Lebanon: The Cycle of Death

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Abstract

This essay addresses the fact that as most countries in the Middle East have managed to protect themselves from external interference, why does Lebanon continue to be a target for intervention. Since the regional elements is the same for all the states in the Middle East, the paper focuses on internal factors within the Lebanese state that allow for foreign influence to prosper. Based on the evidence from crises that took place in 1958, 1975, and 2008; the paper argues that the political system and foreign policy of the Lebanese state are responsible for exposing Lebanon to foreign intervention. In response, proposals are put forward to resolve this inherent weakness of the Lebanese state. They include introducing a decentralised political system and introducing constant status of neutrality to Lebanese foreign policy.

This work is substantially my own, and where any part of this work is not my own, I have indicated this by acknowledging the source of that part or those parts of the work.

Table of Contents

Introduction – Introducing the Deadly Cycle

Relatively small states have historically been subject to intervention by more powerful states for various reasons. Member states of the United Nations' Charter, in principle, are guaranteed the right to sovereignty against intervention. Moreover, costs of intervention, human and economic costs, should deter states undermining the sovereignty of others. Nevertheless, states undermine international law and sacrifice human and economic resources and intervene. Economic resources, strategic concerns, and other factors motivate states to intervene. However, states that have no strategic or economic significance are also exposed to recurrent foreign intervention.

Lebanon is a state that has no significant natural reserves and doesn't fall geographically in a strategic position that makes it so important for regional powers. Despite this, since its creation as a modern state in 1920 has constantly been subject to foreign intervention. In brief the story goes as follows: From 1920 to 1943 Lebanon was under the French Mandate and French control. In 1943 Lebanon was able to regain its independence. However, a decade later Lebanon fell victim again to intervention as the Cold War competition between the US and the USSR was at its heights. In 1967 after the exodus of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) from Jordan they were welcomed by Lebanon. With it, intervention increased and included states from Egypt, Syria, Libya, Israel, US, USSR, to Saudi Arabia which resulted in the civil war which started in 1975 and ended in 1990 and Lebanon became under full control of Syria. After Syria was forced to withdraw from Lebanon under international pressure, Syrian intervention was replaced with Saudi and Iranian intervention. Since 1975 Lebanon has become the battleground of all Arab-Israeli conflict, Arab-Arab

conflict, Iranian-Israeli conflict, and all other sorts of conflict in the region. All these states have been competing to gain more power and influence in Lebanon.

These interventions have played out themselves in Lebanon through full scale interstate wars and internal conflict leaving more hundreds of thousands of people dead and injured and more displaced from their villages and forced to seek refuge in other countries. This humanitarian suffering is never-ending and therefore it is important to understand the mechanisms that allow for foreign intervention.

The questions that concern this thesis are: why Lebanon and not Syria, Jordan, or other states that are in a similar position to Lebanon?

Available Answers

Third Party Intervention could take many forms, from economic to military interventions. The paper focus concerns military intervention only. Economic intervention can include economic aid or sanctions for the regime or regime-opposing groups. Military intervention varies from indirect military support, arm supplies, for proxies to limited military operations, and then the extreme case is a full scale invasion. Any intervention suffers material, human, and audience costs. Material costs include funds for a military campaign, human costs involve loss of life amongst the army personnel, and audience costs is especially important in democracies as state leaders have to deal with domestic concerns. To forego these costs state leaders seem to identify motives and interests that outweigh any negative externalities of military intervention.

Lebanon has been subject to recurrent interventions, so what are the benefits state leaders identify from intervening in a country such as Lebanon. The following are some motives and reasons that academics have identified.

Morgenthau argues that states such as the U.S. and USSR intervened during the Cold War based on either ideological or national interest grounds (1966: pp.434-435). Atzil argues that refugee flows into another state could lead to international conflict. If the host state is not able to neutralize the refugees, they may continue to undergo military operation against their home country. As a result, this will lead to military backlash from the home country. The author gives the example of Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon as an example (Atzil, 2006, p.152). Further, the "kin-country Syndrome", "when ethnic groups in one country become alarmed by the grievances of their brethren across the border become alarmed by the grievances of their brethren across the border", this will increase the likely for a state to intervene to assist its affiliates (2006, p.152-153). In addition, greed can play a role. When a state is experiencing civil conflict and its army has collapsed, neighboring states will seek to intervene to exploit economic resources. Plus, a state may undergo military intervention in a weaker state to set up a friendly regime and establish an ally (2006, p.153).

In turn, Fordham addresses the proposition that states with greater military capabilities are more inclined to resort to direct military intervention more often as a foreign policy instrument (2004, p.633). He tests this proposition to the American foreign policy and his findings show that it increases tendency for decision makers to undergo military intervention (2004, p.653). Therefore the argument is that a state with a military advantage will have an increased tendency to use the military as a tool of foreign policy.

In another article the author sets three principles that usually lead to military intervention. Firstly, the author argues that ethnic affinities are a source of intervention. Moreover, those experiencing difficulties may intervene in other countries to divert attention of their local population from the economic and political difficulties that they may be experiencing

(Macfarlane, 1984, p.133). Third, if the regional balance of power between states is polarized, theses states with great power will be able to intervene easily without any fear of backlash, especially if it had interests in economic resource of neighboring states (1984, p.134).

Based on a domestic perspective, Pickering and Kisangani look at diversionary theory which indicate that when government are experiencing local dissent or economic difficulties they will look to distract attention by sending troops to neighboring states or offshore (2005, p.24). He advances this theory by classifying states into mature and consolidating democracies in contrast to mature and consolidating autocracies (2005, p.24-25). According to the study by the authors mature autocrats will use external force to divert attention in response to elite unrest (2005, p.40). A mature democracy will use external force as level mass unrest increases (2005, p.40).

The following two articles identify three main reasons in general for direct military intervention includes interests such as economic, territorial, ideological, or regional balance of power. States that share borders with states experiencing a civil war intervene in response both opportunity and threat. Opportunistic factors include changing type of government, exploiting economic resources, or gaining a better geopolitical standing (Kathman, 2010, p.990). Threats are mainly characterized that neighboring states may be infected by civil war, due to flow of refugees, kinship, dissident groups may be spurred to do same action, or regional economic recession due to civil unrest may also lead to spread of radical ideologies (2010, p.991). States intervene into states experiencing civil wars in response to third party intervention (2010, p.836).

Another influential writer on intervention is Regan (1998). He discusses the realist and neorealist paradigms explanation of intervention. A state intervenes when security is

threatened, or when geostrategic stature is in danger (1998, p.763). From a liberal approach, stopping humanitarian intervention may result in international and domestic praise, and could stop the suffering of a people (1998, p.764). However, he finds that these explanations are not sufficient and looks at various mechanisms such as the intensity of a conflict, if a state doesn't anticipate it can end the conflict and get embroiled in it won't intervene. Plus, humanitarian issues do matter as the domestic populations see it right for its country to intervene to end the humanitarian suffering. Finally, his findings suggest that the higher the contiguity, the number of states bordering, the less likely it is for a country to intervene (1998, p.775).

In their thesis Dowty and Loescher look at refugee flows as a source for third party intervention. The reason for this is the burden it imposes on the host country. They include economic (Job competition), Social (affects social harmony), political (they can form an organized group), cultural (they can affect identity), and security (guerrilla activity and cross border raids) (1996, pp.47-49). As a result states have intervened on several occasions. All the above sums up the broad outline of the scholarly work that addresses factors that prompt a state to intervene militarily in another state. The literature in the next two actions will look into why Lebanon was the target of intervention by the various countries that intervened.

Another explanation that reflects the mechanisms that lead other states to intervene in third world countries is given by Desch's (1989) work titled *The Keys that Lock Up the World*. In this paper Desch proposes the following argument: The main concerns of Great Powers are to maintain their own internal security and to protect vital external interests that are vital to their military and economic status. In order to attain these objectives great powers seek to maintain its influence over distant geographical areas of little intrinsic value, areas with non-significant

resources; nevertheless, they have strategic value in regards to state security or influence access to valuable resources or areas with high intrinsic value (Desch, 1989, pp.97-98). These areas have extrinsic value; Lebanon is one of these areas. The Middle East enjoys valuable and large amounts of oil that are vital to the economic and security well being of Western states and most specifically the global super power the United States (US). Because of its rich resources the Middle East, stable and free access to its oil resources has become increasingly central to US strategic foreign policy. Unlike other states in the Middle East, Lebanon suffers from scarce natural resources; however, since the end of the World War II Lebanon geographical position has gained strategic significance. With the increase in the tensions of the Cold War conflict between the US and the Soviet Union and fear from US of Soviet Union and the United Arab Republic's (UAR) intentions in the Middle East, the battle for influence was at its height and Lebanon was a victim to this struggle. In addition, 1948 its geographical location came to hold a great strategic value. With the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 and its further expansion Lebanon's south bordered the Israeli state from its north. As the US came to play a greater role in the Middle East from 1956 onwards relationships with Israel have strengthened and Israel stands today as the closest as ally to the US. The power and security of Israel have become central to the US strategic interests to the US. By having an extremely reliable ally in the Middle East with a strategic military outreach over the region ensures US influence and access to oil supplies. Revisionist Middle Powers in the Middle East have ambitiously tried to increase their stature by attempting to undermine its influence. In order to do this they have directly challenged the security of Israel to put the US on the back foot. All states that border Israel since the 1960s have managed to secure their borders and isolate themselves from Arab-Israeli ongoing conflict; except Lebanon a state which has failed to maintain monopoly over coercive means and thus its southern borders has been used by these revisionist middle powers to threaten and attempt to limit US power by

challenging Israel indirectly thought the southern borders of Lebanon. Thus, on one hand, Lebanon has fallen victim to US obsession in maintaining access and mobility of oil resources; on the other, regional and international powers that have sought to challenge the US have found Lebanon as a vulnerable target.

Central Argument

The following paper will attempt to answer the above question. The focus of the paper will not be the motives of intervening states. Instead, it will bring forward the weakness of the Lebanese state. These weaknesses that have forced the Lebanese state to succumb to foreign powers. Two main factors have contributed to the vulnerability of Lebanon to external pressures. The first has been due to Lebanese religious groups' willingness to accept foreign intervention in their competition against each other for internal political power. This competition between different ethnic communities in Lebanon has been the result of the political system which has always tended to favour certain group(s) and discriminate against others. The political system has failed in representing all groups fairly in the political groups and guaranteeing them basic economic and political rights. The power balance between the different sects has varied over the past decades. Thus, every time a sect enjoys ascending power challenges the status quo conflict has erupted between the ascending sect and the other declining sect. As a result, Lebanese communities have sought outside support to gain military and economic aid in order to alter the power sharing in their favour. The second has been the result of misguided foreign policy by various the Lebanese governments. Certain foreign policy choices by Lebanese governments have tended to alienate certain Lebanese groups. The governments' inability in adopting an appropriate foreign policy has allowed foreign intervention and forced Lebanese officials to accept and legitimize foreign

interference. This paper will go further in suggesting solutions to both problems. In regards to the constitutional problem, this paper suggests that it would be better to abandon the centralised political system for a decentralised system. A decentralised system would end this power conflict by spreading this power amongst the Lebanese population. This will guarantee adequate political representation to powerful groups without diminishing others. Equally, adopting a neutral foreign policy officially by the Lebanese state is necessary to manage the sympathies and concerns of all Lebanese groups.

Methodology and Case Selection

This thesis will do a comparative analysis and draw on evidence from three cases of crisis and civil strife in Lebanon's history. These cases include the 1958, 1975, and 2008 crisis. The evidence will be used to support the central argument. The evidence will be drawn from historical accounts that portray the aspects of all three crises. The data will include predominantly qualitative material and some quantitative accounts from both secondary and primary sources. For both the 1958 and 1975 crisis, evidence will be drawn from secondary sources that have covered them both extensively. As to the 2008 crisis evidence will be based on primary data and personal account of the past few years of Lebanese political events. The reason is that this crisis is still recent and not sufficient secondary sources have addressed it in depth.

 The 1958, 1975, and 2008 crises were selected as case studies for three main reasons. Firstly, there is a consensus amongst the Lebanese that they truly were periods of political instability and foreign intervention. If there is any doubt that foreign intervention was involved then they would be useless. Secondly, the evidence available for each case, wether primary or secondary, sufficiently covers all cases. This helps legitimate the claims of this paper and

support its central thesis. Finally, the significance of these cases is that each of these examples of political volatility in Lebanon is that they each took place under different regional circumstances. This is crucial to the case the paper presents. It shows that despite different factors, events, and actors involved in each event, the underlying argument applies to all this cases. This will prove that what will be presented in this document can be applicable to inherent Lebanese failure as a state to function effectively.

For the second part of this article which focuses on the two main solutions for the crisis, the paper will again rely on primary and secondary sources. Qualitative data will be the main content for support. The qualitative date will include scholarly work by other authors and examples of specific events. They will be utilised to give credibility to the content of the thesis.

Structure

The first three chapters will each examine a major period of foreign intervention, beginning with the 1958 crisis, the 1975 Civil War, and the 2008 crisis. Each chapter will portray the beginnings of the crisis and both regional and internal factors that acted as catalysts. They will also show how Lebanon failed to deal with these circumstances due to the failure of the political system and the absence of coherent Lebanese foreign policy. Chapter six will conclude and give a final overview of the central argument in hindsight with the evidence presented throughout the paper and propose future areas of research.

The fourth Chapter will lay out the inherent political problem the Lebanon as a state faces. In return it will contain a proposal to solve these problems. This chapter will be split into two main parts. The first will propose an alternative to the political system and call for a

decentralised system. The second part will focus on the area of foreign policy and recommend that the Lebanese government apply a neutral foreign policy as an official status for the Lebanese state.

Finally, this article will contain a conclusion that will draw on the content of the paper. It will attempt to put forward the central argument and evidence in a concise manner. It will close with emphasis on possible scholarly contributions of the paper and future directions for research.

Chapter 1 – 1958 Crisis

The crisis of 1958 was the result of regional competition that transcended into a limited civil war that led to direct military intervention by the US. This was the result of regional and internal Lebanese factors. The limited civil war led to the death of over 1400 people (Nassif, 2008, p.194).

Regional and Internal factors

On a regional level the countries that were mainly involved in the Lebanese affairs were the US on one side and the United Arab Republic (UAR) on another with Soviet Union backing. With the end of WWII the West, and specifically the US, came to appreciate the strategic significance of the Middle East due to its rich petroleum resources (Yaqub, 2004, p.24). The US had depended on Britain to secure access to oil. However, with the creation of the Israeli state and continued occupation of many parts of the Middle East by Britain, resentment towards the West increased. In 1948, the United Nations (UN) voted in favour of the partition of Palestine into Arab and Zionist states. This led to the outbreak of conflict between Israel and the Arab States who were defeated. This led to wide resentment against the West which was accused of supporting Israel against the Arab States. At the same time the citizens of the Arab States blamed their own regimes for failure and defeat. This destabilized regimes and led to military coups all over the Middle East. One military coup took place in Egypt in 1952 led by army officers better known as the free officers (2004, p.26). By 1954 Colonel Jamal Abdel Nasser became Egypt's leader (2004, p.31). These events had huge impact on the Middle East. With the fall of a regime that was under the control of Britain, western influence was threatened. This was the result of the rise of a regime which came to be headed by

Nasser who had great ambition and sought to increase his influence throughout the Middle East. With the purchase of arms by the new Egyptian regime from the Soviet Union the West became weary of the increased influence of the Soviet Union in the region (2004, p.40). In addition, the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company was another challenge to the Western dominance and specifically British influence in the region (2004, p.47). In response, France, Britain and Israel collaborated and militarily invaded Egypt to remove Nasser's regime and take control again of the Suez Canal (2004, p.50). Despite the success of the military operation, on a political level it was a huge disaster. The invasion led to angry backlash from all over the Arab world and the Soviet Union. The situation got even more difficult as Nasser disrupted the Suez Canal and Syrian saboteurs destroyed pumping stations of oil pipelines that run through Syria (2004, pp.52-53). This left Western Europe "almost entirely deprived of Middle Easter oil" (2004, p.53). The US had to manage the crisis and directly took a firm standing against the invasion and put political and economic pressure on the invaders to cease all operations and agree to a cease-fire agreement (2004, pp.53-54). With this backlash Britain and France stature in the Middle East declined dramatically. They agreed to unconditional withdrawal from Egypt without achieving any of their objectives (2004, p.57). In response, the US was forced to fill the vacuum and be directly involved in Middle Eastern affairs. At the mean time, the turn of events increased that stature of Nasser amongst the Arab world. In its aim to achieve its goals, the US strategy was based on supporting and protecting the stability of allied regimes in the Middle East (Louis & Owen, 2002, p.102). One of these allied states was Lebanon, headed by President Camille Chamoun.

Greater Lebanon as a modern state entity was established in 1920 by the French. In 1943 the Republic of Lebanon gained full independence from the French Mandate. At the time there were two dominant sects in Lebanon, Christian Maronites and Muslim Sunnis. The Muslim Sunnis were the first to call for independence from the French Mandate. In order to convince

the reluctant Christian Maronites, who saw France as their protector, an unwritten agreement was made between both groups. This agreement is better known as the "National Pact" which outlined the political power sharing arrangement that would be followed. This arrangement had two main elements (Kassir, 2007, p.35). The first had to do with how government power is shared. The agreement entailed that the President would always be Maronite, whilst the Prime Minister Sunni. Under the constitutional arrangements that were designed in 1926 the President enjoyed great amount of power unlike the Prime Minister. In addition, the majority of the important positions in government institutions were assigned to the Maronites. Thus, the power sharing arrangements favoured the Maronites. The second condition had to do with the foreign policy of the Lebanese state. This condition entailed that the Muslims in Lebanon give up on their dream of unity with the Arab World and especially with Syria. In return, the Christians would give up on looking to the West and specifically France for protection (2007, p.33). Under these arrangements the Maronites joined the Sunnis in seeking independence. This arrangement worked for at least a decade. The Muslim population with their leaders felt that Maronite Presidents abused the powers given to them. There were allegations of wide corruptions and elections results rigging (Qubain, 1961, p.30). The Muslim population felt like they were treated as secondary citizens. Additionally, in context of the events taking place in the Middle East they saw an opportunity that would make them more equal and increase their power in state affairs. Therefore they called for amendments to the constitution that gave more power to the Prime Minister and many other reforms that gave Lebanon an increasingly Arab identity (1961, p.32). In contrast, Maronites saw the presidential powers as a guarantee to their security and dignity. They regarded all calls for abolishing sectarianism and calls for economic union between Syria and Lebanon with great suspicion (1961, p.33). They feared through such changes the Muslims will come to control Lebanon and seek to unite Lebanon with Syria and this will lead to their persecution. This standoff left the

Lebanese state vulnerable and allowed for foreign intervention. In order to gain foreign support, President Chamoun embraced the Eisenhower Doctrine which guaranteed that the US would intervene militarily to protect allied regimes from the communist threat. The reformists reacted and sought support from President Nasser. This made them even more reliable on the guidance and influence of President Nasser. Neither, the Christians nor the Muslims abided by the National Pact agreement that the first won't look to the West for protection and that the latter will give up on seeking unity with the Arab world. Under this context of internal division and regional competition an internal crisis was imminent.

In 1958 two major events led to the US intervention in Lebanon. The first was the emergence of the UAR at the beginning of the year. The UAR emerged after the agreement that both Syria and Egypt will be united under one republic and under the leadership of President Nasser (2002, p.106). This brought President Nasser to the doors of Lebanon and made President Chamoun extremely fearful of President Nasser's intentions. In contrast, the reformists saw this as an opportunity to stop President Chamoun from seeking another term and implementing changes. With the military and economic support provided by the UAR, on the 8th of May of 1958 the reformists' armed groups took to the streets in direct challenge to President Chamoun's authority (2002, p.121&p.123). In return, the US provided President Chamoun with the necessary support to resist and maintain the regime (2002, p.122). However, by late June President Chamoun was losing control and the opposition forces were advancing towards the Presidential Palace so it was only a matter of time before the US increased its level of intervention to protect the pro-Western Lebanese Regime. The US feared that Lebanon would experience the same fate. Therefore, the immediately on the 15th of July the US Marines were sent to the shores of Beirut (2002, p.126). US officials feared that if the UAR or the Soviet Union was behind the coups taking place in Arab states that the rest of the Middle East could fall under their influence and control (2002, p.105) In

conversation with his close aids then President of US Eisenhower made it clear that since 1945 US objective was to maintain unhindered access to petroleum of the Middle East and now Nasser was trying "to get control of these supplies – to get the income and the power to destroy the Western world" (Yaqub, 2004, p.228). The decision to intervene by President Eisenhower was taken long before the crisis. Since "to lose this area by inaction would be far worse than the loss in China, because of the strategic position and resources of the Middle East" (2004, p.224). By intervening the US ended any prospects of a successful revolution by the Muslim-dominant reformist groups and ensured that the political settlement will be favourable to US interests. By intervening the US ensured that it ended any major blow to the Lebanese political system. The confessional nature of the Lebanese System ensured that the same political elite are always reproduced. However, the US diffused the opposition by ensuring the President Chamoun will not seek another term. Besides, the US officials led the mediation effort between the Lebanese elites which reached a near-consensus that led to the election of General Fouad Chehab as the President of Lebanon (Nassif, 2008, p.207).

Political System and Foreign Policy Failure

These events support the main argument of this paper. Firstly, we see how the internal political structure of Lebanon leads to sectarian division and constant competition between different religious and ethnic groups. The constitution and the National Pact arrangements favoured the Maronites who during 1943 the most powerful sect. However, as the demographic nature of Lebanon changed in favour of the Sunni's and the rise of regional Sunni power, Egypt and then UAR they sought to challenge the constitution and implement change that gave them more power. A political system where its members feel diminished is a failed one. It is only natural that the Sunnis try and correct the power balance. As a result, they will clash with the status quo, the Maronites; hence, civil war occurs.

In addition, not confirming to the foreign policy doctrine of the National Pact was also another reason. Chamoun's decision to align himself with the West through embracing the Eisenhower doctrine triggered severe backlash from other Lebanese who sought support from the Soviet Union. The Muslims of Lebanon were compassionate with the Arab struggle against Israel and the West. For that reason, they regarded the Lebanese state as illegitimate since it went against their beliefs. This polarised the population, since both Muslims and Christians feared the others intentions. It is crucial that a foreign policy is devised that will deny foreign powers influence and at the same time be representative of the Lebanese population.

Conclusion

The crisis did not end with the US intervention. The US and the UAR reached an agreement where President Chamoun would not seek another term. Plus, a consensus President would be elected. This seemed to appease the reformists especially that the UAR support decreased (Nassif, 2008, p.214). Nevertheless, the crisis ended with a counter revolution. It was led by the Lebanese Kataeb Party. It came in response to the government that was formed. The Christians saw that there is an attempt to diminish them politically. This counter-revolution led to the collapse of the government and the formation of a new one. The new government was composed of four ministers, two Sunni and two Maronite ministers (2008, pp.261-262). This led to the end of the 1958 crisis. However, the roots of the problem were not dealt with. The political system remained unfair in the eyes of a large group of Lebanese. Moreover, the future direction of foreign policy was not clearly set. The division remained; Muslims remained sympathetic with the Arab struggle; whilst, the Christians saw any increased Arab influence as a threat to their power in Lebanon. It was only a matter of time before these issues resurfaced and conflict would reoccur.

Chapter 2 - 1975 Crisis

The 1975 crisis of Lebanon is better known to most as the 1975 Lebanese Civil War. However, if the number of foreign powers involved in the 1975 internal conflict is considered the 1975 crisis may be referred to as the war against Lebanon.

Regional and Internal Factors

The domestic factors that allowed for civil war in 1958 do not vary from the context that led to the 1975 internal conflict. Sunni Muslims still felt that their ability to participate in governance was limited and saw a need for constitutional reform that gave them more rights. In addition, the Shiite Muslims, also, saw that they have been deprived socially and economically over the past decades. With a new vibrant political leadership they began to seek a greater power sharing arrangement. In contrast, the Maronite Christians who saw their favourable power sharing arrangement as a guarantee to their freedom and security as a minority in the wide Middle East. Therefore, they saw any change in the National Pact agreement or constitutional arrangement would threaten their physical existence. With the end of the 1958 crisis and the election of President Fouad Shehab, there was a serious attempt by President Shehab to introduce to introduce reforms to appease the Lebanese population. He made efforts to make the Sunni Muslims play a greater role in governance. Moreover, he ensured that the government followed an increasingly balanced economic planning. This meant that the outskirts of Lebanon will receive government investment in order to alleviate economic conditions (Nassif, 2008, pp.389-408). Rather than have investment limited to major cities mainly populated with Chrisitians. With the end of President Shehab's term and the election of President Charles Helou (1964-70) and then President Sleiman Franjieh (1970-76) the efforts for reform were limited and were even reversed. This was due to various

domestic and regional developments that nearly destroyed the very existence of Lebanon as a state and a unified geographical entity.

The regional dimension of the 1975 crisis had begun during the First Arab Summit Conference in 1964 when the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLA) and the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLO) were formed (Petran, 1987, p.77). During the conference, the Lebanese government, and the participating Arab states agreed, that the PLA should not be allowed to set up bases or training camps in Lebanon. Besides, any individual known to be a member of the PLA would not be allowed to return to Lebanon (1987, p.78). With the Arab defeat during the June 1967 war (1987, p.87) and the failure of Arab states to retrieve any occupied land from Israel through diplomacy. The Arab populations became increasingly disillusioned with their regimes (1987, p.91). On the 10 of March of 1968 Palestinian Commandos successfully defeated an attack by Israel against the West Bank town of Karameh. These Commandos were member of Al-Fatah. Al-Fatah was one of many armed Palestinian resistant groups who formed the PLO. This success lifted Arab morale and transformed the resistance image of Al-Fatah, the dominant faction in the PLO. This made Fatah the acknowledged leader and voice of the resistance against Israel (1987, p.91). The humiliating defeats of Arab states against Israel advanced the PLO as an alternative. As a result, to hide their "political bankruptcy" the Arab states were forced to support the PLO (1987, p.94). This made the PLO a liability for most regimes. In response, each Arab regime set up its "Palestine Resistance" organization. These organizations were set up to try and increase each state's influence in the PLO (1987, p.92). This meant that the PLO could never be controlled under one leadership as it became infiltrated by different Arab regimes. This did great damage to the PLO as it provoked conflicts between the resistance and the local populations of host Arab states (1987, p.93). This was the case for the King of Jordan Hussein who feared an attempt of takeover by the PLO in Jordan. The PLO aligned itself

with progressive groups in Jordan. In retaliation, King Hussein started a military operation against the PLO in 1970 to end its military presence (1987, p.106). He was successful in ending their military Presence and led to their exodus from Jordan. In addition, the ouster of Syrian President Salah Jadid, who was sympathetic with the PLO, by Gen. Hafez Al Asad was another blow to the PLO. Assad played a vital role in undermining Syrian support to the PLO, during King Hussein's attacks, by refusing to give air support to Syrian forces that crossed into Jordan(1987, p.106). Assad aligned himself with the political efforts of Arab states to achieve a settlement with Israel. Thus, he had an unfavourable attitude towards the PLO and implemented strong controls over its activities (1987, p.107). After King Hussein utterly destroyed the PLO's presence in Jordan and then President Assad extremely limited its influence in Syria, the PLO's final stronghold was Lebanon.

As mentioned above the Lebanese government formally declared it will not accept Palestinian resistance activity on its land and Arab states agreed to it. With the Arab defeat of 1967; however, the Palestinian resistance groups saw that the ruling Arab regimes were responsible for the Arab defeat (Nassif, 2005, p.270). In addition, the Lebanese government was one of these regimes to blame. They based this on the fact that during the 1967 war it refused to support the attack by the Arab states. More significantly, The Lebanese army was accused of indirectly cooperating with Israel in destroying the Palestinian resistance (2005, p.270). In a significant turn of events an Israeli passenger plane was subject to a terrorist ambush on the 26th of January of 1968 by Palestinians who came from Lebanon (2005, p.275). In reprisal, the Israeli state attacked Beirut International Airport and destroyed 13 planes that were part of Lebanese state owned Middle East Airlines fleet (2005, p.276). The Israel army achieved its objective without any resistance from the Lebanese Army that was on high alert and had anticipated the attack. This led to a wide backlash against the government and the military institutions and gave further credibility to the PLO and its armed

activities in Lebanon (2005, p.275). The PLO started expanding its military operations in Lebanon and especially on the borders with Israel. The PLO claimed that it will take vengeance for Lebanon in the face of the inability of the Lebanese army in defending Lebanon (2005, p.278). This led to military clashes with the Lebanese army in March 1969, when the Lebanese army prevented the Palestinian Resistance from embarking on attacks against Israel from the South of Lebanon (2005, p.278). This became another issue for internal division amongst the Lebanese population. The Lebanese Muslims supported the idea that the Palestinians be allowed to carry military against Israel based from Lebanon (2005, p.278). In contrast, the Lebanese Christians saw that granting the Palestinian Resistance permission to carry out attacks against Israel undermines Lebanese sovereignty. Also, it will expose Lebanon to retribution attacks from Israel that could be very costly (2005, p.279). Armed conflict between the Lebanese army and the Palestinian resistance continued. There were many attempts to forge an agreement between the Palestinians, led by Yasser Arafat and the Lebanese government but with no success. Even if Arafat agreed to certain arrangements he could not force others in the PLO to abide by them. The Palestinian armed organizations kept undermining the agreements and undergo military activity that breach these agreement and looked to expand their military presence and bases (2005, p.288). Conflict on the 19th of October of 1969 broke out again. This time it was not limited between the Palestinians and the Lebanese army. On this occasion Syria was indirectly involved by sending its own Palestinian resistance armed organizations across the borders and at the same time providing military support and cover (2005, p.288). The Lebanese army was forced to face Palestinians and the Syrian government. This was a clear sign of pressure to force the Lebanese government to accept the terms of the Palestinian resistance (2005, p.289). This pressure worked as the Lebanese President Charles Helou accepted Egyptian President Nasser's invitation to hold talks in Cairo to reach an agreement with the Palestinians (2005, p.289). On

the third of November of 1969, the Lebanese Chief Commander reached an agreement better known as the Cairo agreement. Under this agreement the Palestinian resistance was granted the right to carry out military activities and operation from Lebanon. In addition, the restrictions put by the Lebanese government in regards to individuals joining the PLO or the PLA were eliminated (2005, p.300). Simply, the government gave up any power it had on controlling Palestinian activity. This greatly empowered the Palestinian resistance and undermined the sovereignty of Lebanon. Even President Nasser and the Muslim Prime Minister of Lebanon were amazed at how much the Maronite Lebanese Army Commander was ready to cede power to the Palestinians (2005, pp.302-3).

After the PLO was crushed out of Jordan and its freedom completely restricted in Syria, Lebanon became its final base. This made Lebanon the battleground for all of the regional conflicts. Arab states exported their local Palestinian resistance organizations to Lebanon. This not only made Lebanon the battleground for the Arab-Israeli conflict but also for all Arab-Arab conflict too. The Cairo agreement shifted the power in favour of the PLO at the expense of the government. Since the Lebanese government and public institutions were dominated by Maronite Christians, this meant that power shifted in favour of the Sunni Muslims. But this time not only did the Maronites fear that they may lose their privileges in government but also feared for their own security and existence. With the election of President Sleiman Franjieh, who was considered a strong Maronite leader, he was unable to re-establish the government's control over its territory because both foreign and local pressure. This led the President Franjieh to directly tell the two most influential Maronite leaders at the time, Camille Chamoun and Pierre Gemayel, that the army cannot be depended on it was time for other means. This meant that it was time for self-reliance through arming Christians and training them. Tension grew between the Christians and the Palestinians supported by the Muslims. The Christians called for the Palestinians to be disarmed and not

be allowed to use Lebanon as a base for their operations. In return, the Palestinians accused the Christians to be traitors to the Palestinian and Arab cause and this enraged and increased the division with the Lebanese Muslims. It was only time before a direct conflict would break out.

On the 13th of April of 1975 the Lebanese war broke out. The war did not end until 1990 with the signing of the Ta'if agreement. This war took many shapes at first it was Christians against Palestinians and Muslims. Then, fearing the growing influence of the PLO in Lebanon, Syria intervened on the side of the Christian against the Palestinians. After, with signing of the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt, Syria felt that it became isolated and had no leverage against Israel. In order to reconsolidate its position it planned to gain the support of PLO to improve its position against Israel. This put Syria and the PLO against Christians who were backed by Israel. Finally, the war ended with a Christian-Christian war. This came after the death of Prominent Christian Leader Bachir Gemayel and the efforts of others to succeed him. More, the Gulf War of 1990 led to a regional compromise that allowed Syria to control Lebanon. The support Syria gave to the US was rewarded by allowing it to militarily defeat all Christian resistance.

Political System and Foreign Policy Failure

The 1975-1990 war was a brutal conflict which featured repeated genocide carried by all parties of war and saw the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. Decades have passed and the war still haunts the memory of the Lebanese population and still divides them along the same lines. The above events show that common symptoms that led to the 1958 crisis were the trigger of the 1975 civil war. The Muslims aimed to address the power deficit which favoured the Christians. They used the Palestinians as a force to undermine the whole political system and take over by force. Once again, the Christians, specifically the

Maronites, resisted and sacrificed human and material resources in order to protect the political system that favoured them. Nevertheless, this political system ultimately led to the defeat of the Christians militarily. Lebanon must amend its political system appropriately in order for it as a united nation-state to survive.

Furthermore, the Lebanese governments' mislead foreign strategy undermined internal cohesion. The Lebanese government was weakened by the two opposing camps. One that saw that armed Palestinians should be denied operating from Lebanon; and another that the Lebanese government should support the Palestinian cause and allow them to use Lebanon as a base for their operations. At first the government was in line with the first camp, but under internal and political pressure it signed the Cairo Agreement and fell under the second camp. This only increased tensions between the Lebanese and paralysed security institutions. This left Lebanon open for all regional and international infiltration.

Conclusion

The Lebanese war, ended with the defeat of the Christians and the introduction of the Ta'if agreement. The Ta'if agreement was signed in Saudi Arabia. It introduced major amendments to the Lebanese original constitution and relegated many of the powers that the Maronite President enjoyed to the Sunni Prime Minister. Once again the main causes of rift between Lebanese were not addressed. In regards to the political system, power was simply dispatched to the Muslim Sunnis. Consequently, it guaranteed that another conflict will break out. Sooner or later another Lebanese group would feel under-represented and aim to alter the power sharing arrangement. In regards to foreign policy, Lebanon fell under Syrian control. Hence, its foreign policy was dictated by Syria. This put Lebanon in the Syrian camp against the wishes of a large group of Lebanese who opposed this situation.

Chapter 3 – 2008 Crisis

The Lebanese war, which began in 1975, ended with the defeat of the Christians and the introduction of the Ta'if agreement. The Ta'if agreement was signed in Saudi Arabia and introduced major amendments to the Lebanese original constitution. It relegated many of the powers that the Maronite President enjoyed to the Sunni Prime Minister. With it an era of Sunni-Maronite competition ended with the marginalisation of the Maronites.

Regional and Internal Factors

With the end of the 1975 war Syria was victorious and gained full military control over Lebanon. As a result, for 15 years Syria directed Lebanon politically, economically, militarily and interfered in all decision of the Lebanese states. However, in 2005 after the assassination of Sunni leader Rafik Hariri there was a wide uprising that composed of Sunnis, Christians, and Druze against the Syrian military presence and called for the complete withdrawal of all Syrian troops. Under great international pressure Syria was forced to withdraw its troops and with it Lebanon entered another conflict.

Presently, Lebanon is experiencing a Sunni-Shiite Cold War. The paper mentioned above the rise of the Shiite as a political force in Lebanon. With the emergence of Imam Moussa Sadr the Shiite started to seek a greater share in political power of Lebanon. During the war he established a military Shiite wing and better organized religions and political representation (Kassim, 2009, pp.18-19). Sadr's leadership did not last long as he mysteriously disappeared in Libya and there are many speculations as to whether he's dead or still alive (Fars News Agency, 2011, p.1). Despite this setback, the success of the Islamic Iranian Revolution in Iran in 1979 had profound impact on the Shiites in Lebanon. Many Shiite groups sought to establish links with new Islamic Republic under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini

(Kassim, 2009, p.24). As a result, by 1982 Hezbollah (the party of God) was established under the blessing and influence of Khomeini and ultimately Iran (2009, p.26). As a result, personnel from the Iranian Revolution Guards were sent to the South of Lebanon. They set up military training camps and started training Hezbollah members and organizing its military wing (2009, p,27). Subsequently, under the reign of Syrian authority over Lebanon, Hezbollah was able to build up its military capabilities which were primarily targeted at defending Lebanon from Israel. Hezbollah's relationship with Syria began from the very early days of its establishment. Syrian President Assad facilitated the transfer of Iranian Revolution Guards into Lebanon through Syria (2009, p.412). Despite, military clashes between Hezbollah and Syria between years 1987-1988 both sides managed to resolve their differences (2009, p.413). The relationship between Syria and Hezbollah is that of mutual benefit. Syrian borders with Lebanon are the main route for military supply. In addition, Syria's political influence in Lebanon also assists Hezbollah's in his political objectives inside Lebanon. On the other hand, Hezbollah with his strong military capabilities is of great geostrategic significance for Syria. According to the Syrian strategic thinking, a weak Lebanon would be exploited by Israel to undermine Syrian security. Hence, the presence of Hezbollah on the Lebanese borders with Israel deters any attempt form Israel against Syria through Lebanon. Moreover, Hezbollah can be used as a force in the domestic politics of Lebanon as it has wide influence over the Shiite population and its arms can be effective in achieving political objectives. During the reign of Syria over Lebanon, Hezbollah did not show much involvement in the domestic affairs of internal Lebanese politics, as Syria dealt with internal political decisions. However, the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon left a power vacuum. With the success of the revolution against the Syrian occupation which was led by Sunni leader Said Hariri, son of late Rafik Hariri, the Sunni leader filled most of this power vacuum. In return, Hezbollah began to seek a greater role in domestic Lebanese

politics. Since then a political Sunni-Shiite struggle has dominated Lebanon and is driving it to the brink of another civil war. Signs of this were apparent with limited civil war led by Hezbollah in the May of 2008. Hezbollah military personnel invaded Sunni dominated West Beirut and Druze areas of Mount Lebanon killing nearly 100 Lebanese (Harriman & Talbot, 2008, p.33). This attack achieved what is known as the Dawha agreement. Through this agreement Hezbollah was successful in preventing the "14 March" coalition, led by Said Hariri, from achieving its political objectives. Hezbollah through the use of force and terror forced the 14 March coalition into compromise. First, by forcing compromise in regards to the presidency by bringing Michel Sleiman, who is politically non-aligned, as president of the Lebanese Republic. Plus, Hezbollah enforced a norm in which he claimed the right to one-third of cabinet members. By having this one-third Hezbollah can constitutionally dissolve the government if it decides to withdraw its Cabinet members. This guaranteed Hezbollah influence over all government decision making. Many accused Hezbollah of seeking a new form of power sharing system (Daou, 2009). Instead of having a dual system of power between Christians and Muslims, Hezbollah is accused of seeking a tripartite power system. A tripartite system would split political power mainly between Sunnis, Shiites, and Christians. Even though party leaders have denied such claims, they have made it clear that they will not accept the dual power system and power sharing should be more fair (Abou Hsein, 2008). Recently, there have been reports that Iran had indicated to the US that Hezbollah would be ready to consider giving up his arms in return for political reform that establishes a tripartite political system (Younis, 2001). The main source of power today for Hezbollah is his organized military resistance/militia which he has utilised to threat other Lebanese to accept its demands. Therefore, it would be logical to have a deal in which Hezbollah would give its arms in return for greater political power domestically. Their goal to exert greater influence may as well explain their motive behind their involvement in the

assassination of Rafik Hariri. The indictment issued by the Special Tribunal of Lebanon has accused senior military personnel of Hezbollah of being involved in executing the assassination (Special Tribunal for Lebanon, 2011, p.10). Yet again Hezbollah has denied any involvement; nevertheless, evidence show that its members were involved in performing the killing. This ongoing Sunni-Shiite competition has already led to military clashes in 2008 and currently.

In regards to the regional context, the Iranian Revolution introduced a strategic change to the Middle East. The revolution led to the fall of a pro-Western regime. It was replaced that is ideologically hostile to what it labels as American Imperialism and Israeli Zionism. After the success of the revolution the new regime sought to export its revolution in the region. Hence, it was only natural for Iran to target states with significant Shiite populations. Despite Iraq's war against Iran which burdened the Iranian state, its role in the Middle East has grown (Parsi, 2007, pp.88-89). With the invasion of Iraq and fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, the influence of Iran in the region started to become clearer and expand. It was only natural for Iran to target Lebanon which enjoys a major Shiite population. With the defeat of the PLO in 1982 by Israel's invasion of Lebanon the armed Palestinian resistance against Israel was completely defeated. However, Iran, allied with Syria, has looked to fill this void by supporting armed groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas. Hezbollah and Hamas are notorious in their efforts to maintain armed resistance against Israel. Another strategic event took place on the 11th of September 2011. On this day terrorist attacks were carried against the Twin Trade Centres and the Pentagon in the US that was executed by Al-Qaeda. This geared the US to a more direct involvement in the Middle East, beginning with the Invasion of Afghanistan and then Iraq. One of the aims this new approach was to remove the regimes that supported terrorist non-state actors. Therefore, US support for the March 14 coalition to force Syria to withdraw its troops from Lebanon can be attributed to Syria's support of Hezbollah

and Hamas. This has led to regional competition which has contributed to further internal Lebanese strife. Presently, Lebanon is divided into two camps regarding the outlook of foreign policy. Most specifically is the case in regards to the Arab-Israeli war. The coalition led by Hezbollah, called the 8th of March, believes that the armed struggle against Israel must be maintained in order to free occupied Lebanese territory and maintain Lebanon's sovereignty against Israeli constant transgressions. The 14th of March coalition sees armed resistance to be disastrous to Lebanon. The coalition sees no reason for Lebanon to bear the costs of conflict with Israel. In contrast, whilst Syria also has occupied land maintains its armistice agreement with Israel. For instance, despite the limited military victory of Hezbollah against Israel the war still had severe economic costs. The 14th of March coalition prefers the collective political settlement the pro-Western Arab regimes favour. The 14th of March coalition believes that diplomacy is the best method to ensure the Palestinians get a fair peace agreement and Lebanon recovers any occupied territory. In the absence of any balance of power between Lebanon and Israel and the lack of will by Arab states to go to war with Israel; Lebanon should not solely bear the cost of the war against Israel. Hezbollah and its allies see this position to serve the interests of American imperialism in the region. They believe that the 14th of March coalition is taking part in the plot to undermine Hezbollah's armed resistance and to assist to removing the threat to Israel. Moreover, The Lebanese Sunnis, mainly backed by Saudi Arabia, fear the growing influence of Iran in Lebanon through Hezbollah. They see Iran as empowering the Shiite against the Sunnis. Also fearing growing Iranian influence in Lebanon and the region Saudi Arabia has been sympathetic towards Lebanese Sunnis. In the face of this the Lebanese government has no clear foreign policy direction. With a compromise President, foreign policy has become increasingly confused and contradictory. On one hand stresses the need to confirm with all UN resolutions, which call for the removal of all non-government armed organizations. Whilst on

the other hand, he defends the right of maintaining the resistance against Israel through Hezbollah. More, a government headed by Sunni leaders who tend to favour political settlement, but at the same time have foreign affairs ministers that owe their loyalty to Hezbollah makes foreign policy even more bizarre. Sunni Prime Ministers support UN resolutions, only to be undermined by their Foreign Affairs Ministers. These ministers continue stress the fact that Hezbollah is not a terrorist group and has full right to bear arms in the face of Israeli possible contraventions. These set of foreign policies that represent the view of Lebanon towards the world put the two camps at a stand-off. Both Shiite Hezbollah and Sunni leader Hariri have strong foreign links. The first with Iran and the second with Saudi Arabia and thus are committed to defend each country's interest in Lebanon in return for the support they get.

Political System and Foreign Policy Failure

The same mechanisms that led to the 1958 and 1975 confrontations are in work again. Currently, the Shiites aim to play a greater role in internal affairs. In retrospect, the Sunnis fear the intentions of the Shiites. Any gain for the Shiites would mean a loss to the Sunnis. Another conflict between the reformist and status quo groups is emerging. The Shiites call for a fairer system. They seek amendments that would give them greater power within the central government. This will only prolong the crisis. The Sunnis portray these claims with great distrust. They see that the Shiite ultimate goal is to take total control over government. Whatever the outcome, a decade or so later, another Lebanese group under renewed regional context will seek to challenge the power balance again. This can only be avoided by introducing a new political system that ends this state of constant power play.

In regards to Lebanon's outlook to its regional neighbours, Lebanese society is again polarised. Disagreement has invoked high levels of anxiety between the Lebanese. Sunni

official have aligned themselves with the dominant Arab-Sunni states in the region; whereas, the Shiites are part of a strategic alliance with Iran and Syria. Each of these blocs has conflicting interest. This has been introduced to the domestic political relations amongst Lebanese. Since both groups have power in the central government, this has left the government paralysed and unable to have a consistent foreign policy. Therefore, as relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran sour, so does the relationship between Lebanese Sunnis and Shiites.

Conclusion

Lebanon has witnessed over the past five years numerous limited confrontations climaxing in May 2008. The crisis is far from over despite the Doha agreement. The slope towards another civil war is getting steeper. Lebanon continues to somehow hold on against the inevitable. However, the inevitable will become reality and the cost for Lebanon will only grow. For instance, the 2006 Hezbollah-Israel war inflicted US$ 7 billion losses onto Lebanon. It led to the Destruction of over 130,000 buildings and apartments and over 100 bridges (Harrima & Talibot, 2008, p.32). More, the May 2008 attacks by Hezbollah against other Lebanese left nearly 100 Lebanese citizens dead and over 250 injured. This only reinforces the need to address the Lebanese problem and lay out possible solutions.

Chapter 4 – Proposed Solutions

<u>Introduction</u>

A nation is defined by Anderson as "*an imagined community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign*" (1991, p.6). When formed in 1920, Lebanon as a nation fails to live up to this definition. A set of people make up a nation when they all feel some sort of belonging to each other even without physically knowing the other (1991, p.6). However, the different religious groups in Lebanon hardly have any sense of mythical affinity that makes the as Lebanese citizens feel united. Some refer to the Lebanese peoples as a plural to highlight this fact. In his writing Salibi describes Lebanon's socio-political reality in the title of his book as a "*House of Many Mansions*" (1988). In more political terms he saw that Lebanon as a geographical entity is composed of many nations. One nation is the Maronite Christians who see that being Lebanese citizens entails that they must have no loyalties to other nations or identities (Salibi, 1988, p.26). They also feel that they share common Ancient Phoenician heritage with a broader Mediterranean heritage with Ancient Rome and Greece which is also reflected with the relations with modern Western Europe (1988, p.26). However, not all other Lebanese citizens share the same identity of the Maronite Christians. For many Lebanese the legitimacy of Lebanon as a state was in question. Many regarded Lebanon as an artificial creation which intended to undermine Arab unity. A great number of Lebanese, mostly Sunni Muslims, saw they belonged to a wider Arab or Syrian Arab identity rather than restricted Lebanese non-Arab identity (Salibi, 1988, p32). The Lebanese state failed to generate some mythical identity that may unite its citizen and make them feel like they belong together to the same nation. The reason is that the divisions amongst the Lebanese population paralysed the state. After Lebanon gained its

independence on the 22nd of November 1943 the state should've invested in creating national and patriotic sentiments. Especially that the efforts for independence involved leaders from all religious groups. This should've been enough to create some sort of affinity that Lebanese people may share and feel as one nation. However, the 1958 and 1975 crisis led to further doubts regarding Lebanon. Lebanon as a successful nation-state could hardly exist. In both situations the crisis of identity played a great role. Maronite Christians saw Egyptian President Nasser in 1958 and the Palestinian armed resistance in Lebanon as a major threat to Lebanon's security and existence. On the other hand, the Arab Muslims sympathised with both and saw that the Maronite's attitude is part of the Zionist and American conspiracy to undermine Arab strength and unity. Despite all this Lebanon as a state has survived, even though it remains weak. Moreover, Lebanon as a nation is starting to emerge as well. In 2005 the uprising against the Syrian military presence in Lebanon united nearly all Lebanese sects excluding the Shiite Muslims. For the second time in the modern history of Lebanon, Sunnis, Druze, and Christians united around a common cause which called for freedom, independence, and sovereignty of Lebanon. This led to the rise of a national sentiment between these groups and the rise of this common kinship. Despite the absence of the Shiites, all parties that represented the different groups of Lebanon initiated a national dialogue early 2006 to resolve all the contentious issues (British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 2006, p.1 & Blanford, 2010, p.20). When the time came to debate the future of Hezbollah's arms the 2006 July war between Hezbollah and Israel broke out and this undermined all national dialogue and the 2006 crisis began. Yet again Lebanon as an imagined community is not bolstering rather the opposite.

As outlined in the central argument, two common things have continuously led to repeated crisis in Lebanon. Firstly, the centralized political system leads to insecurity between the national groups in Lebanon. One group will look to increase its hold on power, whilst the

other seeks to maintain status quo. This clash of objectives has lead to recurring conflict. Finally, the failure of the all Lebanese governments in adopting a foreign policy that suits its best interests is again another issue. In a region full of conflict the government over the years has succumbed to these conflicts. These conflicts have brought the Lebanese state to the brink of complete collapse. In regards to the first problem and second problem, the paper proposes the following two solutions. In regards to the failure of the political system which is based on a central system with a non-formal consensus on power sharing; the solution is a decentralized system. When it comes to foreign policy this paper recommends that the Lebanese state officially adopts a foreign policy of neutrality to effectively insulate itself from contagious regional conflicts.

New Political System

The original Lebanese constitution that was put in 1926 was based on the French Parliamentary System. Under this constitution most of the powers were concentrated with the President of the Republic. The National Pact agreement stated that the President was to be Maronite. Hence, under the 1926 constitution and the 1943 National Pact the Maronites were given large political powers. Maronites also enjoyed other privileges, most high ranking offices were held by them. Besides, they were guaranteed the greatest number of Members of Parliament (MPs) in comparison to other religious groups (Kassir, 2007, pp.31-32). This led to resentment by marginalised groups. After successive rounds Maronite-Sunni conflict, which ended with the defeat of the Maronites, major amendments were introduced to the 1926 constitution. They were introduced under the Ta'if agreement. These amendments relegated powers from the Presidential office to the Highest Sunni office the Prime Minister. Plus, the number of MPs given to the Maronites was reduced. Currently the MPs are divided

evenly between Christians and Muslims. These amendments did not lead to peaceful existence between the Lebanese religious groups, and religious animosity remains. In short the power sharing arrangements under the centralised system has failed. Lebanon as a multi-cultural nation-state has been unsuccessful. Lebanon is not the only example of futility. Countries such as Sudan, Yugoslavia, and Somalia have either seized to exist or are experiencing major difficulties. Having said this, there are many states with a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural population have managed to successfully exist over long periods of times, these include Switzerland, Hungary, Belgium, Iraq, Syria, Canada and many others.

There are two political systems that have proved effective in managing a multi-ethnic state. The first is the autocratic centralised system. The two main examples have been Iraq under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein and Syrian under the dictatorship of Hafiz Al Assad and his son Bashar Al Assad. Both, Iraq and Syria, have a multicultural population. Iraq's major religious groups include Shiite, Sunni, and Kurdish groups. Under Saddam Hussein, who was Sunni, he completely marginalised the Shiite and Kurdish groups. For more than two decades the Iraqi state maintained internal peace and managed to eliminate any possible conflict. Despite Kurd's attempt to revolt against the regime, Saddam Hussein violently cracked down and managed to restore order (Fisk, 2006, pp.262-3). With the invasion of Iraq by the U.S. in 2003 and the fall of the regime religious enmity and military conflict emerged. This has left Iraq embroiled in a Sunni-Shiite conflict. Hence, under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein Iraq enjoyed internal stability as the Sunni led regime dominate other groups. Similarly, under the Assad autocratic regime Syria internal cohesion was achieved. Syria has been led by an Alewite regime. For the past decades this regime has managed to enforce domestic security. Again the regime achieved this through the use of force against other sections of the population. Currently Syria is experiencing an uprising against the regime. This has

weakened the regime. Unfortunately domestic strife and religious enmity is surfacing once again (Abrams, 2011, p.13).

In Lebanon many religious groups have attempted to dominate the other and marginalise them. Therefore, this solution is not suitable for Lebanon as it has failed. The Maronites could not maintain their dominance. More, the Sunnis couldn't dominate over the past decade. Even today the Shiites even though they're most powerful they still find it hard to completely marginalise opposing groups in Lebanon. As well, in the case of Iraq and Syria, a group can only manage to accumulate so much power for a certain period and then at any stage this power can be challenged and severely undermined.

The evidence above and throughout the paper proves that centralised system wether democratic or non-democratic are not suitable systems for a multi-ethnic state. This is why this paper proposes that a decentralised system must be implemented in Lebanon for a greater internal stable relationship amongst Lebanese religious groups. There are many examples of multi-cultural states that have successfully existed under decentralised states; beginning with Switzerland, Canada, Australia, Belgium, US, Emirates, Spain and many other states. Some of these states are more religiously and culturally diverse than Lebanon. Regardless these states have existed for centuries and are examples of successful nation-states.

Switzerland's population is even more diverse than the Lebanese population. It includes multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and multi-linguistic groups. Despite this, Switzerland as a state has existed since 1291 (Wilner, 2008, p.5). Switzerland as a state was formed in the face of the threat presented by the expansionist ambitions of the King of Germany (2008, p.6). The allied feudal nations formed a confederation which allowed them to coexist under one state peacefully. When Europe was embroiled in religious wars between Catholics and Protestants,

Switzerland managed to maintain internal order. The reason behind this is that the confederation treated both religious groups of faith equally (2008, p.7). Even after Switzerland fell victim to the invasion of Napoleon, it maintained its unity. Influenced by the French revolution the Confederation was abandoned and the Helvetic Republic was established in 1803. The decentralized system of the Confederation was replaced by a centralised system (2008, p.9). The centralised system proved to be unsuitable for the diversity of the Swiss population. It was abandoned for another decentralised system. Again this decentralised system proved to fail and finally they managed to establish a final federal system in 1848 (2008, p.10). Ever since the Swiss population lived in peace and their sense of nationalism and patriotism increased.

Lebanon requires a system which allows for a majority to rule without being paralysed by opposition; and without undermining the minorities. One positive development that has occurred is that the extreme majority amongst the Lebanese population regard Lebanon as their final nation. The Sunni Muslims don't seek unity with Syria anymore. Besides, The Maronite Christians have come to recognize that the Western countries are not reliable protectors. Likewise, the Shiite Muslims do not aspire for unification with Syria and it is geographically impossible to obtain union with Iran, However, the identity which each groups envision for Lebanon differs. The battle to take control over the centralised government remains. Despite winning the majority in 2009, the Sunni led March 14 coalition was unable to rule. With the threat of the use of arms the Shiite led March 8 coalition managed to limit the majority's ability to rule. Through the threat of arms it managed to force many members of parliament to switch sides. Recently it overturned the majority in parliament and installed a new government. Again it is facing great difficulties in governing the country. Tensions are increasing and everything points that the Lebanese political

paralysis will be prolonged and the threat of another civil war remains ever present. A decentralised system must be adopted. Only a decentralised system can strike a balance between the ambitions of power hungry groups and threatened minorities. A federal system that takes common features of other federal systems in the world and at the same time takes in consideration the characteristics of the Lebanese socio-political culture.

Under a decentralised system there would multi-level government. The decentralised system is usually into the following three levels: The executive federal level, the state-district level, and local-council level. The executive federal level is the central government; under a decentralised federal system its authority is limited. Foreign Security and policy must be its primary concern. Economic, civil, social, and all matters may be delegated to state-district level. The Lebanese central government has failed on all levels. Economically apart from Beirut, all of Lebanon is lacking in infrastructure and development. The central government has failed to direct resources fairly and efficiently. Today the Lebanese central government recognizes over 20 districts. These districts must have their own elected council that presides over all economic, legal, and social matters. In addition to all that, there is a danger that dominant religious groups in these districts may marginalise minorities within these districts. Therefore local councils must be given greater power and especially in regards to economic development and services. This can be guaranteed by providing local councils with a greater pool of funds and resources that they can be independently invested. The decentralised system that should be implemented must allow every religious group feel politically significant. Another common feature of all federal systems is that it has two representative systems. One is regional and another is by population. The first is usually called the senate. In the senate each state or region enjoys the same level of representation regardless of geographic, demographic, or economic significance. This is crucial to implement in Lebanon so different religious groups would feel equally represented.

This is a mere description of the broad guideline of the principles and basis a decentralized political system for Lebanon should be based upon. Eliminating the struggle for power will allow for peaceful coexistence. Politically weaker religious groups will become less likely to seek foreign sponsors to support them to undermine the more powerful groups. When mutual fear is eliminated, bridges can be rebuilt between the different religious-nations of Lebanon. This will allow for common values and shared history to develop so that Lebanon could become a united nation and a successful modern state.

Neutrality

If the relationship of the central state with its Lebanese population can be ideally managed through a decentralised system; the question remains on what basis does the Lebanese state approach its relationship with other states. Lebanon is unfortunately positioned in an unstable part of the world. Sharing borders with Israel and Syria is an unpleasant source of instability and disturbance. However, Lebanon is not the only state in the world that is or was positioned geographically under such delicate international and national struggle. A number of these states managed to protect themselves from the pulling forces of foreign states' competition. These states include Switzerland, Belgium, Luxemburg, Uruguay, Finland, and Norway. These states fall between two or more countries that have a history of conflict and competition. Moreover, they have similar diversity in their population (Khalife, 2008a, p.377). Besides, similarly to Lebanon they are all small countries with small populations. These realities have led the governments of these states to maximise their capabilities and respect their limits in order to protect themselves. They have managed to achieve this through following a neutral foreign policy.

In the face of the power play in the Middle East and the characteristics of the Lebanese state neutrality is also the ideal foreign policy. Many scholars and prominent figures have argued that neutrality be Lebanon's official foreign policy orientation (Khalife, 2008b, pp.20-39). Further, Lebanon was found on the principle of neutrality. The National Pact of 1943, which led to independence, included a non-formal agreement that the Lebanese Christians would not look to the West for protection and that the Lebanese Muslims would not seek any assistance from Arab states. This simply was an agreement of neutrality. All Official Ministerial statements of the governments that reigned ever since 1943 and up until 1976, outlined foreign policy of the Lebanese state in a neutral manner. They all emphasized that even though Lebanon was an integral part of the Arab part it shall not take sides in case of an Arab-Arab rift or be part of any regional blocs or alliances. On an international level, these statements saw Lebanon as part of the international community and embraced all friendly relationship with all states without exception (2008b, pp.41-46). Despite rhetorical commitment to neutrality, the Lebanese state was never able to fully abide by it. In some cases it went against the rationale as it did prior to the 1958 crisis, when President Chamoun decided to embrace the Eisenhower Doctrine (Kassir, 2007, p.55). However, there have been instances of neutral foreign policy which have protected Lebanon from any negative backlash internally and externally. A vote last year in the Security Council, which Lebanon is currently a member of, called for another set of sanctions against Iran was a major concern for the Lebanese government. The Lebanese government responded by abstaining from voting and by taking this neutral stance it appeased the Lebanese population (Xinhua, 2010). Internally all political parties were satisfied since there external state sponsors were not undermined by a neutral stance. However, the Lebanese state's ability to abide by such policy is not viable and drastic measures must be taken. The reason for this is that neutrality must be recognised constitutionally and accepted by all political parties. The government has failed to enforce

neutral foreign policy because Lebanon as a state has failed to live up to basic requirements. A state according to Weber is an entity that has monopoly of over the legitimate use of coercion and force over a certain geographical space (1947, p.154). Since 1958 Lebanon has lost this monopoly. Lebanese have taken arms and sought political goals through use of force. Not only Lebanese, foreign groups from Palestinians to other Arab Mercenaries have been allowed safe haven in Lebanon and base their operations in Lebanon. Under such circumstance it is no wonder that Lebanese governments since independence have failed to follow neutral foreign policy. For now, it is important to explain the major reasons as to why neutrality is the suitable foreign policy for Lebanon. Then look at reasons as to why the Lebanese state has failed to apply it. Finally, explain how it can successfully apply a non-aligned-neutral foreign strategy.

This essay will put forward three reasons that justify the need for Lebanon to be a neutral state. Firstly, economically Lebanon cannot afford to take sides in any regional or international dispute. By observing the current regional situation from the perspective of Lebanon; how can Lebanon determine whether it would side with Syria or Saudi Arabia? It can't. If Lebanon chooses to put itself in the Saudi Arabia camp, Syria will retaliate and decide to close it borders with Lebanon. This will have grave consequences on the Lebanese economy. This will severely hamper land-trade routes with the rest of the Arab world and will significantly slow down domestic economic performance. An example of this was in 2005. Syria shut down borders with Lebanon. This came as a response to Lebanese calls for the end of Syrian military presence in Lebanon. This land blockade hurt the Lebanese economy (National Public Radio (NPC), 2005). On the other hand, if Lebanon surrenders to the attempts of the Syrian regime to align Lebanon's foreign policy with its own, again the Lebanese economy will be in danger. The Lebanese economy is too weak to deal with the reprisals of such move. Saudi Arabia's generous economic aid to the Lebanese government

has assisted in funding numerous infrastructure projects and rebuilding efforts after the numerous wars that Lebanon has witnessed. In addition, losing support that Saudi Arabia provides for the Lebanese exchange rate may threaten to destabilise the economy. For example, following the Hezbollah-Israeli war in 2006, Saudi Arabia pledged US$ 500 million for reconstruction efforts and US$ 1 billion to support the exchange rate (Middle East Financial News, 2006, p.1). Even on international level Lebanon cannot risk aligning itself against or with any great power. With the international community led by the US facing off with Iran's insistence on obtaining nuclear technology again Lebanon cannot risk supporting any of these camps against the other. For example, if the Lebanese government supports the sanctions against Iran this would politically destabilise the country and have negative economic externalities. Iran could simply lead its supporters in Lebanon and especially Hezbollah to block access to the airport and other vital economic infrastructure. Hezbollah has effectively used these tactics to force government to take favourable political action over the past few years. If Lebanon decides to join the anti-US camp under the pressure from domestic political actors such as Hezbollah and its allies it will risk a wide range of international sanctions which would cripple the Lebanese economy. For instance, Lebanon's banking sector would be severely hit under these sanctions (Habib, 2011, p.1). This would cripple the Lebanese economy. This is the current scenario and in whatever future regional or international conflict scenario the Lebanese economy cannot afford having enemies that try to boycott it or undermine it. This is why from an economic perspective neutrality is the model Lebanese foreign policy.

The second reason has to do with the identity of foreign policy outlook of Lebanon. Many nations were established as a result of a common threat. For instance, the cantons that formed the Swiss state were joined together in an alliance against the threat from the German King (Wilner, 2008, p.6). Lebanon, in contrast, was not formed on the basis of a common threat

and the Lebanese populations has since its formation been split over this issue. Prior to the 1943 independence the Lebanese were divided. The Christians saw that the presence of the French mandate as a guarantee for their own security; whereas, the Lebanese Muslims saw the presence of the French army on Lebanese soil as a form of imperialism and foreign occupation. In 1958, the Lebanese Christians feared that the UAR led by Nasser sought to overtake Lebanon and make it part of the UAR. Still, the Lebanese Muslims saw that US influence in the Middle East is again a form of imperialism that undermined all Arab states and had led to the establishment of Israel. In 1975, again the Lebanese Christians regarded the armed Presence of Palestinian groups as a source of threat which made Lebanon a constant target for Israeli attacks. Nonetheless, Lebanese Muslims saw that the armed Presence of the PLO and PLA is vital to defeat Israel and reclaim all occupied Arab land. Currently, even though Israel is considered as a universal enemy for the entire Lebanese population and the Lebanese government, not all perceive it as the primary source of threat. Indeed, the Sunni led March 14 bloc regards that the only reason that Lebanon remains exposed to the Israeli threat is the result of the presence of the armed Hezbollah. The March 14 bloc believes that Hezbollah has turned Lebanon into an Iranian rocket launch base from which it fires at Israel. Hence, Iranian and Syrian influence is the main threat as they allow Lebanon to bear the costs of their conflict with Israel. Instead, the Shiites, Hezbollah, led 8 March Bloc regards US imperialism and Israel presence on the southern borders of Lebanon as a constant source of threat. This threat can only be balanced with the presence of Hezbollah and its military wing with the support of Syria and Iran. This is the result of the different historical experiences that Lebanese groups have witnessed. The Lebanese population that lives near the Southern borders of Lebanon have significantly suffered from the Israeli occupation and frequent military attacks. Their experiences present a constant reminded of the Israeli threat. Meanwhile, other Lebanese who suffered from the Syrian

occupation see that Syria and its regional allies as the main sources of danger. In the face of this conflicting outlook of the Lebanese population the fitting policy is again neutrality. This is the only way for the Lebanese state to appease and deal with the dissimilar perspective of threat.

Finally, the capabilities of the Lebanese state dictate that neutrality is a wise policy for any Lebanese government. The Danish foreign minister who devised neutrality wrote justifying his decision: "foreign policy of a state is dictated by the interests and the limitations of a state" (Holbraad, 1991, p.5). The interests of any state are usually centred on its security and economic prosperity. Thus, how can a state like Lebanon with its capabilities and its limitations achieve both items? The economic side of this was talked about in the first point so here the focus will be on the security of the Lebanese state. It is obvious Lebanon has failed to provide security for its citizens. Both from a realist and liberal methods for security have not been successful in protecting the sovereignty of Lebanon. From a realist perspective a state can ensure its security by improving its offensive and defensive military capabilities relative to other states in order to deter any hostility. Lebanon's industrial capabilities give it no chance of building a military complex that can produce the required technology or material for such a goal. Plus, the nature of the arms market which is dominated by the US also hinders the ability of the Lebanese state to build a strong military force. The US allows state to buy under strict conditions and mostly if that state is an ally. With Lebanon having borders with Israel which could be sources of danger to it, the US is very unlikely to provide the Lebanese army with any advanced arms. Even if Lebanon had access to all military technology its economic limitations will not allow it to afford such a build up. In summary, it is very unlikely that the Lebanese government would be able to build a military force that can be at par with its neighbours Israel and Syria. Another realist security recommendation would for a state either to ally with stronger powers to balance other threats or bandwagon with its

rivals. Both methods would miserably not succeed in protecting Lebanon. Disregarding the fact that both options would undermine the sovereignty of Lebanon, no power on a regional or international level would be expected to bear the costs of protecting Lebanon. Unlike 1958 when the US sent Marines forces to the Lebanese coast to back the government, currently there is no state that can guarantee such drastic and risky measures. Besides, as mentioned above determining which states are rivals and which are not is a problematic for Lebanon. Allying or bandwagoning with a state may deter external threats, but will cause internal rift amongst the Lebanese.

From a liberal perspective cooperation may eliminate perception of threat between states and may lead them to recognize mutual benefit from cooperation. Lebanon was a founding member of both the Arab League and the UN. Economically Lebanon has never blocked access to its markets or trade lines to any state besides Israel. Despite a history of economic and political cooperation Lebanon was still a target for foreign states. Again this is another reason that justifies the need for Lebanon to be recognized as a non-aligned state. Having given the above reasons for neutrality the paper will now define neutrality, determine the appropriate type of neutrality for Lebanon, and finally outline necessary steps for a successful neutral policy.

When a state is neutral it means that it would never take part or be allied with any power or group of powers against another. This means that the state will never accept the principles or ideologies of one side. It can take moderate positions or refuse both sets of ideologies. Next, the state will never take part of any military agreements. Additionally, it will refuse any military assistance from any side. Subsequently, it will refuse at all times provision of military bases on its land (Khalife, 2008, pp.27-28). This definition may imply that a state that is neutral is an isolated state with little role to play in international politics. This perception is inaccurate because a neutral state can play the mediator role. This role could

gain the state great influence and prestige at little cost. A state that is truly neutral to both side of conflict can be trusted to seek peace and compromise at times of hostilities. This state may host peace talks and agreements which would attribute to garner great stature to this state. Notably, neutrality is not a retreat from international politics it is rather a unique way of playing the balance of power game (Holbraad, 1991, p.7). A neutral side seeks to maintain the balance of power between rival states by not taking sides and hence maintain peace. There are two types of neutrality that Lebanon should follow. The first is Benevolent Neutrality (Khalife, 2008, p.33). Accordingly, the official foreign policy of Lebanon would be dictated by neutral principles; nevertheless, the Lebanese state would not deny its citizens the right to express their compassion with foreign nations (2008, p.33). In the Lebanese context, many Lebanese citizens feel sympathy towards Arab causes. As a democratic country Lebanon cannot deny them the right to do so publicly. Yet, any support must not be expressed or acted upon by government officials and must remain at the mass public level. Another type of neutrality that Lebanon must abide by is Armed Neutrality (Khalife 2008, p.29). This is where the neutral state builds up its defensive capabilities to maintain its sovereignty without threatening its neighbours. The Swiss neutrality is based on armed neutrality also, and its army size and capability has helped maintain its security (Khalife, 2008, p.3). Lebanon is positioned in a completely anarchic region and it cannot expect that other states would just simply refrain from seeking any interests they have and not interfere in Lebanon. Lebanon has experienced direct military intervention. For that reason, it would be logical that it would obtain sufficient defensive capabilities to deter any envisions of future attempts.

There are three broad requirement for neutrality to be applied successfully ant they are: 1. End the internal power struggle; 2.The normative-legal requirements; 3. Establishing necessary security infrastructure.

The first step is to end the constant power struggle that Lebanese sects can't escape. As long as one group of Lebanese undermine the state by seeking foreign aid to assist in their political aim the Lebanese state can never apply a coherent foreign policy. Every group that seeks help from other states will help achieve the interests of these external countries at the expense of Lebanese sovereignty. This issue was addressed above and the most appropriate way end this political struggle is through introducing a new political system. This new political system is based on a decentralized system of governance. This system must address the fear each group in Lebanon has regarding the other. Equally, it ought to treat the lack of political representation that many groups in Lebanon suffer from. When the anarchy that dominate Lebanese relations with other becomes controlled under appropriate political system this will allow for a strong government that can establish a foreign policy that represents the interest of the whole nation.

The second step is to get some consensus on the need for a neutral foreign policy. All Lebanese must grasp the rational for neutral policy. Some Lebanese still have misconception in regards to neutral foreign policy. They think of it as isolation from the world; subsequently, Lebanon will lose all significance. This misconception must be addressed by encouraging more intellectual and academic work on the issue. This will help remove any misconception and highlight the benefits of declaring Lebanon a neutral state. The current crisis, like the ones before, will reach a stage where the opposing parties will have to sit and negotiate a new settlement. The first step is to reach a new political system and the other is to reach consent on foreign policy. All Lebanese groups must accept that in light of the capabilities and limits of the Lebanese state.

Finally, Lebanon cannot uphold its neutral status without having a comprehensive defensive strategy. It is not sufficient for Lebanon to declare itself as a non-aligned state. International and regional powers will not just suddenly refrain from seeking their interests in Lebanon.

Deterrence can only be achieved if Lebanon obtained sufficient defensive capabilities to increase the cost of military intervention. As outlined above it is unlikely that Lebanon can significantly improve its conventional military capacity. The reason is that it cannot afford to and if it did it is unlikely that it will be granted access to advanced conventional technologies. This also rules out any nuclear option as well. Still, there is an efficient way to achieve substantial defensive measures that have proved successful in Lebanon's modern history. Lebanon must resort to non-conventional strategies to be able to protect its sovereignty. This non-conventional defensive system should be based on a mixed guerrilla-conventional force. If we consider two periods of main military intervention we can see how effective guerrilla warfare has been. For instance, despite the overwhelming Syrian military forces which entered Lebanon, they faced costly resistance. From 1978 until early 1990s the Syrian army faced heavy and successful resistance from Christian forces which inflicted heavy costs upon the Syrian army. The Syrian army was only successful in fully taking control over Lebanon after inter Christian-Christian conflict weakened Christian forces. Besides, regional interests that rewarded Syria for its involvement in the Gulf War gave it cover to successfully use Air forces to undermine the Christian armed forces. Another example of successful guerrilla defence strategy has been the ongoing resistance by Hezbollah against Israel. This resistance was successful in leading to the Israeli withdrawal in 2000 from Lebanon (Harriman & Talbot, 2008, p.29). Hezbollah proved successful again in holding Israel land advance into Lebanon in 2006. An argument can be put forward claiming that the losses suffered by Israel materially and morally have deterred Israel from attempting another intervention. It can be argued that Israel is unsure of the outcomes of another war despite that the balance of power is extremely in its favour. Guerrilla warfare has proven in many examples that it can undermine powerful armies (Meron, 2003).

To establish an armed neutral policy, it is necessary for all non-government armed groups to be disarmed. Nonetheless, the Lebanese government and defence forces can take lessons from the above military experiences. It would be appropriate for the military command in Lebanon to study the possibility of creating units that are specialised in guerrilla warfare and take positions appropriately on the borders. These forces could deter any attempt of invasion since experience has showed that these types of forces have been successful. Plus, with the support and coordination with conventional forces these forces can be extremely valuable.

Conclusion

Drastic policy measures must be introduced in order to address the repeated political precariousness that Lebanon has faced, since its establishment, in response to regional and international competition. One is to re-assess the political system that governs the relationship amongst Lebanese. Lebanon's current political system has failed in successfully upholding peaceful relationship between different Lebanese groups. A new political system is required, one that can fairly represent everyone. It can satisfy the appetite of powerful groups for power. At the same time it must be able to lessen the fears of weaker groups and guarantee basic political and economic rights. This balance can be acquired through a decentralised system.

Another major policy measure is introducing non-alignment as Lebanon's official policy. Lebanese differ on foreign relations outlook. Some sympathise with certain causes while others fear them. This has to the nature of suspicion that Lebanese have towards the other. A neutral foreign policy will give each the right to have sympathy towards international struggles or humanitarian plights. It will also mean that the government will not take sides in any conflict. This is the appropriate measure since it will not lead to any internal dissident.

Only when the Lebanese state takes sides, certain Lebanese groups will feel betrayed and unrepresented.

Conclusion – Putting an End to the Cycle of Death

Over and Over Again

Lebanon has endured a never ending cycle of crisis that has resulted in a large sum of losses. Despite enjoying economic and cultural prosperity during times of internal stability, Lebanon fails and conflict amongst the Lebanese takes place. This conflict is in large due to regional tensions that are released inside of Lebanon. The puzzling phenomenon is: why have other Middle Eastern states managed enjoy stability and sovereignty, whereas Lebanon fails to? This is a problem that this paper has attempted to identify and propose potential solutions to overcome it. Instead of looking at the motives of other states for interference; it did so by addressing the inherent weakness of the Lebanese state. The inherent weaknesses were identified through the content gathered through the major crises in the history of Lebanon that were triggered by the involvement of foreign countries.

In 1958, the Middle East witness competition between Egypt, supported by the Soviet Union, and the US and its regional allies. At the same time Lebanon was experiencing internal difficulties as many Lebanese felt they were politically undermined by the dominance of the Lebanese Maronites. Also, President Chamoun's decision to align Lebanon with the US in fear of President Nasser's influence; alienated Lebanese that were compassionate to the Arab movement. The regional competition and the Lebanese state failure synchronized together and conflict in Lebanon erupted; as opposing Lebanese groups received support from foreign sources.

Again in 1975, with the emergence of the Palestinians armed resistance and the threat it presented to Israel and other Arab regimes, the Middle East was full with inconsistencies. Lebanon was still experiencing the same scramble for power between different groups; and

conflict over the foreign policy identity of Lebanon only complicated the relationship between the Lebanese. Foreign states aided different Lebanese groups economically and militarily. The Lebanese scene attracted the incongruities of the region. Regional and it played out in Lebanon and a renewed civil war took place.

Despite the introduction of the Ta'if Agreement that ended the 1975 war; recently, in May 2008, Hezbollah attacked the Sunni part of Beirut marking a new crisis in Lebanon. The regional hostility between the US and its moderate Arab states allies and Iran supported by Syria and non-state actors such as Hamas and Hezbollah has contributed to this. It has achieved that only because Lebanese remain in fear of each other. The Sunnis, who have most influence constitutionally, see that Hezbollah's internal goal is to take over the central government. In contrast, Hezbollah feel that they as representatives of the Shiite community deserve a greater role in decision making. In regards to foreign relations, there is a great divide over the appropriate defence strategy of Lebanon. Further, the Lebanese are split in their support for foreign players. The Shiites are fans of the Iranian-Syrian continued support of armed insurgency against Israel; while, the Sunnis are supporters of the Moderate Sunni Arab approach for political settlement with Israel to end the conflict. Regional states that have a stake in Lebanon have shored up their Lebanese allies through monetary and military supplies. This is bringing to the edge of another spiral of internal bloodbath.

All the above examples support the argument that Lebanon's problem lies in the political system and foreign policy. This paper proposed a new political system based on a decentralised power sharing system. This will severely reduce power competition and give each groups sufficient political representation. In regards foreign policy, Lebanon must adopt a neutral stance to satisfy all Lebanese groups. This can be effectively achieved by achieving consensus amongst Lebanese and implementing an effective defensive strategy to deter foreign threats. There is an attempt to suggest the Lebanon is a unique state where so many

religious groups co-exist in one common country; therefore it is only natural for its people to share animosity. This is untrue there are other states that are as much diverse as Lebanon and they all seem to function effectively. Many of these states have adopted the recommendation this paper has put forward. I believe that if these changes are introduced, Lebanon can be effectively shielded from the anarchic power struggle in the region.

Contribution and Future Directions

This paper does not attempt to offer a grand theory but rather lays focus to the Lebanese case. The main object that this paper can hope to achieve, is to shift academic debate around Lebanon towards discussing the solutions required to solve the Lebanese problem. This paper has identified a pattern that explains repeated foreign intervention in Lebanon. More significantly, after diagnosing the problem it has presented and justified solutions that may resolve the Lebanese problem. However, currently with the instability being faced by numerous Arab states due to the uprisings that are taking place, the political systems are being challenged in each country. All these systems are autocratic and centralised. Hence, it could be possible that as these states begin to experience greater foreign exposure; a claim could be made that the political system problem could be applied to other Arab countries.

Future research can address in greater length the solutions this paper put forward. A more detailed account of the decentralised system can be outlined. This would include a specific design of the shape and nature of the decentralised political system. It will determine how power is distributed between all layers of government.

Another interesting area I believe that need to be dealt with in more depth is the area of Lebanese security. It is important to look for how a small country such as Lebanon, with the limitations it suffers from, establish a military complex that can defend it from external threats.

Further areas of research can look at means in which neutral policy can become universally accepted amongst the Lebanese relationship. Achieving this requires certain policies from government, such as educational and propaganda efforts that can inform the public of its benefits.

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