid-twentieth century, but terrorization and dilapidation after 1975 meant they lost credibility. Only international justice in the shape of the STL offers hope for renewed judicial authority in Lebanon.

Like its public institutions, Lebanon's economy after 2005 was makeshift. Hezbollah's July 2006 military adventure resulted in damages of around \$3.6 billion, but through 2006, \$5 billion of émigré remittances flowed into the country.⁶⁶ This gave Lebanon the second highest remittances-to-GDP ratio in the world, at 22.3 percent.⁶⁷ Lebanon's Diaspora, its robust banks, and the flow of money from the Arab oil states and Iran into the rival camps guaranteed that the country could bump along. The conservative proclivities of the banks, which avoided exotic financial derivatives, and surging Gulf Arab tourism, supporting everything from malls to prostitution, floated Lebanon through the 2008–2009 global recession. In environmental terms, the country remained a shambles, with shocking air and water pollution and landscape degradation.

No one took seriously Beirut's vulnerability to a major earthquake. Because of public debt, the social facilities phase of reconstruction never arrived. Tripoli and the north endure "extreme poverty."⁶⁸ Employment discrimination against Palestinians has continued, and many Syrian workers fled the country after the Hariri murder, returning after the Syrian military departure. The most callously treated in recent years have been the 200,000 migrant domestic workers from South and South East Asia. A September 2010 Human Rights Watch report detailed abuse and slave labor conditions.⁶⁹ Each of the Lebanese political blocs that emerged in 2005–2006 was cross sectarian. Differences related to external associations of

each camp and clamping down on assassins. March 14 looked to the West and conservative Arabs, emphasized freedoms, and wanted private armies disbanded but offered no social development policy. March 8 looked to the Syrian ruling clique and Iran and acquiesced in Hezbollah's agenda: supremacy of "resistance" to Israel over all else and denigration of international justice. There was no economic policy difference between the camps after 2005.⁷⁰ March 8 has a "new rich" flavor, especially Hezbollah's backers in the Shia Diaspora, whereas March 14 draws on the secularized bourgeoisie of Beirut, including Shia. Both mass retinues encompass all classes. March 14 has reached into the poorest part of Lebanon--the Sunni north--but without doing the north any good.

Cross-sectarian dimensions could not disguise Sunni/Shia sensitivity. Sunnis clustered in March 14 behind Prime Ministers Fuad Siniora (2005–2009) and Sa'ad al-Hariri (2009–2011); locked into siege thinking, most Shia supported Hezbollah or Amal, primarily the former. Sunni humiliation in May 2008 took Beirut beyond the worst days of Sunni hostility to the Shia assertion of the 1980s. Salafists and other Islamists gained Sunni support as March 14 seemed ineffectual. Most scorned Shia. The Christian 35 percent of Lebanon had the casting political vote, but it was split between the Kata'ib, the LF, and Patriarch Sfeir, who went with March 14, and the Aounists, who joined March 8, embracing their former Syrian enemy. Sour Christian defeatism negated Christian defense of pluralism. What could be said--whatever Maronite irritation there was about Sunni advantage after 1990--was that Christians and Sunnis agreed on arms and the state. An April 2006 opinion survey indicated that more than 80 percent of Christians and Sunnis, but only 40 percent of Shia, endorsed a state monopoly of force.⁷¹

Could most Shia and most other Lebanese accommodate one another? Hezbollah's absolutism was not promising, nor was the absence within the March 14 camp of any imaginative vision of a new Lebanon. Such a vision implied restructured politics, perhaps a

legislature mixing communal and non-communal representation added to rotation of executive positions. It was intolerable that Shia, Druze, and non-Maronite Christians--half the population--could never be president or prime minister. Sunni and Christian disdain and Shia sensitivity stiffened Hezbollah's militarized autonomy. The party's melding of Iranian support with communal revenues gave it financial viability. Its education activities, health clinics, care of families of martyrs, and reconstruction aid after the 2006 warfare targeted groups neglected by the state.

Facing international murder indictments in late 2011, Hezbollah has an indulgent Shia public. Party leader Nasrallah, deputy leader Na'im Qasim, a former chemistry teacher, and Hezbollah's al-Manar satellite television station parade victimhood. The question is whether Shia will stay with Hezbollah through the party's confrontation with international justice, regime change in Syria, and revelations of financial irregularities.⁷² Five years after Hezbollah's 2006 warfare with Israel, Lebanese Shia cannot endure repetition; the party's remote control of government has excited hostility in the rest of Lebanon; and Shia competitors endure. Fadlallah's charitable institutions live on after his death in 2010.⁷³ Leaders of Amal, the party's atrophied partner, detest Hezbollah. Old leading clans, together with leftists persecuted by both Hezbollah and Amal, nurse their bitterness. Even so, Hezbollah has Shia insecurity and the Iranian theocracy to help it survive a shock loss of the Asad regime, its Arab patron. More broadly, transformation in Syria promises to convulse the affairs of all Lebanon's little worlds.

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NOTES

¹ Kassir, *La Guerre du Liban*, 159, citing remarks by Khaddam to the Kuwaiti newspaper

al-Ra'i al-Am in a January 7, 1976 interview.

² For full text, see William Harris, "Lebanon," in *Middle East Contemporary Survey, Vol. XV, 1991*, ed. Ami Ayalon (Boulder: Westview, 1993), 570–72.

³ Sarkis Na'um in *al-Nahar*, May 21, 1991.

⁴ For full text, see William Harris, "Lebanon," 572–73.

108. *Ibid.*, 150.

109. *Ibid.*, 143.

⁵ *Lebanon GDP per capita* (purchasing power parity), accessed August 21, 2010, [http://www.indexmundi.com/lebanon/gdp_per_capita_\(ppp\).html](http://www.indexmundi.com/lebanon/gdp_per_capita_(ppp).html).

⁶ Fuad Da'bul in *al-Anwar* daily, Beirut, March 23, 1992.

⁷ *Lebanon GDP per capita*.

⁸ *Lebanese Ministry of Finance--General Debt Overview*, accessed August 21, 2010, <http://www.finance.gov.lb/Public+Finances/Public+Debt+Overview/>.

⁹ Makdisi, *The Lesson of Lebanon*, 119.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹² Chalcraft, *The Invisible Cage*, 145–48, considers the wildly different estimates and the difficulty of establishing even rough numbers.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 143–44.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 163–69.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 188–92.

¹⁶ *Al-Anwar*, November 28, 1992.

¹⁷ See *Al-Anwar*, November 8, 1992, for the expenditure on the government palace.

¹⁸ For discussion of the behavior of Syrian military intelligence in Lebanon, including abuses

of human rights, see *Human Rights Watch*, "Syria/Lebanon: An Alliance Beyond the Law,"

May 11, 1997, accessed August 24, 2010, <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/1997/05/11/syrialebanon-alliance-beyond-law>.

¹⁹ See a careful, detailed argument in Gary Gambill, "Syria after Lebanon: Hooked on Lebanon," *The Middle East Quarterly* 12 no. 3

(Fall 2005): 35–42. Gambill considers kickbacks

from government spending, drug trading, money laundering, and smuggling, among other activities. He notes the unpublished UN (2001) corruption assessment report on Lebanon, which estimated a loss of \$1.5 billion per annum (10 percent of GDP) in bribes and kickbacks.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

²¹ Ghassan Charbel in *al-Wasat*, February 3, 1997.

²² Shaery-Eisenlohr, *Shi'ite Lebanon*, 64–65.

²³ Author's interview with Abd al-Halim Khaddam, December 12, 2009.

²⁴ *Al-Hayat*, October 2, 1998. "Kana'an then raised his hand, saying that the vote would take

place by a raising of hands and would not be secret.... Karami stood and his color changed....

The party broke up early. Presidential hopefuls departed with their wives, one complaining of tiredness, another saying he had a headache."

²⁵ Sarkis Na'um in *al-Nahar*, 22 August, and *al-Nahar*, August 19, 1996.

²⁶ *Al-Hayat*, November 30, 1998.

²⁷ *Mideast Mirror*, June 16, 1999.

²⁸ *Al-Hayat*, December 17, 1998.

²⁹ *Al-Hayat*, February 10, 2000.

³⁰ *Ha'aretz*, March 28, 2000, reported: "The assessment in the IDF is that the failure of the Geneva summit greatly increases the prospect of a unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon." Also see Dan Margalit in *Ha'aretz*, March 30, 2000.

³¹ See, for example, International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance, 2003–2004* (London: IISS, 2003), 114–15. The IISS estimated Hezbollah's core force as 300 to 500 regulars with 2,000 other trained fighters in support. It listed the active personnel of the Lebanese armed services as numbering 72,000, including 22,600 conscripts.

³² Ibrahim Bayram report in *al-Wasat*, October 23, 2000.

³³ See *Al-Nahar*, September 21, 2000, for the text of the council of Maronite bishops communiqué assailing the Syrian regime's "total hegemony."

³⁴ In March 1997, Patriarch Sfeir claimed that only 20 percent had returned--*al-Hayat*, March 27, 1997. In a squabble between Junblat and Hariri in July 1998, Hariri remarked that Junblat's "war language" made refugees reluctant to return and that "the refugee fund is not a channel for camp followers, protégés, and villains.... How can Junblat ask the fund to compensate 1,250 families in a village with 280 houses?"--*al-Hayat*, July 6, 1998.

³⁵ Walid Shuqayr in *al-Hayat*, August 26, 2000.

³⁶ Tlas gave Bashar's address at an officers' graduation ceremony--*al-Hayat*, August 20, 2001.

³⁷ Author's interview with Abd al-Halim Khaddam, December 12, 2009.

³⁸ In June 2002, Hezbollah supporters roughed up a Hariri aide at a bridge inauguration function. See *al-Hayat*, 27 June 2002 ("Crisis between Hariri and Hezbollah with the beginning

of work on the Awza'i bridge project").

³⁹ *Al-Hayat*, October 17, 2003.

⁴⁰ Nicholas Blanford, *Killing Mr. Lebanon: The Assassination of Rafik Hariri and its Impact on the Middle East* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 92–93.

⁴¹ Samih Nazih in *al-Ra'i al-Am* daily, Kuwait, October 15, 2005.

⁴² UN Security Council. S/2005/203, *Report of the Fact-finding Mission to Lebanon inquiring into the causes, circumstances and consequences of the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri*, March 24, 2005, page 5, accessed September 19, 2011, <http://www.undemocracy.com/S-2005-203>.

⁴³ Nicholas Blanford, Richard Beeston, and James Bone in *The Times*, London, March 18, 2005.

⁴⁴ See cases of intimidation of parliamentary deputies cited in *al-Nahar*, 31 August and September 1, 2004. For numerical attrition, see *al-Nahar*, 1 and September 3, 2004.

⁴⁵ Consult David Hirst, *Beware of Small States: Lebanon, Battleground of the Middle East* (New York: Nation Books, 2010), 303–04. Hirst, based in Beirut and a long-time, highly respected

Middle East correspondent of *The Guardian*, reports that the Syrian leadership told Hariri "to step down as prime minister."

⁴⁶ *Al-Nahar*, January 27, 2005.

⁴⁷ Randa Taki al-Din in *al-Hayat*, February 18, 2005, and *al-Hayat*, February 21, 2005.

⁴⁸ *Al-Hayat*, February 21, 2005.

⁴⁹ *The Times*, March 18, 2005.

⁵⁰ *Al-Qabas* daily, Kuwait, October 29, 2005, on Roed-Larsen's testimony to the UN murder inquiry--which was held back from publication in the October 20, 2005 UN International Independent Investigating Commission (UNIIC) report.

⁵¹ *Al-Nahar*, February 17, 2005.

⁵² Michael Young, *The Ghosts of Martyr's Square: An Eyewitness Account of Lebanon's Life*

Struggle (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 50.

⁵³ UN Security Council Report. S/2005/203, *supra* note 140 [endnote 42].

⁵⁴ Elias al-Murr interview with Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC) television, September 27, 2005.

⁵⁵ UNIIC, *Unedited Report of the International Independent Investigating Commission Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1595 (2005)*, paragraph 203, Detlev Mehlis (commissioner), Beirut, October 19, 2005, accessed September 19, 2011, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/syria/mehlis.report.doc.

⁵⁶ For Bashar's 10 November speech at Damascus University, see *al-Hayat*, November 11, 2005. The Syrian president labeled Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Siniora "the hired slave of a hired slave," the latter being Rafiq al-Hariri's son Sa'ad.

⁵⁷ UNIIC, S/2005/775/12 Dec 2005 *Second Report*, paragraph 26.

⁵⁸ Detlev Mehlis in discussion with the author on the circumstances of his decision not to continue beyond his initial six-month contract, May 2009.

⁵⁹ Detlev Mehlis was of the view that UNIIC had sufficient evidence by early 2006 to indict at least one senior Syrian and one Lebanese--comment to the author, May 2009.

⁶⁰ UNIIC, S/2006/355/10 June 2006 *Fourth Report*, paragraphs 58 and 104.

⁶¹ See United Nations, *Official U.N. transcript of the meeting of U.N. Secretary-General Ban Kimoon with Bashar al-Asad. Damascus, April 24, 2007*, 3–4. According to the UN note-taker,

Bashar warned: “Instability would intensify if the Special Tribunal were established. This was particularly the case if the Tribunal were established under Chapter 7 of the Charter. This could easily ignite a conflict which would result in civil war [in Lebanon] and provoke divisions between Sunni and Shi’a from the Mediterranean to the Caspian Sea.... If the tribunal was achieved via Chapter 7 it would have grave consequences that could not be contained in Lebanon.... The present government in Lebanon was not legal and the Syrian people hated the March 14 Movement.”

⁶² In *al-Hayat*, May 21, 2007, the respected journalist Muhammad Shuqayr, with information from Palestinian informants in northern Lebanon, named Syrian intelligence officers who were coordinating the Fath al-Islam jihadist group in Tripoli and Nahr al-Barid. *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* daily, London, June 9, 2007, reported from Jordanian judicial sources that Fath al-Islam leader Shakir al-Abssi ran a training camp in Syria “to house and equip suicide bombers and elements involved in al-Qaeda before their dispatch to battle in Iraq,” this before he moved from Syria to Lebanon in 2005. *Al-Nahar*, 22 and August 23, 2007, interviewed former prisoners in Syrian jails on Syrian intelligence **mobilization** of imprisoned Sunni jihadists (“Have Syrian jails become a ‘land of support’ for jihad in Iraq and Lebanon?”).

⁶³ United Nations, *Report of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team (LIBAT) to the U.N. Security Council, June 22, 2007*, accessed September 25, 2010, <http://www.clhrf.com/unresagreements/1701.rport22.6.07.pdf>. LIBAT, a UN group of border

police experts, concluded: “The presence of armed Palestinian camps in the border zone constitutes a major obstacle to the notion of border security” (paragraph 168). Regarding one such camp on the Rus ridge, LIBAT noted: “The Palestinian area extends from Lebanese territory into Syria, with the official borderline running through the area.... The completely uncontrolled area creates very good conditions for illegal and unhindered cross border activities recently documented by information... from the Lebanese Government” (paragraph 142).

⁶⁴ *Al-Nahar*, May 5, 2008, quoted Hezbollah parliamentary deputy Hasan Fadlallah as warning that anyone questioning Hezbollah’s communications--part of “the weaponry of the resistance”--was “serving the Israeli enemy.”

⁶⁵ “Suleiman: The Resistance is a Source of Strength for Lebanon,” *al-Hayat*, July 8, 2008.

⁶⁶ Nimrod Raphaeli, “Lebanese Economy between Violence and Political Stalemate,” in *Lebanon: Liberation, Conflict, and Crisis*, ed. Barry Rubin (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 115, 120.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁶⁸ Heba Laithy, Khalid Abu-Ismaïl, and Kamal Hamdan, *International Poverty Centre Country Study 13: Poverty, Growth and Income Distribution in Lebanon* (Brasilia: International Poverty Centre, U.N. Development Programme, 2008), accessed September 23, 2010, <http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/IPCCountryStudy13.pdf>.

⁶⁹ *Human Rights Watch*, “Without Protection: How the Lebanese Justice System fails Migrant Domestic Workers,” September 16, 2010, accessed September 23, 2010,

<http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2010/09/16/wit-hout-protection?>

⁷⁰ For a Hezbollah view, see Tim Cavanaugh interview with parliamentary deputy Muhammad

Fneish, “Meet Hizbollah: The Party of God’s MP Talks About Islam, Iraq, and the War on Terror,” *Reason Magazine*, March 11, 2004: “The vision that the government does everything for the people is the wrong vision. The government should be taking a limited role in social services.” Accessed September 23, 2010, <http://reason.com/archives/2004/03/11/meethizbollah>.

⁷¹ Statistics Lebanon Ltd. sampled four hundred residents throughout Lebanon, 19–April 24, 2006. The relevant question was: “Do you think the Lebanese army should be the only armed forces in Lebanon?” Full report in *al-Nahar*, May 18, 2006.

⁷² For an example of financial irregularities, see Robert Worth, “Billion--Dollar Pyramid Scheme Rivets Lebanon,” *New York Times*, September 15, 2009, on \$1 billion of losses to Shia caused by Hezbollah-associated Saleh Ezzedine.

⁷³ Shaery-Eisenlohr, *Shi’ite Lebanon*, 60–65 and 74–76, gives partial statistics for numbers of Students--all Shia--in Fadlallah (14,300), Hezbollah (12,091), and Amal (9,176) private schools in the early 2000s. Fadlallah’s investment of alms income in education created what remains a formidable apparatus.