TO THEM WE ARE ALL ANTS:
LEBANON- FROM INDEPENDENCE TO UNCERTAINTY

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of the Lebanese state is marred by the sectarian order established by the National Pact at the time of Lebanese independence in 1943. As of 2011 the current political crisis in Lebanon has polarized the Sunni community supporting the March 14 party and the Shi’a population supporting the March 8 party. Many of their issues have been dragged across history with no clear, long term, solution to address them. As a result, these problems have culminated in today’s political crisis, adding a new dynamic with the emergence of Hizbullah as a major player in the Middle East. This thesis examines the historical roots of Lebanese independence as a tool for understanding the circumstances allowing Hizbullah to gain prominence. Then it aims to analyze recent historical events between the end of the civil war and the present day to draw conclusions about the current state of affairs. Through this historical and political analysis, I will show the reader that over the period of Lebanese history, the opportunity to reform the country and remove foreign influence has been thwarted by the sectarian divisions. I will conclude by analyzing the most current state of affairs and what it means for Lebanon’s future.
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In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

For my mother, Leila Raouda, without whom none of this is possible

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It is because of these people and many more that I owe my gratitude for this work. Their direct and indirect contributions are the reason I am successful, and for that I will be eternally grateful. This work is a historical analysis of past events intended to provide a framework for a choice that needs to be made by the Lebanese people. It takes a vision to outline peace, but a nation to see it through.

“Those who have come to hate should leave now, for in their hatred they only betray themselves” – Terry Goodkind
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"Your Lebanon is a political riddle that time tries to solve, but my Lebanon is hills rising in splendor toward the blue skies." -- Khalil Gibran
On January 25th 2011 Najib Mikati, a Sunni-Muslim native of Tripolli, took the office of the Premiershipt in Lebanon. His appointment to the position came when members of the March 8 coalition resigned from the cabinet with the support of the Presidential appointee, effectively giving the resistance enough seats to collapse the government of Prime Minister Saad el Hariri. This is merely the latest political setback plaguing the Lebanese government, as the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, intended to investigate the death of former Prime Minister Rafiq el Hariri, is the Hizbollah tactic *de jour* for dividing the government. The people of Lebanon have grown accustom to going about their lives with an ineffective government, where the struggle for power is a seesaw of false hope. The government turmoil in Lebanon carries a causal link with the foundation of the confessional system at the time of Lebanese independence which supports the tribal theopolitical dichotomy that has hindered Lebanese growth and stability. The roots of this system carry important symbolic and practical meaning in the destabilization of Lebanese politics and have allowed for Hizbollah to become a prominent organization in the Arab world. The effective use of history to understand and dissect current politics by exploring the roots of the Lebanese confessional system at the time of independence in 1943, how it relates to the impending crisis, as well the geopolitical nature of Lebanon is the purpose of this first chapter.

Understanding the strategic value and geography of the country is a key factor in the historical evolution of the state. Lebanon’s strategic importance is derived from its geographic location on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, giving the country easy access to critical water routes that make it an excellent hub for trade and natural resources. Its many ports clustered across its coastline enable the development of the
country and played a critical role in its eventual nickname ‘the Paris of the Middle East’. Unique in its territory, only a couple of hours separate Lebanon’s coastal line from several key mountain ranges that have long served its inhabitants as a refuge from religious persecution and a beautiful home for communities seeking seclusion. Lebanon’s geography plays two important roles in the country’s history. First it serves as an alluring strategic port for any country seeking to gain wealth and influence in the Mediterranean; explaining the desire of Western and Arab attempts at controlling the territory. Second, Lebanon’s diverse topography allows for the growth of different communities, creating the circumstances and diversity of identities that currently exists with the country, differentiating it drastically from the rest of the Middle East.

‘The Phoenix’ is the title that has been bestowed upon the historic lands of Lebanon. Often destroyed by earthquakes or surrounded by armies, the land has absorbed the sweat and blood of its people for decades. Massacres and war are a common theme in Lebanon dating back to the Crusades and more recently including the deadly 1975-90 civil war which has been accompanied by five Israeli invasions and thirty four years of Syrian military hegemony. Beirut’s location and laissez faire economic philosophy allow for economic viability that is in part dependent on Syrian access routes and thus normal relations with the country.¹ These access routes have often served Syria as political bargaining chips not just with the Lebanese government, but also Israel, Iran, and the United States. Lebanon’s geography has it nearly surrounded by Syrian territory and Damascus has not hesitated to use the multiple access points to supply materials and weapons (or Iranian weapons) to its allies (most notably Hizbollah). During the civil war

Syria used these points to maintain the strength of its allies and ensure its continued presence in Lebanese territory. In July 2005, when the Syrians were expelled from the country, Syria closed its boarders to remind the first cabinet the importance of strong Syrian-Lebanese relations.²

Lebanon is home to 17 different religious groups that exist collectively within one state but whom, for the most part, live in smaller communities across the country that is dominated by one or two different religions. The major sects that divide the country include Maronite Christians, Orthodox Christians, Sunni Muslims, Shiaa Muslims, and the Druze. To develop an understanding of the composition of the state and the distribution of these sects, an analysis of the latest census would be exceptionally helpful for any reader. Unfortunately the latest figures for religious population distribution date back to December 31st 1944 and are no longer very accurate. They do, however, give you a general idea of the composition of different districts in Lebanon as the majority sects continue to live within their districts. Image one gives a detailed breakdown of this.³

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² *The foreign policy of Arab states.* P. 308
The Maronite Christians are the most distinctive and instrumental in bringing about Lebanese independence under the confessional system. The Maronite Christians are followers of the patron saint of the Maronite Church Saint Marun, adhering to Catholicism and the Roman Church. In pre-independent Lebanon, under the Syrian and Ottoman controlled régime, the Maronites were a persecuted minority group and have thus always been attached to their spiritual and political leaders. In the middle of the nineteenth century the Druze and Maronites in the mountainous regions of Lebanon clashed over the growing political power of the Christians leaving thousands dead and converting the community into a small farmer people. The history of the massacres continues to be passed down through generations and remains a reason why the Maronites are skeptical of other religious groups. The decision of the Maronites to advocate for an independent Lebanon in the 1940s, therefore, was practically contingent upon ensuring that they held the political power within the country. Despite this
seemingly isolationist policy, the Maronites are generally strong proponents of international collaboration and hold strong ties with the West, the French in particular. In the past Maronite historians have stressed the important role of the Christians in Lebanon and often times have advocated for the creation of a Maronite state divided from Islam and the Arab world.

The second largest Christian community is the Greek Orthodox. They affiliate themselves more with Eastern Christianity, opposed to the infallibility of the Pope in Rome and instead, loyal to the spiritual importance of Moscow. These Christians have been friendly to the notion of Pan-Arabism as they see themselves as more distinctively ‘Arab’ recalling their origins as Arab tribes. In the 1940’s, Antoun Sa’adeh, a Greek Orthodox and the founder of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) criticized the Phalangists, the Maronites’ major political party and militia organization, for “isolationist reactionism” instead of working with all their strength for amassing the forces of sectarianism and rallying them around the concept of the religious state.”

In modern Lebanon the Greek Orthodox community is the most urbanized and best educated. They constitute much of the financial elite and are least comfortable with a nation dominated by a sect with close ties to Rome. They, however, have often acted in a mediatory role between the different Lebanese sects.

The Sunni Muslims constitute a major fraction of the Lebanese population with large concentrations in the coastal towns of Beirut, Tripolli, and Saida. When the decision to partition Lebanon from Syria was made after the first world war, the Sunnis, who enjoyed

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4 The Precarious Republic p. 28
5 Khashan, Hilal. Inside the Lebanese Confessional Mind. Lanham, MD: University of America, 1992 p.13
6 The Precarious Republic. P.29
relatively privilege status under the Ottomans were hesitant and concerned about the their future. The Sunni Lebanese are not dominated by a single class of people but rather span the spectrum of the classes including a small class of large land owners, professional and commercial bourgeoisie, as well as a number of peasants and workers. In the current political status the Sunnis feel entitled to power and authority within the government and a challenge to that control is felt as a threat to the Sunni community. The authority that the Sunnis enjoyed during Ottoman rule and in pre-formed Lebanon compels part of the Sunni muslim community to desire the formation of a pan-Arab state where the Sunni community would have a clear majority.

The mountainous Druze community is an offshoot of Shi’a Islam and probably the closest knit community in Lebanon. The Druze faith has endured since the ninth century and is considered to be a very secretive religion dividing the people into two categories: “uqqal” or the initiated, these members are aware of the tenets and protect the religion through their loyalty to each other and the faith. The “juhhal” are the uninitiated and do not possess a potent command of the religion. Instead they are given a strict religious outline of moral and ethical behavior by which to live.\textsuperscript{7} The Druze believe that the Fatimid Caliph Hakim, ruling Egypt between 996 and 1021, was the tenth and most perfect reincarnation of God.\textsuperscript{8} The Druze are united, however, more by a social contract of common traditions, culture, and geography as opposed to a strict moral code. The community that they inhabit in the mountainous regions and their loyalty to the Jumblatt family reveals this tendency. In the political sphere the Druze have managed to serve as

\textsuperscript{7} Inside the confessional Mind. P.16
\textsuperscript{8} The Precarious Republic. P.32
the swing vote between the Shi’a supported March 8 political coalition and the Sunni backed March 14 movement on most political issues and often changing alliances.

The final major sect is the Shi’a Muslims who inhabit the southern region of Lebanon bearing the brunt of the hardship caused by the Israeli invasions and wars which allowed for the evolution of Hizbollah, currently a militaristic and political group that has given the Shi’a community power and influence not only in Lebanon but the entire Middle East. The Shi’a community often feels ignored by the political process within Lebanon and for a majority of their history in Lebanon this is certainly the case. Shi’a writers blame the Maronites and Sunni Muslims for their arrogant treatment of the Shi’a population. This sentiment was particularly rampant after the civil war when the government looked to rebuild Beirut and made little effort to improve the economic situation of the South. The Shi’a community turned inwards towards the Amal and Hizbollah movements for support within the community and Hizbollah has emerged as a political powerhouse that is working within the confessional system to grab political power.

While no sect, region, or family coalition dominates the majority of the population, the confessional system and religious alliances create an issue of national identity for the country. Members of the community turn to their local leaders for responsibilities that should to be provided and guaranteed by the government. Despite a common history of persecution, however, these minority groups have failed to unite as each community has enjoyed a high degree of cultural autonomy. This cultural autonomy stems from a collective cultural emphasis on the role of family within an individual’s life. The role of the family manifests itself as an integral source of political power, economic and financial support, security, and social interaction that is all carried within an individual’s
name. From a name most Lebanese can identify the individual’s family background that clues them not only onto their religious and political views, but more importantly the area from where their family originates in the country. Families, like an individual, are then tied to their community through religious ties. Religion then dictates an individual’s cultural traditions, history, law, marriage, and rights. Rather than unity to the state, the Lebanese people use religion and social affiliations as their primary means of unification. Understanding the complexities of Lebanese politics, therefore, requires the student of history to shy away from a single nation model, in favor of a model rooted in international politics. In Lebanon, as in the international community, there is no single arbiter of conflict with a monopoly over the instruments of force that can be used to keep members of the community in check and enforce international laws. This analogy may seem strange to a state with a full legal sovereignty, a police force, and modern army. The truth, however, is that the state in Lebanon is not strong and centralized enough to control each community within the country, making the government’s legitimacy dependent on the unity of local community leaders that wield considerable forces and can assert their autonomy if their interests are threatened, thereby undermining the government, the most obvious example of this theory is the current tension between Hizbollah and the Lebanese government. Just as in the international system, Lebanon, therefore, is not united under one actor that can take control of the entire system at a moment’s notice. Instead a decision based on discussions between local leaders must be pursued in order to ensure the stability of the country. The autonomy and influence of local leaders, moreover, makes them more susceptible and inclined to, similar to the

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9 The Precarious Republic
10 Ibid
international community, create ties with foreign countries. This serves a duel interest in promoting an international agenda for the foreign country while providing incentives and benefits that only a certain community of Lebanese gets to enjoy. This has been the case all throughout Lebanese history as foreign powers have used local leaders to further their own interests in the region and the failure of national unity among Lebanese has only exacerbated the situation.

The story of Western intervention in Lebanon can be traced to Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798 as the cultural interaction between the East and West was reignited. Napoleon’s decision to invade Egypt caused a chain reaction of events that lead the European powers to seek interests in the Middle East as the possibility of a canal at Suez became apparent. Most importantly were the British who, in order to counter French influence in the region, began establishing relations with the Ottomans in their struggle to oppose French dominance of the Levant. France had traditionally been the dominant trader with the Levant as it maintained a religious obligation toward Near Eastern Catholics.11 Louis XIV declared himself protector of the Maronites after that sect had undergone severe mistreatment. This established France’s ‘special’ relationship with the Maronites of Lebanon that would keep them bound to the region till the present day. Similarly, to counteract French influence in the region, British agents began to cultivate the Druze community, while the Russians attempted to lay a protectorate over the Christen Orthodox. Finally, the Ottoman government attempted to convince the European powers that local rule was impossible in order to reassert their authority over the region.

11 The Precarious Republic
Eventually, however, in 1860 Lebanon erupted into civil strife with the Druze slaughtering thousands of Maronite peasantry.\(^{12}\)

As anarchy gripped Lebanon the European powers swept in to ‘restore’ order and in June 1861 the six interested powers (Turkey, France, England, Austria, Russia, and Prussia all signed the ‘Reglement Organique’ abolishing feudalism and establishing Lebanon as an autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire. Its governor, or mutasarrif, was required to be a non-Lebanese Christian appointed by the Porte and approved by the Powers. He was to be supported by an administrative council with seats allocated to the major sects. The new province was confined only to Mount Lebanon thereby excluding the Sunnite dominated coastal region of Beirut and the Biqaa.\(^{13}\) This lasted until the Sykes Pico agreement following the First World War and in this time the region experienced economic and educational prosperity. While the divisions stirred by the European powers in the region had been quelled, they were not eradicated as the aftermath of World War One reignited the rivalry between the French and British which, ironically, led to the early independence of Lebanon. The fundamental importance of this history is, using hindsight, the ultimate realization that the division of government official positions is not something new to the Lebanese people under the Taif accord signed at the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1989. Instead, it dates back to the 1861 agreement by the major powers at the time to place cultural stipulations on the head of the government rather than utilize the opportunity to promote a truly democratic and patriotic approach in the region. This is a primary factor in understanding the long standing tension and

\(^{12}\) Hudson, Michael C. *The Precarious Republic; Political Modernization in Lebanon*. New York: Random House, 196

\(^{13}\) ibid
political division of the country as the same problems that existed in 1861 continue to plague the country today as further historical evidence will reveal that while circumstances changed the major powers continued to implement a system of government on the people of Lebanon that had an expiration date that erupted violently.

As the years progressed and Mount Lebanon enjoyed the prosperity of peace, the European powers found themselves bogged down in the First World War that would spell change in the geopolitical structure. The decision of the Ottomans to join on the side of the Germans to form the axis powers led the allies to sponsor T.E Lawrence, more commonly known as Lawrence of Arabia, to foment chaos in the region by stirring up Arab nationalism with promises of Arab independence guaranteed by the Western powers after the war. This promise of independence stirred a massive Arab nationalistic movement that helped topple the Ottoman Empire. As a result, the Arabs hoped to obtain an independent Islamic empire that was free from foreign intervention and protection. Despite these promises of independence the Western powers had other plans as outlined in the documents presented by Sykes Picot agreement between the allies. This outlined that Syria was to be broken up into three separate fractions: Palestine, the Lebanon, and a reduced “Syria”.

Under this agreement France was to give up her claim to the Vilayet of Mosul in return for a major share in the Turkish Petroleum Company (confiscated by the allies and renamed the Iraq Petroleum Company). It specified that France would have direct control over the coastal parts of the vilayet of Aleppo and its share of Vilayett of Beirut while maintaining a sphere of influence in inland Syria where several Arab states would be granted ‘independent’ status with a French mandate of the region administered by the
League of Nations. On the other hand the British were given control of the entire Mesopotamia as well as a mandate over all the southern parts of the vilayat of Damascus and Beirut. This territory was eventually labeled Transjordan and Palestine. These territories gave Britain control of an uninterrupted land route all the way from the borders of Iran to the Mediterranean.

While some Arabs, particularly those in current day Saudi Arabia, were misled by the European powers in the extent of autonomous land they would receive after the First World War, there were those Arabs in Syria that had no desire for French plans to sponsor a Greater Lebanon. In fact the Muslims in Syria and present day Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan all preferred a mandate by the British or the Americans. The King Crane investigation of summer 1919 recognized the dangers inherent in a solution that flouted Arab national feeling. Of the 1863 petitions received by the Commission in Syria, 203 (of which 196 were from Lebanon) supported the idea of an independent Greater Lebanon, and 1062 were against it. The King Crane investigation eventually recommended that Lebanon have considerable local autonomy but as a larger part of the Syrian state, as Syria would find the tolerance of minorities in its interest due to the highly educated Christians who could contribute to a more well developed society. In early March 1920 the Syrian General Congress audaciously proclaimed the complete independence and unity if Syria, which included autonomy for Mount Lebanon under Syrian rule.

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14 Salibi, Kamal S. *A House of Many Mansions: the History of Lebanon Reconsidered.* Berkeley: University of California, 1988
15 ibid
During this time, however, the Maronites of Mount Lebanon, despite the recognition that they would no longer hold a clear majority in a Greater Lebanon, Maronite patriarch Elias Hoyek pursued this goal at the Paris Peace Conference.\textsuperscript{17} As a result, on July 24\textsuperscript{th} the French troops and artillery brought an end to the rule of Faisal in Syria and temporarily defeated the Arab nationalist forces in order to partition Syria from the Greater Lebanon which would incorporate Mount Lebanon with the coastal towns of Tripoli, Beirut, Sidon, and Tyre and their respective hinterlands, which belonged to the Vilayet of Beirut; and the fertile valley of the Bekaa. On September 1\textsuperscript{st} 1920 General Henri Gourand proclaimed the birth of the state of Greater Lebanon from his official residence as French High Commissioner in Beirut. The flag of this new Lebanon was to be the French tricolor with a cedar tree in the central white and Beirut would be known as its capital. The problem, however, did not lie in the symbols of a nation, rather in the national identity of the people. To the Maronites and other Christians in Lebanon there was a very clear distinction between Lebanese and Syrians. To the Maronites they identified themselves as decedents of the ancient Phoenicia which predated the heritage they shared with the Arabs by thousands of years. Their heritage, as they felt, had once been shared with Greece and Rome and which now was shared with Western Europe. Unfortunately not everyone in Lebanon felt this way as political life during the two decades of mandate rule reflected the dissatisfaction of the Sunnies that had not yet developed a national identity as Lebanese.\textsuperscript{18} Instead the Sunnies of Lebanon still feel a deep connection to their Syrian and Arab brothers through a bond that has been created and built on since Islam swept over the region. As a result they refused to participate in

\textsuperscript{17} A house of many mansions
\textsuperscript{18} ibid
the new institutions that the French and Maronites set up. They were not the only ones, however, that expressed a desire to reunite with Syria. A substantial number of non-Maronite Christians had expressed similar wishes as the Muslims. The majority of the inhabitants of Zahleh, with its Greek Catholic majority voted in favor of annexation to Syria and against the mandate. Five hundred of its notables signed a petition to that effect, addressed to the King Crane Commission.\(^\text{19}\) The revolt of 1925 – 1927 in Syria and the growing tension in Palestine fueled the anti-Western feelings of Sunni Arabs throughout the area, including the Muslims in Lebanon. Even within the tight circle of officially approved Christian notables a cleavage began to appear between a Francophile faction supported by the Maronite Church and a group seeking genuine independence from the Maronites as soon as possible. Emile Edde headed the Francophile faction while Bechara al Khoury headed the full independence seekers. Khoury believed that it was first critical to unite the Muslims under the idea of a greater Lebanon and incorporate them within the political spectrum in order to sustain the state. He and his Maronite followers went to great lengths to garner the necessary political support from the Muslims that an independent Lebanese entity was necessary and should not be merged with Syria.\(^\text{20}\)

The birth of the Lebanese republic came on the 23\(^{rd}\) of May 1926 that saw the promulgation of the constitution as the country began its tumultuous journey towards independence and national unity. The transformation of the diverse communities into a civil society that was dictated by an allegiance to the country rather than to their respective communities proved far more difficult than the independence from Syria. The


\(^{20}\) *The Precarious Republic*
roots of the conflict for national identity that originated with the decree by the world powers in 1861 was expanded upon in the constitution of May 1926. The Representative Council was renamed the Chamber of Deputies, and a Senate set up to represent sects and regions. The constitution was a hybrid one: it combined a republican body that highlighted individual rights, liberties, political, and judicial equality alongside articles concerning communal rights and representation.\textsuperscript{21} Article 95 provided for the fair distribution of government and administrative posts among the various sects. According to article 9 the state relinquished its control of the legislative rights and rulings on individual community issues (marriage, divorce, custody, inheritance etc…) to the religious authorities of the community as a clause promoting ‘freedom of religious expression’.\textsuperscript{22} Article 10 of the constitution even summoned the state to defend private religious education as long as it did not conflict with the teachings of the public education. On the external scale the constitution also authorized and legalized the French mandate and gave them control over the country’s foreign and military affairs as well as its public security, it made the President of Lebanon answerable only to the French high commissioner. When assessing, maybe with a dab of hindsight, the effectiveness of the terms associated with the constitution, the fundamental issue with a national identity is not addressed, and instead it is exacerbated. Rather than establish a democracy that incorporates representatives from each region, the constitution limits individuals to their respective religions and ensures that sects rather than regions are represented. This is the fundamental and core issue that makes the independence of Lebanon in 1943 premature. The constitution to this day continues to protect religious sects which in turn promote

\textsuperscript{21} A History of Modern Lebanon
\textsuperscript{22} ibid
political allegiances to individuals of certain religions rather than to individuals of the
region. Whatever can be said of the Christian Maronites, it is that they managed to realize
the necessity to incorporate all sects within the country thereby holding the nation
together to fight for independence in 1943, but they did not account for the ties by which
these minority communities would develop. For the constitution to protect the seats of
individuals based on their religion is to deny the integration and mixture of communities
that could have, over time, developed to coerce political unity towards an individual from
an area within Lebanon as opposed to an individual from an area within Lebanon that is
of a certain religion. This mistake ensured that communities stuck together to preserve
their identity and hence their seat in government, making religion a factor for politics
rather than a means for personal satisfaction.

As the struggle over a national identity continued to ferment, the French suspended the
constitution on two different occasions. The struggle for power over the presidency
played a major role in the decision in 1932. Two major Maronite Christians contributed
to this race Emile Edde and Ibshara el Khoury. Edde, like most Maronites of the North,
tented to regard Lebanon as a primarily Christian homeland. He often could not grasp
what had become of Lebanon when it fell under the French mandate. When the Muslims
began incorporating themselves as major partners in the Lebanese State Edde’s first
inclination was to regard them as a threat to Lebanon. Their Arab nationalism, he felt,
would lead to annexation by Syria if they were given too much power within the state and
he maintained that Lebanon must be a Western force in the Middle East rather than
another Arab state due to its internationally recognized Christian ‘majority’. Ibshara el
Khoury adopted a more practical approach to the political world. As a Maronite he was
devoted to Lebanese independence and a greater Lebanon, he believed, could only sustain itself through a political and social partnership with the Muslim community in Lebanon. He saw the Mandate by the French, therefore, as a hindrance to this partnership as Khoury believed that satisfying his fellow Muslim Lebanese by ending the French mandate would act as a show of good will and encourage the Muslim community to view Lebanon as an independent state from the Arab world but would still require their nationalism to play a factor when it came time for Lebanese cooperation with its neighboring Arab states.  

Between 1926 and 1932 the Lebanese political scene was dominated by the struggle for the Presidency between Khoury and Edde. The French high commission disapproved of Khoury’s candidacy because he felt Khoury’s policies legitimately threatened French interests in the area and would lead to an autonomous Lebanon free of a French mandate. As a result France preferred to lend its support to Edde but his unpopularity and inability to gain friends from the Muslim and Greek orthodox Christians due to his heavy anti Arab policies made it appear that it was unlikely that he would be elected. To deprive Khoury of the presidency Edde and other Maronite leaders withdrew from the race and instead supported the candidacy of Shiekh Mohamed al Jisr who originally entered the race to prove a point (that a Muslim could be head of state). With the support of some Maronites and the Muslims now voting for their own, Jisr was certain of success. The French high commission was certainly unprepared to accept a Muslim President and as a result suspended the constitution.  

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24 ibid
that it set. This was the first act in Greater Lebanon that really ensured the cultural and religious divide would persist.

It was the politicians who complained most about life in a non-constitutional government as the majority of people seemed to be satisfied with the administrative honestly and efficiency of the government:

Reductions were made in overgrown officialdom, cuts in salaries imposed, the Gendarmerie and Police reduced. A number administrative and fiscal reforms were made, Directorates amalgamated, the powers of village headmen defined. The financial crisis forbade the tax reductions for children there was an outcry; but sums were saved for public words, and progress was made in improving port facilities, in agricultural marketing, and in other fields. Cases of discovered corruption were taken to Court; but the slow progress made with these…showed again the strength of family and confessional influences.25

Eventually the political life was restored but for three more years no Lebanese government was formed and the administration remained in the hands of a Secretary of State until January 1937. The chamber of deputies convened on 20 January 1936 for the election and Edde won over his rival Khoury in the race by one vote. To Emile Edde the presidency he had coveted for so long proved to be a major disappointment. He was often overruled and deceived by the French Commissioner Martel and further curtailed upon the arrival of Puaux. To make matters worse for Edde the management of his government

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25 Modern History of Lebanon
was made more difficult by Khoury, faced with overwhelming opposition Edde served the rest of his term from his home.  

The outbreak of the Second World War finally erupted in 1939 and Puaux decided to suspend the constitution, and extend Edde’s term in an effort to stabilize the country for the duration of the war and ensure no action was taken to legally overthrow the French.  

It was not the Lebanese or the stability of Lebanon, however, that was the driving force in Lebanese independence but rather the circumstances and outcome of the Second World War that brought about a rapid movement for independence.

When France fell to the German invasion in June 1940 the state of the Levant and the Lebanese territory was in question. After the Franco-German armistice was signed and France passed under the German control, Marchal Philippe Petain accepting office as Chief of State and establishing a collaborationist regime at Vichy. While in London General Charles de Gaulle appealed on 18 June for continued French resistance and by 28 June he had formed a Free French Government in exile and was recognized by the British as the leader of the Free French. In Lebanon it was the Vichy French who remained in control. As a result the British government announced on 8th June 1941 that:

‘The Vichy government in pursuance of their policy of collaboration with the Axis powers, have placed the air bases in Syria and the Lebanon at the disposal of Germany and Italy and have supplied war material to the rebel forces in Iraq. German

\[\text{Modern History of Lebanon}\]

\[\text{ibid}\]

\[\text{ibid}\]
infiltration into Syria has begun and the Vichy governments are continuing to take measures whose effect must be to bring Syria and Lebanon under full German control.\textsuperscript{29}

This declaration established the blockade of Lebanon by the British. Beirut suffered considerably and President Edde’s regime grew highly unpopular as he was unable to handle the food shortage in Lebanon. In April 1941 Edde and his Secretary of State were forced to resign and the General Dentz, who replaced Puaux as High Commissioner, appointed Alfred Naccache to take over as chief of the state.\textsuperscript{30} Ever since the French capitulation German agents had been active in Lebanon and the first months of 1941 German influence was thought to be gaining much momentum in the region; as it is true that some nationalists preferred to see a German victory in the war, while others desired a British control of the territory. It seemed that France had been left out of the picture. It was thought that Germany’s infiltration in the Balkans was a steady move to lead its forces to the Levant and capture French mandated territories. This would put German forces in a position to threaten the British armies in Palestine, Egypt and Turkey.\textsuperscript{31}

German aircraft were permitted by the Vichy government to use Syrian air bases as stages to journey into Iraq and threaten British interests. As a result on June 8\textsuperscript{th} 1941 a mixed force of Imperial, Free French and other allied troops crossed the frontiers of Syria and Lebanon. The force was led by General Sir Heny Maitland Wilson and the Free French contingent under that of general Catroux. French General de Gaule, leader of the Free French, was increasingly apprehensive that Britain’s intentions were motivated by

\textsuperscript{29} Ziadeh, Nicola A. \textit{Syria and Lebanon}. New York: F.A. Praeger, 1957
\textsuperscript{30} ibid
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Syria and Lebanon}
the ‘preconceived idea of evicting’ France from the entire region.\textsuperscript{32} Returning to the fundamental factors, therefore, of the importance of Lebanon coupled with the direct consequences that emerged as a result of the Second World War the upcoming decision by France to grant the independence of both Lebanon and Syria in an attempt to ensure that the region does not fall to regional British control or sphere of influence. General Catroux on June 8\textsuperscript{th} 1941 made the following proclamation to the Lebanese and Syrians guaranteeing them their independence:

“inhabitants of Syrian and Lebanon!

At the moment when the forces of Free France, united to the forces of the British empire, her ally, are entering your territory, I declare that I assume the powers, responsibilities and duties of the representative of France in the Levant. I do this in the name of Free France, which is the tradition and real France, and in the name of her chief General de Gaulle. In this capacity I come to put an end to the mandatory regime and to proclaim you free and independent.

“You will therefore be from henceforward sovereign and independent peoples, and you will be able either to form yourselves into separate state or to unite into a single State. In either event your independent and sovereign status will be guaranteed by a Treaty in which our mutual relations will be defined. This Treaty will be negotiated as soon as possible between your representatives and myself. Pending its conclusion our mutual position will be one of close unity in pursuit of a common ideal and common aims…

\textsuperscript{32} A History of Modern Lebanon
“Inhabitants of Syria and Lebanon! A great hour in your history has struck. France declares you independent by the voice of her sons who are fighting for her life and for the liberty of the world”.33

Despite unexpectedly strong resistance from General Dentz the Allied forces eventually gained the upper hand and the Vichy rule in Lebanon came to a close with Dentz forced to ask for terms. As a result of the ensuing Armistice signed at Acre on July 14th the Allied forces were to occupy Lebanon and Syria34. As a result on November 26th 1941 Catroux, the general delegate of free France in Syria and Lebanon, declared France’s recognition of the two countries’ independence with the following proclamation to the Lebanese:

‘Lebanese,

The proclamation which I addressed to you on June 8th in the name of General de Gaulle, Chief of Free France, and which great Britain supported by a special simultaneous declaration, recognized Lebanon under the guarantee of a treaty to be concluded with a view to defining Franco-Lebanese reciprocal relations, as a sovereign and independent state.

‘…Free France, at the moment of entering the Levant, began with an act of emancipation, in spite of the war and exceptional circumstances which it imposed: she made you free and independent.

34 Modern History of Lebanon
‘Your aspirations are satisfied. It is now a matter of organizing your independence. As far as I am concerned, I have two tutelary duties. The first is to confide the work of installing and directing the regime to a man fully qualified to accomplish this difficult task in present circumstances. After very extensive consultations both with individuals and with public opinion throughout the whole extent of the territory, I have understood that the hopes of the Lebanese nation are fixed upon his Excellency M Naccace. I have asked him to remain in power with the title and prerogatives of President of the Republic, and to govern by means of a ministry which will be responsible to him and in which the just representation of all the regions and confessions which form the Lebanese nation will be assured.

‘…

‘The second task is to define the spirit and forms of the collaboration to be established between Lebanon and Free France, while awaiting the conclusion of a treaty of alliance and friendship.

‘In recognizing your independence France is inspired solely by her traditional friendship with Lebanon. By her tutelary mission in this country throughout the centuries, and by the privileged position which she has thus acquired. Her aid remains assured to Lebanon in all things, in the spirit of the Franco Lebanese treaty of Alliance and Friendship of 1936, which received the unanimous approbation of the Lebanese population. Moreover, the circumstances of war and the occupation of Lebanese territory by the allied forces
places Lebanon temporarily in a special position. There flow from this a certain number of rights and obligations, among them in particular those stipulated bellow…”

Upon examination of these two documents, one prior to the victory against Vichy and one after there are several important distinctions to be made that are reflective of the European intervention in Lebanese independence. In the first document, in order to bolster support for their invasion of the territory from all political parties the Free French promise the Lebanese a chance to reunite with Syria if they chose to do so after gaining their ‘independence’ from Vichy France. This integral clause, however, is not mentioned in the ensuing proclamation for Lebanese independence. In fact it assumes that Lebanon has already created and established its own national identity and wishes to remain an autonomous state; something that the Lebanese people had not yet affirmed for themselves. In addition the rhetoric of the second proclamation is broad in its initiatives and ensures strong Lebanese – Franco relations and mentions nothing of complete Lebanese autonomy from the French high commissioner as well as other critical demands the Lebanese would require for true independence. As a result in the actual administrative arrangements which Catroux introduced into Lebanon, he departed very little from the earlier mandatory arrangements. In fact the French proclamation amounted to very little as the Lebanese independents rejected the idea of a new treaty as there already was one. In either case, Catroux confirmed Alfred Naache as President and continued to behave in his role as all powerful high commissioner. To this end, Britain, the USA, turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq all immediately recognized the independence of Lebanon.36

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The proclamation did have one desired affect for the Lebanese, however, as they quickly mobilized and revived their party politics. Khoury’s Constitutional bloc developed its connections with Britain, while Emile Edde re-emerged into the political life by reviving his old following as the National Bloc. On the issue of complete Lebanese independence the National Bloc showed considerable reserve and instead practiced its former rhetoric of a close relationship between France and Lebanon in order to guarantee against absorption into a pan Arab state, a justified concern as the Allied occupation of Syria and Lebanon caused a surge in pan Arab claims, particularly after the proclamation of June 8th. The Constitutional Bloc, however, took a strong stand as Khoury and fellow Muslim supporters (most notably Riad al Sulh) called for a national congress under the patronage of Patricarch Arida, as they stood up against the illusion of incomplete independence, calling for new elections and the complete handing over of power to the Lebanese people, including basic rights such as the right to elect their own president. The refusal of the French and the backtracking on the promises made by De Gaulle were confirmed after de Gaulle himself declared, August 1942, that war conditions did not allow the exercise of full independence.

Lebanon’s transition to independence did not occur without clashes and violence as a return to the constitutional life was not implemented until late 1942 and only after pressure from the British representative and mission chief in Beirut, General Edward Spears, who between 1941 and 1943 used his position to undermine the French position and promote collaboration between the communities that shared anti French feeling.

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37 Modern History of Lebanon
38 A History of Modern Lebanon
Spears then used his influence to pressure the French to accept terms for a national election during the summer. On September 21st 1943 the result of the summer’s elections was a victory for the Constitutionalists led by Bishara al Khoury, who was in turn elected president of the republic. He immediately invited Riad al Sulh to form the government. This united Muslim and Christian leaders to a common purpose but it neglected to address the larger issue at hand; the ignored ideological differences between the two religious sects. The collaboration between the communities was in the collective decision to remove French and Western influence in the region without ensuring that the differences between Christians and Muslims had been resolved as the Maronites would never have been prepared to accept a Lebanon that was slowly moving towards inclusion within a wider pan Arab nation. Similarly, the Muslims were not willing to accept a long term future for Lebanon that was sustained on the condition that Lebanon was to remain a part of the Western World among its neighboring Arab nations. While these ideological differences had existed since the establishment of a greater Lebanon in 1920, the Sunnis realized that the expulsion of the French from Lebanon did not mean that the potential for the creation of a unified Arab state had dissolved but rather this ensured that no Western influence in the region could prohibit them from eventually attaining that goal. The Christians, on the other hand, still had a perception that even without the direct presence of the Western powers in Lebanon they still maintained a Western mentality and held to what they perceived to be an understanding with the Muslims to never seek to become part of the greater Arab state. The inability of Lebanese leaders to deal with this issue and

40 A History of Modern Lebanon
41 ibid
come to a consensus is a leading factor in continued focus on religious and community values as opposed to a greater loyalty to the state.

When Khoury was elected president of the Republic on September 21 1943 he faced a two folded problem: first the internal parochialism and second foreign interference. The unsettled circumstances of the time had accelerated both the desires of the independence factions and the fears of conservative Christians. Some in the latter hoped for an eventual reunion with Syria while others were content with getting rid of Western influence in the country, while others wanted to establish an entirely Christian Mount Lebanon under French protection, whereas others sought to maintain a Francophile ruler in Greater Lebanon. Sunnis, Shiaas, and Druze all maintained some accurate suspicions that some Maronite rulers wanted to seize control of the country from the French. The Maronites suspected, with good reason, that the Sunnite leadership might betray Lebanon’s sovereignty in favor of the Maronite feared Islamic domination and integration into a larger pan Arab movement.\footnote{The Precarious Republic} Thus, Khoury’s overarching political struggle was to foster an environment for coexistence and collaboration under a unified perception and desire for an autonomous Lebanese state that was independent of all and any foreign rule, be it European, Arab or other. Khoury’s ability to recognize this problem and issue strong collaboration with his Muslim counterparts in Lebanon, while maintaining their trust is credit to his leadership at a time where Lebanon needed it most. While Khoury was eventually successful in his quest to rid Lebanon of Western influence and presence in Lebanon while creating the right atmosphere for cooperation and understanding between Sunnis and Maronites, the exclusion of the Shiaa and other minorities from major
decisions and the ensuing Lebanese leadership after Lebanese independence factored into reigniting the tensions that existed during these times.

In October 1943, a high level Syrian delegation arrived in Beirut, headed by Prime minister Jamil Mardam Bey who agreed on three vital points with his Lebanese counterpart: First, Syria recognized and defended the independence and sovereignty of both countries. Second, Suluh made the commitment that its territory would not be used as a base for any foreign force that endangered Syria’s independence or security. Third and finally, close collaboration between the two countries would take place in the economic and social domains. As a result of the conversation, therefore, Lebanon asked Delegate General Helleu and the National Committee of Free France for a transfer of powers and of the Common interests to the Lebanese authorities. General Helleu was sent to Algiers for instructions and the Lebanese government was to await his return. The result of Helleu’s trip and discussion with the committee of Liberation was not in favor of such action stating that:

1) France refused to hand over any of the powers granted to her through the mandate until Lebano-Syrian relations with her were clearly and specifically defined
2) The Committee of Liberation insisted that it was identical with France, and therefore could exercise all functions which a legal French Government could enforce
3) It was demanded that the treaty of 1936 should be first ratified and then it could be modified.43

43 Ziadeh, Nicola A. *Syria and Lebanon.* Benn, 1957
To understand the response of the French is to realize that they had a poor and grossly misunderstanding of the sentiment in the region. De Gaulle and the French leadership in the Levant did not realize how unpopular France had gown during the mandate period and every declaration and proclamation made that referenced the right of France under the ‘mandate’ further alienated their supporters in the region and the overall Lebanese population. In addition they failed to realize that this growing dissatisfaction with the French leadership in the region was uniting the once much divided Lebanese people on a common cause thereby allowing them to put aside their internal political issues in an effort to concentrate their powers on the regional stability and independence of Lebanon.

Between 1940 and 1943 the French leadership failed to see this growing sense of ‘nationalism’. On the contrary the French believed that the national feeling was subsiding.\(^44\) This gross misunderstanding on the part of the French, and their growing concern with the role Britain was taking in the Levent led them to take harsh measures in Lebanon.

The decision of the committee of Liberation fueled a sense of ‘Lebanese’ nationalism to evict the foreign power, whom they now believed held no legal status or legitimacy to sign such treaties. Therefore in response, on 8\(^{th}\) of November 1943 the Chamber of deputies passed a series of constitutional reviews that abolished the clause stating that the French mandatory authority was the sole source of political power and jurisdiction (it also reinstated Arabic as the official language and adopted a new flag). The following day president Khoury ratified the revisions before Helleu could return to Beirut.\(^45\)

\(^{44}\) Ziadeh, Nicola A. *Syria and Lebanon*. Benn, 1957

When Helleu returned to Lebanon to discover that chamber and taken constitutional action before he could arrive he ordered the arrest of the Lebanese political leadership. At 4AM on November 11th 1943 the President of the Republic, the Prime minister, three ministers and abdul Hamid Karame, a leading member of the Chamber, were arrested and sent to Rashayya, at the foot of Mount Hermon. The following morning, Helleu announced to the people the arrests that had been made along with the dissolution of the Chamber and the suspension of the constitution. Emile Edde was also appointed head of state (which he claimed was his national duty to accept the leadership). He attempted to form a government, but the ensuing chaos was too much and he could not secure the cooperation of the lowest form of government.

As turmoil enveloped the country with demonstrators taking to the streets and at parliament sessions, strikes were frequent, and the Edde government made no progress to secure the confidence of the people the anti-French sentiment continued to grow. Catroux was sent from Algiers to examine the situation and reported that only the reinstating of the President would alleviate the situation. Similarly a note from the British government was handed to Catroux on the 19th of November and read:\textsuperscript{46}

“… In the opinion of His Majesty’s Government it is essential that persons mentioned should be released and reinstated in the offices they held before the recent crisis caused by their imprisonment …

“ If, as is hoped, the present situation is satisfactorily solved by the French Committee of National Liberation’s acceptance of the requests presented above His Majesty’s

Government will then propose an immediate conference between the representatives of
the Lebanese Government and General Catroux under British auspices to be held
somewhere on British territory in the neighborhood of the Levant, in order to read a
modus Vivendi in Lebanon for the duration of the war.

“We warmly hope for the agreement on these points. It is however, necessary to make it
clear on the part of his Majesty’s Government that if the British Government’s requests
do not receive satisfaction by 10am on 22nd of November the minister of state resident on
the Middle East has received his Government’s order immediately to declare martial law
in Lebanon…

“If the President of the Republic and the other Lebanese ministers have not been released
at 10 am on 22nd November they will be set free by the British troops…”

As a result of the growing turmoil in the country, the British’s desire to impose martial
law, and the failure of Edde to secure the people’s trust Catroux released the imprisoned
political leaders who returned to Beirut on November 22nd and were received with open
arms by the people. The next day the men went back to their offices and the constitution
stood as amended, and this triumph of the Lebanese government over the rule of the
French effectively eliminated the French authority in the region and is now regarded as
the official day of independence for the Lebanese people, November 22nd 1943.

The National pact formed by the President, A Maronite Christian and the popular
Sunni leader, Riad Sulh, stipulated that Lebanon should be completely independent,
sovereign, and neutral; that Christians. Especially Maronotes, should not seek Western

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47 A History of Modern Lebanon

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protection while Muslims, especially Sunnis, should not try to make Lebanon part of a larger Arab Islamic state. In addition the new state should develop a strong role in the Arab community but remain autonomous from it. Finally the government should work towards eliminating the sectarian system which stood as an effective “obstacle to National progress” as referred to by Riad al Suluh. The problem, however, is that the pact also cemented the allocation of top government officials based on sectarian divides, thereby ensuring that the goals of the National Pact could not be reached. As long as the Lebanese people continued to elect their leaders based on sectarian divisions then this would effectively limit capable leaders from improving and uniting the country. The independence movement of Lebanon is one that is rooted in the events between 1861 and 1943 that trace a pattern of common mistakes by the political leadership in Lebanon who avoids addressing the schism in ideology that was unique to a multitude of sects within the country. The traceable pattern of error, therefore, was in the political decisions of the Lebanese leadership as well as the French mandate to ensure that leaders of the country were elected based on religious consistency rather than a national interest. This mistake repeated in 1861, 1926, and finally in 1943 is the reason for continued allegiance of the ‘Lebanese’ people to sect rather than to the republic of Lebanon. The Second World War was the opportune moment for Christian and Muslim relations were at the pinnacle of trust, friendship, support, and effectiveness that it could have implemented the right change that would have been necessary to ensure the political stability of the country for the decades to come by taking the first step in truly abolishing the sectarian system. The removal of the French mandate and temporary foreign intervention in Lebanon took

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48 *The Precarious Republic*
precedent, however, over the internal struggle that continues to dominate the political discord that is Lebanese democracy today.

The years that lead up to the creation of the Lebanese republic are some of the most vital in understanding the current make up and politics of the country and throughout this thesis I will often return to refer to these incidents as underlying factors that have finally emerged to rock the Lebanese political structure. The next chapter will take us through the initial years of Lebanon’s independence in order to discuss the emergence of Hizbollah during the Lebanese civil war of 1975. The second chapter will explore the failures of the confessional system during Lebanon’s early years and lead to a discussion on the dynamics of the creation of the Shi’a militia Hizbollah which will reveal the hardship faced by the Shi’a community. Understanding the drive for Lebanese independence will assist the reader in future chapters to understand the roots of the confessional system, its problems, the lack of a true Lebanese identity, and the importance of foreign influence in the history of Lebanon. These factors have effectively made it near impossible to achieve a lasting political and militaristic peace in the country.
Chapter Two: The Pangs of Birth
The lead up to war and the creation of Hizbollah

“To Beirut…
From the soul of her people she makes wine,
From their sweat, she makes bread and jasmine.
So how did it come to taste of smoke and fire?”

The Lebanese Singer, Fayrouz.

In 2006 a Lebanese commercial highlighting the problems of the confessional political system aired on television and I recall watching it for the first time. The classical background music filled the room, while the proudly patriotic declaratons of random citizens from all over the world announced their heritage of belonging each to a certain country, their flags draped proudly behind them. When the Lebanese flag filled the screen, the first citizen announced his loyalty to Sunni Islam, the second to the Druze faith, the third to the Maronite Christians, and finally the fourth to Shi’a Islam. As the flag crumpled to the floor I recall the storm of emotions swirling inside me. At the time, I was neither informed of the political realities of Lebanon nor did I realize how drastically the Lebanese confessional system divided the country. I did, however, understand that the people of Lebanon were committed to their own individual sects as opposed to the country, and going to high school in Lebanon was an easy way of seeing that divisive influence. I was disheartened by what the Lebanese future held, and what this meant for the country. I find that the roots of Lebanon’s problem go far deeper than anticipated. At the onset of Lebanese independence in 1943, global and domestic challenges revealed the inefficiency of the confessional system that led to the civil war of 1975 which managed to tear the country apart and perpetuate the compromise of the National Pact.
As the realities of the Second World War drowned out the cheers of independence, the government of Bishara al-Khuri and Riad al-Sulh came under extreme criticism by the media for failing to address shortages and adopt a new labor code.¹ This was not, by any means, the only issue facing the state. As sectarian and feudal clashes broke out across the country, the government was ill equipped to respond. Camille Chamoun, the interior minister, was forced to call in French troops to quell the disturbances.² While this was an easy task for the French "Troupes Spéciales”, the long term results led to a military presence in Lebanon and consequently French influence in Lebanese affairs. On top of these challenges, government officials faced corruption charges and fraud. On July 1⁴th 1944 the government of Riad al-Sulh collapsed, having lasted approximately nine months. In fact, between 1926 and 1944 only one cabinet lasted over one year, with an average cabinet life of seven months. Even after independence, between 1943 and 1964 Lebanon had three Presidents and thirty-five cabinets, the same cabinet pattern experienced under French control.³ This telling statistic reveals the incapacity of the Lebanese government to cope with the different political and societal struggles facing the country. This is exacerbated by the framework of a constitution designed to protect political power at the expense of representing the citizens. Furthermore, the challenge of forming and maintaining a functioning Lebanese government continues to plague Lebanon’s leaders today. The conundrum posed by a history of government failure and collapse highlights a problem embedded within the constitutional setup of the country. The confessional system has allowed, and continues to allow, foreign influence, disunity, and religious loyalties to take priority over the concerns of Lebanon’s citizens. Individuals within their community areas run for public office based on the political decisions and loyalties that they will make and form as

³ Lebanon: War and Politics in a fragmented society. P86
opposed to the reforms and policies they will propose. This is true of current day Lebanon, and of the Lebanon that existed at the time of Lebanese independence. The Lebanese government of 1944 collapsed for reasons similar to those we see today. Bishara al Khuri and Riad al-Sulh succeeded in bringing Muslims and Christians to form a free, independent Lebanon under what seemed at the time a brilliant accord: The National Pact. Their politicking, unity, and patronage made them veteran politicians, capable of leading the independence movement. In post-independence Lebanon, the people needed a different leader; they needed one who understood effective policies and community development. They needed an academic visionary who could set attainable goals and reforms for the country. Effectively, the 1944 cabinet collapse was a reflection of too much politics and too little reform, a very common thread throughout Lebanese history.

The Lebanese constitution is riddled with political loopholes that are friendly to foreign influence and shield elected officials from being held accountable for their work. Parties in Lebanon place their candidates for election in the districts that they know they will win. This leads to a form of party corruption through favors, bribes, friendships, or family names and excludes candidates who demonstrate a true understanding of the issues. Therefore, a more qualified candidate may be excluded from the political race by his party, thus preventing him from competing for votes. As a result, the Lebanese parliament is replete with true politicians whose qualifications rest in their family names. This creates a disunited, interest seeking cabinet that is working almost entirely on behalf of their parties as opposed to their constituents. Similarly, persuading different religious parties agree on any political maneuvering or social bills is exceptionally difficult. This explains the strong resistance facing the removal of the president and even the ability of a majority party to withdraw from a cabinet led by a prime minister that it
may not support (if a third of the ministers resign from a cabinet headed by the prime minister, then the premier is automatically removed and a new cabinet needs to be formed under a prime minister appointed by the president). Current Lebanese politics reflect these exact problems and will be elaborated on in further chapters. Suffice it to say that controlling the President of the Republic, first by the French in the early years and then by the Syrians since the Taif accord, was simple and posed many problems to future Lebanese cabinets. The president could not be removed without a two thirds majority, a near impossibility under a government that was divided among religious parties. Similarly, a cabinet formed on the grounds of party politics makes for a prime minister who is nearly subservient to the will of the majority within parliament. Making social, political, and economic changes, therefore, is very difficult it requires a two thirds majority.

At the end of the Second World War Lebanon suffered from food shortages and high prices and was governed by a young and inexperienced cabinet. The reforms being demanded by the people were manifold. Alfred Naccache, Kamal Jumblatt, Henri Pharon, and Hamid Karami challenged the president with a list of reforms. These reforms included the appointment and promotion of government functionaries on a merit basis, reforming the judicial system, decentralizing the administrative authority with longer tenure for lower level officials, changing the electoral law to make the Chamber of Deputies more representative and finally defining the powers of the legislative and executive more clearly to preclude no-confidence votes. The president promised to take the concerns seriously, but only a few of the proposals were ever adopted. Politicians, however, continued to call for change. Sabri Hamadah, the Shi’ite speaker of the Lebanese

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5 *Lebanon: War and Politics in a fragmented society*. P93
parliament, in 1946 called for abolishing the confessional system. Kamal Jumblatt, submitted a
detailed proposal in 1947 for revising the electoral law to secure secret ballot and eliminate
electoral corruption. Most importantly, however, Jumblatt called for a more representative
system that reduced the size of the electoral districts. He argued that this would allow for more
government representation.

For the President, the 1947 election took priority and there was nothing he would not do in order
to maintain control of the state. He ran on a platform of amending the constitution and
centralizing control in the executive. Bishara Al-Khuri believed that in order for Lebanon to
defeat its internal and international enemies it would need to strengthen its economy and
influence in the country, and a strong executive with minor restrictions could achieve this. The
elections for the Chamber of Deputies were fraudulent, as government supporters won by an
average of 80% of the voters, and the founders of the state found themselves its leaders again as
al-Khuri assumed the Presidency and Riad al-Sulh as Prime minister. Their credibility, however,
was challenged by politicians, such as Kamal Jumblatt, who resigned his seat in protest, and the
media that agreed not to cover the sessions of the Assembly since it was not representative of the
people. The opposition facing the government ensured that, in fact, no governing could take
place. The failed ousting of al-Sulh from his position as Prime minister combined with the
United Nations resolution recommending the partition of Palestine, however, changed people’s
attitudes and made them willing to work with the government. The government assumed full
control as bombs began to fall on southern Lebanese cities, while war erupted between Arab
states and the newly formed Israel. The major international event gave al-Khoury some breathing

6 Lebanon: War and Politics in a fragmented society. P93
7 ibid
8 Ibid. P95
room and, although corruption increased in Beirut, the Lebanese economy began to boom. At this point, it is important to note that in February 1948, Hamid Frangieh (member of the Lebanese parliament and minister of finance) negotiated the Lebanese withdrawal from the franc zone, thereby promoting Lebanon’s economic independence. In 1950, Lebanon gained economic independence from Syria, effectively separating it from several Syrian public services (railways, Tobacco regulations, customs etc.). This economic independence allowed Lebanon to exercise free trade and capital movement in the global markets. International forces also played a role in the Lebanese economic growth during these times. First, the Arab boycott of Israel and all firms exporting to the Jewish state gave Lebanon more business and reduced competition, shifting maritime trade from Haifa to Beirut. Second, the influx of Palestinian workers who had been displaced and driven from their homes by the Israeli militias gave the Lebanese cheap labor that helped grow the economy. While the influx of cheap labor was a short term benefit to the Lebanese economy, it would evolve into a major cause for the Lebanese civil war, while continuing to pose a major challenge for the Lebanese state that should have been addressed in 1949 through improved border control.

The importance of these historical events is two-fold. First, they prove that early on, Lebanon suffered from the confessional system. While the National Pact managed to unite the country enough to gain independence, the confessional system (governing the National Pact) failed to adequately represent the Lebanese and did not provide sufficient checks and balances against corrupt and arbitrary governments. These grievances with the government would continue into the 1950s and, the early years are just an example of the evolving crisis still challenges the

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10 ibid
Heading into the 1950s, opposition to the government increased, a coup promoting union with Syria failed in 1949, and an organization called the Social National Front (SNF) emerged in 1952. This was formed by nine deputies and spearheaded by Kamal Jumblatt. Similarly, the Phalange Party, led by Pierre Jumayyil began, voicing its opposition to the régime. Rallies and strikes began to be organized, calling for the resignation of the President who finally resigned on September 18th, 1952. Second, highlighting these events will lead into the paper’s thesis regarding the emergence of Hizbollah within Lebanese politics. Understanding the historical background of Lebanon is crucial to realizing the circumstances that allow Hizbollah to rise to power: the deep rooted historical mistrust between religious sects, their historical importance, and the persistence of the sectarian system and difficulty in abolishing the sectarian system.

The new Prime minister, Khalid Chehab, led the cabinet of President Chamoun and asked for full powers for six months in order to implement new reforms. This request was granted almost unanimously and Chehab was able to implement several reforms that gave Lebanon an independent judiciary, defined administrative duties of the civil servants, liberalized the press law, extended voting rights to women, and increased the number of voting districts from five to thirty-three. Foreign governments supported the new reforms taking place in Lebanon and were impressed with the modernization programs. Several agreements were signed with the US for technical assistance in sectors such as security and agriculture, while the government was able to negotiate an interim economic agreement with Syria. While these were some of the régime’s most essential reforms, Chamoun faced a daunting task. Criticism was expressed by all parties,

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12 Lebanon: War and Politics in a fragmented society. P101
13 ibid
some claiming that he was not doing enough while others accusing the government of unraveling the system; by 1953 the rival factions were openly fighting. This is further evidence of the inability of the sectarian system to unite factions in support of governmental reforms and even, after the elections of 1953, criticism of the government intensified as Nasser consolidated power in Egypt and rose to popularity in the Middle East. The Lebanese became, once again, torn between wanting to join the Arab movement being created by Nasser and those who wanted to protect the country from a fully Arab identity. These contrasting visions exacerbated the problems of the sectarian system and ignored the agreement of the National Pact. The desire of many Muslims to support Nasser is largely due to their feelings of inadequacy and helplessness. The powers allocated to them in Premiership and the Speaker of the House was insufficient and did not allow the Muslim community to excel. These feelings perpetuated the desire of Muslim politicians to reform the government because they felt that the French system in Lebanon allocated excessive authority to the president. This distribution of power would be a bone of contention throughout the civil war until it was finally altered by the Taif Accord in 1989.

The crisis that came to a head in Lebanon in 1958 was, to the West, a microcosm of the threat of Soviet influence in the Middle East. The West feared that Chamoun who was considered pro-Western views would be replaced by an Arab nationalist who would side with Egypt and Syria, thereby strengthening ties with Moscow. While the US government was committed to the pro-Western government in Lebanon it hesitated to act militarily. This changed, however, when a coup in Iraq against the pro-Western government raised US fears of stability in Lebanon and troops were sent to the region to support the government. Although Chamoun had begun his

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14 Ibid p. 105-106
term as a fairly popular President, he could not ward off opposition to his foreign policies. While he was somewhat critical of the US interventions in Middle Eastern politics, particularly in its support for Israel’s creations and preservation, Chamoun’s wavering support for Cairo during the 1956 Suez crisis angered many Lebanese Arab nationals. While the US recognized the need for Chamoun to appease his critics through the appointment of Arab nationalists to the government, the US was fearful that their appointment might cause the Lebanese to draw nearer to the Communists. The Americans feared that the upcoming election, and end of Chamoun’s six year term, would lead to the pro-Arab parliament that would appoint an anti-Western President and would damage American interests in the region. The 1958 Lebanese crisis, clearly, had a domestic, regional, and international front.

Domestically, the struggle for power between Chamoun and his opposition was exploiting the sectarian system and polarizing the country. In May 1957 Commander of the Lebanese Forces, General Fouad Chehab, privately informed American representatives that he had warned Chamoun against tampering in the 1957 elections to parliament, conceding that the government may need to give up some seats to the opposition in order to retain popular support. He urged the United States not to view this as an East vs West scenario, vouching for the opposition saying: "If [Suleiman] Franjieh or [Kamal] Jumblatt are Communists then I am afraid you must consider me one also," While these comments reflect the polarization of the Lebanese people, the Lebanese political climate has always been affected by international influences.

Regionally, there were two opposing views in the Middle East that split the political climate in Lebanon. The opposition to Chamoun supported the pan-Arab notion advocated by the United

16 The Precarious Republic.p109
Arab Republic President Nasser who attempted to play the United States against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) for Egyptian loyalty.\(^{18}\) The Chamoun loyalists supported the pro-Western Iraqi stance that aimed to balance Nasser's neutralists decisions; evident through the Baghdad pact that sought to garner Arab support against Communist penetration of the Middle East. Chamoun’s pro-Western position led him to consider joining the pact, straining relations between Lebanon and leaders of the United Arab Republic. Similarly, In the midst of tensions between the United States and the USSR, President Eisenhower announced a plan in early 1957 to provide economic and military assistance to countries whose sovereignty was threatened by another state. This was a strategy designed to combat soviet expansion in the Middle East. While the Arab countries recognized the danger of supporting this doctrine, both Libya and Lebanon endorsed it. In fact, Chamoun’s domestic struggles and regional pressures compelled him to ask for US military assistance, adding that both Syria and Egypt were falling under Soviet domination. Despite Chamoun’s unpopularity with his Syrian neighbors and Egyptian counterparts, Chamoun continued to maintain his opposition to Arab nationalism, perceiving it to be a threat to Lebanese sovereignty. When Syria and Egypt united to form the United Arab Republic in February of 1958, Chamoun initially refused to recognize the union, losing further support among his people as Damascus became a haven for political support among Lebanese who were impressed with Nasser’s charisma. The Shi’a speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, Adil Usayran said: "Lebanon will march with the Arab caravan, and anyone who thinks of working for interests other than those of the Arabs will have no room in Lebanon.”\(^{19}\) Similarly the opposition, in support of Nasser and his ideals of Arab unity, held demonstrations in Tyre that were marked by the trampling of the Lebanese flag. With the stage being set for the ideological

\(^{18}\) The United Arab Republic was the union between Syria and Egypt to create one country. It lasted from 1958 to 1961

\(^{19}\) ibid
clash, Lebanese political life consisted of a lack of national unity combined with excessive foreign influence, whether it was the pro-Washington Chamoun or the opposing views supporting Egyptian and Syrian political and material assistance. The sectarian divide coupled with the tribal loyalties drove politicians away from the bigger picture of supporting a sovereign Lebanese nation. Instead, heavy foreign influence found its way into Lebanon at the request of political leaders who were eager to sell the country’s future for a short term victory. These recurring historical patterns have contributed to the state’s evolution without a clear identity, thereby polarizing the country’s social and political spheres. Such examples help to explain how Lebanon managed to find itself in the current state of political turmoil, still dominated by foreign influence.

On May 8th 1958 the assassination of leftist Nasib al Matani, editor of the Beirut daily newspaper Telegraph, ignited the tense political situation and in the following months of May, June and July; the situation turned violent. In these protests became more violent, the army, under the command of General Chehab, refused to commit its troops to the defense of the President. When fighting erupted in Tripoli, Sidon, Tyre, and Beirut between Chamoun’s and Nasser’s supporters the army fought to protect civilians while maintaining neutrality. While the decision to remain neutral as opposed to supporting the government may seem odd to the outside reader, any observer of Lebanese politics sees the same logic employed in current politics. These historical precedents and problems are the cause of this logic. The loyalty of the people is towards their sectarian, political, and party beliefs, even within the armed forces. Any rupture or outbreak between political parties not only polarizes politicians but leads to massive dissention within the army.

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20 “The Lebanese Crisis of 1958: The Risks of Inflated Self-Importance”
Finally, on July 15th 14,000 US Marines landed in Lebanon (at the request of President Chamoun) and occupied the country. By mid-August the fighting was over and the crisis ended with the election of General Fuad Chehab as President of the Republic, charged with forming a new government.\textsuperscript{22} Chehab made it his mission to restore political life to Lebanon. In his first government in September of that year, however, he formed a cabinet that excluded the adherents of Chamoun’s philosophy entirely and this proved his first mistake. Fighting resumed and a new cabinet was formed in October. In 1959, however, Raymond Edde, a Chamoun supporter who reluctantly agreed to join the government, submitted his resignation and the new cabinet began to resemble the one of September 1958. Only the third of Chehab’s cabinets preserved neutrality, and Chehab declared in 1960 that political life had been restored. In fulfillment of this mission, Chehab resigned in July of 1960 but retracted his resignation after being persuaded by the Parliament, which gave him a powerful vote of confidence.\textsuperscript{23} President Chehab served the remainder of his term in a secure political position, instituting reforms in the country, strengthening the Lebanese intelligence and security services (preventing foreign intervention), and maintaining the delicate balance between Christians and Muslims. In the summer of 1964 President Chehab’s term ended and he refused to allow the constitution to be amended to allow him another term. His vision for what the Lebanese people needed and his adherence to the constitution seemed to have set a precedent for the foundation for future Presidents to adhere to while proving that Lebanon could still maintain a strong political lifestyle with the right leadership.

In 1964, for the first time since Lebanon gained its independence, power was handed over from one President to the next peacefully and constitutionally. President Charles Helou, a Christian

\textsuperscript{22} ibid
\textsuperscript{23} The Precarious Republic. P. 301
lawyer, diplomat and public relations and tourism expert, was inaugurated with the support of Chehab.\textsuperscript{24} Much like previous Lebanese struggles; foreign influence began to chip away at Chehab’s success in establishing peace. Radical Ba’thist regimes had come to power in both Syria and Iraq while Palestinian guerrilla organizations were growing in number, size, and prominence. These guerrilla forces would prove to be Helou’s greatest challenge as Palestinians began asserting their own nationalism both in Lebanon while arming themselves to conduct operations against Israel. Similarly, Israel continued to threaten Palestinians living in the West Bank and Arabs elsewhere by seeking to divert water resources from the Jordan and the Litani rivers, forcing Lebanon to find a political answer. The difficulty of this task is a similar struggle facing Lebanon today in its relations with its neighbors. Maintaining a peaceful border with Israel was of course, necessary to Lebanon’s economic growth but popular support of the Palestinian cause made it increasingly difficult to maintain peace. On the same thread, a militarily weak country such as Lebanon opened itself to vulnerability not just from Israel but also from Arab states that sought to deploy their own troops on the Lebanese border. Syria, for one, could not be trusted and could turn out to be a greater threat that Israel, while the Americans would certainly never choose to side with Lebanon over Israel. As a result, Helou agreed to join a special pact through which bordering countries with Israel would defend themselves but receive no assistance if they did not ask for it, an attempt to protect Lebanese sovereignty from being violated by other Arab nations.\textsuperscript{25}

Helou entered the Presidency with Chehab’s vision for reform but by 1967 the domestic situation was deteriorating and talk of war between the Arab states and Israel grew. The talks were


\textsuperscript{25}War and politics in a fragmented society. P. 151
perpetuated by Palestinian guerillas whose confidence grew due to two factors. First, the success of guerrilla warfare in China and South Vietnam motivated the Palestinians to think that they too could succeed. Second the Israeli reliance on supplies from the Americas, who were currently preoccupied by war in the Far East, made Israel vulnerable. When the June war erupted between Egypt (still under Nasser’s control) and Israel, these Palestinian guerrilla forces (about half lived in camps around Lebanon) mobilized to launch attacks into Israel. Israel, holding the Lebanese responsible for this, struck back against the Southern cities.

The war exacerbated the Lebanese political climate as the Maronites viewed the Palestinians as a threat to the National Pact, while the Sunnis saw this as an opportunity to weaken Christian influence. Similarly the impoverished Sunni and Shi’a Muslims, particularly those living in the south, saw the strength of the Palestinians, empathized with their cause, and hoped that they would be advocates for social and political reform. They did not, however, realize that the Palestinians’ primary goal was to return to Palestine even at the cost of the Lebanese people. After the defeat of the Arabs in the six day war, Jordan tightened its border against Palestinian raids into Israel and in 1969 the Palestinians began to rely more heavily on the southern Lebanese border to launch their attacks. As had happened during the 1958 crisis, the army could not control the increasingly militant PLO in southern Lebanon because the country was divided on supporting the Palestinians. As the numbers of Palestinians continued to increase the Lebanese sought a compromise with the PLO in 1969, which became known as the Cairo agreement. The agreement ceded sovereignty over a seven square mile area in southern Lebanon from which the commandoes could launch their guerrilla war against Israel. In the camps the

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27 ibid
28 *War and politics in a fragmented society*. P. 157
Palestinians won the right to carry arms and patrol the area. This agreement, however, had drastic consequences on the future of the Lebanese state as the Palestinians established what has become known as the *watan badil*, or the alternative homeland.

The election of Suleiman Franjieh in 1970 became a domestic and ideological struggle between Lebanese politicians that set the stage for the fierce civil war on the horizon. The demographic shift in Lebanon now favored the Muslims and they demanded more political power to reflect their majority within the country. The incoming President had to restore order to a divided country. Franjieh won the election by one vote, the closest election in Lebanese history, and this narrow margin was too small to maintain the status quo. Two other external factors contributed to Franjieh’s troubles. The first was the influx of Palestinian guerillas after their expulsion from Jordan, and the second was the death of President Nasser in Egypt. While Nasser was the undisputed ruler of the Arab world, his death left a power vacuum to be contested by the new Presidents of Libya (Qaddafi), Syria (Assad), and Egypt (Sadat). This would later become most evident before and during the war of 1973. The Arab states were divided between those that sought a political settlement with Israel as opposed to those who wanted to continue resistance.

As Palestinian commandos began to strike at Western targets within Lebanon, the political atmosphere grew more and more tense. The radical factions within the PLO refused to work with Arafat as long as he was negotiating with the Lebanese leaders (who they saw as trying to expel them) while the government believed that the commandoes were trying to undermine its authority. All reforms and development came to a standstill as Palestinian raids began provoking

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29 *Mirror of the Arab World. P 91*
Israeli responses. Meanwhile the domestic situation continued in a downward spiral with riots breaking out in Tripoli and Beirut over rising food prices. At a time when Lebanon needed a leader to bring comprehensive social, economic, and political reforms while leading strong negotiations with Arab states, the PLO, and Israel: Franjieh failed to propose any solutions. Franjieh also strained relations between religious leaders within the Sunni community by appointing weak prime ministers or premiers whom he did not fully support. Two years before the outbreak of the 1975 civil war Franjieh appointed Amin al-Hafez to the position of prime minister and used the army to attack Palestinian guerillas. These moves further alienated the Muslim and Christian community. First, since Amin al-Hafez did not command the support of the Muslim community, this led to the formation of a weak series of cabinets incapable of governing the country. Similarly, Franjieh’s military campaign made confrontation with the Palestinian guerillas inevitable. The army was weak for several reasons. First, Franjieh’s election originally represented the decision of politicians to leave the army out of the government; as a result Franjieh dismantled a plethora of reforms instituted by Chehab, thereby weakening the efficiency of the security forces. Additionally, the army lost much of its support as Muslims claimed that the army was now being used to push the Maronite agenda against them and the Palestinians, demanding its reorganization. When Franjieh refused to restructure the army, Muslims lost all faith in it. Consequently when civil war broke out, the army would dissolve as sections broke off to form their own factions. Franjieh had completely failed to defuse the political tension within Lebanon that led to the outbreak of civil war in 1975.

31 War and politics in a fragmented society. P. 175
33 ibid
The civil war altered the fundamental dynamics of politics in Lebanon through one simple factor: the rise of Hizbollah. The entire historical context provided until this point is intended to provide the reader with a taste of the political strife that continuously plagued the country. Similarly, a strong understanding of the issues facing the state from independence until the civil war reveals a set of similar challenges in the post-civil war era. The difference lies in the alliances formed as well as the transformation of the struggle between Muslim and Christian into a Sunni-Shi’a struggle with the Christians and Druze divided. This alteration of political alignment in Lebanon is due to the establishment of Hizbollah as a major factor within the community. From this point the discussion will focus on the rise of Hizbollah through sectarian divisions, the growing influence of foreign governments in Lebanese affairs, as well as the causal link between past and current political strife.

Before the Lebanese civil war in 1975 few scholars would admit the disastrous impact of the confessional system on the country. Despite the political turmoil and sectarian divide, Lebanon was praised as a beacon of democracy in a region plagued with dictators and oppression. While there is no primary cause for the outbreak of the civil war, the lack of national unity, the widening gap between the economic classes, the military composition, and the overarching structure of a nation built around the confessional system set in motion a catastrophic civil war for fifteen years - claiming approximately 300,000 lives. The lack of a national identity combined with a failed government and disjointed military exacerbated the situation and allowed for militant movements to dominate the social and political atmosphere of a once vibrant and independent country. Of particular interest to this thesis is the emergence of the right wing militant Shi’a group Hizbollah in 1982.
At the outset of the civil war, the Shi’a in Lebanon were still considered politically irrelevant, their needs often dismissed by the other, more influential, sects. As these the wealthier individuals within these sects began to immigrate while the less fortunate took to the streets, the fate of the Shi’a would be altered by their unity. Three important men at the start of this movement would rise to prominence by gaining popular support for their captivating personalities and inspiring visions.

Imam Musa al-Sadr studied Islam in Iran and Iraq at the sacred cities of Qum and Najaf. Upon reaching Lebanon, his outreach to the community through speeches at various cultural and educational forums as well as a few churches attracted community members to his alluring personality and acute logic. Imam Musa set out to establish himself as leader of the Shi’a community and was instrumental in improving the lives of the ordinary Shi’a in southern Lebanon while reducing the role of the traditional elites. His opponent in this task was the political boss Kamil al As’ad from al-Tayyiba who had grown accustomed to wielding power through subjugation and patronage. Imam Musa’s first sign of political success came when he was appointed chairman of the Lebanese Supreme Islamic Shi’a Council. The Council was authorized by the Lebanese parliament and provided, for the first time, a representative body for the Shi’a independent of other Sunni Muslims. Imam Musa’s influence spread as he began issuing demands for social, political, economic and military reforms that led to increased defense measures in the South, improved construction of schools and hospitals, as well as several Shi’a appointments to the government. Before his abrupt disappearance Imam Musa founded two crucial Shi’a movements, Harakat el-Mahrumin (Movement of the Deprived) and its militia,

35 *Hizbullah* p.14
Amal (hope). Politically, Imam Musa recognized the Maronite Christians’ fear of losing power and encouraged them to keep hold of the Presidency. He accused them, however, of ignoring the needs of the southern Shi’a communities. He also found the Druze leader Kamal Jumblatt to be irresponsible and exploitive of the Shi’a. While Imam Musa sympathized with the Palestinian plight, their influence in the South was harmful to the Shi’a, and in May 1976 he threw his support behind the Syrians when they intervened in Lebanon on the side of the Maronite militias against the Lebanese National Movement and its Palestinian allies. In 1978 Imam Musa flew from Beirut to Tripoli at the request of Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi to attend the annual September national celebrations. The imam, however, failed to arrive and his fate ever since has remained a mystery with rumors of his assassination floating in the chambers of Qaddafi’s palace.

The second is the Ayatullah Muhammad Mahdi Shamseddine, who became after Imam Sadr’s disappearance, the acting representative of the Supreme Islamic Shi’a Council until his death in 2001. Shamseddine was born into a Lebanese family in Najaf in 1936 and studied in a theological seminary there. Upon moving to Lebanon in 1969 Shamseddine opened the charity foundation al-Jam‘iyya al-Khayriyya al-Thaqafiyya (Cultural Benevolent Society) in East Beirut, while leading prayers at a local mosque. Shamseddine was strongly attracted to academic work, while his sharp intellect articulated his lectures, guided the depth of his conferences, and authored his many books. He joined the Amal party before Sadr’s disappearance but disagreed with Nabih Berri, a prominent Shi’a leader and leader of the Amal movement, on how to handle the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon. This disagreement caused him to part ways with Amal

37 Hizbollah. P 18
38 ibid
40 ibid
41 Hizbullah. P 15
but he would later reconcile with the militia. Though he clearly wanted to fight Israel, Shamseddine was more concerned with pursuing his academic work.\(^\text{42}\)

Much like Sadr, Shamseddine promoted coexistence with the other sects in Lebanon and did not want to see the abolition of political sectarianism after the end of the civil war concluding, that: “abolishing political sectarianism in Lebanon might be very hazardous for Lebanon”.\(^\text{43}\)

He considered the Taif agreement to be an appropriate measure that allowed for discussing the abolition of sectarianism without harming the political climate of misrepresenting the sects. In 1985 and at the height of the civil war, Shamseddine declared that the “national identity of the Shi’ites is Lebanese, they are Arabs, and their religious identity is Islam, that is common among all Muslims”, but at the time he had not been clear on his views regarding the Lebanese political system. He did, however, emphasize the need for the Shi’a to maintain loyalty to Lebanon, reminding them of Sadr’s 1977 statement, which reaffirmed the loyalty of Muslims to the idea of Lebanon as their homeland despite the Maronite accusations of Shi’a close ties to the Palestinians and the PLO.\(^\text{44}\) (Palestinian Liberation Organization\(^\text{45}\))

In a political testament published in book format and titled \textit{al-Wasaya}, Shamseddine reveals his vision for a better united Lebanese nation. In this testimony he calls on the Shi’a to unite as an \textit{Umma}, the Islamic concept that all Muslims form a united community, irrespective of minor sects within the society. He stresses the importance of identifying as Muslims and not to distinguish themselves as minorities in Arab land, even if they may suffer some injustices. He emphasized this importance by calling on the Shi’a not to be fooled by the games that the Great

\(^{42}\) \textit{Hizbullah} p 16  
\(^{43}\) \textit{Shi’ite Lebanon} p 35  
\(^{44}\) ibid  
\(^{45}\) The PLO was a militia organization comprising of Palestinians who left Israel to conduct operations against the Jewish State from the South of Lebanon, effectively compromising Lebanese sovereignty
Powers have played to sow instability in the region. In a subtle reference to Iran, Shamseddine called on the Shi’a to merge with their respective nations and societies and to refrain from sowing suspicion among other Muslims through sectarian activities. While he never directly refers to Arab-Iranian ties, author Shaery-Eisenlohr accurately points out that this is a warning to Arab Shi’a not to associate too closely with Iran. Ironically, it would later be the Lebanese Shi’a under Hizbollah that would build strong ties with Iran and the Shi’a leadership in Syria.

The third influential character is the Ayatullah al Sayyed Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah. Fadlallah was born into a southern Lebanese family with a strong theological background in Najaf in 1936. He was closely associated with Baqir al-Sadr, and joined the Iraqi Islamist Da’wa party. Upon returning to Lebanon in 1966 Fadlallah founded the Brotherhood Association in Naba’a, a poor Shi’a neighborhood in East Beirut. His work and involvement in mosque activity was evident as he gave lectures, taught Islamic classes and led mosque prayers at the Imam al-Rida mosque, which later became a center of Islamic work in Lebanon. In 1977 he founded the Association of Philanthropic Organizations, which was originally intended to provide schooling for orphaned children who had lost their parents in the civil war in Lebanon. Of the three Shi’a leaders, his direct ties to Hizbollah are probably the strongest as many within the militia saw him as its spiritual leader. Despite his nomination for a leading position within the party as a result of his Islamic guidance and support for the Islamic revolution in Iran, Fadlallah refused participation in favor of remaining a cleric. He continued to oversee his

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46 Shi’ite Lebanon p74
47 Hizbullah, P16
48 Shi’ite in Lebanon, P74
schools while remaining independent of the party but supporting it on matters that aligned with his views.  

Imam Sadr, the Ayatullah Shamseddine and Fadlallah all served as spokesman for the Shi’a community and were prominent religious leaders whose influence played a key role in the creation of Hizbollah. Before explaining the different significant roles played in the establishment of Hizbollah, it is important to address one final factor that ties the roots of the movement with the political situation spanning the Shi’a community within the Middle East. The common denominator among these individuals is their international ties with Najaf, Iraq. While the Hizbollah movement was officially created in June 1982 following the Israeli invasion of Beirut, it had its roots grounded in other Shi’a movements that sprung up in the South following the arrival of religious leaders from Iraq. These other Lebanese movements include a breakaway faction of Amal, the Lebanese al Da’wa, the Association of Muslim Ulama in Lebanon, and the Association of Muslim Students. The combination of these Islamic organizations created the umbrella group *Hizbollah*. The clerical network of religious leaders and academics who formed these group can be traced to the Shi’a religious city of Najaf. These Lebanese Shi’a clergy, including the prominent three mentioned above, were all students at the Najaf seminary and were associated with the *al-Da’wa al Islamiyya*, a clandestine Iraqi revolutionary movement and alternative to the Communist party.

Young Shi’a men selected for religious training often chose to study in Iraq’s holy cities, Karbala and Najaf. As the revolutionary movement in Iran gained steam, however, the local atmosphere for foreign Shi’a in Iraq became inhospitable. The most famous of these individuals to be

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49 Hizbullah, P17  
51 ibid
expelled from Iraq (at the request of the Shah of Iran) was the Ayatullah Khomeini. Other prominent clerics include the Lebanese Subhi al-Tufayli and Abbas al Musawi who played key roles in Hizbollah’s early formation. These clerics sought refuge in Lebanon and introduced fervor for religious, social, and political change to the Lebanese Shi’a community, while sharing their disdain for Israel and loyalty to Iran. This important historical migration of religious fervor and community leadership helps explain the rise of Hizbollah not only as a voice for the Lebanese Shi’a but also their “special relationship” with Iran, an integral factor in current Lebanese politics. Most of the returning clerics belonged to the al-Da’wa al Islamiyya movement in Iraq, thereby committed to transform a secular society into a religiously rooted community. Their activity, however, would set the stage for the emergence of Hizbollah as a religious order that propagated the religious secularism that dominates the postwar state of affairs. Their role within al-Da’wa served as prior knowledge alongside the ideological foundation for the establishment of Hizbollah. While in Iraq al-Da’wa, under the leadership of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, served as a religious alternative to Communism; a similar role was identified in Lebanon, except this time the target was secularism and the Shi’a spiritual leader was the Sheikh and Ayatullah Fadlallah. While the establishment of the Lebanese Da’wa was abandoned, it was replaced with the decision to infiltrate the Amal movement and reform it from within. While Sadr’s decision to establish al-Da’wa was in response to the academic repression of the Shi’a in Ba’ath controlled Iraq, Fadlallah’s decision to revive the Islamic traditions within Lebanon was a reaction to the civil war enveloping the country, as secularist militias dominated the streets of Lebanon, raising concern that Muslims were being exposed to non-Islamic movements. An

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52 Hizbollah, P31
53 Hezbullah, P33
54 Hizb ‘allah in Lebanon, P 28
example of this is the expulsion of Fadlallah from the al-Nabaa district of Beirut by the Christian militias of the Lebanese Front, provoking Fadlallah to action.

The relationship between al-Da’wa in Iraq and the congregation of Shi’a clergy in Lebanon was ideologically significant in the creation of Hizbollah as an ideological alternative to secularist organizations. The Lebanese al-Da’wa and its Iraqi paternal organization share such close connections that the Iraqi Ba’ath regime unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate the Ayatullah Fadlallah in Lebanon. They did succeed however, in executing Baqir el Sadr on April 9th 1980 at the same time that the Lebanese al Da’wa began to dissolve the movement in favor of organizing members within the framework of Hizbollah. The ideological and religious impact of the Lebanese al-Da’wa party, however, reverberates through the structure of the political and militaristic powerhouse that is Hizbollah.

The arrival of Shi’a clerics from Iraq was certainly the ideological factor that led to the creation of Hizbollah but, it is important to note the other catalytic factors that provided the right atmosphere for change within the Shi’a community. While the political history of the Lebanese Shi’a is relatively minor, the arrival of Imam Musa al Sadr transformed it into a society ripe for social and political change. This activism, however, was not primarily caused by the poor socioeconomic status of the community, as this condition had existed long before the arrival of enthusiastic clerics. Rather, it is a combination of international and domestic events that created this movement. Between 1975 and 1982 three important factors helped foster the creation of Hizbollah. First, the disappearance of Imam Musa al Sadr sparked emotional outrage within the Shi’a community, as he was the iconic leader of a movement for change. Second, the Iranian revolution in 1979 that brought the Ayatullah Khomeni to power in Iran provided the Lebanese

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55 *Hizb’allah in Lebanon.* P28
Shi’a community with a recognized political force in the region to model their efforts after. Finally, the Lebanese civil war and the ensuing Israeli invasions of the South in 1978 and again in 1982 sparked a fierce resentment towards Israel and a drive to improve security measures in the South alongside the need for community rebuilding efforts. Of these factors the Israeli invasion of 1982 reinforced Israel’s image as the “enemy of Islam” within the eyes of the Shi’a community. Even though the Israeli army was initially welcomed in the southern Lebanese cities as liberators from the arms of the PLO, the Israeli army overstayed its “welcome”. The cheers quickly turned to anger when the people realized that the IDF (Israeli Defense Force) had no intention of withdrawing from the South.

Having experienced a successful Islamic revolution, Iran looked to Lebanon state in which to spread its ideology, encouraging many of its followers in Lebanon to form their own Islamic Amal movement to challenge Nabih Berri’s leadership. Berri had begun to lose favor with his followers who proved to be more loyal to Iran than to the Amal movement. This happened for two important reasons. First, Berri began seeking political accommodation rather than military action against Israel. His participation in the National Salvation Committee, a group designed to strike a deal with Israel on its withdrawal from the South, angered many hardline Shi’a who favored military action against the Jewish state. The second reason, and often less known issue is that Amal rejected the Iranian concept of Wilayat el Faqih, a religious concept contained within the Iranian constitution that gave supreme religious authority to an individual entitled to be the final interpreter of the Quran and all associated texts as well as the arbiter on all political and social issues. This resistance to the wilayat al Faqih concept forced Amal to clarify its stance as a nationalistic Lebanese movement, essentially rejecting loyalty to Iran. This does not mean,

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56 Hizb’allah in Lebanon, P31
57 Shi’ite in Lebanon, P 107
however, that Amal is a secularist party detached from the Shi’a faith; in fact many members within the Amal reject a secularist state. Those who sought to create an “Islamic Amal” preferred the Iranian vision of how the sect should be run alongside a supreme authority on all matters affecting the Shi’a community. Sayyid Sadiq Musavi, the head of the Office of Islamic Propaganda in Iran, characterized the relationship between Amal and Iran after the revolution and before the creation of Hizbollah as:

“Mr. Sadr wanted to enter the Lebanese parliament, thus he decided to put all various influential Shi’ite groups under Amal, without any prior consideration of their ideological background. He believed that once they are in Amal, slowly they themselves will find their religious and ideological orientation… In this process the Iranian revolution was on its way to success, and since most of these people were Shi’ites and the Iranian revolution was under the guardianship of Imam Khomeini, so it had a Shi’ite dimension. The Lebanese Shi’ites felt an unconscious bond with the Islamic revolution, but the revolution was at the beginning not yet in the right hands and it was following a liberal line, and these liberals, based on a series of their own ideas, had put all their efforts in supporting one specific group in Lebanon [Amal] instead of trying to attract a large number of followers…It was as if the line of the revolution had been defined by Bazargan, Yazdi, and Qutbzadeh, but as the Iranian people never agreed on having them represent the line of the revolution here [in Lebanon] many didn’t accept it either. Since the line of the revolution was to incorporate all under its wings, despite the weakness of this group, the revolution reacted positively toward them. But with the last Israeli attack, fights broke out among the Amal members and the party split. But this is natural, once the basis and skeleton of something is not exact and proper, this is what will happen to it… There are
leaders in the Amal who wanted to make peace with Israel, also those who, based on their belief in Islam, wanted to fight Israel, and those who due to their weakness of belief didn’t resist Israel and surrendered”  

While Iran seized the opportunity to use its influence with pro-Iranian members of the Amal movement to provoke a severe dichotomy within the ideological structure of Amal, particularly in expressing their displeasure over the secular decisions Berri appeared to be making. It was the Israeli invasion which provided Iran with the catalyst to expedite the process of gaining a foothold in Lebanon. While the migration of pro-Iranian Shi’a clerics certainly gave Iran an edge to begin establishing a strong Iranian movement within Lebanon, it was the domestic circumstances that accelerated the enhancement of Hizbollah into a major force in the Shi’a community. The former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak put the matter quite bluntly in July 2006 when he said: “When we entered Lebanon…there was no Hizbollah. We were accepted with perfumed rice and flowers by the Shia in the south. It was our presence there that created Hizbollah”. Not only was the Israeli invasion critical in creating Hizbollah and, while some scholars may disagree, it was actually the circumstances of the Lebanese Civil War that allowed the movement to become radical and widespread. Indeed, when the war ended, there was a need to appease Hizbollah, whether out of bona fide recognition for Hizbollah’s ability to resist Israel or out of fear of what might happen if they tried to disarm the movement. The underlining point, however, is that without the circumstances of war (both foreign and domestic) the occasion for Hizbollah’s existence may never have come into being. Analyzing the quote by Musavi highlights the important circumstances that caused the split within Amal and the eventual establishment of Hizbollah, as it is a direct reaction against all that the Iranian regime viewed as

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58 Shi’ite in Lebanon, P114
59 Hizbollah, P. 33
wrong with Amal. Musavi accuses Sadr of having almost purely selfish goals of seeking a position within parliament at the cost of ignoring the division within the Shi’a community regarding their ideological and religious differences. Speaking in hindsight may be easy for Musavi but, the historical evidence suggests that Sadr provided a safe haven for persecuted Shi’a from Iraq to seek refuge in Lebanon. These clerics did not have the support needed to build their own movement; rather they fed off Sadr’s popularity and vision in creating Amal. It is interesting to note that Iran’s history of involvement in Lebanon has been pushing the Lebanese Shi’a to engage Israel militarily and while they have provided weapons and initial training the Iranians have never become involved in the killing themselves. This concept will be developed further in future chapters.

The establishment of Hizbollah grew out of active Iranian support and the merging of several Shi’a groups including the new Islamic Amal militia. The movement’s birth pangs following its full inception in the mid-1980s were marked with violence in the form of kidnappings and murders as well direct competition with Amal for the support of the Shi’a community. Hizbollah expanded its influence, spreading to the Biqaa Valey and, with assistance from the spiritual and highly influential leader Sheikh Fadllalah, expanded its influence into Beirut. Among the first founders of Hizbollah’s units in Beirut was Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, who at the time of the Israeli invasion was only 22 years old and a rising member within the Amal community. Hizbollah’s final expansion into Southern Lebanon, however, is of the utmost significance to understanding the current loyalty that Hizbollah enjoys, particularly in Southern Lebanon.

The power vacuum left by the departure of the PLO following the Israeli invasion combined with Amal’s failure to confront Israel left an opening to gain the loyalty of the Southern Shi’a community. A group of young rebels under the banner of the Association of the Ulama of Jabal
Amil challenged the Israeli Southern occupation militarily and most notably through self-sacrificing missions. These clerics led by Sheikh Ragib Harb (another Najaf student) provided the core foundation for Hizbollah’s take over in the South. His assassination in 1984, allegedly by Israeli agents, served to increase the fanaticism of his followers and the militancy of Hizbollah. Israel’s decision to announce a withdrawal in January 1985 from the Southern port city of Tyre earned Hizbollah prestige within the Shi’a community as they claimed victory over Israel, citing their military accomplishments, most notably the destruction of the IDF headquarters in Tyre on November 4, 1983. The rapid growth of Hizbollah over the period of the civil war was a combination of multiple factors that played perfectly into the vacuum of power existing in the Lebanese Shi’a community. Hizbollah’s successful military operations, their indoctrinating ideology, and material incentive (provided by Iran) were the first signs of Hizbollah’s transformation into an independent state within a state. It began to fill the role of a non-existent central government by rebuilding infrastructure and providing jobs in the south. This gained the party huge support in a community that felt ignored by the sectarian system established in Beirut. Hizbollah gained support for its military activities in the South, demonstrating their ability to fight the Israelis and promote their accomplishments through a successful propaganda campaign, which allowed them to gain new recruits as well. Hizbollah’s ability to address the social, economic, and security concerns of south effectively made them its guardians. Throughout the civil war Hizbollah built its network within the Shi’a community and focused its efforts on resisting the Israeli presence. The conclusion of the civil war saw Hizbollah in the best positions to emerge as a factor in the new Lebanon that was to be created from the Taif accord.

\[\text{Hizb‘allah in Lebanon, P 39}\]
\[\text{ibid}\]
\[\text{Ibid}\]
The purpose of understanding this important historical perspective on the Shi’a community and the establishment of Hizbollah will quickly become evident as we explore the growth of Hizbollah between the Taif Accord, the assassination of former Lebanese Prime minister Rafiq el Hariri, and the continued role of usual foreign interests. It is important to note that the historical framework established within the first and second chapters provide two integral snippets of history within the greater Lebanese story that highlight the creation of the confessional system, its history, and the lost opportunity to establish a boundary between religion and state. The implications of the first chapter both directly and indirectly fostered an ideal situation for a long lasting civil war that saw the creation of Hizbollah and gave it the time and opportunity to grow as a major factor within the Shi’a community. All this happened at an ideal time within the larger Lebanese context as the Taif accord was meant to bring the nation forward and address all the concerns of all Lebanese across the country. Hizbollah emerged as a military (and later political) movement with its own agenda, partaking in a framework intended to preserve the representation of all sects within the government, while maintaining peace with its neighbors, Israel in particular.
Chapter Three:  
The Struggle for Beirut:  
The Rise and Fall of Rafiq el Hariri

"All men dream: but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake up in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men for they may act their dream with open eyes, to make it possible." T.E Lawrence

In 1992 fate positioned two leaders who would revolutionize the course of Lebanese history. Following the assassination of Abbas al-Musawi by Israeli Forces, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah was elected to the post of Secretary General of Hizbollah. Later that year, the parliamentary elections brought business tycoon Rafiq Hariri to the premiership. Both men dreamt of a different Lebanon, through Hizbollah, however, Nasrallah sought justice, particularly for the southern community. Hariri sought to establish an independent Lebanon and move the country passed its experiences of war and mistrust. These two individuals would become symbolic icons within their respective parties while their differing visions would set in motion events within the greater Middle East that, alongside concurrent international events, would redefine global politics.

Born of the same social class both Hariri and Nasrallah were raised in low income families and understood first-hand the struggles of the people. While following different paths within their communities, both leaders grew to be bright and charismatic individuals to whom other leaders gravitated towards. The end of the civil war and the establishment of the Taif agreement (so dubbed for being negotiated in Taif, Saudi Arabia) gave both visionaries the tools they needed to pursue their own structure for the state. These ideologues, while capable of collaborating together initially, but were bound to clash as each grew in power within their respective spheres of influence. The Taif Accord was, in some aspects, a short sighted solution to the civil war that
empowered these ideologies through two factors. First, the Taif accord drew from the powers of the Christian community and channeled them towards the growing Muslim population. The powers of the president were reduced and handed over the prime minister. Similarly the ratio of ministers within the government, which originally favored the Christians by a 6:5 ratio, now adopted a policy known as the recurring six. This meant that for every six Christians appointed they were to be complimented by an equal number of Muslims. Thus, the number of members within the Chamber of Deputies was raised to 108 (and then to 128) to be divided equally between Christians and Muslims and proportionally among sects. These changes empowered Hariri as Lebanon’s first prime minister under the Taif Accord and allowed him more flexibility in pursuing reconstruction. While these constitutional changes were necessary to reflect the growing Muslim population within Lebanon, the Taif agreement also provided two special clauses that would allow a parallel vision for Lebanon to be pursued concurrently with the government. While the Taif accord called for all militias to relinquish their weapons to the government, Hizbollah would become the expectation. Whether out of fear of starting another civil war or out of a genuine desire to resist Israel, the Lebanese leaders determined that Hizbollah was a “resistance” and would be allowed to maintain control of its arms until Israel had withdrawn from all Lebanese territories. Similarly, Syrian forces would remain in Lebanon in a protecting capacity since the end of the civil war had seen Syria’s intervention to stabilize Lebanese affairs. These agreements, perhaps necessary to secure a temporary peace, have once again circumvented government attempts at unifying the country and have ignored Lebanon’s sectarian problem while inviting foreign influence in Lebanese affairs. Perhaps it was difficult to predict that Hizbollah would emerge as a significant political and military entity within Lebanon,

2 ibid
but it certainly was foreseeable that Syria would not relinquish control of Lebanon so easily. Nevertheless these two factors would become the crux of opposition between Lebanon’s divided communities.

The same day as the assassination of al-Musawi in 1992 the leaders of Hizbollah met and appointed Hasan Nasrallah as the new secretary general of the resistance. Despite Nasrallah’s hesitation at assuming this responsibility at such a young age Shiekh Naim Qasim, the deputy secretary general, said this of Nasrallah’s character: “he maintains a high degree of religious faith, a high degree of truthfulness, a high degree of faithfulness, the ability to receive constructive criticism, a high degree of compassion and embrace, a high degree of courage, and I would say a high degree of sound judgment. He holds an inclusive collective intelligence.”

Similarly another colleague, Al Sayyed Hachim Saf al-Din the Head of Hizbollah’s Executive Board, says Nasrallah is: “…capable of bearing a responsibility like this. He [Nasrallah] has the political capability to pinpoint the right political moment and [he has] the political wisdom that is found within an individual needed for this position”. These testimonials from Nasrallah’s colleagues tell a similar story of the secretary general’s personality that history has already demonstrated. Once in control of Hizbollah, Nasrallah used a broad vision to redefine the party’s politics by avoiding actions that pointed the Hizb’s weapons at civilians (as it had done in the civil war). Instead, Nasrallah embraced a joint political, governmental, and military approach to running the organization.

The 1992 election constituted the first of its kind in nearly 20 years. Despite intense debates among members of the party on whether or not to participate, Hizbollah wanted to change the

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image bestowed upon it by its participation in the civil war in order to become a party of the people. Eventually Hizbollah partnered with Amal and other groups to achieve representation within the government, winning eight seats for the party. Thus began Nasrallah’s mission of softening Hizbollah’s image saying: “We fight on mountain tops and in the valleys, but live in this community and are a part of it”. Combined with Hizbollah’s four Islamist allies, they headed the largest bloc within the parliament and would have done better if Syria had not insisted that Hizbollah not far better than Amal and that they run on a joint electoral list. Upon entering the government Hizbollah outlined its political agenda for freeing, providing, and promising southern Lebanon from Israeli military control, more civil liberties, working with different sects for the sake of national unity. This was the first step towards a hope, shared by many Lebanese, that someday Hizbollah would become solely a political party.

Hizbollah’s politics, however, extended beyond just participating in the state’s government. It also began to undertake governmental responsibilities in the south by providing its residents with desperately needed social services. Unlike a simply terrorist organization, Hizbollah opened schools, ran hospitals, and constructed homes for displaced residents. I personally received a dental scan at a Hizbollah operated hospital in the dahiya (suburbs of Beirut) area. Hizbollah had been implementing these social reforms since its inception as it considered the implementation of these works a Party duty. Less than three years after its inception it founded the Jihad al-Binaa Association (The Struggle to Build Association) which was designed to restore buildings damaged by the bombings of the war. In 1987 it worked to restore damage caused by torrential

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4 Ahzab Lubnan: Hizbollah: Al Jiz’ Al Thany
6 ibid
7 Ahzab Lubnan: Hizbollah: Al Jiz’ Al Thany
streams in the northern Bekaa while working in the same year on refurbishing homes in the southern Lebanese villages of Kafra and Yater which had been targets of Israeli aggression. The Jihad al-Binaa institution restored every home damaged by Israeli raids since 1991 bringing the total number of refurbished buildings to 17,212 homes, shops, and public utility structures. Similarly, it founded the Islamic Health Organization (IHO) which manages nine health centers; the Martyrs Foundation, created to provide support to the families of martyrs, detainees, and resistance fighters; the Foundation for the wounded, which helps fighters and civilians who were wounded in Israeli attacks; the Women’s Association, which is composed of Hizbollah’s female members and designed to provide assistance with social welfare projects and to champion women’s rights. These are a few examples of the many social services provided by Hizbollah for its residents. Its work has earned the Party almost unwavering support within the community for providing services at crucial times with no governmental support. I had the opportunity of observing a Hizbollah run woman’s clinic on the outskirts of one of the largest Palestinian camps, Bourj el Barajni. My experience sitting in the clinic room and speaking with some of the nurses and doctors provided me with an insight into the success and shortcomings of these facilities. Most importantly they provide women who otherwise cannot afford quality medical care within Beirut the medical attention they need in order to stay healthy and informed on their medical conditions. In observing the facilities I noted the poor quality of the medical supplies as well as the unlabeled medical pills and bottles. In my conversation with one of the doctors present that day, he informed me – as he proceeded to light a cigarette in the kitchen- that while the clinical programs provided by the Hizb were not perfect, they had effectively stepped into the role of the government and provided the people with the services they needed. He proceeded to

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tell me of the government’s inability to care for its citizens in the south, limiting its attention almost entirely to Beirut. I left the clinic that day with a better understanding of the party’s ability to garner the citizen’s loyalty and the importance of providing social services to the community, particularly in comparison with the number of military escapades previously launched by Hizbollah.

Hizbollah’s primary concern has always been towards evicting Israel from Lebanese territory. The military operations it conducted between 1992 and 2000 provoked severe reactions that circumvented the Lebanese government. Since the Taif Accord had allowed Hizbollah to maintain its arms in a resistance capacity it began taking control of the Shi’a dominated south. Its military operations against Israel increased from 19 in 1990 to 187 in 1994 to over 1000 after 1996 as Hizbollah began its campaign of bleeding the enemy slowly. The years between 1994 and 2000 saw Hizbollah act independently of the state as its military operations led to intense armed conflict on two separate occasions, Israel’s Operation Accountability and Operation Grapes of Wrath. Despite the state of open warfare between Israel and Hizbollah, it was actually the proficiency with which Hizbollah executed its military operations that drove Israel to break the “rules of the game” often attacking civilian villages that they dubbed “Hizbollah targets”.

Between July 25th and July 31st, 1993, Israel launched Operation Accountability, the purpose of this military operation was (like all Israeli operations in Lebanon) to deal a decisive military blow to Hizbollah and to turn the people against the resistance through increased pressure on civilians. The conflict began when a Hizbollah offensive killed several Israeli Defense Force (IDF) soldiers. Israel responded against the villages from which they thought Hizbollah was

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11 Beware of Small States. P. 248/263
12 Ibid
operating with a combined land, air, and sea attack. After seven days of this combined military attack, Israel had destroyed approximately 6,000 homes across 80 flattened villages, killing more than 140 Lebanese civilians in addition to 250,000 displaced refugees from the south streamlining towards Beirut.\textsuperscript{13} Despite all this, Hizbollah rockets continued to fall on northern Israel where the damage was substantially less (2 dead and 24 injured), but the threat still very much alive. An unwritten agreement to halt attack against civilians developed between Hizbollah and Israel but outside of the Israeli invasion of 1982, the devastation invoked on the Lebanese people and their villages – in particular the southern Shi’a community- had already been inflicted and the government was powerless to stop it. Whether the government was vocal about this concern or not is irrelevant to the fact it remained a major issue in current political affairs. This is enough to draw on the fact that the historical precedent allowed for Hizbollah through the National Pact is similar to pre-Taif, Palestinian policy – discussed in the previous chapter - to wage attacks on Israel. Thus, the inability of Lebanon’s leaders to subordinate Hizbollah to the will of the government has forced upon them a near impossible situation of trying to regulate an armed resistance that enjoys major Lebanese support. The circumstances of Operation Accountability became a repetitive theme in Lebanon’s failure to secure stability. Ultimately, this set the stage for Operation Grapes of Wrath.

In 1996 Israel tried once again to end Hizbollah’s military incursions into Israel with a large scale blitz on “Hizbollah” targets. The operation was dubbed “Grapes of Wrath” and lasted sixteen days after the first air-raid on April 11\textsuperscript{th}.\textsuperscript{14} During the operation the Israelis killed 165 Lebanese civilians, alongside 401 wounded, with widespread damage to the civilian

\textsuperscript{14} Voice of Hezbollah P.144
infrastructure. Meanwhile, the casualties caused by Hizbollah’s Katyusha rockets amounted to zero kills and some forty wounded. Israel’s strategy for undermining Hizbollah’s support while trying to convince the international community that its war was solely against Hizbollah failed miserably after the horrifying Qana attacks. The incident occurred when Israeli aerial and ground units intentionally destroyed a United Nations base in Qana after civilians sought refuge inside. The result was the death of 106 civilians, half of which were children. After this incident the United States could no longer protect Israeli actions on the international stage and thus sought a written agreement outlining a truce. The truce affirmed Hizbollah’s legitimacy in conducting military operations in Lebanon, greatly restricted the attacks on Lebanon by the Israelis, and modestly prohibited Hizbollah’s attacks from civilian areas. Hizbollah views this agreement as a victory, not only for surviving another round with Israel (something no other Arab army had been able to do) but more importantly for the American and Israeli concession that Hizbollah had a right to conduct its military operations, despite Clinton’s executive order in 1995 that identified Hizbollah as a terrorist organization. Internally, Hizbollah had managed to finally change its image in the eyes of the Lebanese people. Despite Hizbollah’s inability to inflict a serious defeat on Israel, its tactic of ‘bleeding’ the enemy seemed to be effective over time. The two skirmishes with Israel had earned Hizbollah, contrary to Israeli hopes, even greater community support, not just from the Shi’a community, but from all Lebanese in all walks of life. In a religiously divided community where the people generally supported their own religious political parties, Hizbollah had emerged as a an inter-religious Lebanese phenomenon. Following Operation Grapes of Wrath Journalist David Hirst recounts a story of two Hizbollah press officials visiting a media center in Ashrafiyah- the heart of Christian Beirut. Once the two officials got out of their car an

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16 Voice of Hezbollah P.145
old man across the street shouted: “Hizbollah, Hizbollah, we are all Hizbollah. We are all behind you. God be with you, you have made us proud.”

“Part of me [confided an official] initially panicked at his public shouts of the word Hizbollah in the middle of this Christian quarter [but] another part was filled with emotion when I saw the other pedestrians and shoppers look at us with smiles of acknowledgement and acceptance. I knew then that we had come a long way as a group, and, more importantly, as a people…”17

Just as the ordinary citizens began to praise Hizbollah’s efforts, so too did the Arab world. Arabs began taking pride in the anti-Israeli exploits led by this guerilla movement. Sunnis in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan all showed support for Hizbollah’s activities and resilience.

By 2000 the Israeli military in southern Lebanon was exhausted. After “Operation Grapes of Wrath” Hizbollah’s formal recognition of the “Rules of the Game” allowed it to continue its guerilla warfare against the Israelis. Hizbollah’s progressively intelligent offensive tactics exhausted the Israelis and in 2000 General Ehud Barak, now prime minister of Israel, fulfilled a campaign promise; to withdraw from southern Lebanon.18 In the early hours of May 23rd, 2000, the last Israeli forces in the Strip withdrew to the Israeli frontier leaving behind many of their Lebanese allies who were forced to surrender to Hizbollah. No direct Hizbollah action or decisive military victory dictated the Israeli withdrawal, but suddenly the 18 year occupation of the south had ended. Tens of thousands of exiled southerners returned to their lands, all flying different flags of resistance. The overwhelming majority, however, brandished the infamous bold yellow backdrop fronting the clenched fist and Kalashnikov of Hizbollah. I can recall watching

17 Beware of Small States. P.259
18 Hezbollah. P 88
the historic scene on television, as I picked up the phone to hear my friend inform me that he was now born on a new Lebanese independence day.

That was the sentiment of the Lebanese people, as May 25\textsuperscript{th} became the day of recognition for this historic accomplishment- a second Lebanese Independence Day. Hizbollah’s success, however, raised an important question for the party’s future. Now that Israel had withdrawn from Lebanese territory, would Hizbollah lay down its arms as a resistance and join political life in Lebanon? Whenever it had been asked up to this moment, Hizbollah leaders responded ambiguously for as long as Israel remained in Lebanese territory, it was easy for Hizbollah to justify its operations. The end of the occupation left Hizbollah in a dilemma. To lay down its arms meant to abandon its success as the only Arab force to effectively stand up to Israel. On the other hand Hizbollah could not continue its strategy of bleeding the enemy by infiltrating Israeli territory, because that would lead Israel to inflict unbearable damage on Lebanon as an act of war. To overcome this dilemma, Nasrallah drove the party to a political answer – finding his pretext in the Shiba Farms. No one had ever heard of this 25 square mile plot of land and all maps prior to this declaration showed the Shiba farms as part of Syrian territory annexed by Israel in 1967 war with Israel. Nasrallah, however, draped a Lebanese flag over it and demanded its return. Naturally, the Syrians posed no objection to this demand or to Hizbollah’s claim on the territory.\textsuperscript{19} This, however, was not the understanding the government had undertaken when it agreed to accept Hizbollah’s resistance weapons. Hariri had always held that, once the Israeli invasion had been defeated, Hizbollah would disband and relinquish its arms to the government, which would take back control of the south. Hizbollah’s military and social operations had

\textsuperscript{19} Beware of small states p.262
effectively circumvented the confessional government as the liberation of the south marked the
death of a Lebanese resistance and emergence of a state within a state.

With Hizbollah handling most of Lebanon’s military activity, Hariri’s government sought to
restore the economic prosperity of the country. When the civil war ended the national economy
had been devastated with Lebanon’s GDP reduced to half that of the 1975 figure. Under such
circumstances, it would be impossible to rebuild the economy without either higher taxation or
borrowing from abroad. Hariri’s strong international ties with France, Saudi Arabia, and the
United States prompted him to borrow, while his economic success made him confident that he
could persuade expatriates to invest in Lebanon. Under Hariri’s early years the country
prospered, attracting back its citizens who had fled during the war. Talent and capital flooded
Beirut and within just the first year of his premiership Hariri’s success was evident; the end of
1993 saw a 6 percent increase in national income the highest in the Middle East. Hariri’s first
term as prime minister, however, revealed the deep seated political and sectarian divisions as
well as the extent of Syrian influence in the country. To the West, Lebanon was a bargaining
chip in the greater conflict of the Middle East and this would set the stage for Hariri’s
assassination, the strongest barrier to the restructuring of the Middle East.

Working for a country that struggled to achieve national unity, through a constitution that
promoted sectarian division, under a Syrian regime that played favorites and restricted Lebanese
growth- Rafiq Hariri’s story cannot be told without understanding the vision he was trying to
carry out. Many Lebanese accused the former prime minister of submitting to Syria’s demands
within Lebanon. While it is true that Hariri certainly kept very close ties with Damascus it is

important to understand that he did this not out of fear but instead as a strategy. Ultimately, Hariri was killed for the vision he wished to implement for Lebanon, but only after years of diplomatic struggle. When Hariri first took office, he commissioned some of Lebanon’s best historians to document the country’s history, partially for his own enlightenment. Hariri often referred to the people he admired most in Lebanon’s history notably two Riad al Sulh, Lebanon’s first prime minister as well as Fouad Chehab, former president of the Republic.\textsuperscript{22} In studying these historic characters Hariri was impressed by al-Sulh’s ability to balance his Arabism with Lebanese independence, and Chehab’s recognition that building the state’s institutions would bring prosperity and unity – two attributes that characterized Hariri’s terms in office.

Lebanon’s sectarian system and Syrian control over Lebanon tested Hariri’s Sulh-like-vision between independence and Arabism. The prime minister engaged in a lot of politicking in an attempt to reduce Syrian intervention. Despite receiving Syrian backing to rebuild a state economy, Hariri was made to understand that his economic plans had to promote greater Syrian-Lebanese integration whenever possible.\textsuperscript{23} As a result, Hariri could not implement policies that would restructure Lebanese spending thus ensuring that Syria’s allies within Lebanon received special financial treatment from the government. By 1993 the Oslo Accords being negotiated by the United States, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority gave Hariri hope for regional stability, which was integral to Lebanon’s economic and political independence and subsequent prosperity. After the assassination of Israel’s Prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, on November 4\textsuperscript{th}, 1995, Hariri lost faith in a lasting peace between the Palestinians and Israelis, as well as in the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanese territory. Hariri recognized the inherent danger in

\textsuperscript{22} Bkassini, George. \textit{The Road to Independence: Five Years with Rafic Hariri}. Beirut, No Publisher, 2009. P. 53
\textsuperscript{23} The Political Economy of Lebanon under Rafiq Hariri: An Interpretation
which the Taif accord now lay. In order for Hariri to realize his Chehabist vision, he required stability in the region and now turned to Hizbollah as the best tool for evicting the Israelis from Lebanon. This move, however, legitimized the organization within the eyes of the people and the international community and made it increasingly difficult to deal with Hizbollah in after Israel had withdrawn from Lebanon. Over his term Hariri faced severe resistance from the Syrian regime that effectively positioned Hizbollah to mature into a leading force in Lebanon.

Hizbollah’s relationship with Hariri began in 1992 when Hariri first met with the newly appointed secretary general Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah. In a frank conversation about state affairs Nasrallah said:

“You are the resistance that will remove the suffering of people [in Lebanon] and our party is the resistance that will remove the occupation from our people on the border. If we become allies and agree, our resistance will be your resistance and the country will move on very well. But if we disagree, you will lose both your resistance and my resistance.”24

With this Hariri agreed and identified as an Arab nationalist as opposed to, what Hizbollah feared being an American agent. Hariri had been appointed prime minister to restore revive the country and while a war torn country did not suit Hariri, he remained silent as the first confrontation between Hizbollah and Israel took place in July of 1993. Hizbollah feared that Hariri would compromise the resistance in favor of a ceasefire with Israel. Instead Hariri defended the resistance despite Hizbollah’s attacks provoking an Israeli counterattack that severely undermined Hariri’s reconstruction plans. Relations between the two deteriorated in the first major internal event as Hizbollah began protesting the Oslo Accords by peacefully taking to

the streets. Lebanese troops, however, opened fire on the demonstrators, killing nine. Hizbollah held the government of Hariri responsible for this, dubbing it a “massacre”. 25 The relationship continued to deteriorate with disagreements between Hariri and Hizbollah’s parliamentary bloc opposing Hariri’s economic and “Beirut centered” reconstruction plans. Hizbollah’s success in establishing effective and cheap social services for the people made them exceptionally critical of the government while granting them moral ground to justify their criticism. The relationship would soften as Hizbollah constantly sided with Syria against Hariri as the two visionaries would not find common ground until the April agreement of 1996.

A defining incident of Hariri’s premiership and his relation with Syria came when Hariri fought to extend President Hraoui’s term. In the first part of Hariri’s term he sought to rebuild at a rapid pace in order to restore life to the Lebanese capital and attract business and foreign investors and this was largely done through the launching of Horizon 2000, which set aside 20 billion dollars for the country’s reconstruction. The Lebanese economy grew by eight percent in 1994 and dropped gradually to four percent in 1997. 26 This is in many ways due to the political situation of the country. In 1995 Hariri worked to extend President Hraoui’s term for three more years, an exceptionally unpopular decision that contributed to contagious speculation against the Lebanese pound. 27 This decision is estimated to have cost Lebanon two billion dollars a year for three years and would also set the precedent for the extension of President Lahoud’s term, a decision that would ultimately solidify the tension between Hariri and Damascus and may have led to Hariri’s death. 28

26 The Political Economy of Lebanon under Rafiq Hariri: An Interpretation
28 Ibid
Ultimately, it was Hariri’s success that worried the Syrians and one of his major international accomplishments revealing his diplomatic skills was the 1996 April Agreement. Ever since the failure of the Oslo Accords, Hariri’s pro-resistance position was clear. After the first day of Israeli aggression, Hariri flew to Paris where he secured President Chirac’s support. Chirac in turn sent his Foreign Affairs Minister, Herve de Charette to Lebanon. Hariri also convinced John Major, prime minister of the United Kingdom, of the severity of the situation and persuaded Boris Yelton, the Russian president, to verbally chastise Israel for the attack on Qana. To pull the United States to his corner, Hariri consulted with Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi ambassador in Washington, who had close ties with Clinton, who convinced Clinton of the severity of the situation. In turn, Clinton ordered Warren Christopher, the secretary of state, to do everything to address the impact of the Qana slaughter. Herve de Charette’s efforts in Beirut, where he spent the entire conflict and its resolution, alongside the intensive efforts of Warren Christopher finally pressured Israel into accepting the April Accord which was presented on the 26th of April by Prime minister Hariri and Herve de Charette in Beirut and by Christopher and Shimon Peres, Israeli President, in Jerusalem. Hariri’s pull with the international community was striking as he managed to secure official international recognition for Hizbollah’s role and military activities. More importantly, and worrying to the Syrians, was that April 1996 marked the moment at which Lebanon was no longer assumed to be Syrian controlled because it could call on the United States, France, Russia and other world powers to come to its aid in times of crisis. Hariri’s international work towards obtaining Lebanon’s recognition outside of Syria’s sphere of influence was the same tactic he used towards balancing his relationship with Syria. Moreover, Hariri sought to establish Lebanese independence without alienating with Syria.

29 *The Road to Independence: Five Years with Rafic Hariri.* P.79
30 *Rafiq Hariri and the Fate of Lebanon.* P.80
31 ibid
Despite all his compromises with the regime, however, Damascus remained wary of his influence.

Between 1992 and 1998, Hariri had managed to make some domestic progress. Electricity generation had increased, 1,200 school were rehabilitated, construction of the international airport continued, the communication sector had improved, and Hariri had stabilized the Lebanese pound. This, however, was not enough, as Hariri was accused of neglecting roads, bridges, and the environment.\(^\text{32}\) Similarly Hariri’s reconstruction efforts increased Lebanon’s debt from 2 billion at the end of 1992 to 17 billion by the summer of 1998. Hariri supporters offer this justification saying that the prime minister’s infrastructural economic policies, bids for privatization, the stability of the Lebanese currency, cuts in taxes and the introduction of the value added tax (VAT) were all necessary policies needed to restore the economy.\(^\text{33}\) But in the spring of 1998 Syria began to prepare for the removal of Hariri in the upcoming elections. It did this by supporting the candidacy of Emile Lahoud for President. When he was elected to the post, he and the head of parliament, Nabih Berri, delayed appointing a prime minister until Hariri agreed not to accept a nomination, thereby beginning the era of Salim al Hoss’ cabinet.

The relative ease with which Syria controlled the Lebanese state was apparent. Essentially, Syria manipulated the sectarian system and controlled the state through its secret police known as, \textit{al-mukhabarat}. Hariri’s role as prime minister, however, had managed to ensure that Syria did not have full control over Lebanon. The international community recognized the clash of visions for the state between Hariri and Syria. Hariri advocated for an independent, economically viable Lebanon that was dependent on Syria’s good will. Syria, however, aimed to build a state

\(^{32}\) \textit{Rafiq Hariri and the Fate of Lebanon}. P.89

\(^{33}\) \textit{The Political Economy of Lebanon under Rafiq Hariri: An Interpretation}
essentially controlled by the military. Its allies in this were Hizbollah, Amal, and Emile Lahoud who served as commander in chief of the army. When Syria finally removed Hariri from the premiership it concentrated its efforts on defaming his character and undoing his progress. This led to disastrous results for the Lahoud-Hoss government as debt rose to 21.7 billion dollars and for the first time since the Taif accord, Lebanon experienced negative 1% growth. The inefficiency of the Hoss government, its subjugation to every Syrian whim, as well as the continued attempt to falsely defame Hariri, led to the election of every candidate on Hariri’s list was elected to parliament in 2000, making Hariri the *de facto* incoming prime minister.

In the period between 2000 and 2004 Hariri was once again welcomed as prime minister to attempt to solve the deficit crisis that he had helped create and to restore economic growth to the country. The clash between Hariri and Hizbollah began at the turn of the century with Hariri back in power and Hizbollah having just evicted Israel from Lebanese territory. From the outset it was unclear what Hizbollah would do once Israel withdrew, but Hariri had hoped that it would mean the disarming of the resistance, regional stability, and Syrian withdrawal. None of these, however, took place. Hariri’s return, thus, also aimed to reduce Syrian influence in Lebanon and achieve national unity within the state through administrative reforms. The death of Hafez al Assad in 2000 and the election of his son Bashar al Assad to the Presidency created a new rift between Hariri and Damascus. Similarly, Lahoud sought to undermine Hariri’s efforts at the behest of Syria, despite Hariri’s success to win financial support for Syria from the international community. The years of Hariri’s second Premiership were plagued with political deadlock as Lahoud continued to try and obstruct Hariri’s government. In 2004 the rupture between Hariri’s

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34 *Rafiq Hariri and the Fate of Lebanon*. P.102-103
35 *Hezbollah*. P.125: An example provided is that Lahoud would use his Presidential power to chair the cabinet meetings of Hariri and dismiss the agenda he had set
vision and that of Hizbollah came to a head as Syria demanded that Lahoud’s presidential term be extended. Considering the disaster of 1995 and Hariri’s sour relations with Lahoud alongside his hope of ending Syria’s influence over internal Lebanese affairs, it is no surprise that he opposed this decision. Naturally, Hariri appealed to French President Chirac, who took the claim to President Bush. Together, the two powers proposed a United Nations Resolution that called for “free and fair” presidential elections in Lebanon to remain scheduled “without foreign interference or influence”. Similarly, the UN resolution noted the “determination of Lebanon to ensure the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese forces from Lebanon.” Leading up to the decision, a crucial conversation between Hariri and al-Assad took place.

On the morning of August 26th, Hariri is reported to have had a fifteen minute meeting with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in which he Assad said:

“There is nothing to discuss, I am Lahoud and Lahoud is me. If your friend Chirac wants me out of Lebanon, I would sooner break Lebanon on your head and the head of Chirac than break my word.”

To this, Hariri objected, saying that he had been a friend of Syria. Bashar replied by saying that Hariri had to choose between supporting Syria or opposing it and should convey his message within 48 hours. In a conversation with his environmental minister, Fares Boueiz, later that evening, Hariri is reported to have explained his rational for seeking to vote in favor od the extension. Hariri said that if he did not accept Syria’s decision then it would be the final break and he risked Syrian wrath in Lebanon. One of Hariri’s assistants asked him what he thought

38 ibid
would happen if he rejected the ultimatum. Hariri responded asking: “Do you think they could mobilize 100,000 Hizbollah people to march on central Beirut?” When the assistant answered in the affirmative Hariri posed a second question: “What do you think would happen if someone fired into that crowd?” The assistant responded with a chilling answer:

“Hizbollah would burn the city”

Similarly, Hariri was informed by another advisor who had been informed by a foreign diplomat that 20 car bombs had been prepared and would be detonated around Beirut if Hariri’s parliamentary bloc did not support Lahoud’s extension. These two stories reveal a tiny fraction of the impossible decision facing Hariri. It also reveals the sentiment of pro-Hariri people towards the Syrian-Hizbollah alliance. The relationship between Hizbollah and Syria took precedent over the relationship between Hizbollah and the state and this disunity within the country would lead to the political instability that plagues the country as Hizbollah’s vision for Lebanon was beginning to overtake Hariri.

On September 2nd, 2004, the United Nations passed resolution 1559 – calling for free and fair elections in Lebanon.

The next day, in defiance of the resolution, Hariri and Lebanon’s parliament voted to extend the president’s term. The international community’s efforts, supported privately by Hariri, failed to withhold Syrian action and further marginalized the country into clear supporters and detractors of the Syrian regime’s influence in Lebanon. Despite the fact that Hariri and his bloc (all except one) voted in favor of the extension, Hariri was still being closely watched. Within six week and

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40 *Killing Mr. Lebanon* P. 101
41 ibid
42 *Dreams and Shadows: the Future of the Middle East.* p 147
after Syria had failed to live up to its promise to allow Hariri to choose the cabinet, the beloved prime minister resigned from his position, not willing to deal with Syria anymore. Instead, Hariri joined what began as an ideological movement, the Future Movement, which opposed Syrian intervention and diverted from Hariri’s dreams of rebuilding Lebanon’s economy towards reshaping the nation politically. Elections for parliament were expected in May 2005 and Hariri hoped to test his new movement. Unfortunately, he would never get the chance to do so as a car bomb in February 2005 would claim his life.

From Hariri’s negotiations of the Taif accord to Nasrallah’s victory over Israel in 2000, and finally to the two parties squaring off in 2004, the aims of these two men and their respective parties and allies were bound to clash for control over Lebanon. Syrian intimidation, backed by Hizbollah, hindered Lebanon’s growth as an independent nation and set the stage for the birth of the Independence Intifada, which sought to carry out Hariri’s dream, only to face insurmountable challenges from Hizbollah. The question that cannot but be asked: What does Lebanon’s future hold? What is the significance of Hariri’s death? Why hasn’t the “people revolution” taken command of the Lebanese structure? What is the state to do about Hizbollah and its extraordinary influence and weapons? All these questions remain unanswered in the wake of Hariri’s death and one cannot help but dwell on a phrase that Hariri would often repeat [in reference to the Syrians] in his last months: “To them we are all ants.”

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43 Killing Mr. Lebanon P. 102
Chapter Four:
Which Way Forward?
Hizbollah’s takeover of Lebanese politics

“Sad are those who understand” – Arab Proverb

“Woe to the nation in which every tribe claims to be a nation” – Khalil Gibran

On February 14th, 2005, at 12:55PM I got my first real taste of Lebanese politics. If it had not been for the thunderous explosion coupled with the ensuing dance between fire and smoke, the citizens of Beirut would certainly have thought it was the largest earthquake to rock the capital in decades. The former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri had just been assassinated in the largest car bombing in Lebanese history. The equivalent of two thousand two hundred pounds of TNT exploded around Hariri’s motorcade as he was leaving the Phoenicia hotel located near Beirut’s popular sea walk. The explosion killed Hariri, several of his guards, and his friend and former Minister of the Economy- Bassel Fleihan. Hariri’s assassination dealt a significant blow to the vision he had established among his followers who, after Hariri’s death, were still determined to see it through. The consequences of Hariri’s assassination created a vocal opposition to the Syrian presence and effectively polarized the country into two decisive parties. This chapter will work within the domestic and international framework of Hariri’s assassination to interpret the historical events following his death and analyze the predicament of the Lebanese people. To do this I will explore several major events that tie the international community with the sectarian Lebanese divisions.

Effectively, the country’s two political parties were divided on one major issue, Syrian involvement in Lebanese life. On the 5th of March 2005 Syrian President Bashar al-Assad gave a
speech to the Syrian parliament in which he outlined his discontent with UN resolution 1559 and targeted foreign intervention. In his speech Assad displayed an understanding for the resounding anger of the Lebanese people accusing Syria of Hariri’s murder and demanding their withdrawal. As a result, the Syrian president forewarned of his government intentions saying: “Syria’s withdrawal from Lebanon does not mean the end of the Syrian role; because this role is defined by geographical and political factors.”¹ These words reveal the extent to which the Syrian regime was unwilling to relinquish the control it had established over its neighbor at Taif in spite of an imminent full Syrian withdrawal. Three days later, on the 8th of March, 2005, less than a month after Hariri’s death, the pro-Syrian faction led by Hizbollah gathered by the Riad al-Sulh statue only a block away from downtown Beirut, to thank Syria for her service to Lebanon. This rally was aimed at breaking the momentum for anti-Syrian sentiment and showing that a large portion of Lebanese still supported Syria’s role in Lebanon. Following the Hizbollah rally of a couple hundred thousand, Saad Hariri, the son of the late Prime Minister, called for a rally to support his father’s memory on the one month anniversary of his death. About one fourth the population of Lebanon, the proportional equivalent of seventy five million Americans, amounting to to one million Lebanese citizens from all over the country, gathered in Martyrs Square to demand the withdrawal of Syrian troops and officials from Lebanon. This was the largest mass protest in Lebanese history and marked the beginnings of the Independence Intifada, more commonly referred to as the Cedar Revolution.

My father took me to the million person rally on March 14th. The streets were a sea of red and white, symbolic of national unity under the Lebanese flag. Never before had I seen such a display of support in Lebanon for a single man, let alone a politician. The streets echoed a

common accusation, pointing the finger at the Syrians for Hariri’s death and demanding the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon. In the lead up to these rallies the former prime minister Omar Karami, who had replaced Hariri in 2004, had resigned amid public pressure for government officials to quit. These same protesters, started by university students and young professionals, soon gathered momentum from the working class and together pledged nationwide strikes until four demands were met. First, they demanded Syria’s immediate withdrawal from all Lebanese territory, not only the troops but also including the feared secret police. Second, they expected the resignation of Lebanon’s security chiefs. Third, the presidential elections were to proceed on schedule and without delay or foreign interference. And finally they called for a thorough international investigation into Hariri’s death. The rally held on March 14th was the largest protest ever assembled in a modern Arab country, and its success would be an icon for future Arab movements. By the end of April 2005 Syria had pulled out its last troops, ending its twenty nine year occupation and Lebanon’s top security officials were fired and arrested for questioning in regarding Hariri’s murder. Along the same line, the United Nations voted on a resolution to begin an international investigation into Hariri’s assassination with a direct warning to Syria to cooperate, the first investigation of its kind in the Arab world. Finally, the elections were held on time at the start of the summer and Saad Hariri’s coalition won seventy two seats out of 128 in parliament, the largest majority ever held by one party. The significant gains by the March 14 movement inspired the Arab world. It showed that a peaceful movement with the support of the people could bring change to a country and this would play an important role in future Arab revolutions. On the other hand Lebanon was still stuck with the same confessional system outlined in the Taif agreement and the national pact, and despite the demands of the

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3 Ibid
Independence Intifada Lebanon remained divided. This divide hindered the movement and rendered it incapable of executing a vision for Lebanon, a vision that would turn a country into a nation.

In order to understand the inability of the Independence Intifada to revolutionize the country it is necessary to understand three crucial events between 2005 and 2011. Before discussing these events, however, it is equally important to understand that the events of March 14 created a very specific movement to expel Syria from Lebanon and uncover the truth behind the Hariri assassination. It was not, as many have dubbed it, a revolution. The difference here lies in the fact that while the United States government saw March 14’s prominence as an opportunity to spread Bush’s “freedom agenda” and bring democracy to the Middle East, this was not the goal of the Lebanese people. March 14 was a reactionary movement against the March 8 rally, an attempt to display the broader population’s fury with Syrian control. Instead, the joint Muslim-Christian alliance within March 14 had a more short term goal in maintaining independence from Syria, uncovering the truth behind Hariri, and most importantly creating dialogue around Hizbollah’s arms. Consequently, it is important to realize that these goals were nothing new. The resounding and sudden death of Hariri mobilized hundreds of thousands to express these goals concretely. Within the March 14 party contrasting ideologies exist where each sectarian community sought a different agenda as a result of eventual Syrian withdrawal. It was March 14’s short term goals that would identify the dichotomy within the country. Hizbollah was forced to adapt to understand how the Syrian withdrawal would impact the party. Hizbollah would have to bear the political pressures of defeating the international communities’ tribunal (something they would consider as targeting Hizbollah), while circumventing the discussion on Hizbollah’s arms. This political maneuvering was necessary to justify Hizbollah’s activities and maintain its
support among the Lebanese. This tense political atmosphere positioned the March 14 alliance at Hizbollah’s military capabilities within the state and the Syrian withdrawal meant that Nasrallah was left to justify the militia’s vision. Similarly, the results of the tribunal could spark domestic uproar against Hizbollah leading to heavy sectarian violence as it is certainly very difficult to believe that Hizbollah’s vast intelligence network was unaware of Hariri’s pending security threat.

Through a retrospective lens we can analyze three events within Lebanon’s recent history that hindered the Independence Intifada’s ambitions and achievements. The first occurred a year after Hariri’s assassination – the 2006 summer war between Hizbollah and Israel. The war began with a Hizbollah raid and the abduction of Israeli troops on the Lebanese-Israeli border. In response, Israel launched a punishing aerial campaign on southern Lebanon in a quick attempt to retrieve the abducted troops. This campaign escalated into a war against the Lebanese state with a broad objective of eliminating Hizbollah from the south. By the end of the war Israel had failed its objective despite consistent US support and Hizbollah declared itself the victor for managing to withstand the Israeli onslaught. The damage done to Lebanon’s infrastructure was enormous, and the terms under which Hizbollah accepted a cease-fire were bizarre considering its mission. Despite Nasrallah’s claim that he would not have abducted the soldiers if he had predicted the Israeli response, the political and moral benefits Hizbollah gained from this ordeal were substantial. First, many Lebanese unified around Hizbollah’s efforts and supported them against Israeli aggression. This reminded many Lebanese of their support for Hizbollah during Israel’s aggression in the 90s and reestablished sympathy for the party, shifting support if not to Hizbollah, then at least away from March 14. Second, Hizbollah once again gained pan-Arab support as Nasrallah’s pictures and speeches became evident to Egyptians, Jordanians, and
across the Middle East. Finally, where March 14 supporters had looked to the United States for support in removing the Syrians and leading (alongside the French) the international investigation into Hariri’s death, Nasrallah now pointed out that the Americans supported Israeli motives in Lebanon, effectively playing the United States against the Lebanese population’s interests. Essentially, perception was the victory that Nasrallah gained from the war. Further examination of Hizbollah’s “victory” reveals that it was in fact, not a victory at all. When considering the historical facts and the implications of UN Security Resolution 1701 which governed the cease fire, one is quickly confused by the purpose of Hizbollah’s overall mission. The terms outlined in Resolution 1701 called for a peace keeping buffer zone on the Israeli-Lebanese border that would make it more difficult for Hizbollah to conduct operations to regain the Shibaa farms that the Party seeks to liberate and uses to justify their weapons. The acceptance of this particular term of the cease fire reveals Hizbollah’s short term goals within the country. Since the establishment of the peace keeping force would make Hizbollah’s mission of liberating Shibaa more difficult to justify when conducting a raid against Israeli after agreeing to peace, it can be inferred that Hizbollah’s short term goal was not this liberation cause. Rather we must look domestically to understand these terms. Had Hizbollah desired to further its operations against Israel then it should have sought terms similar under the April 1997 agreement that recognized the “Rules of the Game”, rather Hizbollah’s settlement on peace gained the party domestic support and hindsight reveals that this was necessary for Hizbollah to achieve its priorities, which at this time were almost entirely domestic in nature. This inference allows the reader to see that Hizbollah’s priorities were in fact domestic, that Hizbollah had no desire to lay down its arms, not to seek the liberation of Shibaa but rather to achieve a more domestic and political goal of gaining control of the state. Similarly, Hizbollah’s international support for its
struggle against Israel gave the party substantial recognition from the Arab people, showing that Hizbollah was as powerful as it had ever been militarily and perhaps its political goals within Lebanon would serve the overall Arab goal of defeating Israel. The paradox within the Arab world, particularly the neighboring countries of Jordan, Syria, and Egypt, to idealize and support Nasrallah’s campaign against Israel, however, is simply hypocritical. Both Egypt and Jordan have effectively removed themselves from the fight by signing peace treaties with Israel when they too have borders with Israel, while Syria fights a proxy war with Israel through Hizbollah on Lebanese territory. The 2006 summer war reveals the roots of foreign influence within Lebanon and the extent to which the government was powerless to stop the resistance from doing as it pleased in the south, and engaging in war brought the entire state under duress.

The second major incident that really solidified Hizbollah’s efforts and confirmed its political aspirations within the Lebanese state as a proxy for foreign Syrian and Iranian interests can be seen in the violent incidents of May 2008, in which Hizbollah loyalists took to the streets to overturn an unpopular government decision. During these months, tensions between political parties were very high and Jumblatt, the leader of the Druze community, forced the government to take measures that would provoke confrontation with Hizbollah by threatening to withdraw his ministers from the cabinet. As a result, on 6 May, the government dismissed the head of security at the Beirut Airport, Wafiq Shouqair, who failed to dismantle cameras operated by Hizbollah filming the airport runway from outside the facility. In addition, the government launched an investigation into Hizbollah’s telecommunications network that spanned the entire country. This network was unmonitored by the government and provided Hizbollah with a private communication channel, which it claimed was instrumental in defeating Israel in 2006.

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Whatever the reason for Jumblatt’s decision to provoke this clash can be theorized but it is the consequences of these decisions that are important for discussion. On 7 May pro-Hizbollah labor unions called for a general strike to protest work conditions but this was only a ploy to get the government to revoke its decision. Naturally on the 8th of May Nasrallah gave a speech to the public demanding just that but more important he coined a new phrase that he would begin to use every time he felt the Party was threatened by the government. He told the public that the government’s decision was tantamount to a declaration of war and that the party would “cut off the hand” of anyone who dared to threaten its operations. These words have become engraved in every March 14 supporter because these days of violence would solidify the schism between the two opposing ideological groups. Supporters of Hizbollah blocked main roads with blazing tiers, old cars and collected heaps of earth, while pro-government supporters tried to reopen roads by exchanging assault fire with the protestors. The miniature battle filling the streets brought back memories of the 1975-90 civil war and sectarian divisions as Hizbollah and Amal’s domination of weapons felt like a Shi’a takeover of Lebanon. Fronts opened against two of the March 14 leaders, Saad Hariri’s Sunni community in Beirut, Tripoli and other key areas as well as Jumblat’s Druze-controlled cities of Aley and Bayssour. The lack of Sunni military structure and weapons led Hizbollah to easily paralyze Beirut but the Druze mountains proved more difficult to control and Jumblat’s forced routed Hizbollah but the fighting continued for some days. In response to Nasrallah’s speech the government suspended the two decisions and put them in the hands of the Lebanese army command. The Lebanese army remained neutral in the conflict but received extensive criticism for allowing the much better equipped and trained militia to

dominate the streets. The fighting ended when the government rescinded the two decisions affecting Hizbollah as the Arab states quickly endorsed a Qatari peace initiative to end the violence. The initiative invited the Lebanese leaders to discuss a deal at Doha. The agreed upon circumstances would prove favorable to Hizbollah as the negotiations concluded with a document referred to as the Doha agreement. The agreement specified that presidential elections would take place immediately (the post had been vacant since November), a national unity government would be formed in which the opposition would hold veto power, the 1960 law for district divisions would be adopted for parliamentary elections in 2009, and finally the Lebanese agreed to establish the grounds for dialogue about “promoting the Lebanese state’s authority over all Lebanese territories”.

This event is vital to understanding the current state of Lebanese politics. The week long violence of May 2008 began Nasrallah’s commandeering of Lebanon’s political atmosphere. It also, however, destroyed any hope of national unity. The ease by which Hizbollah and the Shia community managed to take over Beirut through military means infuriated the Sunni community who confirmed for themselves Hizbollah’s ulterior motives. The severity of this scenario is outlined by Hariri who would later say: “The people who saved the country were us [Sunnis], because we didn’t react. Let me be frank. Had I stood up and… asked every [Sunnis] man and woman to come and defend Beirut, what would have happened?”.

This analysis of events by Hariri represents the shared sentiment of the Sunni community and the gravity of the situation in provoking war. Similarly the situation was as serious as it was because it formally broke a promise Hizbollah had made to the Lebanese people, a term that was integral for maintaining popular support among other Lebanese communities. Prior to the events of May 2008, leaders

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7 The Ghosts of Martyrs Square. P. 212
8 The Ghosts of Martyrs Square. P. 213
could only speculate that Hizbollah’s interests had shifted from Israeli raids to domestic political takeover, so the violence was praised by Nasrallah as a week of victory for the resistance. The significance of this event has two parallel threads. First, the domestic importance and the political message that these events sent to the Lebanese people created a sense of urgency among leaders to push Hizbollah to relinquish its weapons and restore control of the south to the government. The rift caused by this has set Lebanon on a path on which it can no longer return on as Hizbollah can no longer claim that it has never used its weapons against the Lebanese people, effectively weakening its popular argument as a safe and necessary resistance force. In addition, the criticism of the army as a weak and divided entity revealed itself most during these events. Similar to Lebanon’s earlier days after independence and leading to the civil war, an army based on sectarian divisions has proved that it would never be able to resolve sectarian disputes. The army often stood by and watched as pro-government and pro-opposition civilians fought on the streets and it is precisely this inability to react that has bled the Lebanese state. Any indication of sectarian favoritism played by the army would result in massive mutiny and the army would fall apart, reinforcing the need for the international community, similar to the end of the civil war and the “need” for Syrian intervention. The polarization of sects clearly lies at the heart of the country’s problem as not even the army can restore order. Similarly, the Doha agreement gave Hizbollah political power it had never previously enjoyed. The agreement not only gave them favorable election divisions for the upcoming parliamentary election, but it also gave a minority within the government veto power, something the Lebanese refer to as the “thilth al muaatel” meaning the obstructing third. This power would be used to ensure that the state did not pass laws that were unfavorable to the resistance. This agreement significantly weakened the government’s position and placed one party in nearly total control of the government, an abuse
of the National Pact. This was meant to last until the new elections but in fact would be a
demand the Party would uphold after the elections in forming a national unity government.
Effectively the violence of May 2008 disrupted the sectarian contract agreed upon through Taif
as tensions between the Sunni and Shia communities rose to new levels. Even after Nasrallah
attempted to ease relations in August saying: “We are no aliens to Beirut; we are an integral part
of the capital and we wish all the best to Beirut and its residents” the Sunni population of Beirut
was unconvinced. The gains made during the first days of the Independence Intifada with the
expulsion of the Syrians from Lebanon, gave many hope that the country was heading in the
direction Rafiq Hariri had set before his assassination. The conclusion of the events of May 2008
revealed the contrary. Hizbollah’s gains within parliament and the party’s willingness to turn its
weapons against the people enforced Nasrallah’s vision for the country. Despite the fact that
Syrian troops had been removed from Lebanon, Hizbollah’s political victory revealed that
Syria’s influence was still intact.

The parallel thread invoked by the May 2008 violence is a representative proxy skirmish that
occurred in Lebanon and the rush by which the international community sought to resolve the
conflict. First, it is interesting to note the location of the peace negotiations. Qatar had never
been an influential actor in the Lebanese political sphere, yet the situation in Lebanon revealed
that the regional community was sorely divided and the actors within the Lebanese state clearly
reveal that tension. While cooperation was generally facilitated by the Saudis, they were on bad
terms with Iran and Syria and they had sided with March 14 during the violence. The
international community did not want to, and was not ready for, another Sunni-Shia eruption in

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9 “Nasrallah Insists on Need to Discuss National Defense Strategy.” Lebanonwire, Live News Direct from Beirut,
10 The Ghosts of Martyrs Square. P. 212
an Arab state, particularly one as clearly influenced by proxies as Lebanon. A civil war between
the two sects would draw in regional actors and further worsen the regional tension for control
over the Middle East. As a result, in spite of Hizbollah’s rapid military victory, all parties were
seeking to arrive at a conclusion to the fighting out of fear of further escalation and the ensuing
violence it would cause. These considerations simply reinforce the deep roots of sectarianism
and the lack of loyalty to a nation and its people alongside a dependence on the international
community. This is a historic problem that can be seen in prior events, where the international
community has intervened not simply to protect further escalations within the country, but more
importantly to protect regional peace. The divisions of the sectarian system have always allowed,
actually depended upon, the international community’s intervention to maintain order but
ironically it is also the international community that creates the problem. While Independence
Intifada called for the independence of the state from Syrian influence, the continuous cycle of
international involvement in the sectarian problems of the Lebanese state reveals Lebanon’s
inability to address this historical problem and establish national unity – a goal that has eluded
the Lebanese. Similarly, it remains important to regional powers to maintain control of Lebanon
which has become a battleground of proxy wars and confrontations with Israel.

The third incident that hindered the evolution of the Independence Intifada is actually a series of
democratic elections and political maneuvers that began with the parliamentary elections in
2009. Many had predicted that a repetition of Hamas’ election in Gaza would take place in
Beirut as many speculated that the Hizbollah led coalition of March 8 would claim victory. The
election results of 7 June revealed that this was in fact not the case. The Hizbollah led coalition
that included former head of the army Michel Aoun garnered only 57 seats as opposed to March
14’s 71 seats.\textsuperscript{11} The election results were “accepted” by Nasrallah but he was also quick to point out several items. He first attempted to ward off some hostilities with the Sunni community by saying that the peaceful elections proved that Hizbollah was not looking to impose a “new political reality”.\textsuperscript{12} Then he added that “the arms of the resistance are not up for discussion. They are present because of the peoples’ will, and will be left for the dialogue table.”\textsuperscript{13} This phrase proves that Hizbollah’s loss does not impact the actions of the militia one way or the other because it still chooses what it will and will not discuss with the government in spite of a majority rule having been given to the March 14 party. The light that Hizbollah has portrayed itself within by insisting that it will not discuss its arms really shows that Hizbollah has no intention of abiding by any government decision to disarm the party. Thus, it is this inflated sense of authority by Hizbollah that undermines the government and makes any consensus though national dialogue with March 14 near impossible.

In August of 2009, only a couple of months after the election, something very common in Lebanese politics occurred. Walid Jumblatt, the leader of the Progressive Socialist movement and head of the Druze community, shifted his allegiance from March 14 to a more neutral stance. For the Druze community Jumblatt’s decision represented a domestic resolve to keep the Druze in a position of being able to side with whichever party he felt would emerge as the leading force in Lebanese politics. While it was evident whom the Sunni’s and Shi’a would vote for, it was not as evident whom the Christians would support in the elections. While the popular vote proved that the people of Lebanon were tired of supporting a resistance whose arms were independent of the state, Saad Hariri and the March 14 alliance had not proved that it was capable of stopping

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{11} *The Ghosts of Martyrs Square.* P. 238
\textsuperscript{13} ibid
\end{footnotesize}
Hizbollah from exerting its influence through military means. As a result, Jumblatt understood that a more balanced approach would be beneficial to the Druze community. In fact it was this thinking that would eventually lead Jumblatt to the March 8 party and the eventual collapse of Hariri’s government in 2011. On the international front, Jumblatt believed that despite Syria’s military removal from Lebanon, Assad’s influence in the country would remain intact due to the more pressing United States’ goal to achieve a Mid-East peace which would require the US to compromise with Syria, perhaps (as the US had done before) over control of Lebanon. Despite the voters’ decision, it can only be deduced that the political realities of a fractured society did not support a truly democratic system. Jumblatt’s re-alliance, however, was not yet complete.

In November of 2009, after months of negotiations between Saad Hariri and the March 8 party on the cabinet formation, a power sharing structure was agreed upon. This structure is known as “the national unity cabinet” formation and grants the majority fifteen ministerial posts, the minority 10 ministerial posts, and the five appointments to the president. This system was a form of compromise between the ruling elected majority March 14 party and the minority March 8 party in order to establish the ministerial positions. While this was acceptable to all parties, it was the only way in which a government would be formed that was representative of the population. After a little over a year of Saad Hariri’s government, the events on 12 January 2011 would reveal the shift in the political atmosphere of Beirut and expose the unrepresentative system of the government. On 12 January 2011 the opposition’s ten ministers resigned from the cabinet citing the government’s inability to resolve the crisis over the international tribunal for Rafiq Hariri’s death. A few hours later a presidential minister resigned from the cabinet, effectively giving the opposition the needed withdrawals to dissolve the government and require

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a new prime minister to be appointed to form a new government March 8 claimed (and continues to claim) that the tribunal to investigate Hariri’s assassination set up by the United Nations is a western controlled effort to indict Hizbollah members for assassinating Hariri. As a result Nasrallah demanded that the government stop funding the tribunal and reject its work. On the international scale, a more accurate place to understand Lebanese politics, this collapse represents a failure of Saudi Arabia and Syria to agree on negotiations to settle the dispute. The dissolution of the government ushered in a new prime minister as Jumblatt decided to commit his votes to the opposition effectively giving March 8 control of the government to elect Najib Mikati. The tact by which March 8 was able to overthrow the rule of March 14 reveals the ultimate failure of the sectarian system to adequately represent the people. Loyalties to sectarian leaders undermined the popular electorate’s decision to give March 14 rule over the country, because Hizbollah’s militia and March 8 managed to politically steer the country into its corner. Looking back at the million man march on Beirut combined with the electoral results in contrast with the current state of the Lebanese government leads us to question Lebanon’s future and viability as an independent state.

Syrian desires to maintain control of Lebanon, and Iranian goals of regional hegemony have impeded Lebanon’s ability to gain independence. The nature of Hizbollah’s close ties with Iran and Syria alongside the party’s domestic policies reveals its loyalty to international powers over Lebanese sovereignty. Hizbollah has so far shown little interest in controlling the affairs of the entire state; rather it seeks to ensure the independence of its control over its militia and the survival of its weapons. After evicting the Israelis in 2000 Hizbollah made a critical choice to remain an armed militia within the state. It also continued to provide social services to its community in the south, many of which are provided illegally through black markets and by
stealing electricity and property under the security of Hizbollah’s thugs. After the 2006 war with Israel, Hizbollah turned its focus inward in order to ensure that Rafiq Hariri’s Taif plans to disarm the party could not be fulfilled. It is precisely these weapons that have led to the political impasse facing the state, but it is the sectarian disunity of the state that has allowed this to become an issue. The support Hizbollah enjoys from the Shi’a community and the polarization of sects has bred mistrust between all Lebanese and hindered national progress towards becoming a full-fledged nation with a recognizable identity. As long as one party continues to dominate the security of the country, stability cannot be reached and the country cannot be expected to grow. Looking to the future Lebanon has two options, both of which have been represented in the vision of Rafiq Hariri and Hasan Nasrallah. These individuals have represented the thesis and the antithesis of Lebanon’s future. On one hand, Hariri’s vision reveals an independent state, aiming to grow its economy and on the other we see a state bound to Iranian and Syrian control through military resistance of a far better equipped enemy. In order to escape from the confines of polarization it is critical that power be restored to the government over all Lebanese territories. The current state of affairs has ignored Lebanese poet Khalil Gibran’s warning of a state within a state and has instead adhered to a grander philosophy that regards the Lebanese as mere ants to the international community.
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