

# CRS Issue Brief for Congress

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## Lebanon

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## Lebanon

### SUMMARY

The United States and Lebanon continue to enjoy good relations. Prominent current issues between the United States and Lebanon include progress toward a Lebanon-Israel peace treaty, U.S. aid to Lebanon, and Lebanon's capacity to stop Hizballah militia attacks on Israel. The United States supports Lebanon's independence and favored the end of Israeli and Syrian occupation of parts of Lebanon. Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon on May 23, 2000, and three recent withdrawals have reduced the Syrian military presence from 30,000 to 16,000.

A large Lebanese-American community follows U.S.-Lebanon relations closely. Presidents Eisenhower and Reagan said the United States had "vital" interests in Lebanon, but others might describe U.S. interests in Lebanon as less than vital. At the invitation of the Lebanese government, the United States intervened in Lebanon to defend Lebanese sovereignty in 1958 and 1982. In a Beirut terror bombing in October 1983, 241 U.S. armed forces personnel died. From 1987 until July 1997, the United States banned travel to Lebanon because of the threat of kidnaping and dangers from the ongoing civil war.

Lebanon is rebuilding after the 1975-1990 civil war. According to estimates, more than 100,000 people died, another 200,000 were wounded, 250,000 emigrated to avoid the fighting, and as many as one-third of the 3 million population were refugees in the Lebanon civil war. Syrian armed forces, invited into Lebanon in 1976 to prevent a Muslim attack on the Christians, continue to oc-

cupy the northern and eastern parts of the country. Israeli forces invaded southern Lebanon in 1982 and occupied a 10-mile-wide strip along the Israel-Lebanon border until May 23, 2000.

Lebanon's government is based in part on a 1943 agreement that called for a Maronite Christian President, a Sunni Muslim Prime Minister, and a Shia Muslim Speaker of the National Assembly, and stipulated that the National Assembly seats and civil service jobs be distributed according to a ratio of 6 Christians to 5 Muslims. On August 21, 1990, the Lebanon National Assembly adopted the "Taif" reforms (named after the Saudi Arabian city where they were negotiated). The parliament was increased to 128 to be divided evenly between Christians and Muslim-Druze, presidential authority was decreased, and the Speaker's and the Prime Minister's authority was increased. President Ilyas Hirawi signed the constitutional amendment implementing the reforms on September 21, 1990.

Lebanon held elections for the National Assembly in 1992 and again in 1996. In the 1996 election, the extreme left and the extreme right lost to moderates, but the moderate victory also was a victory for Syria, which supported moderate, and not extremist, candidates. Speaker Birri and Prime Minister Hariri each controlled blocs of about 20 seats. The National Assembly elected Emile Lahud President on October 15, 1998.

Other CRS reports on Lebanon include CRS Issue Brief IB92075, *Syria: U.S. Relations and Bilateral Issues*.

## **MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

A road-side bomb killed an Israeli officer near the Shibaa farms area along the Israel-Lebanon boundary on January 9, 2005. Israel launched air and tank strikes in retaliation, killing a Hizballah fighter and a French officer serving with the United Nations Observers. Israel claimed the U.N. vehicle was not marked, but the U.N. said the officers were wearing blue helmets and riding in a white U.N. vehicle with U.N. markings.

## **BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS**

### **United States and Lebanon**

#### **U.S.-Lebanon Issues**

The United States has encouraged the reconciliation and rebuilding of Lebanon since the 1990 end of the 15-year civil war. There are several other issues between the United States and Lebanon, in addition to rebuilding.

**Peace Process.** The United States favors a Lebanon-Israel peace treaty. Both Lebanon and Israel agreed to a peace settlement in May 1983, under the tutelage of U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, but Lebanon later abrogated the agreement under Syrian pressure. Lebanon participated in the Madrid peace conference in October 1991, but it was widely understood that Lebanon and Israel would not sign a peace agreement unless and until Syria and Israel had resolved their differences. The Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported on January 10, 1997, that Israel and Lebanon had agreed to a framework for a peace treaty in 1994, but the agreement was linked to a Syrian-Israeli resolution of the Golan Heights issue. Israel and Lebanon accept their common boundary drawn by the French and British in 1922-1923. The primary issue separating Israel and Lebanon had been the 1982 Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, but Israel withdrew in May 2000. A Lebanon-Israel peace agreement will follow an Israeli-Syrian agreement.

**Lebanon-Israel Border Clashes.** The Lebanon-Israel border has been the scene of frequent incidents between the Israeli Defense Forces and the Israeli-supported militia, the South Lebanon Army, on one side and various Lebanese and Palestinian militias on the other side. In the past, the clashes usually involved Lebanese or Palestinian rockets launched at Israeli towns, shooting incidents that targeted Israeli military installations or patrols, mines set along roadsides that were triggered as Israeli vehicles passed, and infiltration attempts. The Israelis launched artillery, aerial, or naval bombardments and armored incursions at suspected guerrilla strongholds. Often, civilians on both sides were the targets of the attacks.

The most recent Israeli-Lebanese exchanges have involved Hizballah rocket attacks on Israeli posts near Shib'a farms and Israeli air and artillery attacks on Hizballah sites and Lebanese villages (Hizballah is a predominantly Shia Muslim militia and political party). Israel claims the Shib'a farms area is Syrian territory, and the Lebanese claim the area

belongs to Lebanon and that Israel should withdraw. (See CRS Report RL31078, *The Shib'a Farms Dispute and its Implications*.)

**The Travel Ban.** On July 1, 1985, following the hijacking of TWA flight 847 one month earlier, President Ronald Reagan issued Executive Determination 85-14 prohibiting U.S. airlines from flying to Lebanon, prohibiting airlines from ticketing passengers to Lebanon, and prohibiting Lebanese aircraft from landing in the United States. On January 28, 1987, following the kidnapping of three U.S. citizens and one U.S. resident alien, Secretary of State George Shultz banned U.S. citizens from traveling to Lebanon. On 25 October 1995, the United States reversed one of the 1985 prohibitions, and allowed U.S. citizens with waivers to purchase airline tickets to Lebanon. Upon application, the Department of State could waive the ban and allow U.S. citizens to travel to Lebanon if the applicants were journalists, Red Cross workers, visiting critically ill family members, or pursuing U.S. national interests.

On July 30, 1997, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright announced that the travel ban would not be extended for another six months. U.S. citizens using U.S. passports were free to travel to Lebanon. On June 19, 1998, President Clinton lifted the airline ticket ban, allowing persons in the United States to purchase airline tickets to Beirut. The ban on U.S. airlines flying to Beirut and on Lebanese airlines flying to the United States remains in force.

## U.S. Interests

On July 15, 1958, President Eisenhower told Congress that he had deployed U.S. Armed Forces to assist the Lebanese army in maintaining order in the face of a possible internal rebellion because Lebanon had "...been deemed vital to United States national interests and world peace." (Public Papers of the Presidents, 1958, p. 550-551) On October 24, 1983, the day after 241 U.S. Armed Forces personnel were killed by a terrorist bombing in Beirut, President Reagan said "...We have vital interests in Lebanon... ." (Public Papers of the Presidents, 1983, vol. II, p. 1501) Some would agree with the two Presidents that a friendly and independent Lebanon is "vital" to U.S. interests. But others might disagree and suggest that the Eisenhower and Reagan comments reflected the crisis atmospheres in which they acted and that U.S.-Lebanon ties are more cultural than strategic.

The U.S. interests to which the two Presidents referred do not include conditions often associated with "vital" interests: the tangible ties of military bases, oil fields, international waterways, industrial strength, major trading ties, or allied military might. Rather, U.S. interests in Lebanon stem from the ties of the Lebanese-American community (a majority of Arab-Americans are of Lebanese origin), Lebanon's pro-Western (and during the "cold war" anti-communist) orientation, U.S.-Lebanon cultural ties dating back to the early 19th century, Lebanon's requests for U.S. assistance against stronger regional neighbors, Lebanon's democratic and Christian experience, and Lebanon's role as a frequent interlocutor among the Arab nations.

Maintaining Lebanon's independence is a primary U.S. interest. The United States has opposed and continues to oppose foreign occupation of Lebanon, including the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon from June 1982 to May 2000, the autonomous actions of the Palestinian guerrilla movement from the early 1970s through 1982, and the Syrian occupation from 1975 to the present. The United States also is concerned that a lingering

Iranian influence among anti-Israeli guerrillas and Hizballah, the Lebanese Shia Muslim militia and political movement, will diminish Lebanon's independence.

## U.S. Policy Toward Lebanon

The United States has enjoyed good diplomatic relations with Lebanon and has supported Lebanon's political independence. In July 1958, the United States sent 14,300 U.S. Army and Marine personnel to Lebanon to support the government in resisting a radical seizure of the country. During the civil war period beginning in 1975, the United States expressed its concern over the fighting, violence, and destruction of the country, and provided emergency economic aid for the Lebanese people and military training and equipment for the Lebanese Armed Forces. The United States supported the various efforts to arrange cease-fires to end the civil war. U.S. Ambassador Philip Habib's peace mission following the 1982 Israeli invasion ended one phase of the fighting and led to the Israeli withdrawal. As a part of the withdrawal agreement, the United States sent 2,000 Marines to join the French, Italian, and British contingents in the MultiNational Force (MNF). Secretary of State George Shultz negotiated a peace agreement between Lebanon and Israel in May 1983, but the agreement was abrogated by Lebanon in March 1984 under Syrian and internal Lebanese pressure.

In October 1989, the United States supported the Arab League-sponsored Taif meeting (see *The "Taif" Reforms, 1989*, below) and supported the governmental reforms, disarming the militias, and the withdrawal of foreign forces incorporated in the Taif agreement. The United States encouraged Lebanon's participation in the 1991 Madrid peace conference and in the subsequent negotiations (although Lebanon acceded to Syrian pressure and has not participated in the continuing multilateral and bilateral talks). The United States is a member of the five nation force monitoring compliance with the April 26, 1996 Israeli-Hizballah agreement to avoid civilians and limit the Israeli-Hizballah confrontation to military targets. The agreement was negotiated by the United States.

**U.S. Assistance for Lebanon.** The Administration requested \$32 million in economic assistance, \$700,000 in International Military Education and Training, and \$2.3 million in emergency response funds for Lebanon for FY2005. H.R. 4818, the omnibus appropriations bill, earmarks \$35 million for Lebanon, of which \$4 million is for educational institutions. (See **Table 2**, below.)

**Other Events in U.S.-Lebanon Relations.** On April 18, 1983, a truck bomb destroyed the U.S. Embassy in west Beirut, killing 63 people, 17 of whom were U.S. citizens, and wounding another 100 people, 40 of whom were U.S. citizens. On October 23, 1983, a truck bomb killed 220 U.S. Marine, 18 U.S. Navy, and 3 U.S. Army personnel in a Beirut airport building used as U.S. MNF headquarters and barracks. On December 12, 1983, a truck bomb exploded in the U.S. embassy compound in Kuwait, killing 6 people, none of them U.S. citizens. The incident appeared to be related to the U.S. presence in Lebanon. In February 1984, the MNF, including the U.S. contingent, left Beirut because it became obvious that Lebanon's government was not able to extend its control over Lebanese affairs. During the 16-month tour, 265 members of the U.S. MNF contingent were killed. The United States lost prestige in the Middle East because many Arabs believed the United States abandoned its commitment to Lebanon by withdrawing the MNF before the Lebanese government was ready to assert its authority over the country. On September 20, 1984, a

truck bomb killed 20 people, 2 of whom were U.S. military personnel, at the U.S. Embassy annex in Awkar, north-east of Beirut.

In addition, between 1982 and 1988, 18 U.S. citizens were kidnapped and held hostage, most of them by pro-Iranian Lebanese. Fifteen of the U.S. hostages escaped or were released, and 3, Peter Kilburn, William Higgins, and William Buckley, were killed while in captivity.

## **Role of Congress**

On July 1, 1993, the U.S. Senate passed by voice vote S.Con.Res. 28, which stated that Syria had violated the Taif Agreements (see below) by not withdrawing from Lebanon in September 1992, urged an immediate Syrian withdrawal, and called upon the President to continue withholding aid and support for Syria.

The House of Representatives added an amendment to the State Department Authorization bill, Section 863 of H.R. 1646, in mid-May 2001, which would have cut \$600,000 in International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds to Lebanon unless Lebanon deployed its armed forces to the border with Israel. Section 863 also called upon the President to present a plan to Congress to cut ESF funds if Lebanon did not deploy within six months.

Section 1224 of P.L. 107-228, the Security Assistance Act of 2002, stated that \$10 million of the funds available for FY2003 and subsequent years could not be obligated until the President certified to Congress that Lebanese Armed Forces had deployed to the internationally recognized Lebanon-Israel border and that Lebanon was asserting its authority over the border area. The amendment (popularly called the “Lantos Amendment” after its initial sponsor) was added to compel Lebanon to exercise control over the border area, displacing Hizballah forces. Lebanon refused to move to the border until Israel evacuated the Shabaa Farms disputed area. As of March 2004, Lebanese forces had not moved into the border area. According to unconfirmed sources, the \$10 million was held in an escrow account pending negotiations among the United States, Israel, Lebanon, and Members of Congress.

On December 12, 2003, President Bush signed H.R. 1828 (P.L. 108-175), which directs the President to apply economic and diplomatic sanctions to Syria if Syria does not offer an immediate commitment to withdraw from Lebanon. H.R. 1828 also calls upon the Lebanese armed forces to occupy all areas of Lebanon. Lebanon has refused to send its forces along the southern border with Israel until Israel withdraws from the Shib’a farms area.

## **Lebanon’s Political Profile**

The “National Covenant,” an unwritten agreement negotiated among Lebanese political leaders in 1943, provided for the President to be a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister to be a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of the Chamber of Deputies (renamed the National Assembly in 1979) to be a Shia Muslim. The National Covenant also provided that parliament seats and civil service jobs be distributed on the basis of 6 Christians to 5

Muslims (including Druze, a separate religious group often associated with Islam). The President usually selects cabinet ministers to reflect the balance among Lebanon's religious communities distributing the portfolios among the Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Sunni, Shia, and Druze. The Christian-to-Muslim job ratio and the confessional assignment of government positions was based on the population as determined in the 1932 census.

According to the 1926 constitution, the people elect the parliament, the parliament elects a President, and the President selects a Prime Minister and between 18 and 25 members of the cabinet, which then must receive a vote of confidence from the parliament. The President, serving a six-year, non-renewable term, does not have to win votes of confidence. The President may propose laws, is responsible for implementing laws, but may delay implementing laws passed by parliament by demanding additional debate, adjourning parliament, or calling for new elections.

National Assembly deputies are elected for four-year terms representing electoral districts. The total number and religious affiliations of deputies from each district are determined by the population of the district. All voters vote for all candidates regardless of the voter's or the candidate's religion. The National Assembly elected in 1972 was composed of 53 Christians, 45 Muslim and Druze, and 1 to represent other minorities. The civil war that began in 1975 delayed the 1976 election until August/September 1992.

## **Civil War, 1975-1990**

A 1975 Christian attack on a Palestinian refugee community triggered the 15-year civil war. At stake in the civil war was control over the political process and the opportunity to dictate the permanent form of Lebanon's government. The Lebanese government requested Syrian forces in 1976 to protect the rightist/Christian enclave from being overrun by leftist/Muslim forces. Later, the Arab League approved the Syrian intervention, and armed forces from several Arab states joined the Syrians in the Arab League's "Arab Deterrent Force." The others withdrew by the late 1980s, and only the Syrian force remains in Lebanon today. The fighting involved several political party militias, the Lebanese Armed Forces (the government army), and many of the Palestinian guerrilla groups. Lebanese militias tied to political parties or to ethnic-religious factions fought among themselves for dominance over their wing of the political spectrum, and then led their amalgamated force against the other political forces within Lebanon. For example, the militia of the Maronite Christian Phalange party dominated by the Jumayyil family, defeated its fellow Maronite and conservative rival the National Liberal party led by the Shamun family in 1980. The two armies then joined forces against common foes. Or in another example, the leftist Shia Muslim Hizballah defeated another leftist Shia Muslim group, the Amal party, in early 1989. Later, Hizballah and Amal formed a political alliance to run in the 1992 elections.

From 1975 to 1990, the civil war killed approximately 100,000, wounded 200,000, left another 100,000 permanently disabled, and forced 250,000 into exile. (There are no accurate data, no breakdown by year, community, sex, etc., for the casualties.) It is estimated that as many as one-third of Lebanon's 3 million people have been war refugees at one time or another. Damage to Beirut and other cities is estimated in the billions of dollars.



## The “Taif” Reforms, 1989

On August 18, 1988, the Lebanese National Assembly did not muster the 51-member quorum needed to elect a successor to President Amin Jumayyil, whose six-year term expired on September 23, 1988. On most occasions in the past, political leaders and National Assembly deputies agreed beforehand on the candidate for President, making the actual National Assembly election little more than a ceremony formalizing what had been decided in the inner circles of Lebanese politics. But, in 1988, the various political leaders could not agree on a candidate for president and many of the Christian deputies boycotted the Assembly session. A few moments before his term expired on September 23, 1988, outgoing President Jumayyil appointed Army Commander-in-Chief General Michel Awn to be the prime minister. General Awn named five other army officers to serve with him in the cabinet, a Greek Orthodox, a Greek Catholic, a Druze, a Sunni Muslim, and a Shia Muslim. The Muslim and Druze officers refused to serve in the Awn cabinet because Awn was a Christian (a transgression of the National Covenant that called for a Sunni Prime Minister) and because the existing cabinet, under Sunni Muslim Prime Minister Salim al-Huss, had not resigned. Al-Huss appointed General Sami al-Khatib to be the interim Lebanon Armed Forces (LAF) Commander-in-Chief.

On October 18, 1988, the National Assembly failed to elect a new Speaker who would preside over the Assembly session that would elect a new president, providing the politicians had agreed upon a candidate. Lebanon had no President, two Prime Ministers and two cabinets, two army Commanders-in-Chief and a divided army, a National Assembly 13 years overdue for elections, two interim speakers but no permanent speaker of the National Assembly, and no immediate prospect of reconvening the parliament for an attempt to resolve the situation. The government was in a stalemate.

In September 1989, after nine months of consultations, an Arab League committee secured a cease-fire and an agreement for a National Assembly meeting to be held in Taif, Saudi Arabia, to discuss governmental reforms. On September 30, 1989, 62 members of the Lebanese parliament met in Taif to begin discussions of government reforms. On October 22, 1989, the Deputies agreed to a reform plan that raised the number of seats in the National Assembly from 99 up to 108, evenly divided between Christians and Muslim/Druze, left appointment of the Prime Minister to the parliament, called for disbanding and disarming the militias, and included a statement that Syria would begin troop withdrawal discussions within two years. The National Assembly Deputies elected a new Speaker, Husayn al-Husayni, and President, Rene Muawwad, and approved the reform package on November 5, 1989, at a meeting in al-Qulayat in north Lebanon. On November 20, 1989, President Muawwad appointed Salim al-Huss to be Prime Minister, and named a 14-member cabinet. On November 22, 1989, President Muawwad was assassinated by a car bomb as he left Lebanese Independence Day ceremonies in West Beirut. On November 24, the Deputies met in Shtawra to elect Ilyas al-Hirawi as the new President. Al-Hirawi named Salim al-Huss to be the Prime Minister and General Emile Lahud to be Army Commander-in-Chief. Awn, besieged at the Presidential palace, refused to recognize the new President.

On August 21, 1990, 48 of 51 National Assembly deputies meeting in Beirut approved the Taif reforms. President Hirawi signed the constitutional amendment on September 21, 1990, implementing the reforms, but many Christian leaders and General Awn opposed the reform. On October 13, 1990, Syrian forces drove General Awn out of the Presidential palace

and into the French embassy where he was granted political asylum. Awn's departure appeared to end the two-year stalemate, and open the way for the reform government under President Hirawi to take full control of the government of Lebanon.

## Political Dynamics

Lebanese groups have developed political parties along religious, geographical, ethnic, ideological, foreign affiliation, or other lines. In general, Christian groups are more conservative and better organized. The leading Christian parties (all led by Maronite Christians) are the Phalange, previously led by the Jumayyil family, the National Bloc, led by the Iddi family, the National Liberal Party, led by the Shamun family, and the Maradah, led by the Franjiyah family. Leading Muslim parties are the Shia Muslim Amal, the Shia Hizballah, the Sunni Independent Nasirite Movement, and the Progressive Socialist Party (primarily composed of Druze). Another party, the Syrian National Socialist Party (favors union with Syria), is predominantly Muslim although it has had some Greek Orthodox leaders. Political parties form alliances and coalitions, usually temporary and subject to shifting issues, foreign influence, and personality clashes. Many of the political parties or other groups have armed militias for protection. In 1975, an incident between Palestinians and Phalangist Christians triggered a civil war that pitted conservatives against liberals and Muslims against Christians, and opened Lebanon to foreign intervention.

In recent years, the Lebanese political community also divided between the old guard elites who practiced politics under the traditional family-led parties, and younger, modern reformers or dissidents who formed political blocs based more on issues and ideologies. For example, the Phalange (traditionally conservative Maronite Christian) separated into factions, one led by George Saadeh and maintaining its allegiance to the Jumayyil family in the traditional manner; another following a Jumayyil lieutenant, Samir Jaja, who broke away in a personality and power struggle to form the Lebanese Forces; and a third, the Al-Wad party of Eli Hubayqah, who broke away from Jaja. (Jaja is in prison for murder and Hubayqah was assassinated in January 2002.) Similarly, dissident leaders of Amal, the Shia Muslim party, broke away to form the more radical Movement of the Deprived, and another radical faction broke away to form the Islamic Amal group. Hizballah, which started as a branch of an Iranian religious group, was associated with hostage seizures and terrorism and was involved in a two-year war with Amal vying for control of Lebanon's Shia Muslims. Hizballah and Amal resolved their differences and formed an alliance for the 1992 elections, with the coalition winning enough seats to dominate the Shia Muslim bloc in the new Parliament. Amal and Hizballah formed a similar alliance in the 1996 election, but Hizballah lost ground, dropping from 8 members and four supporters in 1992 to 7 members and two supporters in 1996. Hizballah supporters claimed 12 seats in the 2000 elections.

**Lebanon's Population.** The estimates of Lebanon's population were taken from Lebanon's Political Mosaic, published by the Directorate of Intelligence of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, NES 92-10020, LDA 92-13537, August 1992. There has been no census in Lebanon since 1932. Not all Lebanese agree with the CIA figures cited, and some maintain that the Christian communities are understated.

**Table 1. Population Estimates, 1991**

	Number	Percent
Shia Muslim	1,140,000	38%
Sunni Muslim	690,000	23%
Maronite Christian	600,000	20%
Other Christian	360,000	12%
Druze	210,000	7%
Total	3,000,000	100%

### 1992, 1996, and 2000 Elections

Beginning in mid-July 1992, several Maronite leaders opined that the elections tentatively scheduled for September 1992 should be delayed until after Syria agreed to withdraw troops from Beirut. (The Taif agreement called for Lebanese-Syrian withdrawal discussions and National Assembly elections two years after the accords were ratified, which occurred on September 21, 1990.) The Maronites believed that the Syrian military presence would intimidate voters and would extend the Syrian occupation of Lebanon. Syrian officials said the elections should go on as scheduled, and that Syria would not withdraw from Beirut in the near future even if the withdrawal discussions were held. The Maronites announced an election boycott and called for general strikes on the election days. Many, but not all, Maronites running for office withdrew their names, and most Maronites stayed away from the polls.

The Maronite strategy appeared to backfire. The elections went on as scheduled despite the Maronite boycott, and enough candidates and voters broke ranks with the mainstream Maronites to elect the necessary number of Christians to the National Assembly. In the end, more pro-Syrian Deputies were elected than would have been the case if the mainstream Maronites had remained in the race.

The newly elected National Assembly met as scheduled on October 20, and elected Amal leader Nabbi Birri to be the Speaker of the Parliament. On October 22, 1992, following consultations with National Assembly members and Speaker Birri, President Hrawi named Rafiq al-Hariri to be Prime Minister. Hariri named a 30-member cabinet on October 31, consisting of a mix of new technocrats and old line politicians, and a mix of Maronites, Greek Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Armenians, Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims, and Druze. Prime Minister Hariri said the cabinet's first task would be restoring the economy.

The Maronites did participate in the 1996 elections, despite some pro-Syrian and pro-Muslim manipulating of the voter districts. The National Assembly passed an election law on July 11, 1996, that named the five provinces as election districts, but subdivided Mount Lebanon into six sub-districts. Ten Assembly members petitioned the Constitutional Court claiming the election law violated the constitutional principle of equality among Lebanese, and the Court upheld their petition. A second law passed on August 13 was

similar to the first, but stipulated that the law would apply only to the 1996 election. Members failed to acquire the necessary ten signatures on a petition to challenge the new law, and the elections were held as scheduled with Mount Lebanon as the only subdivided district. Pro-Syrian forces and the Druze realized the political advantage from the manipulated voting district because the Druze were assured election in the smaller sub-districts. Voter turn out was about 44% over the five Sundays on which the election was held. As a result of the election, National Assembly Speaker Nabbi Birri and Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri each controlled their own blocs of about 20 seats each. For the most part, the delegates elected in 1996 were pro-Syrian moderates. Syria did not support extremists from the left or right. Hizballah won seven seats, a drop from the nine seats it won in 1992.

The 2000 elections were held on August 26 for the 63 seats representing Mount Lebanon and the north and on September 3 for the 65 seats representing Beirut, the Bekaa, and the south. Despite their political differences, President Lahud named former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri to form a new government. Hariri's 30-man cabinet won a vote of confidence on October 23, 2000.

## Foreign Presence in Lebanon

### Syria

Up to 20,000 of the 35,000 Syrian military troops who entered Lebanon in March 1976 in response to President Fanjijah's appeal to protect the Christians continue to occupy the north above Tripoli, the Beqaa Valley north of the town of Rashayah, and the Beirut-Damascus highway. Between May 1988 and June 2001, Syrian forces occupied most of west Beirut. (Syrian forces did not venture south of a "red line" running east and west across Lebanon near Rashayah. South of the line was considered Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) operating area.) In October 1990, Syrian tanks and infantry surrounded the Baabda presidential palace in east Beirut where General Awn had been besieged since September 1989. On October 13, Syrian aircraft bombed and strafed the palace, causing General Awn to flee to the French embassy where he sought asylum.

In October 1989, as part of the Taif agreements, Syria agreed to begin discussions on possible Syrian troop withdrawals from Beirut to the Beqaa Valley two years after political reforms were implemented (President Hirawi signed the reforms in September 1990), and to withdraw entirely from Lebanon after an Israeli withdrawal. The withdrawal discussions, which should have started in September 1992, have not yet begun, in part because the Lebanese government said it needed more time to establish its authority over the country. Syrian officials maintain that they are waiting for the Lebanese government to complete rebuilding the army and police forces and assume security responsibilities in Lebanon before beginning the withdrawal discussions.

Syria and Lebanon signed a treaty of brotherhood, cooperation, and coordination in May 1991, which calls for creating several joint committees that will coordinate policies. Some observers speculate that the treaty will lead to Syrian domination (if not outright annexation) of Lebanon, while others believe the treaty will enhance Syrian-Lebanese cooperation without affecting Lebanese independence.

Observers speculate that Syria wants to maintain influence over Lebanon and Lebanese affairs, particularly foreign and defense matters, to maintain the historical connection between Syria and Lebanon, to protect Lebanon as a center for Syrian trade and business, to ensure Lebanese support for Syrian positions in Arab councils, to deny Israel influence over Lebanon, and to use Lebanon as a buffer against Israeli encroachment. Syria cultivates relations with several Lebanese factions, including the National Syrian Socialist Party that advocates a "Greater Syria," the Shia Muslim Amal group (Shia Muslims are the plurality in Lebanon), the Druze and the Progressive Socialist Party (Lebanese Druze want to retain access to the Syrian Druze community), and the Franjijah-led Maronite Christians of northern Lebanon to counter other Maronite forces. In contrast, other Lebanese factions, led primarily by Maronite Christians, are becoming more vocal in advocating a Syrian withdrawal.

Beginning June 14, 2001, 6,000 Syrian armed forces personnel withdrew from Beirut, along with tanks and armored personnel carriers, and returned to Syria. About 20,000 Syrian forces remained in northern and eastern Lebanon. It was not clear why the Syrian forces withdrew: some speculated that the movement was part of a secret quid pro quo with Israel; others speculated that Syria feared conflict with Israeli forces; others speculated that the Syrian forces were needed in Damascus to protect the regime. Another 4,000 Syrian troops withdrew in March 2003.

## **Israel**

On March 14, 1978, Israel invaded and occupied Lebanese territory south of the Litani River, to destroy Palestinian bases that Israel believed were the source of attacks against Israelis. Israeli forces withdrew on June 13, 1978, after the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was placed south of the Litani to serve as a buffer between Israel and the Palestinians (U.N.S.C. Resolution 425, March 19, 1978). Israeli forces again invaded Lebanon on June 6, 1982. The IDF overran the UNIFIL positions, occupied southern Lebanon, defeated Syrian forces in the southern Beqaa, laid siege to Beirut, and killed approximately 20,000 Lebanese and Palestinians. Israeli forces withdrew in three stages, completing the primary withdrawal in June 1985. About 1,000 Israeli troops, in cooperation with the 2,000-3,000 man South Lebanon Army, patrolled the "security zone," the 10-mile-wide strip along the Lebanon-Israel border that the Israelis held since the 1982 invasion. Israel continued its air and artillery retaliation against Palestinian and Lebanese armed forces that attack IDF and South Lebanon Army positions.

Between 1978 and 2000, Israel lost 900 soldiers killed in Lebanon and the SLA lost 400 killed; about 2,100 Palestinian and Lebanese guerrillas and 21,000 Lebanese civilians have died in clashes with the IDF and the SLA. Following an Israeli cabinet vote on March 5, 2000, the IDF began withdrawing in mid-May 2000, intending to leave the SLA in their place as the IDF moved south. On May 22, the SLA abandoned their positions, compelling the IDF to pull out of Lebanon during the night of May 23/24. Some 500 Hizballah fighters moved in behind the retreating IDF and SLA to take control of the south. Israel gave asylum to about 6,000 SLA members and their families. Hizballah turned over more than 1,500 SLA fighters to the Lebanese government for trial as traitors.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 09/13/04** — The U.S. House of Representatives passed H.Con.Res. 363, which condemns Syria's continued occupation of Lebanon.
- 09/03/04** — The Lebanese Parliament amended the constitution to allow President Lahud to serve another three years past his six-year term.
- 09/02/04** — The United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1559, which expresses support for Lebanon's independence and calls for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon.
- 12/12/03** — The President signed the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, H.R. 1828. The law calls for sanctions against Syria unless Syria withdraws from Lebanon and calls for Lebanese armed forces to move to the Israeli border and for Syria and Lebanon to begin peace negotiations with Israel.
- 04/15/03** — Prime Minister Hariri resigned, but formed a new government within two days that had no anti-Syrian members.
- 03/04/03** — Syria completed the withdrawal of 4,000 troops from northern Lebanon.
- 04/18/02** — Prime Minister Hariri met with President Bush at the White House.
- 11/08/01** — Lebanon rejected the U.S. request to freeze Hizballah assets following the November 2 U.S. listing of Hizballah as a terror organization. Many Lebanese consider Hizballah a resistance movement that freed Lebanon of the Israeli occupation.
- 06/14/01** — About 6,000 Syrian troops began withdrawing from Beirut.
- 09/03/00** — Lebanon completed two rounds of voting for the 128-seat parliament. Rafiq Hariri and his 30-man cabinet were sworn in on October 26, 2000.
- 05/23/00** — Israeli forces completed the withdrawal from southern Lebanon, except for the area around the Shib'a farms. The South Lebanon Army collapsed as the IDF withdrew. Some 1,500 SLA members were tried by the Lebanese government for treason, and some 6,000 SLA members and their families sought asylum in Israel.
- 03/05/00** — The Israeli cabinet voted to withdraw from Lebanon by July 7.
- 02/09/00** — President Clinton said the Israeli attacks against Lebanon were in retaliation for the Hizballah attacks against Israeli Defense Force personnel.
- 05/17/99** — Following his election as Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Barak repeated his campaign pledge that Israeli troops would be out of Lebanon within one year.

- 11/30/98** — Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri resigned. President Lahud named Salim al-Huss to form a new cabinet on December 2.
- 10/15/98** — The Parliament elected Gen. Emile Lahud to be President, replacing Ilyas Hirawi. Lahud was granted a constitutional waiver to serve as President without waiting five years since leaving the army.
- 07/30/97** — Secretary of State Albright announced that the travel ban on Lebanon, implemented in 1987, would not be extended.
- 12/15/96** — Donors attending a Washington conference pledged \$1 billion in grants, loans, and investments to help rebuild Lebanon. The United States announced that it would increase its aid to Lebanon to \$12 million for FY1997.
- 08/18/96** — Lebanon began the five-stage election for the National Assembly.
- 04/26/96** — Secretary of State Christopher negotiated a cease-fire between Israel and Hizballah where the two sides agreed not to fire on civilian populations. As part of the agreement, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, France, and the United States formed an observer group to report on violations of the agreement.
- 04/11/96** — Israel launched an air, artillery, and naval barrage at southern Lebanon in retaliation for Hizballah rocket attacks against northern Israeli cities. Over the next 15 days, 20,000 Israelis evacuated northern Israel, and between 400,000 and 500,000 Lebanese fled north to avoid the fighting. More than 150 Lebanese were killed.
- 10/11/95** — Syrian President al-Assad announced that Lebanese President Hirawi's term of office would be extended for three years. On October 19, the Lebanese parliament passed an amendment to the constitution permitting the extension. President Hirawi was sworn in for an additional three years on November 25.
- 07/25/93** — Israel began a seven-day air, artillery, and naval bombardment of southern Lebanon in retaliation for the deaths of seven Israeli soldiers. In the exchange, three Israelis and 130 Lebanese were killed. Israeli Prime Minister Rabin said the bombardment was intended to drive civilians north to Beirut where they would force the government to stop Hizballah. As a result of the Israeli bombardment, about 250,000 Lebanese became refugees.
- 07/01/93** — The U.S. Senate passed S.Con.Res. 28 stating that Syria had violated the Taif agreement by not withdrawing from Lebanon in September 1992.
- 12/16/92** — Israel began deporting 415 Palestinian members or suspected members of Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement) from the occupied territories into southern Lebanon. Lebanon refused to allow the deportees to leave the Israeli security strip and enter Lebanese-controlled territory. The last of the deportees returned to Israeli prisons on December 15, 1993.

- 10/20/92** — The National Assembly met and elected Nabbi Birri as Speaker. On October 22, President Hirawi named Rafiq al-Hariri as Prime Minister, and Hariri named a 30-man cabinet on October 31.
- 09/21/92** — Syria and Lebanon did not begin the discussions for Syrian armed forces withdrawal as called for in the Taif agreement (see August 21, 1990, below). According to press sources, Lebanon did not request the talks because the Lebanese government did not believe it was strong enough to assume control as Syria withdrew from the south, Beirut, and the Biqa Valley.
- 08/23/92** — Lebanon began three-step elections for parliament. Most Maronites boycotted the election.
- 10/30/91** — Lebanon participated in the Madrid peace conference (although it was widely understood that Lebanon and Israel would not sign a peace treaty until after Syria and Israel resolved their differences).
- 10/26/90** — The Lebanese Forces under Samir Jaja, the Amal militia under Nabbi Birri, and the Druze forces under Walid Jumblatt agreed to withdraw their militias from Beirut, leaving the Lebanese Armed Forces in control.
- 10/13/90** — General Awn sought political asylum at the French embassy after Syrian tanks and planes attacked his refuge at Baabda palace. Awn left for France one year later.
- 08/21/90** — The National Assembly passed amendments to the Constitution implementing the Taif reforms. President Hirawi signed the amendments on September 21 (the date many cite as beginning the two-year period before the Lebanon-Syria withdrawal discussions were scheduled to begin).
- 11/22/89** — President Muawwad was assassinated. On November 24, the National Assembly Deputies elected Ilyas Hirawi President to replace Muawwad.
- 11/05/89** — The National Assembly approved the Taif reform package, elected a new Speaker, and elected Rene Muawwad as President of Lebanon.
- 10/22/89** — Some 60 National Assembly deputies, meeting in Taif, Saudi Arabia, agreed to government reforms that included increasing the National Assembly from 99 to 108 members evenly divided between Christian and Muslim/Druze, disarming the militias, and calling for discussions of a Syrian withdrawal within two years after ratification of the “Taif” agreement. On July 16, 1992, the National Assembly raised the number of Deputies from 108 to 128 and reconfirmed the four-year term of office.
- 09/06/89** — U.S. Ambassador John McCarthy closed the U.S. embassy annex in Awkar following anti-American demonstrations and threats from General Awn. New U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker reopened the embassy annex on November 29, 1990.



- 01/00/89** — Fighting resumed between Hizballah and Amal, and between General Awn's government forces and several Christian militias. By March, Hizballah defeated Amal and controlled the left, and Awn's forces controlled the right. But Awn was defeated and isolated after he attempted to drive the Syrian forces out of Lebanon. The Arab League secured a cease-fire in September 1989.
- 09/23/88** — Outgoing President Amin Jumayyil appointed Army Commander-in-Chief General Michel Awn to be Prime Minister. The National Assembly had failed to elect Jumayyil's successor in August. Awn's appointment meant that Lebanon had two Prime Ministers, two interim Speakers, two cabinets, a stalemated parliament, and no President.
- 06/00/85** — Israel completed its withdrawal from Lebanon except for the 10-mile wide strip along the Lebanon-Israel border.
- 09/20/84** — A truck bomb killed 20 (two of whom were U.S. citizens) at the U.S. embassy annex in Awkar.
- 02/00/84** — The U.S. contingent in the MultiNational Force withdrew from Lebanon. The French, Italian, and British contingents were out of Lebanon by the end of March.
- 10/23/83** — A truck bomb killed 241 U.S. military personnel at the U.S. MNF headquarters at the Beirut airport.
- 04/18/83** — A truck bomb destroyed the U.S. embassy in Beirut, killing 63 people (17 of whom were U.S. citizens) and wounding 100 (40 of whom were U.S. citizens).
- 09/18/82** — The press reported that about 1,700 Palestinians had been murdered, reportedly by Christian militiamen, in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps of southern Beirut. Two days later, the Lebanese government requested that the MNF return to Beirut to stabilize the situation. The first MNF contingent returned on September 24, 1982. An Israeli commission found Defense Minister Ariel Sharon responsible for allowing the militiamen into the camp.
- 09/14/82** — A bomb killed President-elect Bashir Jumayyil. The next day, Israeli troops occupied southern Beirut.
- 08/00/82** — U.S. diplomat Philip Habib negotiated an agreement whereby Israel agreed to withdraw its troops from Lebanon. The United States, France, Italy, and Great Britain sent peacekeeping forces to Lebanon to monitor the Palestine Liberation Organization departure from Beirut.
- 06/06/82** — Israel invaded Lebanon and occupied southern Lebanon up to the Beirut-Damascus road.

- 03/14/78** — Israel invaded southern Lebanon. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) established an east-to-west buffer zone across southern Lebanon to separate Israeli and Lebanese forces. Israel withdrew its troops on June 13, 1978.
- 07/00/58** — President Eisenhower dispatched 14,300 U.S. Marine and Army personnel to Lebanon to support the Lebanese government in resisting a radical seizure of the country. The U.S. forces were withdrawn in October.

**Table 2. U.S. Assistance to Lebanon**  
(millions of dollars)

Year	Total	Economic Aid (Grants)	Food Aid (Grants)	Military Aid (Loans)	I.M.E.T. (Grants)
1946 - 1980	332.7	120.2 <sup>a</sup>	86.2 <sup>b</sup>	123.3 <sup>c</sup>	3.0
1981	24.3	4.0	0	20.0	0.3
1982	21.8	9.0	2.2	10.0	0.6
1983	153.9	52.2	0	100.0	1.7
1984	44.0	28.1	0.3	15.0	0.6
1985	21.1	19.9	0.5	0	0.7
1986	17.6	16.0	1.1	0	0.5
1987	23.0	12.8	9.7	0	0.5
1988	12.3	5.1	6.8	0	0.4
1989	15.5	2.8	12.3	0	0.4
1990	19.4	8.3	10.7	0	0.4
1991	19.2	9.3	9.9	0	0
1992	16.4	9.2	7.2	0	0
1993	14.4	10.3	3.5	0	0.6
1994	2.0	1.7	0	0	0.3
1995	16.0	15.6 <sup>d</sup>	0	0	0.4
1996	2.5	2.0	0	0	0.5
1997	12.8	12.3	0	0	0.5
1998	12.6	12.0	0	0	0.6
1999	12.6	12.0	0	0	0.6
2000	15.6	15.0	0	0	0.6
2001	35.4	34.9	0	0	0.5
2002	35.6	35.0	0	0	0.6
2003	35.5	34.8	0	0	.7
2004	37.1	36.4	0	0	.7
Totals	953.3	518.9	150.4	268.3	15.7

I.M.E.T. = International Military Education and Training

**Source:** U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants

a. Of the \$120.2 million total, \$19 million was loans.

b. Of the \$86.2 million total, \$28.5 million was loans.

c. Of the \$123.3 million total, \$109.5 was loans and \$13.8 million was grants.

d. Includes about \$6 million from 1994.