

LEBANON AFTER TA'IF: ANOTHER REFORM OPPORTUNITY LOST?

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THE NATIONAL ACCORD DOCUMENT for Lebanon issued in Ta'if, Saudi Arabia, on 24 October 1989 was composed with the active mediation of Saudi Arabia, discreet participation by the United States, and behind-the-scenes influence from Syria. Signed by nearly all the surviving members of the 1972 Chamber of Deputies, it was the blueprint for restoring the Lebanese state and ending the long civil war. The Ta'if Accord modifies the "rules of the game" of the First Republic but does not alter their basic character. Postwar Lebanon—in form—remains more-or-less a consociational democracy. Sectarian proportionality is still there, but the proportion of Muslim to Christian legislators and officials has been increased to 50-50. The President of the Republic remains for the foreseeable future a Maronite Christian, but his powers have been substantially reduced. The Prime Minister remains a Sunni Muslim, but the powers of the Council of Ministers, which he chairs, have been increased. The office of President of the Chamber of Deputies still goes to a Shiite, but his term has been increased from one year to four, and so has his influence. The power of the Chamber itself is increased by the elimination of the old provision allowing the Executive to pass "urgent" legislation without parliamentary involvement. At the same time, Ta'if explicitly calls for a gradual phasing out of political sectarianism.

Other provisions of the Ta'if Accord relating to Lebanon's external relations were more controversial. "Lebanon is Arab in belonging and in identity" is a stronger expression of Lebanon's "Arabness" than was found in the 1943 National Pact and thus alarmed some Christians. Even more alarming was

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the provision authorizing a “special relationship” between Lebanon and Syria, one that would give Syria a privileged position on matters relating to national security, among other things. Moreover, a pledge by Syria to redeploy its forces in Lebanon east of the Lebanon mountain range within two years of the formal ratification of the Ta’if Accord, the holding of a new presidential election, and the formation of a new cabinet were also conditioned by “the approval of political reforms.” Two years later, with a new president and cabinet in place, the Syrians refused to redeploy on the ground that all the political reforms (by which they meant beginning the process of desectarianization) had not yet been achieved. Furthermore, as long as Israel controlled its self-styled “security zone” in southern Lebanon, Syria could justify keeping its own military presence in the country.

THE POST-TA’IF PERIOD

In theory, Ta’if had much to recommend it. True, it restored a “temporary” confessional order, but one that was fine-tuned to accommodate new realities. But Ta’if on paper indicated much more than a simple restoration of the confessionalism of the past. Its clear commitment to the dismantling of confessionalism and the strengthening of the public sphere through an enhanced judiciary was commendable. The nagging question remains, however: Did those who were responsible for the document really believe in its liberal-reform provisions? From a *realpolitik* perspective it is easy to imagine that the Syrian, American, and Saudi governments were minimalists, preferring to make tactical adjustments rather than risk a transformation that could threaten their respective Lebanese clients. The aging parliamentarians who collectively legitimized the Accord did not include many reformers. One cannot repress the suspicion that Ta’if in 1989, like the National Pact of 1943, was merely paying lip-service to liberal reform. In any event, Ta’if in practice deviated significantly from Ta’if in theory.

THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS OF 1992 AND 1993

General Aoun and many Maronite Christians either opposed Ta’if outright or accepted it with great reluctance. They also opposed the holding of new parliamentary elections in August and September 1992, but Syria refused all requests to delay them, even for technical reasons: How could the electoral rolls be updated following the vast demographic upheavals of the previous 17 years? The elections were held nevertheless, and notwithstanding the shadow of Syria and a boycott in much of the Maronite heartland of Mount Lebanon, the new Parliament was welcomed in most other parts of the country as an important, if flawed, step on the road back to stable representative government. Comparison of the 1992 election with its predecessors revealed lower voter participation, especially in Mount Lebanon, where it averaged around 16 percent, although it was closer to 40 percent in the Biqa’ and South Lebanon; the overall turnout in

1972 had been 55 percent. As for the composition of the new parliament, new entrants not surprisingly filled 80 percent of the 128 seats; yet fully a third of the deputies either had been elected to earlier parliaments or were close relatives (sons, sons-in-law, brothers, or cousins) of former deputies. Of twenty "parliamentary families" prominently represented in parliaments going back to 1943, eleven were found in the 1992 parliament, suggesting—for better or worse—a certain continuity. The occupational background of deputies revealed a continuing steep decline in large landowners and lawyers and a large increase in the professions—doctors, journalists, engineers, clerics, retired civil servants, and professional politicians.

There were several striking trends in the political makeup of the new Chamber. Some 47 percent of the new deputies were affiliated with a political party or movement (as opposed to a traditional grouping or independent status), compared with 31 percent in the 1972 parliament. Some of the parties showed continuity—for example, the Ba'ath, Walid Junblat's Progressive Socialist Party, and the Armenian Dashnak. More striking was the disappearance of many traditional Maronite actors—personalities like the Shamuns, Gemayels, and Eddes, and parties like the Phalanges. Absent too were prominent anti-Syrian militia chiefs of the civil war such as Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea. Many Maronites of Mount Lebanon looked on these results as depressing evidence of the end of Maronite hegemony, and some waited for General Aoun to return from exile in France to restore Lebanon as a "Christian" country. But not only were traditional Christian players missing, there were now new Islamist actors on the parliamentary scene: the Shiite parties Amal and Hizballah now constituted the largest blocs in parliament—12 for Hizballah (and allies) and 20 for Amal. There was also small but significant representation from two Sunni Muslim Islamist parties. Even Lebanese observers who detested Syria's involvement in Lebanese politics admitted that Damascus had on the whole acted skillfully to implant its influence in postwar Lebanon while allowing quite a broad spectrum of traditional and new political forces a place on the political stage. If Lebanon were to emerge definitively from its past agony, the traditional Christians of Mount Lebanon would need to be brought back into the formal system one way or another. On the whole, then, the 1992 elections raised as many questions as they answered about Lebanon's future stability. The simple fact that they had taken place was perhaps the most positive result, but they did little to help relegitimize the Lebanese political system. However, a reminder of Syria's hegemony in Lebanon was the decision in November 1995 to amend the constitution to extend the mandate of President Elias Hrawi—a Maronite "outsider"—for an additional three years.

The elections of August-September 1996, therefore, took on particular significance. In many ways they advanced Lebanon's political recovery. Voting participation rose to 44 percent, still well below the 1972 level, although the Interior Minister claimed that the "real" figure might have been 66 percent, owing to the number of absent and dead voters on the electoral rolls (*Lebanon*

Report 1996: 24). The results were a decisive victory for the post-Ta'if regime led by Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, thus further entrenching the Syrian-dominated post-Ta'if establishment and (for better or worse) enhancing its stability. Many of its 128 members had been affiliated with the once-dominant militias of the civil war period; others were wealthy businessmen, many of whom had profited from the civil war. It was estimated that perhaps 85 of the 128 deputies were independently wealthy or had income sources other than their salaries (*Lebanon Report* 1996: 23). Hariri came into parliament with a bloc of 30-40 deputies, and he was supported by eight other blocs, led by Nabih Berri (Shiite, Amal leader), Omar Karami and Ahmad Karami (Sunnis) in the North, Walid Junblat (Druze, from the Shuf district of Mount Lebanon), Hizballah (Shiite, in the South and Biqa' districts), an Armenian bloc, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, and the bloc of President of the Republic Elias Hrawi. This parliament was not expected to present any serious challenge to Prime Minister Hariri or to Syrian policy in Lebanon. While Islamists continued to be represented, their numbers actually shrank somewhat: Hizballah lost one seat (out of 8) and several allies, while two Sunni Islamist parties were completely eliminated from parliament.

On the negative side, however, the 1996 elections were marked by significant irregularities, according to an independent monitoring group, the Lebanese Association for the Democracy of Elections. Furthermore, the marginalization of the Maronites and of the traditional political establishment continued. True to form, the Christian opposition split, with a group of notables in exile (General Aoun, Raymond Edde, and former President Amin Gemayel) calling for another Christian boycott, while another group inside Lebanon insisted on participating—and for the most part losing. The government, meanwhile, moved ahead with legislation to shrink the electronic mass media, leading the opposition to accuse it of curtailing freedom of expression. Certainly there seemed to be few pressures on it to improve its unimpressive performance in institutional reform or social policy.

The 1996 results seemed to confirm several post-Ta'if trends. The structure of sectarian bargaining had certainly changed, even though sectarian consciousness (by many Lebanese accounts) remained high. The Maronite establishment, including even the Patriarch, had been marginalized, and former Maronite militia leaders had been totally excluded. The Druze and Shiite militia elites seemed very much intact even though their militias (except for Hizballah, fighting the Israeli occupation in south Lebanon) had been demobilized. Most of the old Sunni and Shiite traditional politicians were gone. Money appeared to be talking loudly, to the extent that one could speak of an oligarchy of the very rich. In some ways the handful of main power brokers in the 1996 parliament resembled the small oligarchy of traditional leaders who had run Lebanon in the 1940s. Might one then expect the emergence of a new—and multi-sectarian—grouping of socially conscious, ideologically driven activists to challenge this cozy order, as happened in the early 1950s? And would such an ideology submerge sectarian chauvinism in the interests of a broader constituency of the

neglected? The Syrian factor, of course, would be important though not necessarily decisive in future bargaining configurations.

SYRIAN TUTELAGE AND GOVERNMENT BY TROIKA

Although Syria was not formally present at the Ta'if gathering, its shadow falls heavily over post-Ta'if Lebanese politics. The Ta'if Accord speaks of "the special relationship" between Lebanon and Syria. With a 30,000-man army in Lebanon, along with an elaborate intelligence apparatus, Damascus has the means to shape the nature of that special relationship. But Syria's influence rests even more firmly on its ability to manipulate the three leading "presidencies" in post-Ta'if Lebanon: the presidency of the Republic, the presidency of the Council of Ministers, and the presidency of the Chamber of Deputies. Syria secured the election of Maronite Elias Hrawi (from the Syrian-dominated Biqa') as President of the Republic in 1989 and was able to obtain a constitutional amendment for a three-year renewal in 1995. As the presidency came up for reelection in 1998, opinions differed over whether Hrawi might be renewed again or whether Emile Lahoud, commander of the army, or some other individual might be chosen, but no one doubted that Syria would determine the outcome (an outcome which is by now clear, Emile Lahoud having been chosen as president). Similarly, Sunni millionaire-businessman Rafiq al-Hariri and his successor Salim al-Hoss could not have been selected as prime ministers without Damascus's blessing. Speaker of the Parliament Nabih Berri, whose prominence lies in his leadership of the Shiite Amal movement, owes his prominence largely to Syria, to whom he has been a loyal ally. There is no love lost among these three presidents: none want to be dominated by the others. This has made it all the easier for Syria to play them off against each other.

The dysfunctional aspects of government by troika might be alleviated if there were other institutions in place for articulating and channeling political activity. Unfortunately, such institutions are weak or nonexistent. For example, the lack of a strong party system leaves only a weak token "loyal opposition" in parliament, numbering between a dozen and two dozen deputies, depending on the issue at hand. Meanwhile, the more ideologically oriented (and polarized) elements among the Maronites (Aounists, ex-Lebanese Force partisans, certain traditional politicians, and the Patriarch) and the Shiites (Hizballah, trying to play a dual role) lurk on the margins of the formal political arena, each subject to periodic constraints and encouragement by the Syrians. Another theoretically important institution, the judiciary, does occasionally exert a tempering effect on political abuses (for example, when the Constitutional Court condemned certain electoral irregularities in 1996), but it is far from able to restrain the troika. The press and electronic mass media also play a considerable role, but the Hariri government (with Syria behind it) steadily whittled away at their freedom and pluralism. Instead of being an open forum, the country's permitted TV channels reflect sectarian and *za'im* (boss) interests: one for then Prime Minister Hariri

(Future TV), one for Speaker of Parliament Berri (NBN), one close to President Hrawi (LBCI), and one close to Interior Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Michel Murr (Murr TV). Thus the media and other structural bulwarks of a civil society are attenuated, leaving the field to the “non-civil” (or at best “semi-civil”) institutions of religion, sect, clan, patriarchy, and plutocracy. This is the political field on which the troika leaders have played their parochial games.

Coherent public policymaking also suffers in this deformed institutional setting. The country’s current economic crisis is a case in point. According to the Paris-based Lebanese economist Georges Corm, “Mr. Hariri’s management record is cause for dismay” (Corm 1998). While the prime minister beguiled the international financial community with his showcase project—the reconstruction of Beirut’s central business district—he eased the tax burden on the rich while increasing it on the poor, and permitted the debt burden to reach astronomical levels (with a gross domestic product of \$13 billion in 1997 the total public debt was more than \$15 billion). Middle-class Lebanese regularly lament the demise of the middle class in Lebanon and point to the growing ostentation of the super-rich while the poor seem to get both poorer and more numerous. These trends are even more depressing when viewed against the post-civil war social situation in Lebanon. According to Antoine Haddad (1995), some 28 percent of Lebanese families now live below the poverty level, and in the main urban centers there are an estimated 750,000 poor, of which 90,000 are “extremely poor.” Parliamentary opposition is too weak and unstructured to mount significant criticism of these problems. There is little parliamentary oversight of revenues and expenditures. Because other key *za’ims* have gained control of their own shares of the government pie, they are less likely to join in any concerted oppositional attack on corruption and mismanagement. Hariri and the Sunnis are said to control the substantial funds of the Committee on Development and Reconstruction (CDR), but Shiite leaders control the funds of the Council for the South, and Walid Junblat, the Druze leader, controls the Fund for Displaced People—the some 700,000 (mainly Christians) driven out of the Shuf in the intersectarian fighting in 1983. Economic policy rationality has been further inhibited by the particular rivalry between Hariri and Berri over patronage and civil service issues. Corm suggests that, as the Christians lose ground, there is increasing competition between the Sunnis and the Shiites for the resources of the state.

If “within the system” parliamentary and press opposition is ineffectual, it is reasonable to ask whether protest could arise “outside the system” if socioeconomic conditions do not improve. The Lebanese Confederation of Labor Unions has threatened general strikes and continues to lobby for massive salary increases for workers. A Lebanese journalist, Carole Dagher, recently observed that sectarian antagonism on the popular level may be re-emerging, at least if crowd behavior at recent sports events is a valid indicator. Early in 1998 when a Lebanese soccer team (backed by Hariri) played a visiting Iranian team, the largely Shiite fans cheered for the Iranians, and in a basketball game between local Christian and Muslim teams the fans started insulting each other. Is it any

wonder, then, that, while Syria's "hegemonic" role is widely resented in Lebanon, even some Lebanese who resent it wonder whether Lebanon would retain its post-Ta'if stability without it?

LEBANON'S "NEW REPUBLIC": AN ASSESSMENT

Enough time has elapsed since the Ta'if Accord (1989) and the end of the fighting (1990) for the main contours of Lebanon's "new republic" to become evident, making at least a preliminary assessment possible. In doing so it is important to note that Lebanese politics is not simply a matter of sectarian power-sharing. One must also consider socioeconomic cleavages, patronage and clientelism, ideological movements, and extraordinary external involvement.

That said, however, there is no escaping the centrality of sect. Ironically, despite the marginalization of "clerical" leaders like the Maronite Patriarch, the Sunni Grand Mufti, and the President of the Higher Shiite Council, and despite the ubiquity of intra-sectarian cleavages, the mythology of sectarianism not only persists but has probably become stronger as a result of fifteen years of often savage internal warfare. Ta'if in theory restores a consociational sectarian order, albeit with salutary alterations in the power-sharing formula, but it also explicitly states a procedure for ending institutionalized sectarianism. Yet Ta'if in practice thus far has ignored that procedure or any other for desectarianizing the political system. Furthermore, Ta'if in practice appears to have deepened sectarian segmentation, especially in the top executive institutions. In prewar Lebanon, during the relatively tranquil periods, the President of the Republic, although a Maronite, also enjoyed widespread support from the Muslim communities. But in postwar Lebanon executive power is distributed among a "troika" whose leaders are more narrowly identified with their respective sectarian constituencies: Prime Minister (Sunni), Speaker of the Parliament (Shiite), and President of the Republic (Maronite).

SECTARIANISM: RESURGENT AND UNEASY

If one could analyze the mood and concerns of the country's major sects in the post-Ta'if period so far, one would probably find a general lack of confidence in the reconstituted institutions of government combined with a heightened concern about sectarian status and security. Some, to be sure, are more unhappy than others.

The Maronites are significantly disaffected. Stung by Ta'if's diminution of their former formal hegemony, they have been even more disturbed by Syria's post-Ta'if behavior. Many believe that the Syrians were responsible for the assassinations of two (Maronite) presidents: Bashir Gemayel in 1982 and René Moawad in 1988. Much of the traditional Maronite aristocracy is disaffected, including the Gemayel, Shamun, and Edde families. And the younger generation

of Maronite populists who had worshiped General Aoun are biding their time, waiting for the opening that would give them revenge for Syria's crushing of the Aounist crusade in 1990. To be sure there are some respected centrist Maronites operating "within the system" (such as Nassib Lahoud, former ambassador to Washington), but on the whole the once-proud Maronites are feeling defeated and marginalized. Given the polarization of Lebanese politics over the course of the civil war, some Maronites also have had to bear the burden of their collaboration with the Israelis; and given the popular attitude toward the Israelis (especially after their brutal bombardment of southern Lebanon and Beirut in April 1996) it does not make the task of inter-confessional reconciliation any easier.

At the other end of the ideological spectrum, the Shiites find themselves united against Israel but ambivalent about post-Ta'if Lebanon. To be sure, the Shiite speaker of the parliament now enjoys a longer term and more influence. Shiite officers are also more prominent (along with Maronites) in the reconstituted Lebanese army officer corps. But the more militant Shiite revolutionaries (those who had been influenced by Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini) must be wondering whether the civil war, with all its suffering, has really led to an improvement in the hitherto downtrodden condition of the Shiites in Lebanon. Clearly, the Shiite community is divided. On the most militant extreme are the partisans of Hizballah, even though their spiritual guide, Shaykh Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, has withdrawn Hizballah's earlier demand to make Lebanon a Muslim state. Despite its strong Iranian backing, Hizballah is now reaching out to other Lebanese communities and trying to present itself as a peaceful non-governmental organization, committed to social welfare projects and "normal" political party participation. Hizballah has won considerable prestige from other Lebanese communities for its aggressive resistance activities against the Israeli occupation in south Lebanon. Closer to the middle of the ideological spectrum is the Shiite Amal movement, led by Nabih Berri. Closely linked to Syria, Amal provides a useful check against Hizballah (over which the Syrians may have had some apprehensions) and also an instrument against the Palestinian guerrilla organizations. Even though Hizballah has considerable representation in Parliament, it is Amal that has the biggest influence in the post-Ta'if Lebanese government. Another, and more moderate, tendency among the Shiites is represented by Shaykh Mahdi Shamseddine, president of the Higher Shiite Council and a leader with good connections to the Maronites, to the Shiites in the army officer corps, and to the Americans. For the time being the traditional Shiite *zu'ama'*, led by Kamel al-As'ad, are sidelined. On balance, the Shiites probably feel that they have not gained enough from the civil war, especially in that they are the largest single sectarian community in the country.

The Sunni Muslims, on the whole, must feel considerable satisfaction with Ta'if and the position of their community. Considering that they had dominated Lebanon of the pre-civil war "golden age" (albeit in second position behind the Maronites), and considering also that they had never been able to field a militia presence comparable to those of the Maronites, Shiites, and Druze

during the civil war, they have emerged as the principal sectarian winners in the constitutional "fine-tuning": their leader, the prime minister, is now *primus inter pares* in the troika along with the Maronite president and the Shiite speaker of parliament. In Rafiq al-Hariri the Sunnis had a dynamic, wealthy, and well-connected prime minister. Even though he was not widely popular, Hariri's commercial connections and his leadership in the redevelopment of Beirut's devastated downtown business district made him a figure to reckon with. In the Republic of Ta'if, the Sunnis obviously have considerable leverage. The Sunnis also fielded a respected opposition candidate, Salim al-Hoss, with numerous regional and international supporters. Why, one might ask, should such a prominent Sunni have been in the opposition? Clearly it was not because he felt his sect was under-represented. He criticized the domination of the country by a small (multi-sectarian) group of wealthy businessmen and notables who in his opinion were choking off full democratic participation, especially from secular, progressive elements.

The Druze could not have been very happy with these arrangements. Although their principal leader, Walid Junblat, holds a cabinet position (albeit a secondary one), the community is not substantially represented in the higher reaches of the civil service or the military. Moreover, Junblat is challenged on traditional grounds by the Yazbaki faction within the Druze community. The Yazbaki Druze include some of Lebanon's most prominent businesspeople and intellectuals, but Junblat has sought to keep them out of politics and even out of the country. The Druze traditionally have played a role in Lebanon far beyond their meager demographic weight (around 7 percent of the population), but this role seems to be shrinking. Indeed, Junblat had to work hard to have the electoral laws of 1992 and 1996 written in a manner to give him a safe seat in the mixed Maronite-Druze governorate of the Shuf.

Although a certain uneasy sectarian balance seems to have been restored, the instrument of that restoration—a Syrian-influenced, clientelistic, wealthy ruling coalition, only semi-legitimized by flawed elections—both generates new problems and exacerbates existing ones. First, as we have noted, executive and legislative power in post-Ta'if Lebanon is concentrated in the troika. But the degree of distrust among those leaders and their preoccupation with clientelistic concerns over public policy appear to account for the government's lackluster and uneven governmental performance (Kamel Shehadi in *Lebanon Report* 1996: 18). Second, the government's efforts to curtail the news media and to marginalize the opposition through electoral manipulations risks generating a popular backlash of the kind that toppled two Lebanese presidents (Khoury and Shamun) in the past. Third, then Prime Minister Hariri was accused by the enfeebled opposition of running Lebanon as if it were one of his many businesses. By bypassing the traditional political and administrative establishment he made enemies both in his own community and outside it. Traditional Lebanese politicians do not easily accept being bypassed by technocrats and nouveau-riche entrepreneurs with business school diplomas.

This is something General Fuad Shihab discovered to his dismay back in the 1960s. Fourth, there does not appear to have been any significant development of the institutions of civil society since the end of the civil war. There is still no party system and no individual parties with any kind of national constituency. While there are numerous traditional and modern NGOs, there is little evidence that they affect the policymaking process. And the government's clampdown on the media hardly encourages the development of a "public sphere" in Lebanon. Fifth, while the country has made considerable progress in reconstruction and in overall economic growth, there is a growing problem related to economic inequality. In the summer of 1995 there was major labor unrest, and another crisis in March 1996 was only averted by the military declaring a curfew to prevent bloody strife between striking laborers and the government security forces. The Hariri government, as we have noted, gave priority to the development of Beirut's devastated central business district while neglecting the growing—and increasingly visible—problem of disparities between rich and poor. Considering the catastrophic disruptions caused by fifteen years of internal conflict, the country has problems of poverty, homelessness, and unemployment that would challenge far more wealthy governments. In Lebanon, acute economic crises can explode into sectarian political conflicts.

HOSTAGE TO THE "PEACE PROCESS"

The last "hot war" theater of the Arab-Israeli conflict is Lebanon. In April 1996 Israel launched a 16-day operation, "Grapes of Wrath," against Lebanon that cost the country some \$500 million, displaced around 500,000 civilians, damaged 130 industries, killed between 170 and 200 people, and wounded 400 ("What Did Grapes of Wrath Cost," 1996). Notwithstanding United Nations Security Council Resolution 425 (1978), which demanded Israel's unconditional withdrawal from southern Lebanon, the Israeli occupation was still in place twenty years later. The Arab-Israeli "peace process," initiated in Madrid in 1991 and reinigorated by the Oslo agreement of 1993, had led to a certain engagement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, thus obviating the *casus belli* between Israel and Lebanon. Having occupied Lebanon to liquidate the PLO, Israel now found itself suffering increasing losses from the guerrilla operations of an authentically Lebanese movement, Hizballah. Yet Lebanese diplomacy was, and is, entirely subordinated to Syrian policy. With the breakdown of the so-called "peace process" in 1996, the progress that had been made between Syria and Israel over the Golan Heights came to an end, and so did any prospects for the Lebanese-Israeli "track" in the peace process. But in 1998 the Israeli government began sending out signals that it was ready to consider a withdrawal from south Lebanon, in accordance with Resolution 425, if its security conditions could be met. Lebanon and Syria received these signals with the greatest skepticism, insisting on an unconditional withdrawal. Without a resumption of the Syrian-Israeli negotiations over the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights, however, it did not seem likely that the south Lebanon situation

would be normalized. Consequently, Lebanon appeared fated to have to deal indefinitely with a state of tension and endure the attendant economic, developmental, and political burdens. The problem of the south discourages investment and reconstruction, not only in the south itself but in Lebanon as a whole. It also prevents solution to the social dislocations of two decades of armed conflict. And on the political level it perpetuates the anomalous situation of Hizballah as the primary Lebanese resistance force against the Israelis and their local proxy, the South Lebanon Army. Hizballah is allowed to function as an armed militia for this purpose, even though all the other militias of the civil war period have been more-or-less disarmed; but it also has sought to redefine itself as a normal political party within the mainstream of public and parliamentary life. But the asymmetry of an armed party driven by a Shiite Islamist ideology (albeit toned down from its earlier years) competing in the Lebanese political arena generates tensions and apprehensions elsewhere in the system.

Finally, the issue of the 300,000-350,000 Palestinians resident in Lebanon remains highly contentious (Hudson 1997). Without movement on permanent status issues (including refugees) between Israel and the Palestinians, it is difficult to envision a solution to this problem. Most Lebanese resent having had their country drawn in as a proxy battleground between Israel and the PLO from the 1960s to the 1980s; and so the idea of *tawtin* (permanent resettlement and even naturalization) of Palestinians in Lebanon is anathema. But the Palestinians' goal of *'awda* (return to what is now Israel and/or the Palestinian state-to-be in the West Bank and Gaza) is rejected so far as Israel is concerned and deemed by many specialists as demographically and economically unfeasible for the Palestinian areas alone. Many Christian Lebanese especially are worried that the Palestinians could once again disrupt the country's political stability and once again pose a national security problem.

LEBANON'S FUTURE AND THE LIMITS OF POWER-SHARING

It is hard to avoid concluding that postwar Lebanon's political recovery has been only partly successful. The most important achievement has been peace and quiet. People have had time to recover from the depression induced by years of civil strife. For a time they were optimistic if not euphoric about the bright possibilities for recovery. Even before real stability had been achieved, overseas Lebanese investment capital was beginning to return home. Reconstruction of Beirut's central business district, despite criticism, was moving ahead dramatically. But in the late 1990s, on both the political and economic levels, things are not so bright. Even though there have been salutary adjustments to the old consociational formula, there has been no progress toward dismantling the system of confessional representation. And casting its shadow over the entire political scene is the continuing presence of external powers in Lebanon. Israel's occupation in south Lebanon continues to generate instability and misery—as the

devastating bombardments in 1996 illustrate once again. Syria thus has a continuing rationale for keeping its own forces in Lebanon—not as an occupier but as a “sister.” Similarly, Hizballah is allowed—even encouraged—to maintain its militia as the only possible armed resistance movement against the occupation. None of this is good for the normalization of political life. But we should not be completely pessimistic. Ta’if was, after all, not just a return to consociationalism, with all its negative side-effects, but also a call for deeper structural reforms in the Western liberal mode, which might (if enacted in phases) move Lebanon beyond political confessionalism toward a more legitimate and effective system of governance. Were this “consociationalism-plus” model actually being implemented, one might be more optimistic. One can make a case for a consociational-type sectarian bargaining formula at certain historical moments. One such moment was independence in 1943, and the National Pact provided “growing time” for the new republic. Another such moment was in 1989, when the Ta’if Accord bought time for the embattled and embittered sects to reconstitute a viable unified state. But in both cases the power-sharing solution outlived its usefulness and in fact impeded what might have been the transition to a more inclusive political order that would provide not just for sectarian participation but for the growth and integration of a larger, more complex civil society into the body politic.

A decade after the Ta’if Agreement, Lebanon stands at a crossroad. The Lebanese urgently need to confront their political future with clarity and realism. The country’s modern history suggests that while “muddling through” may have short-term tactical benefits, it has disastrous long-run consequences. If no serious effort has been made in the last ten years to undertake the reform of the confessional system mandated by Ta’if, why should anyone suppose it will happen at all? Can the present political order—characterized, as we have seen, by heightened confessional chauvinism, weak institutions of political participation, low policymaking and administrative capabilities, and government by troika—cope with the growing economic and financial problems, postwar social inequalities, and a truly difficult regional security environment? Lebanon needs strong executive leadership legitimized on a national, civic basis and not just on sectarian and patronage-based constituencies. It also needs a stronger, fairer electoral system (at the municipal as well as parliamentary level) and one that encourages the development of nationwide political parties with cross-confessional support and non-confessional orientations. To be sure, those Lebanese and foreigners who compare Lebanon favorably to many other political systems in the region have a point. But that does not ensure that Lebanon can avoid another political catastrophe in the years ahead that will once again make it the object of pity by its neighbors rather than envy.

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LEBANON'S CONUNDRUM

Augustus Richard Norton

LEBANON'S CIVIL WAR CAME TO AN END in the autumn of 1990, when, with silent approval from Washington, Syrian forces assaulted the presidential palace in Ba'abda and brought the rebellion of General Michel Aoun to an end. Aoun had resisted implementing the Ta'if Accord of 1989, which he and his followers viewed as a legitimization of Syria's occupation of Lebanon. Aoun's objections notwithstanding, many Lebanese were understandably relieved that the sixteen-year civil war was finally over.¹ Unfortunately, nearly ten years after the agreement to end the war was signed in Ta'if, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon is still wracked by problems, especially because Lebanon continues to be a site for the Arab-Israeli conflict.

On the positive side, most of the war's detritus has been carted away and the landscape of destruction is being transformed throughout Lebanon. Even in the south, where the Israeli occupation zone continues to be a magnet for resistance attacks, the pace of construction is impressive. The potential for Lebanon to rebound financially is reflected in the international financial markets. Two Lebanese offerings on the Eurobond market were snapped up by investors. The result is that Lebanon has been able to capitalize its postwar rebuilding of infrastructure with deficit financing. The plans are ambitious and include state of the art telecommunications, a world class airport, and extensive renovation of port facilities in Beirut and in Sidon (former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri's home town). The reconstruction project, called Horizon 2000, has cost three quarters of a billion dollars annually since 1993, and is projected to cost a billion dollars a year through 2001, large expenditures in a country of three million citizens.

In Beirut, the commercial center of the city is being recreated in a mammoth project by Solidere, a private company created for the purpose in

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1993. Solidere, described by the *Middle East Economic Digest* as the most ambitious construction project in the world, is the brainchild of billionaire and former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri. Hariri stands not only to leave a magnificent legacy in Beirut, but, as a major stockholder in Solidere, to see his personal fortune grow as well. As a result, Lebanese have commonly complained that he acted as though he were a CEO and Lebanon his company.

Although it would be hard to discern so judging from the conspicuous consumption of some well-to-do Lebanese, the domestic economy has only grown modestly since 1990. The General Confederation of Labor, which is the umbrella for most of Lebanon's unions, has mounted several nationwide strikes to protest low wages and a galloping cost of living, most notably in 1992, when labor protests precipitated the fall of the government of Prime Minister Omar Karami, and again in 1995, when the Labor Confederation defied a government ban and organized protests against large increases in the price of gasoline. The construction boom has benefited some Lebanese, but it has also attracted about 500,000 Syrian workers. Only a tiny fraction of the Syrian workers' wages is spent in Lebanon; most of it is repatriated to Syria. Since the Syrians habitually perform menial jobs that Lebanese spurn, as they did before the civil war as well, it is hard to argue that they are stealing jobs from the Lebanese. This does not stop the issue from being a source of angry, if muted complaint.² Many members of the middle class have only been able to stave off a deep decline in their standard of living by selling off real estate and other fixed assets. In fact, many members of the middle class have left Lebanon, seeking opportunity elsewhere. The emigration flood has been especially heavy among the Maronites and other Christians, to the effect that the Christian communities are now estimated to account for a third or less of Lebanon's total population of three million. The human drain has been propelled not only by a quest for the good life, but by ominous limitations on personal freedom, including heavy government tampering with elections and a growing intolerance for dissent.

Syria's influence on Lebanon has grown tremendously since the late 1980s, just as Michel Aoun and his supporters feared. Few political decisions are made without consulting Damascus, and it is widely understood that Syria routinely intervenes in the Lebanese government. Decisions are tailored to suit the preferences of President Hafez al-Asad and his lieutenants, and no decision is taken that would have even the remote likelihood of offending Damascus. Lebanon has basically tied its destiny to Syria in the peace process and, since 1993, President Elias Hrawi has repeatedly emphasized that there will be continued cooperation between Lebanon and Syria. While many Lebanese privately express their distaste for Lebanon's cheek to jowl relationship with Syria, many others argue that Lebanon has little choice. Were Lebanon to try to make its own way, independent of Syria's wishes, it would not only provoke Syria, but it would also be in a weaker position vis-à-vis Israel. For their part, after their own unhappy attempts to shape events in Lebanon during the 1980s, both Israel and the United States have been content to let Syria call the shots in Lebanon.

RESHAPING THE PARLIAMENT

After a twenty-year hiatus as a result of the civil war of 1975 to 1990, parliamentary elections were resumed in Lebanon in 1992.³ Ordinarily, the resumption of elections would be an occasion for celebration, but the 1992 election law was ramrodded through the parliament, and protections provided in the Ta'if agreement, including a Constitutional Council, were not implemented in time to function for the elections that were hastily scheduled for August 1992. Given the short time available to confirm lists of voters and otherwise monitor the conduct of the election, many Lebanese viewed the 1992 elections as a ploy by Syria to increase its control over the Beirut government. By ensuring the election of a majority of pro-Syrian parliamentary deputies, Syria could avoid the inconvenience of a recalcitrant legislature that might insist on the enforcement of the Ta'if Accord. That agreement required Syria to withdraw its 40,000 soldiers to positions in Lebanon's Biqa' valley two years after implementation, that is, by September 1992, but this aspect of the agreement was suspended by the Lebanese parliament.

Sensing a fixed election, many Lebanese, especially Christians, mounted a boycott. As a result, in several electoral areas fewer than five percent of eligible Christians voted, and no area had an overall participation higher than 37 percent. In one district (Jubayl), only one Christian vote was cast for every 200 eligible Christian voters. The rates of participation among the Muslims were higher but still well below the customary voting rates.

Arguably the most authentic result of the 1992 elections was in the Shiite Muslim community, where a number of the traditional political bosses were shunted aside by the voters in favor of candidates from Hizballah (the Party of God) and Amal (the Shiite reformist movement).⁴ Although the Shiite Muslims account for at least a third of Lebanon's population and are the largest single confessional group in the country, they have been habitually impoverished and poorly represented in government. In many ways, the long process of politicization and political mobilization among the Shiites that began in the 1950s and culminated in the 1990s has been the central challenge facing Lebanon for some time. After generations of marginalization and being kept outside the system, the Shiites now found themselves in the halls of parliament. Counting victories by its non-Shiite allies, Hizballah won a total of twelve seats in the 1992 elections, making it the largest bloc in parliament. Of course, Hizballah gained notoriety and international opprobrium in the 1980s for its complicity in the kidnapping of foreigners and the devastating 1983 attacks on French soldiers and American marines deployed in Beirut as part of the multinational force. More than 280 American and French servicemen were killed when bomb-laden trucks were driven into their positions. The 1992 elections seem to mark the beginning of a period of transition as Hizballah sought to recreate itself as a political party.

As the 1996 parliamentary elections approached, a new electoral law was passed in July of that year. Like the previous law, this one ignored key provisions of the Ta'if Accord and stipulated that elections in Mount Lebanon, one of Lebanon's five provinces and the center of opposition to the government, would be organized not on the basis of the province, but, exceptionally, on the basis of the *caza* or district. The transparent purpose was to ensure the election of government supporters and to fragment the opposition. Although there was some audible grumbling in parliament, the new law was dutifully passed and elections were announced to begin in August (elections are conducted on five succeeding weeks, in one province after another). As in 1992, the elections were to begin in Mount Lebanon, apparently to give the opposition as little time to prepare as possible.

Some well-known personalities called for a boycott of the elections, including General Michel Aoun; Dory Chamoun, son of a former president; Raymond Edde, the aging but respected head of the National Bloc Party; and former president Amin Gemayel. But even leading participants in the 1992 boycott argued against a repeat. Albert Mukhaibar, the respected Greek Orthodox oppositional figure who was a stalwart of the earlier boycott, argued that it was counterproductive and announced that he would stand for election. (Ironically, Mukhaibar later lost his bid for a seat.) For its part, the U.S. embassy in Beirut urged broad participation in the elections. The U.S. enthusiasm for elections evoked cynicism among many informed Lebanese who anticipated that the election would be anything but fair.

Parliamentary elections in Lebanon are organized using a unique list system, which invites deal making and complicated alliances. Although parliamentary seats are allocated on a confessional bases, voters cast a ballot for every empty seat in their voting district. Thus, in the North province, which accounts for 28 seats in parliament, voters elect nine Maronite, two Alawite, six Greek Orthodox, and eleven Sunni members of parliament. Prominent candidates seek to organize coalitions and often try to persuade their supporters to vote for every member in the electoral coalition. However, voters routinely split their ballot, crossing out less preferred candidates and writing in more popular candidates from other lists, or even independent candidates. As a result, pre-election coalitions sometimes backfire. For instance, voters in Beirut defied government manipulation in order to elect several opposition candidates, including Salim al-Hoss, the respected former prime minister (elected again to that post in late 1998), and Najah Wakim, an outspoken Greek Orthodox critic of the government.

While voting irregularities varied from place to place, reliable reports indicate that a systematic pattern of tampering by the government occurred. Voter lists were often incomplete and inaccurate, newly naturalized citizens were instructed to vote for the government approved list (and did so for fear of losing their coveted identity cards), ballot boxes were stuffed to prevent some embarrassing defeats (apparently including that of Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz), and voters were sometimes denied the right to cast a secret ballot. No

doubt, not all the abuses occurred at the hands of government, but the lion's share clearly did.

The result was a resounding if tainted government victory. In Beirut, where Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri headed his own list, the list captured 14 of 19 seats and only two opposition candidates won seats. The results in Beirut were indicative of the pattern throughout the country. Oppositionists did manage to capture a few seats, but the lion's share of the 128 seats are firmly in the government's and Syria's corner. This means that the Beirut government will continue to acquiesce obediently to Syria's ultimate control over Lebanon.

As noted above, one of the most dramatic aspects of the 1992 elections was the entry of Hizballah, the Party of God, into Lebanese parliamentary politics. Of 27 seats assigned to Shiite Muslims, Hizballah won 8 in 1992, but there was no doubt that the Hizballah candidates were assisted by the Christian boycott. Were they not boycotting, many Christian voters could have been expected to cast a vote against Hizballah.

Contrary to the anxious concerns of some Lebanese, and particularly some western officials, Hizballah performed responsibly in parliament. In fact, the party's deputies proved to be just as pragmatic as their secular colleagues, and often brokered deals and built legislative alliances in order to promote desirable legislation. In this sense, and as a number of leading Lebanese politicians have emphasized in private interviews conducted in 1995 and 1996, the entry of Hizballah into parliament is a success story, yet another proof that participation in the political game tends to moderate radical players. Muhammad Ra'd, president of Hizballah's Political Council, told the author in 1996 that, despite its earlier rejection of any participation in Lebanese political institutions, the party had come to the conclusion that the Ta'if Accord changed the structure of the system so that constructive participation was now possible.

Nonetheless, despite its strong base of popular support, Hizballah faced strong competition in the 1996 elections. Hizballah's campaign stressed its role in resisting Israel's occupation of Lebanon's soil. Thus one ubiquitous poster in West Beirut, which referred to the leading role played by Hizballah fighters in the resistance, said: "They resist with their blood, resist with your vote." Thanks to its record of clean, non-corrupt politics, Hizballah has a broad base of support among the Shiite Muslims, particularly in the southern suburbs of Beirut (called the *dahiya*), but even if its candidates can count on a heavy vote from fellow Shiites, the mixed list system often gives the final word to non-Shiite voters who have the option of choosing other Shiite candidates. Hence in the Ba'abda *caza* the popular Hizballah deputy 'Ali 'Ammar was defeated by a combination of Maronite and Druze enmity and some strong armed manipulation by the Maronite leader of an opposing list.

In addition, Hariri and his colleagues in Syria seem to have been intent to ensure that Hizballah would not expand its role in the political system. In this sense, there may have been a meeting of the minds of the Lebanese government, the Syrians, and U. S. officials. Only seven of the twenty-seven Shiite deputies

elected were from Hizballah. Success in the Lebanese electoral system requires candidates to seek alliances, given the need for electoral support across confessional lines. Hizballah candidates did not fare well in areas where the Shiite Muslims comprise a minority. Non-Shiite voters preferred to vote for more moderate candidates. Moreover, Nabih Berri, the speaker of parliament and head of the rival Amal movement, is in a position to dispense vast patronage, and he is supported by Syria to boot. Including his own seat, eleven of the successful Shiite candidates were allies of Nabih Berri. Two were allies of al-Hariri, one was an ally of al-Hoss, two had a base in a leading party, and four were from traditionally powerful families.

THE NINE-YEAR PRESIDENTIAL TERM

The term for the president in Lebanon is six years, and incumbents are constitutionally prohibited from succeeding themselves. Although the prerogatives of the president were reduced in the Ta'if Agreement, the position continues to be preserved for a Maronite. Whereas prior to Ta'if the presidency was the strongest political position in Lebanon, it is now checked by the prime minister, a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of parliament, a Shiite Muslim. In effect, the top leadership is now a troika of presidents: the president of the republic, the president of the cabinet, and the president of the parliament.

In the autumn of 1995, an election was scheduled to replace President Elias Hrawi, a second tier politician from the town of Zahle in the Biqa' Valley. Hrawi was elected in 1989, following the assassination of President René Moawad, who was killed three weeks after his election. Of the troika, Hrawi's public profile was by far the lowest. He maintained friendly ties with Syria, and Syria was clearly content with his presidential style, as was Prime Minister Hariri. Despite the constitutional prohibition, parliament voted on 19 October 1995 to extend Hrawi's term of office for three years. Speaker Nabih Berri put aside his declared opposition and lent his support to the extraordinary measure. For its part, Syria signaled its preference somewhat subtly, but Lebanese politicians strain hard to read Syrian signals, and they are willing, as in this case, to contort and even ignore Lebanese laws in order to please their Syrian brothers.

In the 128-seat parliament only eleven members found the will to oppose the extension of Hrawi's term, which eventually expired in 1998. Resisting the interpreted will of Damascus has its costs. Of the eleven members who voted against the term extension, only six managed to win reelection in the 1996 elections. Among the victims of government manipulation of the elections were several popular and well-regarded figures, including the leftist Habib Sadeq, who has strong popular support in southern Lebanon; Mikhail Daher, who was promoted for the presidency by Syria in 1988; and 'Isam Na'man, a respected Beirut attorney.

As this example illustrates, while some restructuring of the political system has occurred, there is little prospect for comprehensive political reforms so long as power remains in the grip of a coterie of politicians on good terms

with Damascus. Instead, the government is used like a giant patronage machine, enabling newly entrenched political bosses to busily create networks of clients and to grow richer on sweetheart deals. For instance, in September 1997 the government decided to reduce the number of authorized television stations to four. On the face of it, the decision was sensible, since a crazy-quilt of stations had emerged during the war, most associated with one militia group or another. The details tell a different story. The four authorized stations are owned by the prime minister, the speaker of the parliament, the interior minister, and a wealthy businessman in partnership with the grandson of a former president. Not only are the stations important sources of advertising revenue, but the government seems to be intent on controlling the political coverage offered by television, just as it has sometimes sought to intimidate and control the stubbornly outspoken print media. Reportedly, Syria objected that the government's decision affected al-Manar, the Hizballah television station, and on 2 October of the same year, al-Manar was allowed to resume broadcasting.⁵

FRIENDS

Since 1991 Syria has enveloped Lebanon politically and diplomatically. A web of agreements and pacts now link the two countries and serve to legitimate Syrian meddling in Lebanese affairs. These range from a Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination and a Pact on Defense and Security, signed in 1991, to bilateral agreements on agriculture, social and economic affairs, health, and the movement of individuals and goods, signed in 1993. The common denominator is that each agreement has served to bring Lebanon closer to the embrace of Syria.

Lebanon, like Syria, attended the Madrid peace conference in 1991, and, with the exception of a brief period in 1993, Beirut has basically followed the lead of Damascus in negotiations with Israel. Syria has, for instance, refused to participate in the multilateral negotiations launched under U.S. and Russian sponsorship in Moscow in January 1992. Hafez al-Asad has argued that the multilateral talks, which deal with the environment, economic development, security, water, and the issue of refugees, serve to lend legitimacy to Israel, conferring the prizes of peace before Israel has earned them by withdrawing from occupied Arab territory. Lebanon has followed the Syrian lead scrupulously, despite the fact the one of the most pressing issues confronting Lebanon in the peace process is the fate of the approximately 350,000 Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon. Arguably, it would serve Lebanon's interests to participate in the multilateral talks at least on the refugee question, especially since the government has emphatically declared that it opposes "normalizing" the refugees and integrating them into Lebanese society.

Early in his tenure as prime minister, in February 1993, Rafiq al-Hariri outlined the parameters for negotiations with Israel. Lebanon was willing, he declared, to sign any agreement with Israel, short of a peace treaty, based on

United Nations Security Council Resolution 425, the 1978 resolution that calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon. He rejected any linkage with Resolutions 242 and 338, which deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict and the principle of land for peace, since the occupation of southern Lebanon by Israel is unequivocally rejected in Resolution 425, and in Resolution 425, unlike Resolutions 242 and 338, there is no suggestion of a principle of territorial adjustment. Finally, he declared his refusal to wait for progress by other parties negotiating with Israel. Hariri's independent position did not survive the spring, and by October 1993 Lebanon announced a policy of "total coordination" with Syria.

Diplomatically, Lebanon has been relatively isolated since 1993, when it became clear that Beirut had tied its fate to Syria in the peace process. In Washington it became increasingly common for officials to presume that Lebanon's "zip code" was the same as Syria's. The United States has continued to emphasize its continuing commitment to the territorial integrity of the country, to the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanese soil, and to the reestablishment of peace and security. Nonetheless, U.S. Middle East policy under President Bill Clinton has been remarkably partial to Israeli perspectives, and especially so in southern Lebanon, where Washington has often offered unconditional support for Israel's actions. This penchant was clearly demonstrated in April 1996, during Israel's "Grapes of Wrath" operation (discussed below). Despite the fact that Israel's continuing presence in the south is in clear violation of Resolution 425, which the United States sponsored, President Bill Clinton accepted Israel's assertions that it was acting only to protect its own security and took no action except to emphasize its support for Israel.

Some U.S. policies have served to isolate Lebanon and arguably have further nudged Lebanon into Syria's brotherly embrace, none more so than the passport ban. Since 1985, when hijackers sympathetic to Hizballah hijacked a TWA airliner to Beirut and killed an American sailor who was a passenger, American citizens have been prohibited from using their passports to travel to Lebanon (this policy is typically mislabeled as a "travel ban," but such a ban would be hard to sustain under constitutional challenge). In fact, more than 40,000 U.S. citizens have traveled to Lebanon, either using a Lebanese visa in the case of some Lebanese-Americans, or simply by securing a Lebanese visa on a piece of paper that substitutes for the passport. In point of fact, outside the occupied south, the physical dangers confronting the traveler are far more extreme in many other countries and regions, including Russia, Latin America, and Africa, and there has not been an act of political violence against a westerner since the 1980s. Politically, there is no serious domestic incentive for the ban to be lifted, and it also lends U.S. diplomats a prize that can be awarded to Lebanon should the peace process move forward. The United States has refused to lift the ban despite persistent Lebanese requests, citing continuing but undisclosed dangers in Lebanon. Those dangers are emphasized on the scene by U.S. diplomats who travel only in heavily armored convoys accompanied by

their own SWAT teams, or "Ninjas," as the Lebanese term them. Symbolically, the continuation of the passport ban (now lifted) dampened investment in Lebanon, especially by U.S. business.

The U.S. position, both on the passport ban and on broader Arab-Israeli issues, has opened a path for France to reassert its historic role in Lebanon. Prime Minister Hariri was quick to welcome France's involvement. In fact, Hariri garnered significant credit for his relationship with President Jacques Chirac, which helped reduce Lebanon's sense of diplomatic isolation. Following the artillery massacre of Lebanese civilians who sought refuge at the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) camp in Qana in April 1996, when both Israel and the United States became anxious to bring the embarrassing violence to an end, it was a French draft of the cease-fire plan that carried the day, notably preserving the right of the Lebanese to resist the continuing Israeli occupation.

THE BLEEDING SOUTH

Israel has been heavily involved in southern Lebanon since the civil war began in 1975. Since then it has sought to cultivate and fortify local allies who, in return for Israeli support, would assist in securing Israel's northern border. Since 1985 this policy has taken the form of the self-declared "Security Zone," an area that comprises about 10 percent of all Lebanese territory. From the perspective of many observers as well as the Lebanese government, the Security Zone is little more than a euphemism for occupation, a position that is buttressed by Resolution 425, which calls unconditionally for Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. Israel, for its part, argues that its only objective is security, that it has no territorial ambitions in Lebanon, and that it will withdraw provided satisfactory security arrangements are made. Since 1993, the question of the south has been captive to the Israeli-Syrian peace negotiations. In effect, it is presumed by Washington, Tel Aviv, Damascus, and Beirut that an Israeli-Syrian agreement will deal not only with the fate of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights but with the Security Zone as well. Attempts by Lebanon to negotiate directly with Israel, especially in 1983 and 1993, have foundered on Syrian objections to separate negotiations (which would isolate Syria).

For more than a decade a deadly war of resistance to the Israeli occupation has been fought by Lebanese, and especially by the Iranian-backed Hizballah, which is the dominant force in the self-styled "Islamic Resistance." Attacks occur almost daily, and all sides have suffered losses. In 1996, through September and excluding the "Grapes of Wrath" operation discussed below, 21 Israeli soldiers, 16 members of Israel's proxy militia (the South Lebanon Army or SLA), 33 members of the Islamic resistance, 8 Palestinian fighters, and 15 civilians were killed.

Over time very clear—but unstable—rules of the game have emerged between the Israelis and the SLA on the one hand, and the resistance forces on the other. Israel would refrain from attacking civilian targets in Lebanon, while

the resistance would focus its actions on the Security Zone. This *modus vivendi* was formalized as an oral agreement in 1993, following Israel's Operation Accountability, launched in July of that year. Nonetheless, the 1993 agreement only sufficed to temporarily reduce the intensity of violence and counter-violence. By 1996, after Hizballah fired *katyusha* rockets into Israel in retaliation for the killing of Lebanese civilians, the IDF again launched a major campaign into Lebanon. Operation Grapes of Wrath, initiated in April 1996, was intended to undermine popular support for Hizballah among the Lebanese, as well as to prompt Syria to rein in Hizballah. The strategy failed, largely as a result of the horrible slaughter at a UN base in southern Lebanon, where scores of civilians seeking refuge from IDF air and ground attacks were killed by Israeli artillery. As CNN broadcast horrific pictures of mangled and burned civilians, U.S. diplomacy swung into action. Secretary of State Warren Christopher succeeded in gaining acceptance by all sides to the same rules that had been orally accepted in 1993. This time, the agreement was committed to an unsigned piece of paper.

The April understanding specifies that armed groups are not allowed to launch attacks against Israeli territory; that Israel and its allies are not allowed to bombard civilians or civilian targets; that both sides commit themselves to avoid attacks on civilians and launching attacks from civilian areas; and that nothing in the agreement would prevent the right to self-defense. The agreement also provides for a monitoring group of the United States, France, Lebanon, Syria, and Israel to oversee the implementation of the agreement and to receive complaints of violations, and for a consultative group, including France, the United States, the European Union, and Russia, to help Lebanon in its reconstruction efforts. It is noteworthy that, while Israel asserts that it is not an occupying force, it has tacitly accepted the right of the Lebanese to attack Israeli soldiers on Lebanese soil.

Of course, the rules of the game will inevitably be violated. Both sides have blatantly disregarded time-honored principles of non-combatant immunity and proportionality.⁶ Resistance attacks spark Israeli reprisals, which lead to civilian deaths simply because Israel's standards for discriminate retaliation are sometimes quite loose, especially after Israeli soldiers have been killed. In addition, on a day to day basis the IDF often adopts a shoot first, ask questions later policy, which makes daily life more than a bit risky for those who live in the shadow of the Security Zone. In point of fact, civilians are regularly killed "by accident," and in greater cumulative numbers than either members of the resistance or the IDF or SLA.

Over the course of the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon there have been relatively few civilians killed in Israel as a result of fire from Lebanon. Since 1982 twelve Israeli civilians have been killed as a result of attacks launched from the South, and since 1993 only three have died. These deaths are regrettable, but they are modest in number by comparison with the toll in Lebanese civilians, for whom the price of Israeli security has been high. The combined Lebanese civilian deaths incurred during the 1993 and 1996 invasions

total nearly 300, including the 103 or 104 people massacred in the Israeli shelling of the UNIFIL base in Qana in April 1996. In the period between Operation Accountability in 1993 and Operation Grapes of Wrath, 45 Lebanese civilians were killed by the Israelis or their allies, compared to three Israeli civilians.

The report of the UN Secretary General's military advisor demonstrates that it is likely Israel fired on the UNIFIL site in Qana intentionally and with disregard for the lives of civilians housed there, as well as the safety of UNIFIL soldiers.⁷ The report shows that the thirteen shells that fell on the compound were decisively not accidental overshots, but exploded where they had been aimed. This tragic incident illustrates the disdain for innocent lives that often characterizes the actions of the IDF in Israel.

The logic of Israel's "iron fist" is to punish Lebanese civilians disproportionately for the IDF's inability to prevent attacks on its own soldiers as well for the retaliatory firing of katyusha rockets at Israel. Israeli strategists consistently assume that by imposing an awesome burden on the Lebanese—as when 400,000 people were roused from their homes and given a few hours to flee on threat of bombardment in April 1996—support for the resistance will wither. This is a clear strategic miscalculation reflecting an inability to understand that the attacks on the Security Zone are widely popular because many Lebanese believe that a reduction in pressure will induce Israel not to leave but to stay.

Washington and Tel Aviv call regularly for the disarming of Hizballah, and Israel has made the de-fanging of Hizballah a precondition for withdrawal, as though it were merely a collection of fanatically-crazed gunmen directed by Iran and manipulated by Syria. In effect, Israel and its friends in Washington often assume that Hizballah is a mirror image of the SLA, namely, an easily manipulated and completely dependent proxy force. This is a faulty image. Hizballah's role in the resistance has won it support, especially among the Shiites of the Beirut suburbs, whose roots are usually in the south, and Hizballah looks more and more like an efficient political party.

Although Hizballah refuses to engage in any direct negotiations with Israel, which it routinely excoriates in brutal language, it has negotiated indirectly with Israel. It did so most recently in July 1996, when, through German mediators, Israel and Hizballah agreed to the exchange of the remains of their fallen fighters. A small step, obviously, but the corpse talks may have opened a useful channel for further dialogue. Hizballah has maintained a position of calculated ambiguity in terms of what it will do should Israel actually withdraw from the south. While it is widely believed in Lebanon that the violence against Israel would then stop, Hizballah has avoided saying this directly. In this sense, its calculated ambiguity makes it far easier for Israel to justify staying than leaving.

In fact, if Israel withdraws from the south, it will be a relatively simple matter for the Lebanese army to disarm Hizballah, because its *raison d'être* is not

limited to bullets and bombs. Conversely, without an Israeli withdrawal, Hizballah has broad support for refusing to put down its weapons. As for Hizballah's external friends Iran and Syria, they have no incentive to end the resistance. For Iran, Israel is anathema, and for Syria, Hizballah's pressure on Israel serves an instrumental purpose; namely, it raises Syria's value as a negotiating partner and increases the likelihood that Syrian suzerainty in Lebanon will be formally recognized to the disadvantage of the Lebanese.

In July 1996, responding to pressure from the Israeli military, which has begun to question the tenability of the Israeli position in Lebanon, especially after the heavy criticism that followed the Qana massacre, and in a patent attempt to send a message to Syria, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu released a new trial balloon to test the idea of a "Lebanon first" option. Rather than considering the question of the South as an adjunct to broader negotiations with Syria, Netanyahu proposed the idea of an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in return for appropriate security arrangements, including the disarming of Hizballah. From Israel's perspective, the idea has a lot to recommend it. First, and perhaps primarily, it might relieve the pressure on Israel from the United States to make concessions in other realms of the peace process, namely, in the remaining occupied areas of the West Bank. Equally enticing, by leaving southern Lebanon, Israel would be eliminating Syria's trump card. Predictably, Syria rejected the proposal, arguing that Damascus holds the key to peace in South Lebanon. The Lebanese obediently followed suit, citing the proposal as a ploy intended to weaken Syria and therefore Lebanon. At the end of the day, the trial balloon may have been good public relations, but it only served to underline that Israeli-Syrian negotiations are the only game in town.

CONCLUSION

Lebanon continues to be captive to the peace process. Lebanon's senior politicians have shown no enthusiasm for staking out an independent path and have resigned themselves to following the Syrian lead. Israel has been perfectly content to accept Syria as its main interlocutor for Lebanese matters, and the United States, while maintaining diplomatic representation in Beirut, has also presumed that the Lebanese are not masters of their own fate. Threatening troop movements by the Israeli, Lebanese, and Syrian armies in October 1996 served to highlight the stakes in the peace process for all concerned parties, although the maneuvers were clearly moves on the diplomatic chessboard as the players repositioned themselves for the next stage in negotiations.

The subordination of Lebanese politics to Syrian interests is for now a fact. Lebanon's independence is a hostage to the peace process. Whether the hostage will be released at the end of the process remains a central question.

NOTES

1. For a fuller discussion see Ronald D. McLaurin, "Lebanon: Into or Out of Oblivion?" *Current History* (January 1992): 29-33.

2. Precise data on the number of Syrian workers do not exist, since few of them have work permits but instead enter Lebanon on three-week tourist permits.

3. Excellent coverage of Lebanon's elections is found in *al-Nahar* and *al-Safir*, the leading Beirut dailies, as well as *al-Hayat*, now the newspaper of record in the Arab world. For an analysis of the 1992 elections in English see Jillian Schwedler, "Swiss Soldiers, Ta'if Clocks, and Early Elections: Towards a Happy Ending in Lebanon?" *Middle East Insight* 10, no. 1 (November-December 1993): 45-54; for an excellent summary of the 1996 elections see *Lebanon Report*, new series, 3 (Fall 1996).

4. For a discussion of the emergence of these Shiite groups see the author's "Estrangement and Fragmentation in Lebanon," *Current History* (February 1986): 58-62, 88-89.

5. For more details see *Lebanon Report*, new series, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 8-10.

6. A recent and carefully researched study by Human Rights Watch is essential for understanding events in southern Lebanon. See *Civilian Pawns: Laws of War Violations and the Use of Weapons on the Israel-Lebanon Border* (New York, London, Brussels, and Washington: Human Rights Watch, 1996).

7. The report, prepared by Major-General Franklin van Kappen, a Dutch officer serving on the staff of the Secretary General, is Security Council document S/1996/137, dated 7 May 1996. A 1997 report by Amnesty International reached similar conclusions.

TRANSFORMATION OF EDUCATION: WILL IT LEAD TO INTEGRATION?

Shams C. Inati

THIS ESSAY IS INTENDED TO SHOW that the Lebanese government's criticism of the Lebanese educational system that was in existence from 1968 to 1994 is not fully justified and cannot, therefore, serve as grounds for making the basic changes in it that have been made; and that these recent changes, though they may be good in part, will not lead to the goal of individual and social integration.

Most discussions about Lebanon focus on areas such as politics, economics, sectarianism, and the environment. Education does not usually feature in such discussions. Education must not be forgotten, however. It is the making of a country, since it is the making of its future generations. I take it the term "transformation" is clear enough. Before we discuss whether the transformation of education in Lebanon today will lead to integration, however, it is appropriate to identify the terms "education" and "integration," and to set the background that has led to the very recent transformation of the Lebanese educational system.

By "education" I mean the process of developing the moral, intellectual, emotional, or physical potentialities of an individual or of society. Of course, good education requires the development of such potentialities in ways suitable to this well-being. But the development of any or all of these potentialities is not sufficient, though necessary, to create individual and social well-being. Integration of all such developed potentialities is also required. By "integration," I understand allowing the moral, intellectual, emotional, and physical potentialities on individual and social levels to work harmoniously with each other. In other words, in integration there is always a diversity of elements that work harmoniously together. This is what Plato would call "justice," where the various faculties and various players fulfill their specific roles without overpowering or impeding the roles of the other faculties and other players.¹

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However, it would seem that the best type of integration is that which allows the working together, not of just any variety of individual and social elements, but only of those elements that are conducive to individual and social well-being.

We should keep in mind, therefore, that not all integration is desirable, only that which enhances as much as possible the well-being of the part and of the whole in society through integrating the developed moral, intellectual, emotional, and physical potentialities in the most constructive way possible. The ultimate objective of education must be to bring about the well-being of individuals and society through this best kind of integration. Of course, absolute integration in this sense is probably impossible to obtain in any individual or social setting. There are always natural and genetic elements that resist any educational efforts and stand in the way of such integration. The best one can hope for is a relatively high degree of desirable integration. The issue before us now is this. Did the old educational system that has been applied until recently in Lebanon suffer from problems that stood in the way of this type of integration and, hence of individual and social well-being in Lebanon, necessitating thereby the transformation of this system?

HISTORY AND RESPONSIBILITY

In trying to assess the causes of the most recent Lebanese civil war, some people place the blame, in part or in whole, on the Lebanese educational system. Their main claim is that, by giving the various religious sects the right to have their own private schools, the system gave those sects the ability to destroy the identity of the Lebanese and, hence, their integration, owing to the fact that certain religious sects taught in their schools materials contradictory to those taught by other religious sects.

To go back in history, it is true that, as early as 1535, Sultan Sulayman (r. 1520-1566) gave the French community in Lebanon the right to have its own schools and to have control over those schools. Certain Christian communities then received the same right. The story of the missionaries who arrived in Lebanon in the nineteenth century and brought their schools with them is well known. What we now call the American University of Beirut was established by the Presbyterians in 1866 under the name Syrian Protestant College. The French Jesuits established Saint Joseph University in 1887. In 1888 the local Sunnis founded al-Maqasid. The Shi'ites opened their schools in 1910. The mandate gave the various religious communities the right to have their schools. The Constitution of the First Republic in 1926 confirmed these rights, on condition, first, that these communities abide by government regulations regarding education; second, that they not infringe on the rights of other communities; and third, that they not disturb the moral and public order.² These rights were reasserted in 1946 and preserved when the educational system was revised in 1968.

Now we can address the question whether these rights in themselves are responsible for destroying the identity and integration of the Lebanese. In other

words, are we to blame the educational system for the disintegration of Lebanese society just because this system gave the Lebanese communities the freedom to open private religious schools? It would seem that the blame for the disintegration of Lebanese society must not be placed on these rights in themselves, but in part on the fact that these communities did not have the foresight and sense of responsibility to prevent their schools from plunging the country into the disintegration and destruction it witnessed. In their schools, these communities misused education and taught materials that were essentially different, if not contradictory. This was the case especially in the fields of history and language, the two areas that could either bring people together or distance them from each other. Some communities, for example, stress in their schools, whether directly or indirectly, the idea that the Lebanese are Arabs and must be proud of their Arabic language. Others stress the opposite, that the Lebanese are non-Arabs, and so perhaps a language like French is more befitting to their linkage to the West and to their special "non-Arab" status in the region.

With time, the gaps among these communities (whether religious or secular, native or foreign) grew wider and wider. Furthermore, to create what they referred to as a "balance," communities made an effort to strengthen their private schools and the curriculum in those schools. This effort widened the gap even further, something which, to a great extent, was responsible for what looks like the total disintegration of Lebanese society, thus the tragedy of 1975.

What in a sense helped fulfill the interests of these communities was the fact that the government had no supervision over the private schools and did not begin establishing public schools to counterbalance the teachings of the private ones until quite late. For example, the Lebanese State University was opened almost 100 years after the American University of Beirut had been established. The former was opened in 1951 and did not begin to operate properly until 1959. Moreover, even when public schools were opened, they remained much weaker than the private ones and primarily hosted students from financially poor sectors. Also, one of the most essential stages of education, preschool education, remained limited to private schools until 1971. And even then public schools devoted only two years to this stage of education, whereas private schools devoted three.³

Thus the government, too, was to a large extent responsible for the disintegration and tragedy by its lack of supervision and slowness in attempting to introduce public balanced views, not by the mere fact that it entitled religious sects to have private schools. To blame the government or the educational system in Lebanon for giving the religious communities the right to open private schools is like blaming God for giving human beings freedom just because certain people commit certain sins. In the United States, religious communities have the right to have private religious schools. For example, the Catholic Augustinian order was given the right in 1842 to open and manage Villanova University. But this did not entitle the Augustinians to turn Villanova into a divisive factor in American society.

As a matter of fact, private schools in the United States had complete freedom in the type of curriculum they adopted, as opposed to their Lebanese counterparts, which despite a degree of freedom in this regard had to submit to certain unified demands by the educational system. For example, students in all Lebanese schools, whether private or public, were required to sit for three official exams. This created a common element among these schools that is absent in American schools. Still, the Lebanese religious communities somehow managed to create a certain degree of divisiveness and disintegration in the society, whether by adding hours to teach materials over those required by the system or simply by including such materials during the regular hours.

Two factors have been mentioned as causes of disintegration in Lebanon, especially on the social level: the irresponsibility of the religious communities in the way they applied the educational system and the absence of an official response to counteract this irresponsibility. Was the curriculum itself a third factor? In what follows, the nature of the curriculum will be briefly examined. For the time being, suffice it to say that, even if the curriculum were perfect, the above two factors would have been sufficient to end integration in Lebanese life.

EDUCATION PRIOR TO TRANSFORMATION

No doubt the educational system in Lebanon needed some reform, primarily in the area of teachers' training and application and, of course, in updating information techniques and facilities. But through Markaz at-Tarbiya (the Center for Education), the government argued that the teaching curriculum and methods it had approved in 1968 and 1971, and which had been applied since then, suffered from problems, the elimination of which could help in the desirable integration of Lebanese life.⁴ Some of the problems identified were:

1. *Especially on the lower levels, the teaching curriculum and methods focused primarily on quantity, theory, and individual learning, as opposed to quality, application, and group learning.* The teacher was the center of the learning experience and the student an uncritical passive learner. It is true the system then focused on quantity, but it is not true that that was to the exclusion of quality. My first-hand experience with the system is that it focused on both quantity and quality. The Arabic and English literature taught, for example, was qualitatively excellent. I would agree that the system focused on theory, where theory is possible, such as in geometry. But it did not exclude facts, where the study of facts is possible, such as in history and geography. It did not stress application, but it did not exclude it altogether, especially in physics, where students were required occasionally to apply certain theories. The teacher was the center of the learning experience, but the students cannot be described as inactive learners. The very heavy problem solving in physics, chemistry, algebra, and geometry and the literary and grammar analysis, for example, in which students engaged cannot at all count as passive learning, except if learning is

considered passive so long as the student is not the central figure and determinant of the learning situation.

2. *The curriculum was dissociated from vocational education on the various levels.* This was true in the academic schools, but there were vocational schools for those wishing to specialize in vocations.

3. *Pre-college education did not prepare the student for higher education or for the labor market.* Such preparation means beginning specialization in branches of learning and labor areas at the pre-college level. But the value of such early specialization is highly debatable. First, it would seem to deprive students from delving deeper into the branches they had begun to study, and moving on to touch superficially on new areas. Second, there seems to be no need to begin specialization in high school by way of preparing for college, when the majority of high school students have not so far selected to go to college. The statistics in item 6 below show only 2 percent of high school students going to college. Of course, these statistics may change in time, but it would seem that as one may begin specialization in high school, one may also begin it in college. I am of the belief that if one has a strong background in high school, one should find no difficulty specializing in college in the area in which one is interested. The same is true with regard to labor specialization. Instead of specializing in labor areas while in high school, one can do so afterward.

4. *Technological education was absent.* Yes, but this was because technology itself was absent.

5. *Students' education had no relationship to their environment.* According to the government, this fact left the schools in isolation and away from the benefits they could derive from the various opportunities in their surroundings. This is perhaps true.

6. *The educational system led to many drop-outs and failures.* According to the Center for Education statistics for 1981-82, the number of students dropping out or simply failing was very high. Of 1000 students, 340 dropped out of school on the elementary level, 247 on the intermediate level, and 223 on the secondary level; only 190 students remained in the last secondary class. That is, only about two out of ten students graduated from high school.

Again, this is perhaps true, but it does not necessarily indicate deficiencies in the curriculum itself. It is possible, for example, to have an excellent curriculum, yet have many failures and drop-outs owing to the teachers' poor application of the curriculum. I am not asserting that this was the problem. I am simply stating that the failures and drop-outs cannot be logically attributed to the curriculum unless there is evidence for that.

In sum, the government's readiness to transform the educational system that had been in place since 1968 into a new one was based on the argument that under the existing system the learning experience focused on quantity, theory, and student passivity; the curriculum did not deal with vocational training, college preparation, technology, and the environment; and the curriculum was responsible for a large number of drop-outs and failures. While there is some truth to some of these points, such as the dissociation of the curriculum from the

environment, for the most part the government failed to demonstrate the soundness of its argument, namely, that the failure of the educational system was necessarily linked to a deficiency in the educational curriculum, something that (in its view) necessitated essential changes in the curriculum themselves.

THE RECENTLY PROPOSED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The Ta'if Accord signed in 1989 dictates the following terms that would improve, according to it, the Lebanese educational system in ways that would help fulfill the needs of the Lebanese people and create a sense of integration among them.

1. Education must be available to all and compulsory at least on the elementary level.

2. Academic freedom must be ensured in accordance with the law.

3. Teaching in private schools must be protected, but government supervision over these schools and over the unity of textbooks must be strengthened.

4. Public, vocational, and technological teaching must be reformed and promoted in ways that fit the needs of the country for development and reconstruction. Under this term it is added that conditions in the Lebanese University must be reformed and support must be given to it, especially to its academic units that deal with applied sciences.

5. The curriculum must be reconsidered and developed in ways that promote national belonging (*al-intima'*) and integration (*al-insihar*), spiritual and cultural openness, and unity of textbooks in history and civics.

The new elements the Ta'if Accord seem to have brought to the picture are these: strong government supervision over private teaching institutions; accommodation of the reconstruction of Lebanon by reforming public, vocational, and technological teaching; changes in the educational curriculum to induce national belonging, integration, and spiritual and cultural unity; and insistence on the unity of textbooks, in particular for history and civics. These terms are broad and vague and may be subject to various interpretations. For example, the expression "national belonging" is vague unless the nature of the Lebanese nation is specified with clarity and in detail. In any case, when the Lebanese civil war ended in 1990, the government decided to transform the educational system into a system that takes into consideration the above terms of the Ta'if Accord and avoids what the government considered shortcomings of the previous system. In the view of the government, this new system would, among other things, meet the requirements set in the fifth term of the Ta'if Accord and, therefore, bring the Lebanese together and create integration in Lebanese society. This new system was first advanced in *al-Haykaliyya*,⁵ which was approved by the cabinet on 25 October 1995. By "framework for education" the government means:

The general frame, which defines the direction, kinds and branches of education and the relationship of general academic education to vocational and technological education; the relation of pre-college education to higher education; and the link of various types and degrees of education to the market of labor and production, the needs and future aspirations of the Lebanese society. (*al-Haykaliyya*, pp. ii, 24, 27)

Al-Haykaliyya asserts that, therefore, the new framework is intended to pave the way for the introduction of “interrelated and integrated new curricula for all kinds, branches and degrees of education.”

The new curricula were fully elaborated in 1997 in *Manahij at-Ta'lam al-'am wa-Ahdafuha* (The Curricula for Public Education and Their Objectives). Let us first examine *al-Haykaliyya* and then see whether it would create educational changes that would bring about in Lebanese society the type of desirable integration defined above. For education to succeed in achieving this type of integration depends on a number of factors, the most important of which are the curriculum and application. What follows is a brief synopsis of the new curriculum.

Al-Haykaliyya requires twelve years of pre-college education (ages 6-18), as was required under the previous system. Basic education (elementary and intermediate levels) will by the dictates of *al-Haykaliyya* require nine years of education (ages 6-15). The elementary level will require six years instead of five as required by the old system (three for the first stage, ages 6-9; three for the second, ages 9-12) and the intermediate level will require three (ages 12-15). The secondary level will continue to require three years (age 16-18) (p. iii).⁶

On the secondary level some interesting changes are to be made in the field of what is referred to as “general” or “formal” education, which is to be understood as academic education. Four areas of study are identified in this field (pp. 26-29):

- (A) Humanities (*insaniyyat* or *adabi*: literature, art, languages, history, philosophy, religion, civics, and so on).
- (B) Social and economic sciences (*ijtima' wa iqtisad*: economics, politics, administration, law, sociology, and so on).
- (C) General sciences (*'ulum 'amma*: mathematics, physics, and chemistry).
- (D) Natural sciences (*'ulum al-hayat*: biology, medicine, agriculture, and so on).

Social and economic sciences is a new area, intended to take into account new developments requiring new skills not provided for by the old secondary curriculum. It is stated that this area was created in light of the

progress made in developed countries with respect to this area and the need of Lebanon for this kind of specialization (pp. 3, 31). But it is not shown why the progress of a certain field in “developed countries” necessitates the adoption of the same field in Lebanon, or Lebanon’s need for this field as such. In any case, the first secondary year forms a common ground for the four areas. The second forms a common ground for each two of the four areas. It is to be understood that the third and last year is to be devoted to specialization.

The technical or vocational secondary level is also three years. It branches into three areas: agriculture, industry, and public service (tourism, trade, management, and so on). Agriculture and industry are distinct areas in the first year. Public service does not branch out till the second year. So in the first year a student must take agriculture and public service or industry and public service. In the second and third years the student must take only one of the three areas.

Al-Haykaliyya stresses that one of the objectives of the new system is to ensure that students do not turn to nonacademic vocational or technological education before age 12 (age 12 being the end of the stage of compulsory education required by the new system; the end of the stage of compulsory education *hoped for* by the new *Haykaliyya* being the age of 15) (pp. iii, 31, 35). It is worth noting, though, that the end of compulsory education under the old system was also age 12. The difference between the new and the old systems in regard to this issue so far seems to be only in terms of hope.

What about the ideas and skills the new curriculum proposes to advance? Such ideas and skills may be summarized as follows:

Catering to Students' Needs

The new system asserts that teachers must cater to the needs of the students. But “education” has been defined as the process of developing the students’ potentialities, not catering to their needs. A potentiality is not the same as a need. John’s potentiality for walking, for example, is his capacity for learning to walk or to acquire the ability for walking. His need for walking, on the other hand, is his lack of walking when at the same time walking is with respect to him a suitable or desired activity, whether in reality or in imagination. To cater to students’ needs, therefore, is to try to satisfy the lack or deficiency of things that are in reality or imagination suitable or desired from the point of view of students. This is to say that to cater to students’ needs would be more like mirroring a lack of something whose presence for them is considered suitable or desired. Such mirroring, however, may be an impediment to the development of their potentialities. This could cause education to run into conflicting circumstances and perhaps even into self-contradiction. For, on the one hand, education would serve as a mirror of the students’ needs; that is, it would keep potentialities as they are. On the other hand, it would strive to make a change by developing these potentialities, as required by the definition of “education”

stated above. Perhaps what is intended is catering to students' capacities and abilities, not catering to their needs, as is stated in *al-Haykaliyya*.

Compulsory Education

The new Framework requires compulsory education up to the age of 12, expressing the hope that in time a gradual move will be made to raise the age of compulsory education to 15 (pp. 23, 46). But a careful reading of the text reveals that two types of education will be at work: the systematic and the nonsystematic (pp. 27, 29, 42).

The systematic type, which extends over fourteen years (ages 4-18), is described as consisting of two main levels: basic, which in turn is divided into three sub-levels: kindergarten, elementary, and intermediate; and secondary, which includes academic and vocational types. The nonsystematic, which is not limited to specific ages and is not bound by strict educational rules, is described as opportunities given to the various social and vocational sectors and is intended primarily for social and job promotion. The nonsystematic type of education requires only 25 percent theoretical education; the rest is practical. Furthermore, in nonsystematic education, students are allowed after elementary school to focus completely on vocational skills, such as carpentry, dressmaking, and so on (p. 28). In other words, such students may depart from academic education as soon as they are 12 years old. This means that, like the old system, the new one does not enforce compulsory education beyond the age of 12, except if what is meant by "compulsory education" is compulsory learning of any type of information or skill, including skills related to vocations. I take it, though, that is not the common understanding of "compulsory education." Rather, the expression commonly refers to compulsory academic education. Moreover, why does the new system call for a gradual move from 12 to 15 years of age as the years for compulsory education? Why can it not impose compulsory education until the age of 15 immediately?

Religious Education

The new system does not promote the teaching of religion at any level. (This curricular plan seems to be intended for public schools only, though it is not asserted to be the case.) This attempt to avoid including an essential element of the humanities in the curriculum seems to run contrary to the assertion made in the Introduction to *al-Haykaliyya*, namely, that it is never possible for the Lebanese system to deny the religious communities the right to have their own schools and to teach their religion and that one of the objectives of secondary education is to prepare the student for "understanding the essence of religion and its role in the spiritual, moral and human integration of the individual" (p. 53). This is also despite the further claim that one of the objectives of the new system is "the awareness that the spiritual heritage in Lebanon, represented in the monotheistic religions, is a precious heritage, which should be preserved and

strengthened as a model for spiritual and intellectual interaction and openness, since it is contradictory to the systems and doctrines that are based on racial discrimination and religious fanaticism” (p. 33). It seems that what is stated in the Introduction is for public consumption, and what is stated in the text is intended for inclusion in the curriculum. In any case, a more recent development regarding the present point is this. After strong negative reactions from the religious communities to the above proposal, the government consented to allowing the teaching of Islam on Friday and the teaching of Christianity on Sunday, with the proviso that any religious instruction is to be optional to students. But one would expect all Lebanese students to be required to study both Islam and Christianity, since these are the two major religions in Lebanon. The Lebanese government seems to have the idea that, if religion is not taught, religion will go away and, therefore, the “sectarian problem” in Lebanon will evaporate. But keeping people ignorant about their religion and that of their compatriots will not help create more understanding than keeping them informed, and will therefore not facilitate but worsen communication among them.

Languages

Knowledge of languages, which has always been highly emphasized in Lebanon, seems to be diminished by the new Framework. This is particularly true in the case of Arabic, despite the assertion that in identity Lebanon is an Arab country (pp. 34, 36), that its official language is Arabic (p. 36), and that one of the objectives of *al-Haykaliyya* is to deepen the students’ knowledge of Arabic and help them become proud of it as their native language (p. 54). But, according to the text of the document, students are not to be more exposed in class to the study of the Arabic language than they are to be exposed to other languages, and nothing is to be done to bring the Arabic language closer to the students’ hearts and minds than are some foreign languages. For example, in the first three years of elementary education they are to receive seven hours weekly of Arabic and seven of a foreign language. At the second level of elementary education, they are to receive six hours of Arabic and six of a foreign language (p. 47). At the intermediate level, students will have six hours of Arabic, six of a foreign language, and two of another foreign language (p. 51). Furthermore, in some secondary branches, languages in general are to be given only as many hours as physical education or vocational studies are to be given, namely, two hours a week. In any case, it is not clear how the government expects students to become proud of the Arabic language and have a special affinity to it, when at no level are they given more training in it than in at least one other foreign language.

Reasoning

Reasoning on the part of students does not figure explicitly in the new Framework. Critical and analytical thinking is not encouraged, though one of the reasons offered by the government for the new system is its criticism of the absence of such reasoning under the old system. Some of the subjects known for promoting reasoning and critical thinking, such as analytical philosophy and logic, are missing from the curriculum. This is despite the fact that scholars in the West, like Matthew Lipman, have discovered that teaching logic, for example, even on the elementary level, sharpens students' rational skills.⁷ The development of reasoning requires more than active learning of just any sort. Active learning of concrete things, for example, may be good, but it may not help develop the students' rational skills as much as active learning of abstract concepts and logical methods. On the whole, *al-Haykaliyya* seems to stress the positive value of vocations and to view theoretical and rational thinking with scorn. It ignores the fact that behind the success of all practical matters lies a logical way of thinking.

Vocations

Al-Haykaliyya points out that in 1993-94 Lebanon had 1508 public and private academic schools at the elementary and intermediate levels, compared to only 260 vocational schools at the same levels (14.8 percent). The number of students attending academic schools was 261,641 on the intermediate and secondary levels, as opposed to 25,383 on parallel levels in vocational schools (9-10 percent of the total number of students) (p. 12).

Based on the above figures, the government called for a balance between academic and vocational education. Such balance it admits cannot be achieved without full knowledge of labor forces and labor demands (p. 13). Still, *al-Haykaliyya* requires that vocations, such as carpentry, sewing, cooking, and so on, be given much more respectability and allotted more time in the curriculum than they had ever been given. Respectability for vocations is indeed necessary. But the strong emphasis in the curriculum on vocations in the absence of any study of the labor forces and demands that require such emphasis at the expense of promoting rational and linguistic skills is definitely unnecessary. It is worth noting that, with the exception of the Lebanese University and Saint Joseph University, none of the 17 or so Lebanese universities have a department of philosophy. They are instead emphasizing vocations, such as hotel management, public administration, and the like. For example, some Lebanese universities have already graduated a few students in hotel management. However, the market has failed to accommodate all those who have already graduated in this vocational area, though they are few in number.

Special Education

Education for the physically challenged. The new system acknowledges the existence of physically challenged members of the Lebanese society. *Al-Haykaliyya* states that in Lebanon there were only 10,000 physically challenged people in 1975, 13,000 in 1982, and over 15,000 by 1994 (p. 17). But most likely this estimate is incorrect. One would expect that, after the recent civil war, this number must have been raised to at least 50,000-60,000. Also, though the new system recognizes the need for the education of the physically challenged, it does not introduce any provisions or strategies for their education.

Education for the gifted. The new system gives no statistics about the number of gifted students in Lebanon, but simply insists on the necessity of attention to their education by having a special curriculum for them (p. 17). But, again, no plan for such education is proposed and no special curriculum is elaborated.

Al-Haykaliyya mentions that regulations will be issued later concerning the education of the physically challenged and the gifted (p. 27). But why later, not earlier, than the curriculum for normal students, which has been already issued? Furthermore, it is astonishing that education of physically challenged and gifted students is lumped together with part-time independent vocational training under nonsystematic education (p. 42). It is not clear either why education of physically challenged and gifted students is seen in the same light as that of part-time students or why these students are to seek nonsystematic education, instead of the regular academic systematic type. It must be remembered that nonsystematic education is, as mentioned above, (1) not limited to any specific age, (2) not bound by any strict educational rules, (3) described as opportunities given to the various social and vocational sectors, and (4) intended primarily for social and job promotion. In other words, physically challenged and gifted students are not to be given opportunities for the same type of academic education, which is to be accessible to their so-called normal peers. This despite the fact that there is nothing that prevents the former type of students (except in rare extreme cases) from benefiting from that type of education.

Mechanical Promotion

Al-Haykaliyya permits automatic promotion from the elementary level to the intermediate one (p. 31). That is, regardless of performance, students would be permitted to move on from the elementary to the intermediate level. But if the idea is, as I think it is, to prevent discontinuity in the first twelve years of the students' education, and to eliminate from the student's life the trauma of failure at an early age, the idea may create more problems than it solves. First, what is the point of continuity when the student does not catch up with the educational progress of his or her peers? Second, to remain with peers who are more advanced than one is to prolong the agony of feeling the failure. Third, the

knowledge that promotion to a higher level is granted regardless of performance will unavoidably leave some students unmotivated, lazy, and unconcerned.

There remain two very important issues that are worthy of consideration: teacher training and the status of private schools.

If one of the major objectives of this new system is the creation of a sense of unity and integration in Lebanese society, then teachers must interpret and apply the regulations and curriculum in a unified manner. Even if the curricular materials are unified, teachers may not interpret them in a similar manner unless trained and instructed to do so. But *al-Haykaliyya* seems to ignore the subject altogether. It does not in any way touch on the issue of teacher training in applying the new system.

Al-Haykaliyya and *Manahij* are concerned with regulations and curriculum for public schools to the exclusion of private ones. But since there are a number of official exams based on this public curriculum, private schools would have to use at least the basic contents of this curriculum. However, this in no way determines the other materials private schools would add to the basic curriculum, the manner in which they are introduced, and the specific textbooks they can use. It is not clear how much, if any, government control over private schools is to be maintained.

Considering the features of this new educational system, will it lead to integration, and if it will, what kind of integration will that be? As stated earlier, there are two types of integration—individual and social—each of which may be desirable or undesirable. On the individual level, I do not think there will be integration of the desirable type. This is because the nonintellectual faculties, which in ancient and medieval times were referred to as lower faculties, will prevail over the intellectual ones, which will remain dormant and unchallenged. There will be no integration of the whole society either, if for no reason other than leaving out its physically challenged and gifted members, its thinkers and theorists, and keeping vague the place of those educated in its private schools. The rest may integrate with each other, but primarily as cooks, carpenters, dressmakers, singers, and dancers. The emphasis on such skills at the expense of intellectual and academic development is exemplified in the following assertion by *al-Haykaliyya*: On the intermediate level students will receive weekly one hour of history, one of geography, and one of civics, but two of physical education and two of various activities such as drawing, painting, sculpture, music, singing, acting, gardening, cooking, driving, computer, community service, and so on (pp. 51, 78). Such activities, it is added, should help in the development of the student's talents and in the integration of his or her personality (p. 78). Indeed, they help in the development of nonintellectual and nonacademic talents, leaving very little room for the development of intellectual and academic ones. With this, there would be no personal integration, but an overpowering by the nonintellectual and nonacademic faculties and skills. It is worth noting that the same attempt that is being made in Lebanon to deintellectualize the new generations through education has also been made recently in Egypt and Palestine.

Al-Haykaliyya asserts that the changes in the educational system will fulfill “the needs of the Arab and local labor markets and their future expectations” (pp. 37, 71-72, 74). The same type of revealing idea is repeated at the end of the work. There it is stated that this new system is intended to prepare the Lebanese for the expected future local and regional labor market (pp. 71-74). One cannot but wonder whether there is a political effort to deintellectualize the Lebanese, stripping them of the intellectual and linguistic superiority for which they have always been known in the region and turning them into laborers with strong bodies that can do the job and weak minds that can obey.

NOTES

1. *Republic IV*: 432.

2. See Introduction to the Constitution, Paragraph C.

3. *Al-Haykaliyya al-Jadida li al-Ta'lim fi Lubnan* (The New Framework for Education in Lebanon) (Beirut: al-Markaz at-Tarbawa li al-Buhuth, 1995), p. 4.

4. For the six points presented by the Center for Education, see *al-Haykaliyya*, pp. 8, 9, 11. For a critique of these points, see Nimr Frayha, “Taqwim Awwali li al-Manihij al-Jadida wa Falsafatiha fi al-Ta'lim al-'Amm,” Part I, *as-Safir* (June 1998): 830.

5. See note 3.

6. Cf. *Manihij*, pp. 724, 751-52.

7. See, for example, Matthew Lipman, *Thinking in Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Lipman, *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* (Montclair, N.J.: Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, 1977); Lipman, Ann Margaret Sharp, and Frederick S. Oscanyan, *Philosophy in the Classroom*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980).

RECONSTRUCTING THE ECONOMY OF LEBANON

Atif A. Kubursi

THE BASIC THESIS OF THIS ESSAY is that Lebanon's current economic predicaments are rooted in the unmanaged mercurial successes experienced in the 1950s through the mid-1970s, in the traumatic consequences of the civil war and the massive reconstruction effort that followed it, and, in a less obvious way, in the confessional structure of the economy that is still one of its dominant organizing principles.

It is also argued that accounting for past successes and the processes that supported and sustained them is a necessary prelude for understanding the economic causes and consequences of the civil war and the difficulties encountered in reconstructing the post-civil war economy. Such an understanding could also be helpful in restructuring the economy and reconstituting the Lebanese polity and society.

The essay begins with an examination of the sources of past Lebanese economic growth and the economic causes and consequences of the civil war. It ends with a suggested economic framework for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the economy and society, one that is different from the framework used by the Hariri government.

THE LEBANESE ECONOMIC MIRACLE

There is nothing magical or miraculous about the sources of the past economic success and growth in Lebanon. Actually, most of the sources and causes of this growth can be explained in terms of traditional economic factors.

Generating a surplus is a good measure of the ability of an economy to save and to expand its productive capacity. A central feature of the Lebanese economy that goes back to the early 1940s was the high ratio of investment to GDP (gross domestic product). In fact this ratio, on average, had rarely fallen

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below 20 percent throughout the 1950s until the eve of the 1975 civil war. Starting with a capital-output ratio of about 2.47 (see Saidi, 1986), this investment ratio could have theoretically supported an annual GDP rate of growth of about 8 percent, a rate that was in fact typical of the Lebanese economy for much of the prewar period.

Given that services accounted for more than 60 percent of Lebanon's GDP, the 20 percent investment ratio understated the magnitude of investment per unit of output in the commodity-producing sectors of the economy. A high investment to value added originating in these sectors explains the relatively high capital-labor ratios in the commodity-producing sectors of Lebanon before the war. This, in turn, explains the relatively high labor productivity indices generally then observed in Lebanese manufacturing and agriculture.

**Table 1. Sectoral Contribution to GDP, 1970, 1979
(Factor Cost, \$US Million, Current Prices)**

Year	Total GDP	Agriculture	Mining, quarrying	Manufac- turing*	Construc- tion	Services
1970	1488.5	136.1	---	202.2	66.7	1083.5
1979	2523	215.2	76.1	391	86.3	1754.4
Sectoral contribution to GDP (%)						
1970	100	9.1	---	13.6	4.5	72.8
1979	100	8.5	3.0	15.5	3.5	69.5

Source: Sayigh (1982), Tables 18 and 19. * Includes electricity, gas, and water.

Another central feature of Lebanese development before the war was a young and growing population investing heavily in education and supplying a dynamic, well trained, and highly motivated labor force (Saidi, 1986). Lebanon had the highest adult literacy rate (73.5 percent) in the Arab region and one of the highest among developing countries (Richards and Waterbury, 1990). This domestic skilled manpower was supplemented by a large pool of cheap semi-skilled Palestinian workers trained by UNRWA at little or no cost to Lebanon and a large group of unskilled seasonal immigrant Arab workers from neighboring countries, particularly Syria. Estimates of the foreign labor force in

the early 1970s put the total number at about one third of the national labor force (Khalaf and Rimlinger, 1982).

The Lebanese economy was and is basically a confessional economy that grew as a natural outcome of an extensive intersection of interests of basically Maronite bureaucrats and Sunni trading families. The former group was primarily interested in developing and securing a stable source of public finance, which in the context of the then prevailing conditions and structures of the Lebanese economy could only be based on custom duties on foreign imports. Much of this activity was controlled primarily by a handful of very powerful Sunni trading families in the coastal cities of Beirut, Tripoli, and Sidon. These traders saw their interests best served by a government restricting itself to building an efficient social infrastructure and maintaining a policy environment favorable to free trade. This intersection of interests manifested itself politically in the National Pact. It also manifested itself, perhaps in a less obvious way but no less strongly or importantly, in an implicit economic and social contract that gave the political accord a strong economic base.

The terms of this implicit contract called for the public sector to invest heavily in building an extensive infrastructure of trade routes, ports, airports, warehouses, and an excellent communication network. It also required the government to restrict its activity in promoting competing commodity producing sectors or regions that could undermine the dominance and the free flow of imports. The terms also called for a pro-free trade, pro-business policy environment with minimal government interference, low or no income or profit taxes, bank secrecy laws, and a free foreign exchange market.

In a less obvious but no less certain way, confessionalism has given rise to Everett Hagan's "blocked minorities" phenomenon (see Hagan, 1962). Disgruntled and disenfranchised Orthodox, Protestants, Shi'ites, Druze, Armenians, and Palestinians sought influence, power, and protection through economic success outside bureaucratic jobs and trading monopolies, thus giving rise to a proverbial class of local entrepreneurs and highly competent professionals.

Lebanese prosperity also had much to do with the fact that Lebanon had a jump start in economic and social development over neighboring countries rich in resources but relatively poor in skills, world contacts, and developmental experience. The advanced educational system in Lebanon and the extensive connections the Lebanese had garnered with the West bestowed on Lebanon some real advantages in its ability to act as the indispensable middleman in much of the contact of the Gulf and other Arab countries with the West.

The Palestinian enclave (sub-) economy also contributed to Lebanon's prosperity. The Palestinian "infrastructure" within Lebanon may have been a negative political factor, but it certainly injected into the Lebanese economy a good amount of operating and capital money in addition to cheap semi-skilled and unskilled workers and some first class bankers and entrepreneurs. At one time, this economy was estimated to have pumped over \$4 billion annually in

social services, wages, and salaries into its "public servants and army" and other goods and services in the domestic economy.

Last but not least, a stable political environment (relative to its neighbors), combined with a banking system designed to attract and protect foreign hot capital, meant that Lebanon was able to capitalize on the growing pains and political instability of other neighboring countries.

The 1975 war undermined most of these favorable factors and processes and, in addition, created some very negative mechanisms and attitudes of its own that are proving to be difficult to reverse or correct.

A brief account of some of these negative processes and a simple analysis of their underlying mechanisms is attempted below by way of sketching the necessary framework to deal with them.

THE WAR ECONOMY

The economic causes and consequences of violence are not well researched or documented in economics. Generally economists have shied away from studying these phenomena, preferring to leave them to other social scientists and disciplines. In a way, Lebanon provides a kind of a social laboratory for analyzing and gauging the economic mechanisms and processes spawned by violence.

Even without the war, the uneven sectoral, regional, and class development was bound to create social tensions, contradictions, and conflicts. Whether it would have exploded into open warfare the way it did in 1975 is debatable. Several mitigating factors could have easily made these tensions and inequities simmer for a long time on the back burner of history. The new explosive opportunities in the Gulf region were just beginning to loom on the horizon. The uninterrupted and continuous growth that began in the early 1950s was just as solid in the 1970s. Furthermore, a new vigorous economic spurt was just about to begin, fueled by the emergence of a vibrant and dynamic small-scale manufacturing activity that was primarily export oriented. The war blunted this growth and sent the economy reeling on a contractionary spiral that lasted over 17 years.

Perhaps the most long-lasting damage was the profuse brain drain triggered by the war. Professionals and skilled workers with international transfer prices (i.e., with skills that are easily transferable in the international market) emigrated, leaving semi-skilled or unskilled workers behind to fend for themselves. Losses in productivity were experienced in most sectors and real incomes of the unskilled plunged sharply, exacerbating an already iniquitous and skewed income distribution system. Conservative estimates of net emigration suggest that a total of 740,000 people left Lebanon between 1975 and 1988 (Labaki, 1989, 1990). Another 240,000 are believed to have emigrated in the first eight months of 1989. The total tally of all those who emigrated during the Aoun-Lebanese Forces conflict was difficult to estimate precisely, but the conflict was believed to have triggered another wave of emigration of no less

significance than that experienced in 1989. Eighty percent of all Lebanese emigrants to Arab oil producing countries between 1975 and 1982 had some technical qualifications. In the mid-1970s over 50 percent of the emigrants were part of the labor force. In the 1980s this bias was toned down to 25-30 percent as earlier emigrants gathered their families.

This out-migration of talent and skills could have been partially compensated for by fresh crops from the educational system. But the Lebanese educational system suffered, too, as good and experienced teachers left the system and school days were cut short by frequent and incessant fighting. A growing and dynamic population that was heavily investing in its education and training was replaced by a declining population with fewer years of schooling and little or no on-the-job training. More than one third of the Lebanese emigrated between 1975 and 1989; fewer than a third of them returned between 1990 and 1997.

In attempting to identify the consequences of demographic and manpower movements and adjustments caused by the war we have had to rely rather heavily on limited and outdated sources. These included the official manpower survey of 1970, the ECWA (now ESCWA) Statistical Abstract of the Region of the Economic Commission for Western Asia of 1978, and data provided by the United Nations International Labor Office. The most reasonable conclusion one could draw from all these sources is that the level of nonagricultural employment in 1977 was half the aggregate level it would have been without the civil war. Employment levels recovered slightly in the mid-1980s, but slumped again in 1989. The consequences of this major slump in employment have been drastic. They have had, however, a differential impact on the various sectors of the economy. In the early 1970s manufacturing activity grew faster than most other economic activities, but only slightly faster than commerce, hotels, and the restaurant sector. The result was that the earlier dominance of services in the economy was unaltered. The Lebanese economy remained a basically service-oriented economy with services accounting for 50 percent of total employment and about 70 percent of nonagricultural employment shortly before the war (Khalaf and Rimlinger, 1982). The largest drop in employment following the start of the civil war was in the construction industry where employment losses exceeded 72.2 percent (Khalaf and Rimlinger, 1982). The reason the construction sector suffered more than any other sector despite the fact that other sectors were comparably sensitive to political instability had to do with the fact that construction workers in Lebanon were recruited to work in the Gulf region that was then embarking on a massive development program to construct its infrastructure following the explosive increases in oil prices and oil revenues.

Manufacturing and extractive industries lost (57 percent), as did transportation (63.2 percent) and commerce (53.5 percent). All these losses involved above average employment losses between 1974 and 1977 (Khalaf and Rimlinger, 1982). Service related activities appear to have weathered the difficulties with more resilience, losing only 23.6 percent. This was perhaps a

reflection of the local nature and the predominance of the informal sector in this activity. Public sector employment did not change much as the government obstinately resisted downsizing its operations despite the drastic fall in government revenue.

Human capital losses were matched by massive losses in physical capital that was either destroyed or laid waste. Few repairs were made and new investment virtually ceased during the war years. Actually, net investment turned negative for most of the years between 1976 and 1989. New additions to the capital stock were below the depreciation rate. While it was difficult to conduct extensive and complete surveys of the total damage inflicted on the economy's capital stock during the war, the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) completed some partial surveys shortly after the cessation of hostilities that presented some benchmarks of these damages. The evidence collected by the CDR suggested that the Lebanese capital stock suffered on two important counts. First, there was considerable evidence that the existing capital stock was over-used during the war with little or no maintenance or replacement. The typically high investment to GDP ratio of 20 percent before the war declined to less than 3 percent by 1985 (Saidi, 1986) and to even lower magnitudes in 1989. The Lebanese simply consumed their capital. The ratio of gross investment to real capital exceeded 8.2 percent in 1974, but declined to below 1.2 percent in 1985. There were enough indications that pointed to an even lower ratio in 1990. Second, there was extensive and massive destruction of buildings, bridges, power stations, schools, refineries, and factories that the capital stock stood at less than 45 percent of its 1974 level (see Table 2). Estimating the capital stock losses using the concept of potential capital stock (the level of capital that could have been accumulated had the war not happened and had Lebanon maintained its prewar capital formation levels) would result in a decline in its level to less than 32 percent of the prewar capital stock.

Markets were segmented, and an already small economy was fragmented into yet smaller "enclave" economies with even smaller goods and labor markets. The south, which Israel occupied under the pretext of establishing a "security" zone, became essentially a captive market for its products and a source of cheap labor and non-saline water, and more recently a source of fertile topsoil. The Bīqā' valley and the north were tied more strongly to the Syrian economy and less and less to the rest of Lebanon. The "Christian" enclave was severed from the rest of the economy, and the Palestinian enclave was dispersed into smaller sub-enclaves. This fragmentation increased the transactions cost of exchange and production and reduced measurably the productivity of the economy as goods and labor were not allocated efficiently to their best uses and the efficient economic size of producing firms was further compromised. Exports markets were also curtailed as foreign importers diverted their demands to more reliable and secure suppliers.

**Table 2. Gross Investment and Capital Stock, 1974, 1982-85, 1989
(LL millions)**

Year	I	K	I/RGDP	I/K	K/RGDP
1974	1644	20133	0.202	0.082	2.47
1982	298	12089	0.05	0.025	2.0
1983	229	11230	0.039	0.02	1.91
1984	173	10393	0.032	0.017	1.9
1985	118	10095	0.024	0.012	2.05
1989*	108	10800	0.02	0.01	2.0

Source: Saidi (1984, 1985). * Author's estimates. I = gross investment at constant 1974 prices; K = capital stock at constant 1974 prices; I/RGDP = investment output ratio; I/K = ratio of gross investment to capital stock; K/RGDP = capital output ratio.

Rampant inflation fueled by currency speculation, declines in domestic production, and unchecked monetary expansions were an early product of the war. The economy was shielded from the full vagaries of this situation in the early years of the war because it was still receiving enormous remittances from Lebanese working abroad and aid from friendly governments. Besides, the government was still in a position to collect some custom revenues and the enclave Palestinian high-spending economy was still thriving and profligate.

As the war proceeded unimpeded, oil remittances started to decline, help dried away, traditional government revenues were usurped by the militias, the Palestinian economy was driven away, and foreign reserves started to dwindle rapidly. The government was forced to lean heavily on borrowing from the commercial banking system and from the Central Bank. Borrowing from the former is constrained by the ability of government to pay back interest and principal; borrowing from the latter was tantamount to printing money. To the extent that interest on the public debt grew larger than the normal revenues of government, the public sector fell into a state of de facto bankruptcy. The government had occasionally resorted to shoring up its finances by using Article 115 of the Lebanese Code of Money and Credit, which credits the government account (treasury) with the foreign exchange revaluation gains (losses) on the Central Bank holdings of gold and foreign exchange reserves. This had the unfortunate consequence of tying the interest of government to depreciating the

value of the Lebanese pound and drove the Central Bank into pro-cyclical speculation.

Throughout the war period the increase in the velocity of money did not keep pace with the huge increase in money supply; the public preferred instead to shift its holdings of liquid funds into foreign currency deposits. From 1986 to 1987 the money supply, M^2 , jumped from LL293 to LL1402 billion, a fivefold increase, whereas the velocity only about doubled, from 3.49 to 6.32. The impact on local inflation, however, is the sum of the increases in the monetary base and velocity. Shifting deposits into foreign currency accounts helped moderate what could have been a worse inflationary bout, but this reduction in the private sector's desire to hold pound-denominated liquid balances exacerbated the pace of depreciation of the Lebanese pound and the linkage coefficient between inflation and depreciation.

To make matters even worse, the bankrupt government purchased a considerable amount of weapons from foreign countries to tighten its grip on the shaky political situation. The government diverted funds away from foreign reserves to finance these purchases. Foreign reserves decreased from \$1,883 million to \$652 million from 1983 to 1984. As a result of this considerable contraction in foreign reserves, the Central Bank's ability to adopt preemptive policies decreased, and with it its power (or perceived power) to counteract the attempts of speculators to alter the exchange rate in order to reap extraordinary profits.

There is an inextricable link between the inflation rate and government deficits and between the inflation rate and the exchange rate. But these links are so complex and dynamic that it is often impossible to draw the direction of causation or to assess precisely the relative contribution of the various factors.

Deficits were primarily financed by borrowing from the Central Bank; this increased the money supply, raised inflation, depreciated the Lebanese pound, increased the government's cost of operation, and so further raised the deficit. The consequent borrowing from the Central Bank again raised inflation and further depreciated the Lebanese pound. The economy was caught in a vicious circle of deficits, inflation, and depreciation. Adding to the impact of inflation on the exchange rate was another dynamic spiral that worked against the Lebanese economy. Higher inflationary expectations triggered a flight from the Lebanese pound into dollars, thus further depreciating the value of the pound. This in turn raised the domestic prices of imported goods (these account for over 70 percent of total domestic supply), which added new fire to inflation, and the spiral proceeded. The only check on this process was the price elasticity of demand for imports, which acted to constrain the vagaries of this dynamic spiral.

Increases in money supply are not necessarily inflationary. They become so to the extent that the increase in supply is not matched by an increase in demand. Actually, the situation in Lebanon was one of generalized excess supply of money, as demand faltered under pressure from continuous declines in GDP, rampant inflation, and a cumulative tendency toward currency substitution

and capital flight. Decreases in output provoked commensurate decreases in the demand for money for transaction purposes and inflation enticed economic agents to flee from Lebanese money into safer assets. The rise in world interest rates at the time intensified the currency substitution process and the spread of dollarization of the Lebanese economy. In 1985, domestic currency denominated deposits amounted to \$4,013 million and foreign currency denominated deposits to \$2,478 million; in 1987 they were \$270 million and \$3,222 million respectively. The Lebanese pound depreciated sharply from LL2.2 for \$1 in the early 1970s to a low of LL2200 in the summer of 1992.

Inflation distorts the pattern of investment away from productive endeavor and into speculative and socially undesirable allocations. It further imposes a tax on the private sector and plays havoc with income distribution, favoring those with market power to protect their real income and disfavoring the weaker classes and those on fixed incomes or who are incapable of adjusting their incomes sufficiently to maintain their purchasing power. It also hurts an economy that needs to export to pay for its mounting imports. Its only advantage, if one can call it that, was its dilution of the public debt that was increasing at the time at very high rates.

Inflation ultimately succeeded in destroying the proverbial Lebanese middle class that shouldered and cemented whatever social stability Lebanon had experienced in the early days of the republic. Inflation also increased the volatility, uncertainty, and risk factors in economic calculations in addition to those directly associated with the war. This contributed further to the deterioration of the operating economic environment and its predictability, and finally compromised the competitive posture of the economy against its trading partners with lower inflation rates. Given that Lebanon, up to the eve of the civil war, had little or no inflation, the hyper-inflation of the 1980s saw the cost of a bundle of goods go from LL10 in 1974 to LL741 in 1987 and as high as LL1500 in 1989. With the demise of the private sector and the erosion of the middle class, the public sector had to shoulder a number of responsibilities which were not within its domain and with which it was ill prepared and equipped to deal.

The war saw the public sector increase its relative size from about 15 percent of GDP in 1974 to over 50 percent in 1989. In the prewar years, the government did not participate actively in the economy and did not practice counter-cyclical policies—a feature characteristic of most advanced capitalist countries. Between 1965 and 1975, the government showed no inclination to increase its share in domestic production or to engage in any direct management of the macro-economic affairs of the economy where it would be willing to go into debt to shore the economy in times of slowdowns. In fact, the opposite was true. Governmental activity was on the whole pro-cyclical (see Saidi, 1986).

The war also forced the government into a new stance. Real government expenditures increased throughout the war at an average annual rate of five percent, suggesting that nominal expenditures had increased faster than inflation. With real revenues declining and with the private sector downsizing its operations, the government attempted to absorb part of the slack in the economy

and to subsidize consumption of some essential goods. It also continued its operations, but primarily with an ambitious rearming scheme of the Lebanese army without linking these schemes to its revenues, foreign exchange reserves, or the wholesale absenteeism and low discipline of the public service. The public debt (a phenomenon unknown before the war) climbed to 150 percent of the GDP. Interest payments on the debt alone grew larger than government revenues from normal sources.

Warlords who had access to resources and revenues without having to shoulder most of the burdens of government entrenched themselves at major access and trading routes and added to the fragmentation of the economy and to its transaction costs. In a way the economy was paying for its demise, fragmentation, and disfiguration and the warlords developed vested interest in sustaining trouble that became their lifeline to influence and power.

Not all the war effects were negative. Some aspects (a small set) were indeed positive. These relate to the reduction in imports, depreciation of the currency to levels that were more supportive of exports, revitalization of local agriculture and manufacturing, and reinvigoration of rural and mountainous regions.

RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION

From a relatively advanced and prospering economy in the 1970s, Lebanon was on the brink of total collapse in the late 1980s. It is miraculous that it did not implode the way most had expected. To be sure, the Lebanese per capita income in U.S. dollars slipped from a high of \$1800 in 1974 to below \$500 in 1989, from the ranks of middle income countries to those of the least developed countries, but the economy survived. The question is, Why has it survived and what accounted for this phenomenon?

A great deal of credit goes to the resilient Lebanese people, who capitalized even on their troubles and kept the economy going. When electricity was cut, a number of local entrepreneurs started their own generators, small shops selling all kinds of goods sprang up on every corner, and many families retreated into their villages and produced their own food. Equally important was the fact that many left the country and emigrated to where jobs could be found. They showered Lebanon with remittances and reduced the social costs of unemployment. The massive depreciation of the Lebanese pound acted as a shock absorber that moderated and fueled a countervailing adjustment process. Imports declined, real wages were eroded, debt was depreciated, rents were almost eliminated, barter emerged, and Lebanese exports and assets became cheaper. Meanwhile, the Lebanese government that had shied away from the economy before the war played a significant balancing role during the war, as was discussed earlier.

Unemployment rates increased, but the increase was far below what could have been expected in the circumstances. Evidently, as stated above, other accommodations were taking place. The war precipitated a reverse rural-urban

migration as people fled the cities to the comfort and security of their villages, where they grew their own food and bartered their services. Militia ranks swelled with fresh recruits as the unemployed were reabsorbed into this informal sector.

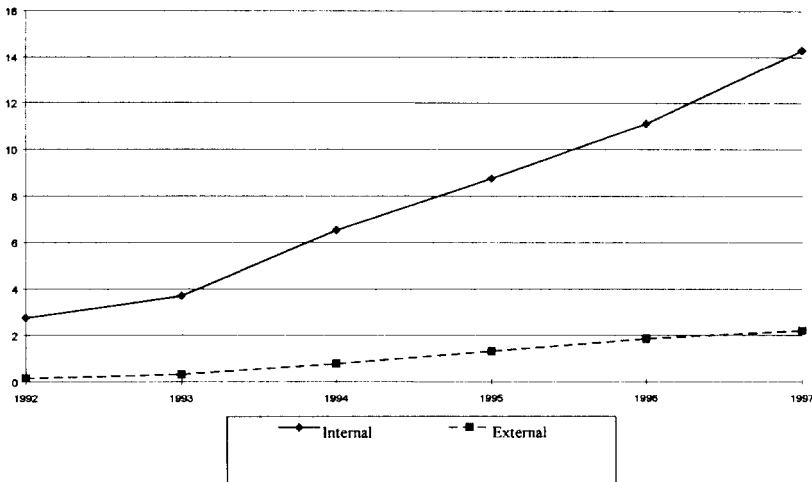
While precise figures on the outflow of labor during the civil war do not exist, there is ample evidence to suggest that over 260,000 foreign workers left Lebanon between 1974 and 1978 (Khalaf and Rimlinger, 1982) and a slightly larger number in the early 1990s. Probably more Lebanese left the country during the same period. This out-migration of labor represented a major adjustment mechanism. It reduced measurably the economic costs of employment losses. Otherwise what was a major economic setback could have been a major economic catastrophe.

When the guns fell silent, there were ample reasons for believing that with political stability and the reconstitution of the Lebanese polity the economy could be turned around and growth could again resume its normal course. There were, however, many obstacles to surmount before the economy could reclaim its health and vigor. First, the basic physical infrastructure that was destroyed during the war had to be repaired and rehabilitated quickly and effectively. Second, the inherited rampant inflation had to be arrested and the depreciation of the Lebanese pound stopped. Third, the profuse and continuous loss of Lebanese talent had to cease and the outflow turned to influx. Fourth, the Lebanese middle class that was decimated by war and inflation needed to be rebuilt. Fifth, the Lebanese government coffers were empty and fiscal order had to be restored. Sixth, the social and economic imbalances of the past, whether between regions, classes, sects, or sectors, had to be addressed and redressed.

This was a tall order even for a strong government and a healthy economy. It was doubly so for a fledgling government and a hampered economy. There was no time to spare, and achievements had to be realized quickly and simultaneously. It has now become clear that there are serious pitfalls in repairing a damaged economy and society without a coherent plan and a clear vision of the final outcome of the reconstruction program.

When the Hariri government embarked on its ambitious reconstruction program, the government coffers were almost empty. There was no choice but to borrow. All through the war, Lebanon had almost no foreign debt. This fact proved helpful in allowing the government to borrow on international financial markets without the encumbrance of past debts. This it did. The foreign debt grew rapidly from a low of \$150 million in 1992 to over \$2.7 billion in 1998. The combined external and internal debt reached \$17 billion in 1998 (Table 3, Figure 1). Servicing this debt today requires \$2.1 billion annually, over 89 percent of the total government revenues. The combined debt today is larger than the entire GDP (Figure 2). The latter was continuously revised upward but still fell short below estimates of the total debt. Surely this debt level and its servicing are no longer sustainable. It is legitimate to ask why the government has allowed the debt to increase to this high level and why it has accepted these high debt servicing charges. In other words, did the government have any choice regarding the debt level or its level of servicing payments?

Figure 1
Internal and External Debt (SUS billions)

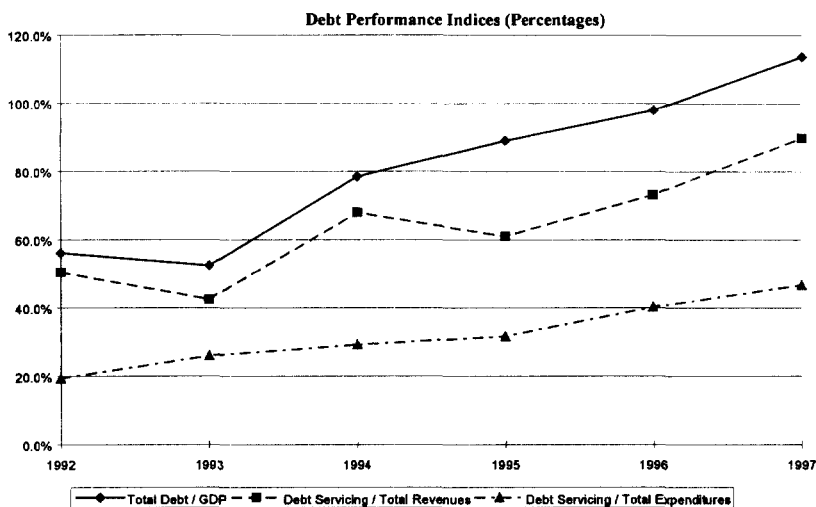


The level of the debt is increased by the yearly deficits on the government budget. These deficits are of two kinds—a primary deficit that reflects the difference between program expenditures and government revenues and a secondary deficit that represents interest and other payments on the debt. The primary deficit in Lebanon was rather low and is expected even to turn into a positive (surplus) value in 1999. The difficulties arise from the debt service payments. These are too large. They increased from \$282 million in 1992 to over \$2 billion in 1997. Their level is determined by the size of the debt and also by the interest payments made on it. Unfortunately, the high interest paid on both the domestic and foreign components of the debt is responsible for the high deficit that raises the debt. It is hard to break away from this vicious cycle without higher economic growth, higher government revenues, and lower interest payments. Not surprisingly, lower interest rates and higher economic growth are also highly correlated (possibly the former is a cause of the latter).

While borrowing was a necessary option, the terms under which it was done were high (for the foreign component, about 250-350 basis points above comparable rates for the U.S. government) and the maturity period was relatively short. This is true for both the domestic and the foreign components. It is true that Lebanon's creditworthiness was not high after the war, but borrowing at rates that were significantly higher than the prevailing rates on dollar accounts, taking into account a reasonable risk premium, is not defensible. Similarly, with the Lebanese pound exchange value fixed in terms of the U.S. dollar (actually, it even appreciated in value), the double digit rates paid on the Lebanese pound denominated treasury bills and bonds exceeded by far the opportunity returns on comparable dollar accounts. These rates have already become a significant

burden on the economy. The higher interest rates that were needed to stabilize the foreign exchange value of the Lebanese pound so as to play the role of a financial anchor for reducing inflation have driven a wedge between fiscal policy and monetary policy, distorted investment, and compromised production. Higher interest rates were required to attract foreign capital, sustain constrained domestic liquidity, finance the government deficits, and stabilize the foreign exchange value of the Lebanese pound. But they also increased the deficits, the borrowing requirements of the government, and the diversion of liquidity toward government bills and bonds and away from trade and investment credits. In the process they constrained investment, domestic production, and exports. Perhaps worse, the brunt of economic adjustment is now borne exclusively by output and employment (quantity adjustments versus what could have been a price-quantity adjustment process). As is clear from Table 3, annual GDP real rates of growth fell from 13.3 percent in 1993 to 3 percent in 1997.

Figure 2



The population at large will ultimately pay for the cost of borrowing to build this infrastructure. The poor, however, will bear more of the burden than the rich, given the prevailing regressive tax structure in Lebanon, which is disproportionately made of customs duties, consumption taxes (gasoline and tobacco), and flat income tax rates. Unfortunately, the poor in Lebanon are already paying for this program with lower job opportunities (as exports and production are constrained by higher interest rates and an appreciated exchange rate). They have not apparently reaped significant benefits from the construction program either, given the high proportions of foreign labor involved in this

activity and the high import content of most of its inputs, which have reduced the magnitudes of its associated employment multipliers.

Saudi Arabia is unique among developing economies in its ability to separate infrastructure development from the capacity of the using sectors to pay for it. It was able to do so because of her revenues. In Lebanon there are no such sources of income or wealth to rely upon to help pay for the debt (at least the foreign component). In such circumstances, it is the added productivity that should enable Lebanon to service the debt. Reconstructing the infrastructure in Lebanon in isolation of its contribution to production is dangerous and unacceptable. The size, timing, nature, and costs of this infrastructure should be determined by its contribution to growth and its capacity to raise sufficient revenues to pay for it. If there is any lesson to be learned from Saudi Arabia, it is that the development of infrastructure needs to be managed wisely. Today many Arab Gulf countries are suffering from the high maintenance costs of an exceptionally large and at times basically unproductive and economically unsupportable infrastructure. While the Arab Gulf states can perhaps afford this kind of waste, Lebanon cannot.

It is great to have a large, clean, modern airport, but its capacity should have been tied to traffic volumes that could be realistically expected over the medium horizon. Building a modern and shiny central business district may not be the best alternative use even of private investment funds when no large business has been developed or could be expected to develop soon. Constructing highway rings to ease legendary Lebanese traffic jams may be inferior to developing public transportation alternatives.

My concern is that the reconstruction program has become too costly, too fast, too large, untied from the absorptive capacity of the economy or to its capacity to pay for it, and disconnected from a clear and coherent development plan to guide, monitor, and harness it. The vision driving it, if there is one, appears to be insensitive to global changes in industry, technology, and the basis of economic success in the new economy. It suffers from a long list of structural biases that compromise its developmental worth: an urban bias (in contrast to a rural-urban balance), a cement bias (in contrast to a balance between human development, technology, and construction), an import bias (in contrast to encouraging exports and domestic production), a services bias (in contrast to a balance between commodity producing sectors and non-commodity producing sectors), and so on.

It may not be too late to suggest that Lebanon can float reconstruction bonds around the world that Lebanese emigrants can buy into à la the Israeli Reconstruction Bonds that attract billions of dollars to Israel annually at favorable terms. A coherent plan for how this money will be used, some credible guarantees of payment of principal and interest (set at very low levels), a transparent program administration, and a co-management framework that can attract the full participation of the contributing expatriates may permit Lebanon to tap into a large pool of available funds without the strings and costs associated with commercial borrowing.

Table 3. Macro-Economic Indicators, 1992-97 (US\$ billions)

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
GDP (current prices)	5.17	7.67	9.29	11.3	13.2	14.5
Annual real GDP growth (%)	---	13	9	7	4	3
Implicit inflation rate (%)	120	35.1	12.1	14.6	12.8	6.8
Actual government revenues	0.56	1.08	1.36	1.9	2.28	2.37
Actual government expenditures	1.45	1.76	3.17	3.66	4.15	4.56
Budgeted revenues	0.52	0.99	1.36	1.9	2.28	2.37
Budgeted expenditures	0.9	1.98	2.49	3.52	4.16	4.2
Actual deficit	-0.89	-0.68	-1.81	-1.76	-1.87	-2.19
Budgeted deficit	-0.38	-0.99	-1.13	-1.55	-1.57	-1.52
Internal debt	2.75	3.7	6.53	8.75	11.1	14.3
External debt	0.15	0.32	0.77	1.31	1.85	2.2
Total debt	2.9	4.02	7.3	10.06	12.95	16.5
Debt servicing	0.282	0.458	0.926	1.16	1.67	2.13
Current expenditures	0.65	1.07	1.48	1.74	1.9	2.12
Development expenditures	0.52	0.23	0.76	0.76	0.58	0.31
Total exp. excl. debt servicing	1.17	1.3	2.24	2.5	2.48	2.43
Total exp. incl. debt servicing	1.45	1.76	3.17	3.66	4.15	4.56
Foreign currency deposits (%)	69.4	69.9	61.5	62.3	59.6	61.0
Bond maturity period	13.18	16.35	18.73	15.42	16.97	18.03
Primary deficit	-0.61	-0.22	-0.88	-0.6	-0.2	-0.06
Total deficit - primary deficit	-0.28	-0.46	-0.93	-1.16	-1.67	-2.13

Source: Ministry of Finance (1992-95, 1996-97).

The macro-economic stabilization program of the government has produced some major successes and some critical problems. The inflation rate declined from 120 percent per year in 1992 to less than 7 percent in 1997. The

Lebanese pound reversed its downward slide and real growth in GDP in 1992-95 was solid and significant. This success came at a high price. The country is facing a liquidity crunch as banks and people prefer the high yields on government IOUs to real investment returns. The investment GDP ratio has declined from 33 percent in 1995 to 27 percent in 1997 despite the massive reconstruction effort (Koniski, 1998). Unemployment is still high. The official estimates of 8.5 percent grossly underestimate the real magnitudes of this problem, believed to exceed 30 percent. A large number of apartments in Beirut and surrounding areas are empty and unsold with potential adverse effects on the entire banking system. Growth has slowed measurably. Real GDP growth rates have slumped from 13.3 percent in 1992 to below 3 percent in 1998 (Table 3). Exports are less than 10 percent of imports (Koniski, 1998). The surplus on the balance of payments is dwindling fast. Foreign investment is declining (from \$478 million in 1995 to \$154 million in 1996 "excluding real estate and portfolio investment"). The deficit continues to rise, debt servicing absorbs almost all government revenues, and the foreign component of this debt requires a servicing charge that is larger than total exports. Debt has already surpassed the red line of 100 percent of GDP (see Table 4). Government revenue elasticity is below one (the percentage change in government revenues divided by the percentage change in GDP between 1996 and 1997 was 0.4, suggesting that government revenues grow less than the GDP). Over 61 percent of all deposits in the Lebanese banking system and over 88 percent of its loans are in U.S. dollars (Sarkis, 1998).

Last but not least, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has just completed a major study on living standards in Lebanon and its regions. Their findings indicate that 35 percent of all families are unable to meet their basic needs and that over 7.09 percent of all families are severely deprived. They also found wide variations in the standard of living of families across the five *Mouhafazat*, with the North (Akkar), East (Hirmel and Baalebek), and South having far higher proportions of their families that are severely deprived than Jebel and Beirut (*Al-Safir*, 14 November 1998).

A number of Lebanese experts, probably inspired by the IMF, feel that the exchange rate should be allowed to depreciate and to fetch its market value. I am not convinced that this is the best way to deal with the problems at hand. Surely, it does not make much sense either to continue to appreciate the Lebanese pound against the U.S. dollar. If anything, a downward crawling peg may be more helpful. Under the prevailing global conditions of speculative bubbles and almost perfect free capital mobility that succeeded in wrecking the once solid economies of East Asia, the Central Bank will be ill-advised to loosen its grip on the exchange rate. Lebanon is still dependent on imports to meet a large proportion of its domestic demand (over 60 percent), and it will shortly have to pay its foreign debts. Raising the price of imports (as a consequence of depreciation) will undermine the fight against inflation and can trigger new vicious circles of escalating costs as labor and other social groups hurt by inflation will fight to protect the purchasing power of their incomes. Besides, it

is difficult to argue that Lebanon should pay its foreign debts with large resource transfers.

Table 4. Macro-Economic Indicators, 1992-97 (percentages)

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Actual deficit/actual expend.	61.4	38.6	57.1	48.1	45.1	48.0
Total debt/GDP	56.1	52.4	78.6	89.0	98.1	113.8
Primary deficit/GDP	11.8	2.9	9.5	5.3	1.5	0.4
Total deficit/GDP	17.3	8.9	19.5	15.6	14.2	15.1
Debt servicing/total debt	9.7	11.4	12.7	11.5	12.9	12.9
Debt servicing/GDP	5.5	6.0	10.0	10.3	12.7	14.7
Debt servicing/total revenues	50.4	42.4	68.1	61.1	73.2	89.9
Current expenditures/total revenues	116.1	99.1	108.8	91.6	83.3	89.5
Debt servicing/total expend.	19.4	26.0	29.2	31.7	40.2	46.7
Current/total expenditures	116.1	99.1	108.8	91.6	83.3	89.5
Development/total expend.	35.8	13.1	24.0	20.8	14.0	6.8
Actual/budgeted deficit	234.7	68.7	160.2	113.5	119.1	144.1
Actual/budgeted revenues	107.7	109.1	100.0	96.4	88.0	88.4
Actual/budgeted expend.	161.3	88.9	127.3	104.0	99.8	108.6

Source: Ministry of Finance (1992)

I believe that we need to look at this problem from another angle. What is needed is a lower interest rate for investment purposes and more funds made available for productive investment and for export promotion. These can be achieved directly through subsidies linked to production and export performance in lieu of depreciation. The optimal tariff literature is a very useful reference here. Subsidies and taxes can be assigned directly to specific targets. South Korea, which pays high interest rates on domestic savings, provides large soft

loans to producers and exporters, the terms proportional to their success in meeting specific negotiable export and employment targets.

The availability of productive and performance loans can be negotiated with the banking system and recourse can be made to available bank reserves and capital. Broadening the tax revenue base is inescapable (see Figures 3 and 4). Very low flat income and profit tax rates are regressive and untenable given the fiscal difficulties encountered by the economy. If the question is one of noncompliance and tax evasion, then this problem should be dealt with directly through tightening the collection apparatus, the laws governing them, and administrative reform. Government revenues are shamelessly regressive and their income elasticities are very low. Increasing these revenues must be achieved by ensuring an equitable distribution of their burdens. This can be achieved through progressive taxation on incomes, profits, and even an expenditure (value added) tax but with large offsets (or counter-transfer payments) for poor families and higher rates on luxury goods the rich Lebanese are fond of.

Now that inflation has been snuffed, it is perhaps advisable to lower the nominal interest rates to levels consistent with the old real rates before the decline in the inflation rates. This will encourage investment and reduce the debt service charges (every 1 percent reduction in interest rates reduces debt servicing payments by over \$140 million per year). The latter may restore coherence to the policy mix (fiscal and monetary policy coordination). The two policies are currently inconsistent—high interest rates raise the deficit, increase the debt, and in turn raise the interest rate. There is a definite need for realignment and synchronization between the two planks of public policy. There is a definite and unjustified bias toward monetarism. The interest rate adjustment, if used judiciously, can also bring down the exchange rate in an orderly manner to a level that is more consistent with export promotion without causing a major collapse of the foreign exchange market.

The stabilization program of the government suffers too from some unnecessary biases. It demonstrably has a monetarism bias, a technocratic short-term solutions bias, a debt bias, and a bias in favor of regressive taxation and therefore in favor of the rich and against the poor. The credibility of the government has suffered from consistent forecasting errors. Budgeted revenues and expenditures deviate widely from predicted magnitudes. The debt has reached unsupportable levels and the deficits are 15 percent of the GDP (see Table 4). Debt service charges are unreasonably high regardless of the measure used (percent of government revenues, of GDP, of total deficit, etc.). On the positive side, the government succeeded in controlling inflation, in building a financial anchor through the exchange rate, in creating an environment that projected a credible image that Lebanon is open for business, and in fostering valuable cooperative arrangements with several Arab monetary authorities that came to help when needed.

Figure 3
Government Revenues and Expenditures
Actual and Budgeted (\$US Billions)

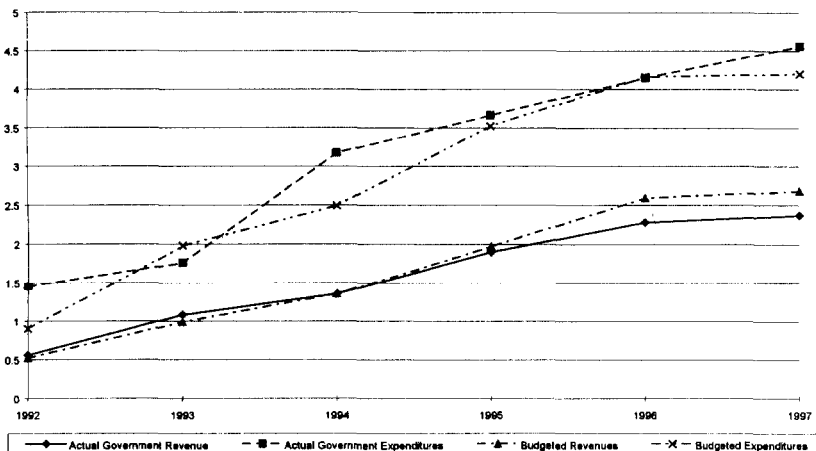
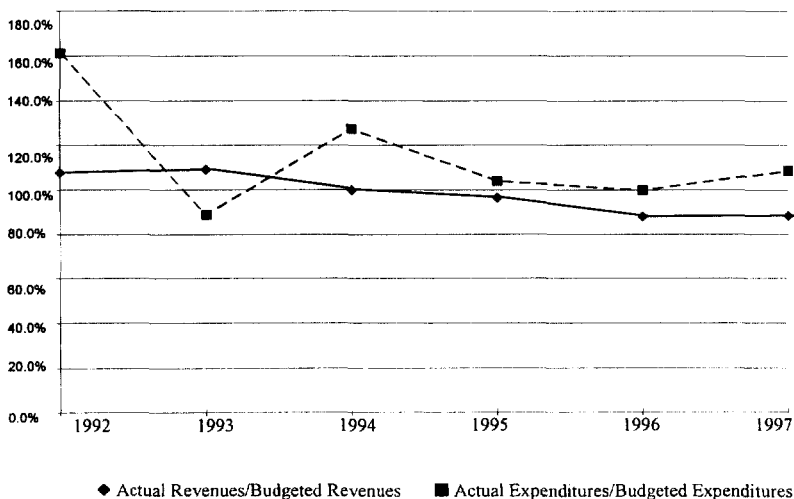


Figure 4
Budget Forecasting
Errors (Percentages)



The reconstitution of the Lebanese middle class and the gathering of Lebanese talents abroad are difficult tasks but practical and noble goals. There is no better mechanism to achieve them than good employment opportunities, law

avored few will not do it. This is a far more serious issue than treating senior government officials and technical and professional bureaucrats as if they were employees of a private company and showering them with lucrative and unsustainable fringe benefits. Not enough is done to attract migrant talents. What is needed is a systematic inventory database that tracks these people's abilities, addresses, and needs. As well, a clearly defined strategy and well-formulated procedures should transform the existing informal, personal, and opaque process into a well-established, effective, transparent, and formal process of repatriation.

CONCLUSION

It is easy to be critical of government policies and to pronounce on their efficacy. It is hard to appreciate the contexts within which these policies are chosen and the constraints under which they operate. Economists write on the skin of paper and politicians write on the skin of people. Difficulties and challenges are posed by large deficits, huge debts, declining growth, an over-valued Lebanese pound, high unemployment, widespread poverty, and regional and sectoral imbalances. A massive run on the dollar can undermine all the achievements of the government and can sink the country into a serious crisis. It is a miracle that things are not worse than they are, given the underlying economic weaknesses and structural imbalances the country faces. It does not help to be alarmist, and economists should recognize that their statements, even when well meaning, could trigger unintended results. But complacency is just as dangerous. It is time to challenge the government to take another look at its programs and policies. The time is now, and there is still good time to do so.

Governments are no longer expected or believed able to do much about their domestic economies in the globalized world we live in today. At a minimum they are expected to create a favorable economic environment for business and growth, provide sufficient inputs that raise the productivity of the economy and meet the basic needs of citizens, moderate and temper extreme distributional outcomes of the market, and provide an affordable social safety net. Few if any would doubt the success of the Hariri government in providing a positive economic environment for business and projecting a positive image about Lebanon's business potential to the world community. All would certainly agree that it has also rebuilt the basic infrastructure without which the economy could not function. It failed, however, to articulate a coherent development program and provided little or no arbitration to moderate the negative market outcomes on income and wealth distribution among people, regions and sectors. The standard of living study mentioned above points out to high incidence of poverty and deprivation among families, particularly in the North, Northeast, and South, particularly in the areas of education and health. These are crucial components of human capital and reflect the untenable bias in government investment toward cement, large construction projects, and emphasis on Beirut to the detriment of other regions.

There are a number of measures that can be taken to change and improve the economic and social situation in the country. It is difficult to list them all; the short list here is presented without regard to the priority or sequential logic of these measures.

First, a serious macro-economic stabilization effort should target reducing the deficit at once. This can be best achieved by reducing the interest rate by at least 200-300 basis points, renegotiating the maturity terms of the debt, and raising more revenue from progressive taxes on income and wealth and from expenditure taxes that involve high offsets or credits to lower income earners. Equally important is to explore the possibility of borrowing, at favorable terms, from the Lebanese expatriates abroad. Other supporting strategies should involve reducing waste in government expenditure, improving the income earning capacity of the Central Bank reserves, scaling down construction projects, and judiciously privatizing part of the infrastructure development.

Raising more revenues without fostering growth is unsustainable. Growth can be fostered through granting of optimal subsidies (tying the subsidy or the soft term of the loan to production and export performance indices), credit expansion toward productive uses, and a more export-oriented value of the exchange rate. Allowing the pound to fetch a more export-friendly value should be done in a managed, moderate and orderly manner and coordinated with the interest rate policy and other friendly Arab Central Banks. This will bring about the desired synchronization between fiscal and monetary policies.

Dealing with unemployment seems to have an unjustifiably low priority for the government. Growth with emphasis on employment creation can be achieved through a well-designed employment creation program that can be worked out with the private sector. This policy should be tied to the strategy of fostering growth; the two cannot be separated.

Second, a new development perspective should be formulated with the full participation of the people and their representatives after a lengthy and serious civic debate. Such a framework should address the current imbalances between regions, sectors, and classes and should be part of the de-confessionalization goal. Heavy emphasis should be placed on human development, education, training, and fostering the new economy. Resurrecting old Beirut as the financial capital laundering center of the world is not a worthy or realistic option. Reinventing Beirut as a center for advanced knowledge, software development, and design engineering is more realistic.

The Lebanese comparative advantage has always been its people, great geographical beauty (whatever is left of it), relative water abundance, and ingenuity. Building on strength requires developing agribusiness that utilizes wisely and efficiently Lebanon's relative water advantage in the region, integrating the deprived southern and eastern regions into the development program, and opening again our traditional export markets. It also requires a more realistic tourism policy that attracts large volumes of visitors yearly to sample Lebanese flavors. Greece, which is only an hour's flight away from Beirut, is capable of attracting 12 million visitors a year. I am sure Lebanon can

attract multiples of its low volumes of visitors with proper coordination among tourism operators, the government, and private business. Israel has already started planning on attracting visitors at Lebanon's expense. Their designs include transforming visitations to a one-day safari like visits Jordan is experiencing today, while diverting the lion's share of this flow.

Developing tourism without preserving Lebanon's natural beauty will not work. The environment is part of the natural endowment and capital of Lebanon and deserves its attention and concern. Not enough attention has been paid to the environment. This neglect is costly and should not continue. An environmental assessment review should precede any project. Tourism is ultimately the financial payoff on the effort to preserve the environment; Lebanon's survival in the end is at stake here.

Foreign aid was expected to complement public funds, but these funds have trickled in at far lower rates than was expected. Many Lebanese have amassed substantial wealth abroad; some estimates put this wealth at over \$30 billion. The return to normalcy and the preservation of the free enterprise stance was believed sufficient to entice this group to return and to reinvest in Lebanon. A good number of entrepreneurs returned, but many preferred to keep their money abroad. The expected flood turned out to be a minor trickle. A serious effort should be made to attract a larger share of this capital abroad.

The profuse out-migration of skills and talents during the war can be reversed. The return to Lebanon of this pool of experienced talents with new skills learnt abroad could reestablish Lebanon's comparative advantage in services and knowledge. Not enough has been done to tally this group and to research what it takes to recruit them. The present informal and haphazard way should be replaced with a more systematic and formal program. The advantage of maintaining a lead over neighbors on the learning and technological curve cannot be exaggerated. Lebanon has lost ground in this area. An intensive effort is needed to rebuild and reposition the schools and the educational infrastructure to generate the quality professionals and researchers that accounted for Lebanon's success in the past and will ensure that it can be engendered again.

Lebanon does not have much time to waste. The costs can be catastrophic but the returns on a coherent and well-studied plan are great and real.

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LEBANON'S SECOND REPUBLIC: SECULAR TALK, SECTARIAN APPLICATION

Sami A. Ofeish

DURING A TRIP TO LEBANON in December 1996, I observed a very interesting and intriguing phenomenon in one neighborhood of Beirut's southern suburbs. I was visiting with a friend who lives in the predominantly Shiite neighborhood of al-Shiyya. His residence is located in a newly built area very close to the predominantly Christian area of al-Tayyuna. At dusk, he pointed to me a reemerging tradition in the community; we saw candles lit and arranged in different formations on some balconies and windowsills in adjacent buildings. My Shiite friend had to inquire from his wife about the occasion. We learned that it is in celebration of the advent of mid-Sha'ban. (Sha'ban is the month that immediately precedes the fasting month of Ramadan according to the Muslim calendar.)

When we revisited the scene a few minutes later I noticed a very intriguing fact. Some of the apartments displaying the burning candles also had illuminated Christmas trees in their living rooms. It was not unusual for me to see decorated Christmas trees in Muslim households in Lebanon. This was a common occurrence in the last few years before the 1975-90 civil war. But what attracted my attention was the concurrent existence and public display in this area of what is considered to be two "rival" religious symbols in the postwar period.

Beirut's southern suburbs had been a frequent target of "sectarian" shelling throughout the war, mainly from the adjacent Christian-concentrated areas that were controlled by the right wing militias. Although Beirut's southern suburbs had been a stronghold for leftist and secular parties in the past, Shiite-based sectarian militias and religious groups became very active in these suburbs in the 1980s. As a result, these areas became identified as a bastion for Shiite sectarian-based calls for reform and Shiite "fundamentalism." In such a milieu, the mutual display of "contesting" religious symbols could be a direct challenge to the logic of sectarianism (*al-ta'iffiyya*). The phenomenon of sectarianism was rejuvenated in different parts of Lebanon in the 1980s.¹

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WHAT IS SECTARIANISM?

Sectarianism and the sectarian system (*al-nizam al-ta'iffya*) were considered by some scholars and Lebanese political contenders as major contributors to the Lebanese conflict before 1990. They were reinforced through the 1989 Document of National Understanding (also known as the Ta'if Accord) that ushered in the formal end of the war. The main aim of this essay is to examine the reasons for the continuous use of sectarianism in government in the postwar period. I argue that the interest of the Lebanese elite in maintaining control is a principal factor in the continuing implementation of the sectarian system since its embryonic formation in 1843.

Sectarianism is a complex phenomenon. The coeval display of the "opposing" religious symbols in al-Shiyya under the circumstances described above triggers many pertinent questions. These questions have to do with the degree of association between sectarianism and other factors, like the increasing practice of religious rituals² and the expansion of modernization and globalization³ that influenced Lebanon from 1990. Drawing on the al-Shiyya case, a set of questions could be raised here to address the relationship between sectarianism and religiosity.

Is lighting candles in this case a sign of religiosity or sectarianism or both? Are religiosity and sectarianism—universally or in the case of Lebanon—different or the same in nature and goals? And if different, to what extent do they overlap? Are sectarianism and sectarian feelings a logical extension or a necessary outcome of religious identity? Are the Lebanese who displayed multi-religious symbols sectarian but tolerant of other religions, or are they are religious but not necessarily sectarian? Is either of these two options possible, and in which way can we explain the phenomenon of displaying these symbols? Can we generalize across geographical areas about the reasons for displaying multi-religious symbols, or will they vary greatly from one area to another in association with other economic, social, and political factors? Finally, is the simultaneous display of these symbols a strong or weak indicator of the commonly held argument that sectarianism is well entrenched in Lebanon after the civil war?

Sectarianism is not necessarily synonymous with religiosity. These concepts should be differentiated from each other with an eye on the situational nature of sectarianism. One difference is that, while sectarianism may imply some intolerance of them (sectarian) "others" and encourage feelings of competition with them, religiosity does not necessarily imply intolerance. Moreover, religiosity may be personal, dormant, and passive in many instances. History has shown many cases of the existence of a significant degree of tolerance among religious groups.

Another difference is that a sectarian person is not necessarily a religious person in practice, behavior, and attitudes. To the contrary, it is common to find people in Lebanon who have strong sectarian feelings and may exhibit sectarian behavior, but who are secular in terms of their daily conduct

and general attitudes—including many who are non-practicing Muslims and Christians. It is also common to find a person who may act in a sectarian or religious way but have secular positions on some issues.⁴

Moreover, religious conflicts have in many cases involved an attempt to convert the “others,” to subdue them on a religious basis, or even to separate permanently from them. This has rarely been the case in Lebanon since the initiation of the sectarian system. The civil war period in particular witnessed calls for separation by Christian-concentrated right wing militias or for the creation of a religious state introduced by Islamist groups. But these ideas were and are unpopular and are usually considered inapplicable and extremist.

Sectarian arguments do not necessarily reflect religious dogmas, although they may use them heavily at times. Sectarianism is mainly a political tool whose advocates often exaggerate the significance of “ethnic” markers in sectarian communities in order to stress their differences and promote an identity of each community versus others. The proponents of sectarianism may shift tactics and arguments, sometimes drastically, to achieve power ends. For example, during the 1975-82 period some predominantly Christian sectarian right wing forces called frequently for “autonomy of Christian regions” or partitioning of Lebanon, at times citing the inherent religious differences from Muslims as a cause for separation.⁵ But when the Israeli invasion in the summer of 1982 tilted power to the advantage of these groups their presidential candidate, Bashir Jemayel, campaigned on the basis of reuniting the “10,452 square kilometers,” that is, all Lebanese territories.

Sectarianism in Lebanon’s case cannot be simply explained by the fact that sectarian communities exist. In other words, sectarianism is not a “natural” byproduct of the presence of sects, as some scholars had assumed or argued.⁶ If so, then sectarian systems would have been more common in other states, including Middle Eastern states, where more than one sect exist and societal tensions are rampant.

The vast literature on ethnicity is very useful to our understanding of sectarianism. Studies of ethnicity in its broader context, including groups differentiated along racial origins, cultural backgrounds, and religious affiliations, address the causes for the rise of ethnicity and ethnic mobilization. Of the two major approaches that address ethnicity and ethnic mobilization, the instrumentalist approach is more viable than the primordialist approach in explaining Lebanon’s sectarianism. The primordialist approach tends to consider sectarian mobilization as inherent and given based on the existence of sects, whereas the instrumentalist approach allows for explaining fluctuations in mobilization in association with other socioeconomic and political factors.⁷ Most studies on sectarianism in Lebanon use the primordialist approach, and the few who use the instrumentalist approach have mainly explored specific affects or dimensions of sectarianism.

Sectarianism is purposeful rather than coincidental. It is not an independent but a dependent variable, largely dependent on the interest of the elite in reaching and maintaining power. If we examine historically the

development of the sectarian system since its inception in 1843, it becomes clear that it was carefully promoted at its different stages by an emerging or an established elite interested in power.

Lebanon's elite in general are interested in sectarianism because it is a useful tool for control. As such, it serves two major purposes. First, it creates a solid constituency for the elite. This constituency is composed mainly of lower and middle class co-religionists who are led to believe that their access to resources is dependent on their association with the elite in a client-patron relationship. Second, it allows the elite to diffuse demands for reforms raised by the lower and middle classes. The elite would achieve their goals if they succeeded in dividing these classes along sectarian lines, thus encouraging them to compete with one another for access to resources.

Sectarianism is institutionalized in a sectarian system that highlights sectarian communities as primary societal units and political entities. As a result, the state largely confines political representation to the boundaries of "sectarian representation." The dominance of the elite over their co-religionists is legitimized by the "fact" that they "represent" their interests. Moreover, the state tries to redirect the anger caused by the growing inequalities between the upper and the popular classes, and within different segments of the population, into intra-class anger within the popular classes molded as sectarian tensions.

Although the elite compete over resources, and would enhance their positions if they secured continuous (sectarian) popular support, they would usually like to keep the mobilization of the popular classes within safe limits. Thus the privileged elite usually emphasize stability and maintenance of the sectarian balance. In other words, they are interested in controlling the emerging tensions of the popular classes and guaranteeing themselves continuous access to resources. So popular attempts to challenge, modify, or abolish the sectarian system are usually blocked by the exploiting elite for the alleged sake of safeguarding the national interest (*al-maslaha al-wataniyya*) or national unity (*al-wihda al-wataniyya*).

Sectarianism could be initially identified here as an elite-promoted mode of differentiation among religiously affiliated members of the society in terms of access to power and control over resources. Although this differentiation is primarily a perceived one on the popular level, it may materialize in association with the competing elite interests in building a solid constituency among their co-religionists. The main goals of sectarianism are diffusing the popular classes' demands for reforms aimed at alleviating their deteriorating conditions and redirecting their activism into intra-class competition that weakens their abilities for change and advances elite control over them.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SECTARIANISM AND THE SECTARIAN SYSTEM

The sectarian system is relatively new to Lebanon's rule: its principles were first introduced to the political regime of Mount Lebanon in only 1843 and it was not applied to the rest of Lebanon's territories until the inception of Greater Lebanon in 1920.

Mount Lebanon was divided under the Ottomans in 1843 into two administrative districts: the southern Druze-concentrated region and the northern Maronite-concentrated region. These districts were headed respectively by Druze and Maronite administrators. Members of the district councils were also drawn equally from the various sectarian communities in each region.⁸

An array of factors contributed to this injection of sectarian principles into government rule. The influence of lay and religious Christian elites grew significantly under Ottoman rule. The Ottoman millet system allowed for developing communal institutions of non-Muslim sects, which, coupled with the Ottoman Capitulations to the expanding European powers, advanced the status of emerging Christian elites in Lebanon. Many of these were involved in economic activities associated with expanding Western interests in the region. Concurrently, the Western-connected Maronite Church was gaining wealth and influence.

The introduction of European-based capitalism during the "long nineteenth century" was a principal factor in shaking the foundations of Mount Lebanon's feudal principedom and weakening the predominantly Druze feudal lords. Subsequently, class-based peasant revolts became more frequent, placing strong pressures on the elite to enact reforms. The division of the mountain and the introduction of "sectarian representation" in 1843 did not terminate the peasant insurrections. In 1858 a major uprising by peasants against their co-religionist feudal lords in the predominantly Maronite area of Kisirwan succeeded in throwing out the lords and establishing a commoners' republic.⁹ But the conflict expanded wildly into other territories and turned sectarian.

The European powers and the Ottomans, who had jointly supported the 1843 regime, intervened again in 1861, but this time to unify the mountain under a new system. This system reinforced the principles of "sectarian representation," which favored the Maronites in appointment of district heads, allocation of seats in the central administrative council, and recruitment of the gendarmerie.¹⁰ This system helped advance the emerging Maronite bourgeoisie.

Under the French Mandate, Greater Lebanon was established in 1920 by joining Mount Lebanon with adjacent parts of the dissolved Ottoman provinces. The French, along with some Maronite compradors (agents of foreign economic interests) saw the larger entity as more economically viable and suitable for infiltrating the Arab interior. But the initiation of Greater Lebanon was entwined with a steady gap in access to resources among the Lebanese as well as serious disagreements over national identity. The socioeconomic and

national identity divides had overlapped with regional and religious differentiations.

Greater Lebanon engulfed two areas unequal in their level of capitalist development and their access to services and resources: the more advanced area of Beirut and Mount Lebanon, constituting the center, and the less advanced areas of northern, eastern, and southern Lebanon, constituting the peripheries.

The creation of Greater Lebanon was also against the wishes of a significant number of its population. A large number of the center's residents were Christians, and many of them, particularly Maronites, were advocates of the new state. A good number of the peripheries' residents were Muslims, and many of them, in addition to a good number of Christians, leaned toward reunion with a Syrian/Arab nation.¹¹ The different concentrations of sectarian communities in the center versus the peripheries also meant that Christians, predominantly of the center, had better access to resources while Muslims, predominantly of the peripheries, had less. This access also varied with class differences, with the upper classes of various religious affiliations in both regions having much better access to resources.

The continuous rejection of the French Mandate and its local allies throughout the 1920s and 1930s, supported by the development of secular parties that represented the popular classes, led the ruling elite to reinforce sectarianism through expanding "sectarian representation." Seats in the first parliament, initiated in 1926, were allocated on a sectarian basis. The sectarian allocation of top state offices also started to take shape during this period, although the Christian elite predominantly filled them.

The sectarian system was fully developed at independence in 1943. Bishara al-Khuri and Riad al-Solh, representatives of the Maronite-based comprador class and the Sunni-based merchant class respectively, joined in an unwritten agreement called the National Pact to establish this system. Tradition was set to preserve the position of the presidency for the Maronite elite, the premiership for the Sunni elite, and the parliament speakership for the Shiite elite. Rules were also set to distribute parliamentary seats, cabinet posts, and administrative and army positions at all levels on sectarian basis. These arrangements worked mainly to the advantage of the Christian, and more in particular, the Maronite elite.

The predominance of a service-based economy during the 1950s, the subordination of agriculture and industry to its rules, and the heavy discriminatory impact of the sectarian system culminated in a series of crises starting in the mid-1960s. These led in turn to forceful calls for political, socioeconomic, and educational reforms. The reform coalition included labor unions, secular parties and organizations, and student groups. Political organizations like the Communist Party, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, and the Ba'th Party were involved, while the student unions at the Lebanese University and the American University of Beirut led the student movement. Demands for reform included abolishing the sectarian system and replacing clientelism by merit for access to resources.

In response, the ruling elite moved to weaken the reform movement and diffuse its demands. The dominant Maronite elite initiated a well-organized sectarian campaign that was also designed to solidify their sectarian mass base and develop its military readiness.¹² The Kataib Party led the campaign along with the National Liberal Party, and coordinated their efforts with President Suleiman Franjiyya and the Lebanese army. The resulting tensions culminated in the outbreak of the civil war in 1975.

The largely Christian right wing sectarian militias became dominant in Christian-concentrated areas from 1975 on and cleansed these areas in a short time from their "enemies." The list of groups targeted included Christians who disagreed with the militias' sectarian plans as well as the bulk of non-Christian and non-Lebanese inhabitants of these areas.

In the first few years of the war the secular parties of the leftist coalition made serious efforts to maintain a secular atmosphere in the areas they controlled. Nonetheless, several factors, including the impact of the 1982 Israeli invasion, allowed the predominance of the largely Muslim sectarian militias in the multi-sectarian areas from 1983 on. Although mobility between various areas was relatively tolerated in the late 1970s, a stalemate was reestablished after 1982. Each side confined itself mainly to its own areas and fixed lines were drawn among neighborhoods and regions.

THE TA'IF ACCORD: SECULAR TALK, SECTARIAN TALK

In a Saudi-brokered deal, the Document of National Understanding (Ta'if Accord) of 1989 ushered in the formal end of the civil war, a step enforced in 1990 with a great deal of Syrian help.

The Ta'if Accord was the crest of a series of "reformist" proposals and agreements that never materialized fully in wartime.¹³ The secular and leftist forces' calls for reform had gained momentum rapidly from 1975 on. In response, the right wing forces argued that the conflict was primarily an internal-external one between Lebanese and Palestinians, and that reforms were unnecessary. Some members of the Muslim traditional elite argued in turn that the formula for reducing tensions lay in achieving parity of power with the privileged Maronite elite.

Despite the fact that most of those traditional Muslim elite lacked teeth during the war, the essence of their argument constantly prevailed throughout the "reformist" documents culminating in the Ta'if Accord. Many factors developing after 1976 contributed to this outcome. These factors included the gradual retreat of the leftist and secular forces, the rising power of the Muslim-concentrated sectarian militias (especially in the 1980s), the inability of the right wing forces to expand beyond the Christian-concentrated areas they controlled in the war's first two years, and the forceful intervention of the Syrians. As a result, reform was narrowed down to a redistribution of resources on a sectarian basis to the advantage of the Muslim elite. Such an outcome was made more possible by the

reluctant acquiescence of Christian-concentrated right wing forces, who preferred it to any secular alternative.

The new (1990) preamble to the constitution, drawing on the Ta'if Accord, addressed three major underlying causes of the Lebanese civil war.

The first cause pertains to the conflict of national identity entwined with Lebanon's inception in 1920. While the 1943 National Pact rather recognized Lebanon's dual ties to the West and the Arab world, the new preamble to the constitution unequivocally stressed Lebanon's Arab identity and affiliation (Clause B).¹⁴ But this was represented with a particular "Lebanese" twist. The preamble rejected any attempt to partition Lebanon and any form of discrimination among the Lebanese (Clause I). It also declared illegitimate any authority that negated the (sectarian) coexistence of the population (Clause J). These statements were a veiled response to arguments propagated by some right wing Christian-concentrated forces from the war period. But the preamble equally stated that Lebanon is a "final homeland" for all its citizens (Clause A).

Such an emphasis was aimed at weakening the historical calls by leftist and secular forces to include Lebanon in a larger Syrian and/or Arab union. Thus in the preamble the postwar regime equated secessionists and larger unionists, and considered both extreme sectarian arguments and broader nationalist (often secular) ones non-viable. Because of the significant support extended to the Accord by the Muslim elite, the stress on the "final homeland" concept definitely got their approval. This in turn suggests that the new Muslim bourgeoisie (like Rafiq al-Hariri and Nabih Berri) were openly signaling their acceptance and advancement of a "Lebanese nation." The Muslim bourgeoisie had historically refrained from supporting this notion.

The second cause relates to the growing socioeconomic divide perpetuated by unequal access to resources and the negative affects of the steady center/peripheries gap. The new preamble states that Lebanon's system should be based "on social justice and equality between all citizens in rights and duties without any differentiation or preference" (Clause C). It also affirms that "a balanced development among regions culturally, socially, and economically is a cornerstone of the state's unity and stability" (Clause G).

The third cause is sectarianism and its discriminatory system. Indicating the destructive effects of the sectarian system, the postwar state made it clear that "abolishing political sectarianism is a fundamental national goal that should be achieved according to a piecemeal plan" (Clause H).

The founders of the Ta'if Accord "Second Republic" mimicked their predecessors who conceived the National Pact's "First Republic." They suggested that sectarianism should be phased out to advance Lebanon, yet they took steps to reinforce it. But while the National Pact's elite did not advance beyond the hope that sectarianism would wither away,¹⁵ they organized the sectarian system in an extra constitutional manner.¹⁶ The Ta'if elite, in contrast, injected into the constitution for the first time both the intention to abolish sectarianism and steps that solidified its existence.

The 1990 constitutional amendments introduced some principles and mechanisms that organized and rearranged the sectarian system. Article 24 presents the guidelines for the sectarian distribution of seats in parliament. This article affirms that, until parliament enacts non-sectarian electoral laws, parliamentary seats should be distributed equally between Christians and Muslims. It also states that seats should be allocated on the basis of “proportional representation” among the sectarian groups within each of the Christian and Muslim communities. While the first tier of distribution of seats between the two religious communities is clearly defined, the second tier is rather obscure and open to different interpretations.¹⁷ The principles of sectarian “proportional representation” were not implemented accurately in the past and they did not accommodate the demographic changes showing Muslims as the numerical majority starting in the 1960s. Moreover, there are no constitutional guarantees that these principles will reflect any present and future changes among the larger religious communities or the sectarian groups.

Article 19 establishes a constitutional council whose role is to “oversee the constitutionality of laws and to adjudicate the conflicts stemming from the presidential and parliamentary elections.” Religious heads of sectarian communities are, except for the three top state leaders and ten unspecified members of parliament, the only parties allowed to petition the council. The religious leaders’ appeal to the council is restricted to legal matters related to “personal status, and freedoms of belief, religious practice, and religious education.” Nonetheless, they were provided an exclusive opportunity to influence decisions on such vital matters. Such an opportunity was not extended to civic associations or individuals, who may have a comparable interest in petitioning the council on such matters.

Top religious leaders can use their petitioning prerogatives under Article 19 to preserve their exclusive control over all personal status matters in the absence of a civil personal status law. Moreover, their privileged ability to protect religious education, in a state where a significant number of educational institutions are religiously affiliated, puts them in a unique position to block secularization of education and disrupt attempts to create a secular and unifying national identity. One disturbing notion about Article 19, as Muhammad Majzoub argues, is its unfairness: it provides those who wrote the laws with the right to check and correct them, while it denies this right to their potential victims.¹⁸ This in turn contradicts the principle of social justice injected in the new preamble.

The Ta’if Accord delivered a major boost to the sectarian system’s durability by rearranging sectarian control among the top state leaders through the constitutional amendments. The exclusively Sunni-held position of prime minister was strengthened at the expense of the president’s traditional functions. According to Article 64, the prime minister is clearly now the one who heads the government and acts as its representative. The Shiite-exclusive position of the parliament’s speaker was also empowered by the 1990 amendments. The speaker’s term is extended to four years, instead of one in the past, as stated in

Article 44. In addition, limiting the executive authority's ability to dissolve it to three rare cases as stated in Articles 65 and 77 strengthened parliament.¹⁹ The Maronite-exclusive position of president was rendered more symbolic. The president is now the head of the state (Article 49), but executive power now lies mainly with the Council of Ministers (Article 17), and the president shares the decision-making process with the prime minister and the council.

These rearrangements of power among the top state leaders created a unique situation never witnessed before in Lebanon. Now three presidents rule Lebanon: the President of the Republic, the President of the Council of Ministers, and the President of the Chamber of Deputies. Although this literal translation of their posts had existed before 1990, the term "three presidents" (*al-rou'asa al-thalatha*) or troika was coined after 1990 to indicate that they now share power almost equally, though in different capacities. Tensions and clashes among the troika members increased, and on a larger scale than those among top state leaders in the pre-1990 period.

The intensity of the competition among the elite is multiplied by the fact that they are operating in a sectarian environment. It is continually argued that the rearrangement of control among those leaders is reflective of power relations among their respective religious-affiliated communities at the war's end. Joseph Mailla points out that the post-1990 tug-of-war over claims of executive control is one between a Maronite President of the Republic and a Sunni President of the Council of Ministers.²⁰ Paul Salem also notes that, while the president's term is limited to six years and he or she can be removed from office only by impeachment, the speaker and prime minister are limited to four years and both are subject to a vote of no-confidence in parliament. Salem suggests that the "proviso on the term of the Speaker" as stated in Article 44 "reflects Sunni-Shiite sensitivities and the need to maintain the delicate balance between the two groups."²¹ This argument supports the frequently suggested notion that the continuous strife between Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri and Speaker Nabih Berri was an indicator of the competition over the "representation" and leadership of Muslims between their two larger respective sectarian communities.

While the above constitutional amendments reinforce sectarianism in the Second Republic, other amendments address the abolition of political sectarianism and suggest steps to achieve it. Article 95 entrusts the first parliament "elected on an equal basis between Christians and Muslims" to take the "appropriate measures for eliminating the sectarian system according to a piecemeal plan." One of these measures is assembling a high-powered committee to achieve that goal. This committee is to be charged with studying and proposing the means to abolish sectarianism, presenting them to the parliament and cabinet, and supervising the execution of the transitional plan. The committee, to be headed by the president, would also include the prime minister, speaker of parliament, and leading public figures.

During the transitional period, the article states, sectarian groups should be represented in an equitable fashion in the cabinet. Moreover,

The principle of sectarian representation should be eliminated and expertise and competence should be applied in the appointments for public service jobs, the judiciary, the military and security institutions, and public and joint institutions, all in accordance with the requirements of national reconciliation. Grade one posts and their equivalents should be exempted from this rule, and should be equally distributed between Christians and Muslims without reserving any of them to any sectarian community while employing the principles of expertise and competence. (Article 95)

There are two fundamental problems with Article 95. First, its distribution of grade one posts and their equivalents on a sectarian basis violates the principle of merit stated in Article 12. Article 12, kept in its original text from the 1926 constitution, clearly states that “every Lebanese has the right to hold a civil service job, with no preference being made except on the basis of merit and competence.” This contradiction between Articles 95 and 12 is not new. Both the original 1926 text of Article 95 and its amendment in 1943 recognize the sectarian distribution of civil service jobs. But the Ta’if sponsors should have eliminated the sectarian distribution of jobs from the 1990 amendment to Article 95, especially because the amendment’s main aim is to abolish political sectarianism through a transitional plan.

The second problem lies in the suspicious nature of the committee entrusted with abolishing the sectarian system. Neither the Ta’if Accord nor Article 95 sets a time limit for the function of this committee or the duration of the transitional period. They also do not state that the committee’s recommendations are to be binding on the parliament or cabinet. Simply put, this committee was rather a paper tiger: it never materialized with the first parliament elected in 1992 “on an equal basis between Christians and Muslims” as required in the constitution. Actually, it was only initiated on paper eight years later, as we will show below.

In major violation of the spirit of abolishing political sectarianism stated in the preamble and Article 95, Article 22 was amended to allow for initiating a sectarian-based senate immediately following the first parliament elected on a non-sectarian basis—a senate which shall encompass “representation of all spiritual families and whose authority shall be confined to dealing with crucial national issues.” The article does not specify who would represent the “spiritual families,” leaving room for participation of religious leaders, which—if it materializes—will solidify their constitutional prerogatives stated in Article 19.

The Ta’if Accord elements reflected in the 1990 constitutional amendments are not fully committed to the cause of abolishing the sectarian system. As such, they look contradictory and vague, suggesting that sectarianism is an unnecessary evil that should be eradicated, but taking various steps to

reinforce it. There is also a serious effort in the constitution to maintain "sectarian representation." This is clear in the distribution of cabinet and grade one civil service posts during the transitional period, in allowing religious leaders exclusively the communal right to petition for crucial civic matters, and in the plans to initiate a sectarian-based senate. An additional measure showing the lack of commitment to abolish sectarianism in the constitution lies in the make-up of the committee entrusted with doing so: Article 95 authorizes those who are the principal beneficiaries of the sectarian system to lead the efforts to eliminate it.²²

THE "SECOND REPUBLIC": SECTARIAN APPLICATION

The Ta'if Accord sustained the notion that political representation is for now mainly bound within sectarian "representation." The reinforced sectarian system continued to facilitate the process of tying the popular classes to their respective co-religionist elite in a client/patron relationship. The sectarian ideology in turn asserted the concept that access to resources and power may be achieved mainly through sectarian channels.

Under these conditions Lebanon returned to the prewar period. The First Republic disallowed and oppressed the bulk of the secular forces for a long time and, when they were legalized in 1970, worked hard to block their activism and expansion. The increasing activism of the secular forces then posed a serious challenge to the maintenance of the clientelist system.²³ Although secular forces have better legal grounds for activism in the Second Republic, the sectarian groups and elite are the dominant ones now. The reproduction of ruling elite control in the Second Republic is strongly associated with the reproduction of sectarianism, both made possible through sectarian "representation."

This whole scheme was facilitated in the Second Republic by a loose alliance between two major forces: leaders of the war militias and a new socio-political coalition led by Hariri, who represented a coalition between local and regional capital.²⁴ Members of this alliance were heavily represented in the cabinet and the troika leadership.

The hegemonic control of the predominantly sectarian militias during the war's later period led to their manipulation and maintenance of a war economy plus segmentation of the population along sectarian lines.²⁵ As a result, they had the upper hand in accumulating and distributing resources that they had levied directly or were state-owned. When the state reemerged after 1989 and sectarian demarcation lines were loosened, a concentration and centralization of power rapidly developed. Under these circumstances, many militia leaders broadened their appeal and patronage to the national level and started to compete over state resources.²⁶

The troika members, who agreed on a partnership in state control but frequently clashed over access and distribution of its resources, supervised this centralization of power. This relationship, like the one among Hariri, Berri, and President Elias Hrawi that dominated the political process in the 1992-98 period,

is historically unique to Lebanon. At no time in the past did the fate of state policies hang for an extended period of time primarily on relations among the top three state leaders. The relationship among those three leaders cannot be sufficiently explained by their personality traits. But it is politically significant to the extent that it overshadowed the interaction among the institutions they presided over. This lies in direct contradiction with the Ta'if Accord, whose main purpose "was to replace the rule of the individual (the president) by the rule of institutions."²⁷ One of the frequent complaints about the hegemony of the Maronite elite over state affairs in the prewar period was directed at the symbol of this authority: the all-powerful president.

The political weight of the troika relationship plus the relative power parity among its members had a great impact on the popular level in association with the logic of "sectarian representation." Under this dominant logic, each member of the troika is the top state "representative" of his respective sectarian community. With this pretext, the growing competition among the troika members may resonate negatively on the popular level, while their rapprochement usually spells stability. In addition, the success or failure of their maneuvers to legislate and/or implement policies is usually measured in scores of "losses" or "gains" of the Maronite, Sunni, and Shiite sectarian communities and subsequently of the two larger religious communities. Some Maronite elite consider the First Republic a presidential system and consider the more equitable post-Ta'if relationship among presidency, cabinet, and parliament a loss to their community. In this context, President Hrawi in 1998 blasted what he called "the system of the three presidents" and called for the stabilization of a presidential system,²⁸ although Clause C of the preamble identifies Lebanon as a parliamentary democratic republic.

Each of the troika members was interested in advancing his power in the state, and represented and served certain economic powers. But the strong influence of sectarian logic in public discourse serves to camouflage the class dimensions of several contested issues. For example, Berri and Hariri disagreed for most of 1998 on modifying the pay scale for government employees. This is not a Shiite-Sunni issue per se and was usually presented as the result of their personal rivalry; but it was also suggested that Berri's advocacy of the pay increases added to his weight as a speaker and a Shiite spokesman. Hariri had also recruited to high state offices professional advisors and managers of different sectarian affiliations who worked for his vast business enterprises. But Hariri was seen as the dominant Sunni politician, and this non-sectarian selection of economic advisors was not given enough attention.

Government corruption continued to hinder the state's effectiveness under the Second Republic,²⁹ but on a larger and more intensive scale than under the First Republic.³⁰ It became more rampant at different levels of the power structure, from the monopoly of elite family members over private services, to favoritism in the distribution of government contracts, to nepotism in the bureaucracy, to the payment of bribes in most government departments. Bribes partially addressed the economic needs of traditionally underpaid government

employees, especially at the lower ranks of the bureaucracy.³¹ But the rejuvenation of sectarianism and clientelism from 1990 on particularly contributed to the spread of corruption. This rejuvenation was greatly helped by the expansion of the militia-built networks that were engaged in the distribution of resources during wartime and the interest of the reemerging state's elite in creating political fiefdoms for themselves. It is interesting that many of the new elite, most of whom come from lower and middle class backgrounds, were as effective as the upper class-based traditional elite in manipulating sectarianism and clientelism to serve their interests.

Every reshuffling of top administrators from 1990 on has been marred by conflict among the troika members over their "sectarian shares." Sectarian affiliation and patronage are becoming increasingly the major criteria for selection to these positions. An excellent example is the extended crisis associated with appointing deans at the Lebanese University. This university, the only public university in Lebanon, has the largest student population, drawn mainly from the popular classes. It had been historically neglected by the state, which favored private universities. As a result, it has continuously struggled to survive and expand. The move to appoint new deans for its ten colleges was blocked for months in 1996 because the troika members could not agree on a sectarian/clientelist distribution of deans that was satisfactory to all three of them.

The initial distribution of deans was as follows: three Maronite deans, one clearly close to President Hrawi and a second the brother-in-law of the Orthodox Minister Murr; three Sunni deans, all close to Prime Minister Hariri; two Shiite deans, one close to Speaker Berri and the other apparently endorsed by both Berri and Hariri; one Orthodox dean, brother of Hrawi's personal physician; and one Druze dean, close to Druze minister Walid Junblat. Speaker Berri protested the inadequacy of his share compared to those of the other troika members, and the appointments were shelved. Finally the troika reached a compromise: a new college was initiated (the College of Tourism and Hotel Management) and a Shiite dean was appointed to it in order to satisfy Berri.³² As soon as the appointments were announced, a public uproar ensued over the sectarian and clientelist criteria for the selection. So the troika froze the appointments for a few months until the uproar died down.³³

A central secular issue, the introduction of civil marriage, was the subject of serious contention on both the leadership and popular levels in spring 1998. The personal status of Lebanon's residents, including marriage, is solely regulated by religious courts and may vary widely among the eighteen state-recognized sects.³⁴ Thus a couple seeking marriage who are born to different sects will usually face the requirement that one of them should convert in order to get married in the other's religious court. If they choose to avoid conversion, one available alternative is to have a civil marriage outside Lebanon. This does not suggest that they have avoided religious courts for good. Lebanese authorities will recognize their marriage, but other personal status matters like

inheritance are regulated only under these courts. The couple will still face other personal status-based problems because of their different religious affiliations.

The introduction of civil marriage had been blocked repeatedly in the past because it was considered an important step on the road to secularism.³⁵ Member of Parliament Ghassan Matar, who belongs to the secularist Syrian Social Nationalist Party, submitted a proposal to Parliament in July 1997 to enact secular laws, including civil marriage, but his proposal was not examined. In March 1998 President Hrawi succeeded in passing in the cabinet a draft law for optional civil marriage. This was made possible by the support provided by the secularists and Speaker Berri's allies in the cabinet. This in turn increased tensions between President Hrawi and Speaker Berri on the one hand and Prime Minister Hariri on the other.

Sources suggested that Hrawi was primarily showing his leadership abilities in passing the civil marriage draft law. The countdown for the presidential elections had started amid reports that Hariri and probably Berri were more interested in electing a new president than supporting another extension for Hrawi in office. It was also suggested that Berri's support of the draft law was just another round in his continuous struggle with Hariri. In addition, Berri had been trying to position himself for some time as the champion of abolishing political sectarianism.³⁶ Such support for the draft law would be consistent with this image and would also make him, rather than Hrawi, the star of secularism. Hariri was infuriated by this alliance and by the fact that Hrawi had challenged his authority as the President of the Council of Ministers by passing the draft law under his nose.

Sunni clerics led a forceful campaign against the draft optional civil marriage law, mobilizing sectarian support and coordinating with some Sunni Islamist groups. This of course strengthened Hariri's position in the troika's rivalry. The Sunni clerics were soon joined by Shiite and Druze religious leaders and on the Christian side by the Maronite hierarchy.³⁷ In response, a group of secular associations and parties organized to promote civil marriage and immediately became active on college campuses. This secular coalition broadened its appeal to address the need for civil personal status laws and received enthusiastic support on the popular level. Its activities included rallies and petition signing in various areas.³⁸

On the troika level, a joint meeting with Syrian President Asad diffused the crisis without inflicting heavy losses on any of its members. Sunni clerics contained their support. Prime Minister Hariri remained adamant in his refusal to sign the civil marriage bill. President Hrawi sent a letter to parliament asking for the initiation of a national committee, as stipulated in Article 95, to study and formulate the plan to abolish political sectarianism. Although Speaker Berri was the one who solicited Hrawi's letter, he received it and read it in parliament without taking any action. Berri undermined the proposed committee's success beforehand by suggesting that it would take it "20 to 30 years before reaching anywhere."³⁹

Economically, the postwar state continues to face some of the same major problems that plagued Lebanon before 1990. Prewar patrons often came from the landed class and had provided the connections to facilitate services for their clients. Now the war lords-turned-business owners, along with the new capitalists, are providing both jobs and connections to their clients. This situation has made the clientelist system more socioeconomically entrenched and effective, facilitated by tight labor market conditions, which has tied the clients more tightly in their livelihood to the destiny and whims of their patrons.

Moreover, the state's spending priorities through 1998 strongly favored paying debt interest plus defense and general government expense spending over social services like education, health, housing, family support, and unemployment benefits.⁴⁰ The state also paid more attention to rebuilding the infrastructure and supported the service sector while relatively ignoring the productive economic sectors.⁴¹ Although the pre-1975 center/peripheries divide was relatively destabilized by the war's effects, this did not lead to any fundamental change in the distribution of wealth or access to services between its regions. The center is still the dominant area: it engulfs a concentration of wealth and better access to services, which are available mainly for the few while the majority of its residents are becoming more impoverished.

A very influential "center within the center" is developing in the newly reconstructed downtown Beirut. This area is designated as an exclusive commercial/financial center and has many skyscrapers but little public space. Among the major criticisms of the center city scheme is financial exploitation of small owners and social segregation resulting from the reconstruction design, both assigned to a Hariri-owned company that fully controls the project.⁴²

Other infrastructure projects have developed in a similar direction. The expanding network of highways is redrawing the urban geography of Beirut, segregating its neighborhoods from one another and impoverishing some of them. The new highway that connects Beirut with southern Lebanon has been diverted from the poor neighborhood of Ouza'i, leading to its further marginalization.⁴³ The state's policy on poverty is very similar. Poverty is ignored as a major societal problem. The state assumes instead that its focus on currency stabilization and infrastructure projects will ultimately lead to a decrease in poverty.⁴⁴ The execution of such policies by the Hariri governments broadened the socioeconomic gap and increased poverty vis-à-vis the prewar period.⁴⁵

The state's leading troika is mainly interested now in building a service-based nation-state using a hybrid of conflicting national models and symbols.⁴⁶ Prime Minister Hariri could have been a leading candidate to continue such a role, taking into consideration his strong regional and global connections as well as his unprecedented internal economic and political control. But this project does not lead necessarily to a stable and successfully developing state.

The Ta'if Accord was a turning point in ending the civil war. But the Accord has not succeeded as of 1998 in creating an effective formula for a stable Second Republic. The new regime has not yet resolved the lingering causes of

the civil war as promised in the 1990 preamble to the constitution. The Second Republic, as Salim al-Hoss suggests, is a “sectarian, and therefore a discriminatory, regime”;⁴⁷ it neither narrows (or even seriously addresses) the socioeconomic gaps among the Lebanese nor puts sufficient effort to create even development among its regions. A unified national identity cannot be facilitated under these conditions. If Emile Lahoud’s regime fails to install reforms that implement the Ta’if promises, all the gains achieved from 1990 to stabilize Lebanon may be in serious jeopardy.

NOTES

1. Sectarianism and sectarian-based power were undermined from the late 1960s on by the forceful rise of secular forces intent on introducing secular reforms. But these forces were weakened from the early 1980s and in particular after 1982. Less mixed areas like the southern suburbs in particular witnessed an ascendance of sectarianism during the later part of the war.

2. Surveys of student attitudes, for example, show that Lebanese university students are becoming more religious and more engaged in religious rituals in the postwar period than in the last few years before the war. For the postwar period see, e.g., results of student surveys in *al-Nahar*, 19 February 1997. For the prewar period see Halim Barakat, *Lebanon in Strife* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), 72, 88-91; Sami Ofeish, *Ittijahat al-talaba al-jami'yyin al-lubnaniyyin fi lubnan nahwa al-intima' al-siyassi* (Attitudes of Lebanese University Students Toward Political Commitment) (BA thesis, Beirut Arab University, 1975), 73-74.

3. Do globalism and sectarianism coincide, or do they reinforce each other, or are they conflictive? If they are conflictive, we must explain, for example, how Rafiq al-Hariri, Lebanon’s prime minister between 1992 and 1998 and a leading and forceful regional globalist, acted and presented himself as a Sunni leader and blocked the passage of a secular draft law on civil marriage, as we will discuss later.

4. The issue of implementing optional civil marriage in Lebanon was debated extensively in March-May 1998. Many supporters of civil marriage, including some who actually had civil marriages, pointed out that they personally prefer it because it allows couples who have different religious affiliations to get married without having to convert (as usually required by religious courts). It is not clear whether those who prefer to avoid conversion are sectarian or religious or both, but it is clear that they are exhibiting a secular attitude toward marriage. For a sample of these interviews see *Daily Star*, 7 April 1998.

5. A series of booklets that appeared in 1975-77 under the general title *al-Qadiyya al-Lubnaniyya* (The Lebanese Cause) advocated the position of the right wing Lebanese Front. Some of these booklets called for the division of

Lebanon into Christian and Muslim entities. They also emphasized the presence of fundamental differences in values, religious beliefs, and ways of life among Christians and Muslims as an explanation for the need to separate. See, e.g., *Nizam siyasi mouqtara li lubnan al-jadid* (Proposed Political System for a New Lebanon), vol. 20, February 1977; *Lubnan al-moustaqbal: min al-insihar al-siyasi ila al-inshitar al-nafsi wa al-jughrafi* (Future Lebanon: From a Political Melting Pot to a Psychological and Geographical Split), vol. 12, June 1976.

6. For example, Anis Sayegh argues that sectarianism in Lebanon goes as far back as the Phoenicians in association with the initiation of sects. Anis Sayegh, *Lubnan al-ta'ifi* (Sectarian Lebanon) (Beirut: Dar al-Sira' al-Fikri, 1955).

7. For the primordialist approach see, e.g., Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution," in Geertz, ed., *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa* (New York: Free Press, 1963), 108-13. For the instrumentalist approach see, e.g., Paul P. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison* (New Delhi and Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1991), 18-20, 22-26.

8. Kamal Suleiman Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon* (Delmar, N.Y.: Caravan Books, 1965), 71-72.

9. Yehoshua Porath, "The Peasant Revolt of 1858-1861 in Kisrawan," *Asian and African Studies* 2 (1966): 95-100.

10. Samir Khalaf, *Persistence and Change in 19th Century Lebanon: A Sociological Essay* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1979), 95-97; Mas'oud Daher, *Al-Juzour al-tarikhiyya li al-mas'ala al-ta'ifiyya al-lubnaniyya: 1697-1861* (Historical Roots of the Lebanese Sectarian Question: 1697-1861) (Beirut: Ma'had al-Inma' al-'Arabi, 1981), 442-44.

11. Ahmad Beydoun, "Lebanon's Sects and the Difficult Road to a Unifying Identity," *Beirut Review* 6 (Fall 1993): 15-16.

12. Tabitha Petran, *The Struggle over Lebanon* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987), 96-97, 113-15, 162.

13. For the previous agreement proposals see Hani A. Fares, "The Failure of Peacemaking in Lebanon: 1975-1989," in Deirdre Collings, ed., *Peace for Lebanon? From War to Reconstruction* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Reiner Publishers, 1994), 17-30. See also Table of the Major Peacemaking Attempts, 1975-1989 in the same volume, 312-13.

14. *Official Gazette*, special supplement no. 39, year 130, 27 September 1990.

15. Riad al-Solh, the National Pact's co-founder, stated repeatedly in the 1940s that the sectarian system was only a temporary arrangement that would be abandoned eventually.

16. The only article in the 1943 amendments to the constitution that addresses sectarianism is Article 95, which states: "As a provisional measure and for the sake of justice and amity, the sects should be equitably represented in the public employment and in the composition of the cabinet, provided such

measures will not harm the interest of the state.” *Official Gazette*, no. 4106, year 83, 10 November 1943, 11501.

17. Paul Salem, “The Constitution of Lebanon After the Amendments of August 21, 1990,” *Beirut Review* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 131.

18. Al-Nadi al-Thaqafi al-‘Arabi, *Bina’ al-jumhuriyya al-thaniya wa mushkilat al-salam fi lubnan* (Establishing the Second Republic and Problems of Peace in Lebanon) (Beirut: Al-Nadi al-Thaqafi al-‘Arabi, 1992), 105.

19. See also a discussion of these changes in the Ta’if Accord in Albert Mansour, *Al-Inqilab ‘ala al-ta’if* (The Coup Against the Ta’if Accord) (Beirut: Dar al-Jadid, 1993), 45.

20. Joseph Maila, *The Document of National Understanding: A Commentary* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1992), 54.

21. Salem, “The Constitution of Lebanon After the Amendments,” 135.

22. Daoud L. Khairallah suggests in the same direction that “The full extent of the (Ta’if) accord’s commitment to deconfessionalization boils down to this: It gives the confessional establishment an unguided, nonbinding, open-ended mandate to abolish itself.” See Khairallah, “Secular Democracy: A Viable Alternative to the Confessional System,” in Collings, ed., 263.

23. See Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut* (London and Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Ithaca Press, 1986).

24. Hassan Krayem, “The Lebanese Civil War and the Taif Agreement,” in Paul Salem, ed., *Conflict Resolution in the Arab World: Selected Essays* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1997), 427-29.

25. See Georges Corm, “The War System: Militia Hegemony and Reestablishment of the State,” in Collings, ed., 215-30.

26. See Fawaz Traboulsi, “Al-Takawwun al-tabaqi li al-sulta al-siyasiyya ba’d al-harb” (The Class Formation of the Political Strata After the War), *Ab ‘aad* 6 (May 1997): 87-90

27. Krayem, “The Lebanese Civil War and the Taif Agreement,” 426-27.

28. *Al-Nahar*, 31 July 1998.

29. See the summary and recommendations of a conference on corruption in the “Second Republic,” *Lebanon Report*, new series, 4 (Winter 1997): 20-21.

30. For the negative affects of sectarianism and clientelism on the Lebanese bureaucracy and corruption in the prewar period see Iskandar E. Bashir, *Civil Service Reforms in Lebanon* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1977), 131-33, 80, 140.

31. For an example of bribes in Beirut’s port, see *Lebanon Report*, new series, 4 (Winter 1997): 19-20.

32. *Al-Nahar*, 20 March 1997.

33. The deans were appointed on 30 June 1997. See *al-Nahar*, 2 July 1997.

34. For the subordinate status of women under these codes see Lamia Rustum Shehadeh, “The Legal Status of Married Women in Lebanon,”

International Journal of Middle East Studies 30 (1998): 501-19. There are only fifteen personal status codes recognized in Lebanon. The Alawites, Isma'ilis, and Orthodox Copts have no codes of their own and follow the codes recognized as closest to them: the Ja'fari code for the first two and the Orthodox for the third. See Shehadeh, 503, 517.

35. For example, the Syndicate of Beirut Lawyers was engaged in an extended strike to support the introduction of civil marriage and personal status laws in 1952. See B. A., "The Lawyers Strike in Beirut," *Middle Eastern Affairs* 3, no. 3 (1952): 85-86.

36. *Daily Star*, 22 March 1998.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Daily Star*, 27 March, 22 April 1998; *al-Diyar*, 2 August 1998.

39. *Daily Star*, 26 March 1998.

40. Ghassan Diba, "Al-Bu'd al-ijtima'i wa al-inma'i fi siyasad al-infaq" (The Social and Developmental Dimension in the Expenditure Policy), *Ab'aad* 6 (May 1997): 67-68.

41. Najib 'Issa, *al-Qiwa al-'amila wa siyasad al-'amala fi lubnan* (Labor Forces and Labor Policy in Lebanon) (Beirut: Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, 1996), 54-59.

42. See a detailed critique of this project in Nabil Beyhum, "The Crisis of Urban Culture: The Three Construction Plans for Beirut," *Beirut Review* 4 (Fall 1992): 49-62.

43. *Al-Hayat*, 23 August 1998.

44. Antoine Haddad, "Al-Faqr fi lubnan" (Poverty in Lebanon), *Ab'aad* 5 (June 1996): 171-75.

45. Kamal Hamdan addresses this issue as part of the continuing Lebanese crisis in peacetime. See *al-Azma al-lubnaniyya: al-tawa'if al-diniyya, al-tabaqat al-ijtima'iyya, wal-hawiyya al-wataniyya* (The Lebanese Crisis: Sects, Classes, and National Identity) (Beirut: Dar al-Farabi, 1998).

46. Hariri's Solidiere Company sells the large project of reconstructing downtown Beirut as a modern recreation of a Phoenician city. The ideological emphasis on the Phoenician past has always previously been associated with Christian-based right wing protagonists in the past. But this argument also fits with the interest in promoting the notion of a "Lebanese nation."

47. Salim al-Hoss, "Horizons of Prospective Change in Lebanon," *Beirut Review* 3 (Spring 1992): 11.

DEVELOPMENT—AT WHAT PRICE? A REVIEW OF THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES' MANAGEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Rania Masri

THROUGHOUT THE 1990S WE HAVE SEEN rebuilding activities in Lebanon. The physical remnants of the war, particularly in the greater Beirut area, have been removed and replaced. Much of the media reporting on Lebanon has centered around this rebuilding, the “rebirth of the Phoenix.” Although rebuilding the country is important, such efforts must be examined in their full context, including their impact on the environment and on the people it supports. How are the efforts by the Lebanese authorities at land management and infrastructure development affecting the very land of Lebanon? This question, often disregarded by the Lebanese government and agencies, is the central theme of this article.

Governmental responsibilities for the management of Lebanon’s environment encompass wide aspects: wastewater, pollution, land use and coastal zone management, forests and agriculture, solid and hazardous waste, cultural heritage, industrial pollution, and water resources. These responsibilities are shared among nine ministries and eight key institutions: the Ministries of Agriculture, Environment, Tourism, Housing, Hydraulic and Electrical Resources, Public Health, Urban Affairs, Public Works, and Industry and Petroleum; and the Urban Planning Institution, Municipalities, *Mohafaza, Caza*, Council of Development and Reconstruction, Roads and Planning Institution, Council of Grand Projects, and Department of Antiquities (METAP, 1995). Lack of coordination among agencies hampered effective environmental management.

Numerous laws and decrees were issued by the Lebanese authorities, including the Ministries of Agriculture, Interior, Environment, and Hydraulic and Electrical Resources (Table 1). The problem was not so much with the laws per se as with the enforcement of the laws. Most laws were not implemented due to financial constraints, lack of effective institutional capacity, internal corruption and inter-agency strife, shortage of technical expertise in the private

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and public sector, and/or, occasionally, public opposition. Lack of coordination was rampant between (and among) these organizations, and further served to render enforcement, monitoring, and any productive kind of environmental management weak, at best.

Table 1. Sample of Environmental Legislation (Laws and Decrees)

Sector	Target	Year
Agri- culture	Regulations on production, sale, and use of pesticides and fertilizers	1978
	Land, water, flora, fauna	1971
	Agricultural education	1922
Fauna	Ban on hunting from 1/1/1995 until 1/1/2000	1994
	Breeding of birds and animals to release in nature	1974
	Regulations and permits in hunting	1954
Fishing	Guidelines for fishing, including ban on the use of explosives and anesthetics for fishing	1991
	Fresh water fishing regulations	1990
	Ban on fishing in ports; ban on the use of materials to anesthetize or poison fish, or pollute water	1921
Habitat protection	3 reserves (Ihdin Forest, Palm Islands, al-Shuf)	1992
	Protected zones around water sources	1962
	Forest Code	1949
Pollution regulation	Ban on car tire burning (MoE)	1993
	Penalties on violation of regulations regarding hazardous substances; penalties up to hard labor and death penalty	1988
Quarries	Regulations on exploitation of stone and sand quarries, subject to analysis by a national commission; prohibition on work of all unlicensed stone and sand quarries	1994

In certain measures aimed at protecting the environment, the Lebanese authorities have been relatively successful. The Ministry of Environment, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, increased environmental programs throughout the public schools. The Lebanese authorities have also begun an awareness campaign for solid waste management, as part of the solid waste management program for Beirut. In addition, based on anecdotal evidence, the hunting ban, extending from 1995 until 2000, has resulted in greater protection of birds and animals, and has probably saved certain species from local

extinction. Of all their efforts at positive reform, the conservation of certain important natural sites was most famous.

MEASURES AIMED AT CONSERVING NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS

Currently, less than 0.5 percent of Lebanon's total area is protected (Dean, 1994). Several laws and decrees were drafted and passed that aim to protect certain endangered, or high biologically diverse habitats (Table 2). Ihdin Forest, the most floristically rich area in Lebanon, and Palm Islands, the three islands off the coast of Tripoli that serve as prime areas for migratory birds, were declared protected areas in 1992. It took four years for the enforcement of the protective measures to begin.

Table 2. Biodiversity In-Situ Conservation—Protected Areas

Organization	Target	Year
Ministry of Agriculture	Fir forest of Qammouaa	1996
Ministry of Environment	Karm Shbat	1995
Ministry of Agriculture	Reserve of Khurbet Sleem	1992
Ministry of Agriculture	Reserve of Kfar Zabad	1992
Ministry of Agriculture	Reserve of Hbaleen	1992
Ministry of Agriculture	Palm Islands, Ihdin Forest, Jabal al-Barouk	1991-1992
Ministry of Agriculture	Nature Reserve of Saissouk	1991
National Council for Scientific Research	Batroun maritime reserve	1991
Ministry of Agriculture	Arz Bsharri	1939
Ministry of Agriculture	Valley of Qannoubeen	1939
Ministry of Agriculture	Reserve, region of Bass in Tyre	1933

In 1996 the Lebanese government signed the UN proposal for Protected Areas for Sustainable Development in Lebanon, thus declaring Ihdin Forest, Barouk Mountain, and Palm Islands to be nationally protected areas. The project was initially funded with US\$2.5 million from the United Nations and US\$ 578,000 from the Lebanese government; the Lebanese government will also provide annual support of approximately US\$ 32,000. The project aims to conserve endemic and endangered wildlife and their habitats, incorporate wildlife conservation as an integral part of sustainable human development, and strengthen the institutional capacity of governmental agencies and non-

governmental organizations (NGOs). By 1998 the vegetative cover and the sightings of mammals, birds and reptiles in the reserves had increased. Various municipal bodies and NGOs have sought to establish additional protected areas in Lebanon (Abu-Izzedin, 1998). Although the creation of protected areas in Lebanon is a preliminary step toward the protection of Lebanese natural resources and their heritage, comprehensive environmental management confronting the roots of the problems is necessary if Lebanon's health is to be restored. Did the Lebanese authorities' land management and infrastructural development policies comprise a holistic approach to the environment?

LAND MANAGEMENT

Land Use Planning or Land Use Gorging?

While the Lebanese authorities created islands of protection in Lebanon, the increase in unplanned urbanization threatened the remaining fertile and productive lands. The governmental failure in implementing adequate land use planning resulted in loss of prime habitat for agricultural land and forestry. Currently agriculture and annual crops cover over one-fifth of Lebanon. Between 30 and 50 percent of the population is estimated to be involved in agriculture and agriculture-related activities (Abi-Antoun, 1998).

The increased urbanization, encouraged by the high prices offered by developers, has been the most devastating and long-lasting effect on arable land in Lebanon. In agricultural land around major cities, landlords are offered US\$ 3 million for property they lease to farmers for only US\$ 4,000 a year (Doueiri, 1996). In the past 20 years alone, urbanization around cities and highways has taken approximately 20,000 hectares (7 percent) of all cultivated land, and a higher proportion (15 percent) of irrigated land (METAP, 1995). A large part of this agricultural land is situated near the bases of urban extensions in the suburbs of Tripoli, Jounie, Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, and Zahle. The loss of land also affected the vegetation used by grazing animals. Half the wild species of fodder plants are endangered due to uncontrolled urban development (Abi-Antoun, 1998).

The loss of fertile land affected agriculture by more than simply transforming potential agricultural land into urban concrete. The loss of habitat encouraged the disappearance of primary predators and consequently resulted in an increased population of field mice and rats. Carefully planned—and enforced—land-zoning systems were desperately needed to allocate primarily non-arable land to urban development needs. In the words of the Ministry of the Environment, “if strict measures are not taken and applied by the authorities, the agricultural sector would be under the threat of disappearance in Lebanon” (MoE, 1991). However, the Ministry of the Environment, itself one of those authorities responsible for urban planning, did not undertake any of these “strict measures.”

Forests—Neglecting the Poetry of the Earth

"Trees are poems that the earth writes upon the sky," wrote Kahlil Gibran. The poetry of the Lebanese earth has been cut down for thousands of years, reducing the once "green Lebanon" to patches of greenery and woodland. Forested areas are estimated at roughly 5 percent of the total land area (approximately 51,000 hectares), down from 7 percent in 1966. Most of the woods are of poor quality, degraded, or offer little economic incentives for management. The main species are oak (56.2 percent), pine (21.5 percent), juniper (17.5 percent), cedar (2.5 percent), beech (1.9 percent), and cypress (0.4 percent). Three tree species are known to be endangered: Cicilian fir (*Abies cilica*), turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*), and the true locust bean (*Ceratonia silica*). Along the western slopes of Mount Lebanon, the oak forests have almost completely disappeared, primarily due to logging and fires. The once dominant fir, juniper, and cedar along the higher elevations of the mountain have been reduced to sparsely distributed stands. On the eastern slopes of Mount Lebanon, and on the Anti-Lebanon mountains, trees are scattered and rare, if present at all. These are fragile ecosystems that are grazed extensively in the spring and fall (Zurayk, 1995a). Human activities, inducing accelerated erosion, further exacerbate these problematic factors.

Of the primary trees, the Italian stone pine (*Pinus pinea*) accounts for a proportionally significant economic production and constitutes half of the pine composition. The stone pine is localized on the sandy soils of al-Matin and Jizzen, where it has been diminished by war, urban development, and neglect, and its habitat threatened by the encroaching sand quarries (METAP, 1995; Masri, 1996). In addition to urbanization, forests throughout Lebanon are also threatened by fire and insects. Lack of forest management and silvicultural care creates circumstances favorable to propagation of fires and diseases.

But why care so much about the welfare and regeneration of these forests? Certain important reserves, such as the cedars of Bsharri, Ihdin Forest, and Barouk Mountain, are now protected, and the demand for firewood has significantly declined.¹ Perhaps, then, all that is necessary is protection of the economically-valuable stone pine and continued maintenance of a few remnants of forests for cultural and historical value. Trees, however, are more than mere containers for wood and portraits of beauty; they are the very basis for a healthy ecosystem. Trees reduce air pollution, protect against soil erosion, provide habitat for wildlife, and serve to conserve water.

In Mount Lebanon, where soil erosion rates are estimated to be the highest, 20 percent of the permanent soil productivity was lost in one year alone (Dregne, 1982). In these hilly lands, soil erosion occurs mainly on the extensive areas of abandoned, dilapidated terraces and overgrazed marginal land. Nearly half of the cultivated lands in Lebanon are on mountain slopes, where terracing is necessary to decrease erosion (METAP, 1995). Approximately 25 percent (36,000 hectares) of these terraces are degraded (Andraos, 1998). In 1995, nationwide soil erosion rates equaled the annual loss of 500 hectares of fertile

agricultural land and millions of dollars. According to a World Bank study, US\$10.3 million were lost due to soil erosion in 1995 (Table 3). Increasing the forested areas would have significantly protected the soil. For example, increasing forest cover to 25-30 percent on the western slopes of Mount Lebanon would have cut by half the rates of soil erosion (Zurayk, 1995a).

Table 3. Estimated Cost of Soil Erosion in 1995

Type of Land	Area (ha)	Rate of Soil Loss (ha/year)	Loss (US\$ Million)
Degraded agricultural terraces	36,000	200	2.5
Degraded range lands	210,000	100	7.4
Degraded forests	70,000	17	0.4
Total	316,000	317	10.3

Source: Environment Resources Management/World Bank (1995).

In addition to protecting the productivity of the land, forests also have a positive effect on the micro-climate. Based on historical data and scientific estimates, when Lebanon's forest cover was more extensive, the perennial springs of higher Lebanon were much fuller and more constant, and the lower slopes green and moist. There may even have been greater annual rainfall through the recirculation of water on the western slopes of Mount Lebanon by the transpiration of the forest (Brown, 1969). Simply put, more trees lead to more water. According to the Ministry of the Environment, "a judicious reforestation policy, implemented today, could reduce water lost into the sea by 20 percent, and increase water availability in the country by 50 to 100 percent" (MoE, 1991). Such a policy was not implemented.

Both the Ministries of Agriculture and Environment clearly recognized the importance of forest cover and supported increasing the percentage of forest cover to the recommended 20 percent (200,000 hectares). However, in practical terms, both did little to protect or regenerate the forests. In 1991, the Ministry of Environment cited reforestation "at a 5 percent rate," yet it has undertaken almost no monitoring or even simple assessment after planting. The governmental plans for reforestation did not result in an increase in forest cover, nor did they even slow down the loss of forest cover in Lebanon.

The government was also unsuccessful in protecting the remaining forests from fires, one of the primary threats to the forest cover.² Uncontrolled fire events have destroyed vast expanses of land, often irreversibly due to the

ensuing grazing which prevents regeneration. The Lebanese forestry service estimated an annual loss of 1,000 to 1,200 hectares (Zurayk, 1994). According to Ministry of Agriculture statistics, the number of fires reported fell from 112 in 1995 to 79 in 1996, but jumped to 127 in 1997. Due to extremely high summer temperatures, lack of adequate fire-fighting capacities, and poor forest management, the number of fires continued to rise in 1998. Between the months of July and October, several hundred fires swept through the country. More than 200 fires occurred in October, the month when fires are most common (*Daily Star*, 15 October 1998). The fires resulted in the loss of millions of dollars. Environmental Minister Akram Chehayeb reflected that, "so much of what we planted over the last five years is gone, as well as irreplaceable ancient trees" (*Daily Star*, 15 October 1998).

The Ministry attributed most of these fires to carelessness, yet the ensuing damage from these fires was a result of negligence on the part of the ministries themselves. Fires are expected during the Summer and Fall months in Lebanon, and preparations to minimize the effect of the fires should have been taken.³ The authorities not only failed in minimizing the effect of the fires through preventive measures, but they also simply neglected to be adequately prepared to control the fires.

After months of destructive fires raging through the scant remaining wooded areas in Lebanon, Minister Chehayeb ceded that most of the damage from the fires could have been avoided if the government only had a Canadair fire-fighting plane. The plane had demonstrated its abilities in 1995, when a sample aircraft was brought to Lebanon for a trial run; three years later the government still had not made any decision on purchasing an aircraft. Chehayeb was quoted as saying, "Had the government bought the plane at the time, we could have saved our forests and the plane would have made up its cost five times when compared to the value of the forests that went up in smoke" (*Daily Star*, 17 October 1998).

Ironically, in March 1998, the Ministries of Agriculture and Interior had proposed a LL 20 billion plan to fight forest fires by purchasing 3 helicopters, 15 fire-watch stations, 150 storage tanks, a number of fire engines, and communications equipment, primarily in the governorates of Mount Lebanon and the north (where fires are most common). In a joint statement issued in March, the ministries stated that they would present the plan to the Council of Ministries for funding approval before the summer (*Daily Star*, 24 March 1998). What happened to that plan?

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Treating the Solid Waste or Letting It Stink?

Approximately 1.6 million metric tons of solid waste is produced annually in Lebanon.⁴ This quantity is expected to increase to more than 2 million metric tons by the year 2000. Facilities for solid waste collection,

treatment, and disposal are severely inadequate throughout Lebanon, especially in the rural areas (see Table 4). Most of the current waste disposal sites in Lebanon are simply uncontrolled dumps (METAP, 1995). Only a fraction (10 percent) of the collected solid waste is disposed of properly. Waste has usually been transferred, without any form of treatment, to uncontrolled discharge sites that pollute the air, sea and waters, spoil the scenery, and represent imminent risks to public health. Much of the industrial waste, which ranges from motor oil to animal carcasses, is dumped into rivers or onto open ground. The disposal routes of industrial wastes pose serious threats to ground and surface water, particularly in Matin, Alay, and Ba'abda, where industry is concentrated. In major city disposal sites, which are established without any environmental planning assistance, waste is piled up and then compacted with the help of bulldozers before being pushed toward the sea. In rural areas, solid waste is disposed of into stream beds and rivers, in valleys, and often by the side of the road, a few hundred meters outside the locality. These "trash piles" have regularly been set on fire, causing fire hazards and serious localized air pollution. Waste is also dumped along the coast in Tripoli, Beirut, Tyre, and Sidon, thereby seriously impacting the coastal water quality and marine ecosystem. Partly due to the accumulation of plastic and metallic waste on the sea bed, fish catches have plummeted from 6,000 tons a year in the early 1970s to just 2,500 tons a year in the early 1990s (Zurayk, 1995b). Marine pollution can also cause direct health hazards to humans through the biological concentration of certain contaminants, such as heavy metals and pesticides.

**Table 4. Proportion of Population Served by
Solid Waste Collection Operations (1994)**

Governorate (<i>Mohafaza</i>)	Population Served (%)
Beirut	100
North Lebanon	45
Mount Lebanon	57
South Lebanon	18
Biq'a	85
Average in Lebanon	57

Source: METAP (1995).

In 1995, the Council for Development and Reconstruction⁵ and the Ministry of the Environment formulated waste management plans relying primarily on incinerators and landfills to address Lebanon's growing waste

problem, while failing to mention waste prevention and reduction or clean production. Four new incinerators were proposed in Beirut, Tripoli, Zouk, and Sidon, although incinerators are scientifically proven to pollute the air, soil, and water.

Two incinerators, both built during the war, resumed operation from 1993 to 1997: a small incinerator in the Karantina area and a larger one in Amroussya in Beirut's southern suburbs. Hazardous hospital waste, hazardous plastic waste, household toxic waste (such as batteries and paints), and industrial toxic waste were incinerated. The incinerators were not operating to design specifications, due primarily to the high moisture content of the waste and its consequently low combustion temperature. Corrosive, and potentially carcinogenic atmospheric emissions, including dioxins and furans, were produced. The toxic ash from the incinerators was dumped in the Burj Hammoud landfill. Nearby residents protested about the polluting Amroussya plant. In spring 1997 the Minister of the Environment and the owner of the Sukkar Group (the private company dealing with waste generated in the greater Beirut area)⁶ threatened to have the waste of the district remain in the streets if the protests were to continue. On 26 June 1997, the Minister said that the incinerator would resume operation despite the three-month protests. If the people continued to protest, he said, then the waste would remain on the street. Minutes later, hundreds of residents torched the incinerator. The second incinerator in Karantina was shut down by the Lebanese authorities in October 1997 after Greenpeace attempted to sample the ash of the plant.

In August 1998 Greenpeace revealed that the MoE and CDR were proposing to build a hospital waste incinerator,⁷ probably in Silaata in the north (a region that is already highly polluted). The study, commissioned by the CDR, presented two alternatives: incineration (more expensive and polluting) or sterilization machines in the hospitals themselves. If built, would this incinerator burn at the hands of angry protestors, or would the Environment Minister threaten to let the hazardous hospital waste accumulate in the hospitals?

In addition to incinerators, the MoE and CDR planned to build five large landfills in Zahle, Shuf, Tyre, Baalbak, and Sidon, and 24 smaller landfills (one for each district or *caza*). The creation of these landfills in the mountains and in the Biq'a valley would threaten the country's groundwater reservoirs by allowing rapid percolation of leachate. This problem is exacerbated in dump sites situated on porous sandy soils, as in Naama and Jizzen. One example, among many, of an environmentally destructive landfill is the Naama landfill south of Beirut. The Lebanese authorities had vowed not to allow hazardous, toxic, and organic wastes into the Naama landfill. Nevertheless, large amounts of organic wastes continued to end up there. (The addition of organic waste in landfills creates methane gas, thereby leading to fires and further toxic fumes.) Hazardous hospital and toxic industrial wastes have also been deposited in the landfill, thus posing a serious danger of leaching into groundwater.⁸ The Minister of the Environment responded simply that "mistakes" had been made, and that no one but the private company Sukleen (a sub-firm of the Sukkar

Group) was responsible. No attempts at resolving the problem were made (Greenpeace Mediterranean, 28 October 1998).

The Lebanese authorities have also neglected to address the industrial waste problem. Industrial toxic solid waste is expected to increase from approximately 18,000 metric tons per year in 1994 to 64,000 metric tons in 2020. According to scientific analyses conducted in 1997 by the Greenpeace International laboratory, several industries are dumping highly toxic wastes into the marine environment. Coastal water samples from the Naama coast have revealed high levels of toxic heavy metals, including mercury, chromium, and nickel.

Industrial waste has also been deposited inland. In October 1998 fuel oil contaminated the drinking water system in Zahle. For days people were unable to use tap water because an unknown industry had illegally pumped petrochemicals into the nearby source feeding the town where some 70,000 people live. Polluting drinking water is a crime. According to ministerial decision 144/925 and law 930/926, water is regarded as public property. Any activity that leads to the pollution of water is punishable by up to two years in jail (law 8735/974). If the water is polluted with toxic waste, the punishment can be raised to hard labor or death (law 64/988). The industrial factories were not investigated by the Lebanese authorities.

Of greater danger to human health are the remnants of the Italian toxic waste scandal. In 1987 a shipment of hazardous wastes was imported into the country and never treated or disposed of properly. Approximately 15,800 barrels of different sizes, 20 containers of highly toxic industrial waste, and some 30,000 tons of contaminated waste were illegally brought to Lebanon from Italy in exchange for cash payment to a local militia (Greenpeace Mediterranean, 1995; METAP, 1995). The waste was buried in both coastal and inland hilly areas throughout the country. In 1988, due to public pressure, 5,500 barrels were removed from Lebanon, yet approximately 2,500 tons of toxic waste are believed to have been dumped 40 to 50 kilometers east of Famagusta, in the waters between Lebanon and Cyprus. More than 10,000 barrels and the contents of several containers remain in Lebanon or have been dumped along its shores. Water supplies may be poisoned in years to come as the toxic contents of the drums leak into ground and surface water, thereby contaminating soils over a wide area and poisoning wildlife and human populations through bio-accumulation.

In September 1996 the Lebanese government officially closed this toxic waste file, despite the remaining presence of several thousand toxic waste containers. In September 1997 the Greenpeace Mediterranean Office published documents revealing that at least five sites in Lebanon were still contaminated by the toxic wastes (Shannir, Zilahmaya, Halat, Uyun al-Siman, and Tripoli). The Lebanese government did not clean up the suspected sites. Instead, the government allowed a cattle barn to be built on one site, covered another site with rocks, and, in April 1996, secretly shipped 12 containers (more than 77 tons) of toxic waste and contaminated land from Beirut to Marseilles for

incineration (UPI, 17 May 1996). Furthermore, in 1998 the Shannir quarry, believed to be the main dump for 2,411 tons of toxic waste, was reactivated (Greenpeace Mediterranean, 13 January 1998). (Operation of this quarry violated an official order banning the operation of quarries in mountains close to the coast.)

In spring 1997 two Spanish construction companies and a Lebanese firm, under contract with the CDR to "rehabilitate" toxic and industrial waste, instead illegally transferred tons of contaminated toxic and industrial waste from the Beirut Port to Monteverde in the Lebanese mountains. Leachate and sediments from the Monteverde dump revealed high levels of toxic heavy metals. These toxic substances probably have contaminated the Beirut River and the Dayshunia well underneath the Monteverde dumpsite; approximately 600,000 people in Beirut depend on Dayshunia for drinking water. Although, in a precedent-setting move, the MoE forced the companies to pay the costs of rehabilitation,⁹ estimated by the MoE at US\$ 35,000, it still failed to enforce the laws punishing polluters of drinking water supply with jail time.

Clean Drinking Water for All?

During the war there was a 60 percent decrease in the quantity of water available from municipal sources (Kolars, 1992). Most areas in Lebanon still suffer from water shortages caused by major demographic changes that have been unaccompanied by the necessary infrastructural improvements.

Most ground and surface water, springs, wells, numerous rivers, and drinking water are bacterially contaminated (METAP, 1995; Khair et al., 1994; Jurdi, 1992). The areas most affected by water pollution are the Biq'a, the North, and the South (Jurdi, 1992). This situation is particularly severe in the rural areas, where a 1994 countrywide survey found evidence of contamination in 78 percent of the water resources of rural households (Al-Khalidi and Zurayk, 1994). The prevalent diseases in Lebanon believed to be transmitted by water are typhoid, hepatitis, and dysentery. The primary causes of water pollution are the poorly constructed domestic and industrial water-treatment systems, the general release of untreated effluents into the soil or water, and the excessive construction of private wells.¹⁰

The Lebanese government's recovery program intended to ensure clean drinking water to most of the urban population (METAP, 1995). However, it did not propose treatment plants outside the urban concentration of Beirut, thus ignoring the rural areas, the most affected regions in Lebanon.

As with access to reliable (although not necessarily clean) drinking water, a significant portion of the Lebanese population still has no access to wastewater services. While 50 percent of the population has access to some form of wastewater disposal services, only 8 percent of the rural population is served by a sewer collection system (Al-Khalidi and Zurayk, 1994). The rest of the population has developed rudimentary individual methods of wastewater disposal. In both cases, whether the community is afforded governmental

disposal services or adopts methods of its own, the existing conditions remain unsatisfactory (METAP, 1995).

There are effectively no operational wastewater treatment plants in Lebanon. Approximately 60 percent of the wastewater collected in the sewer networks is discharged in rivers and in the sea, while the remainder is disposed of on land, without any technical provisions (Jurdi, 1992). This uncontrolled collection and disposal of wastewater is a main cause of ground and spring water contamination, ultimately affecting populations away from the disposal site (Al-Khalidi and Zurayk, 1994). To protect the water, and to protect human health from illnesses caused by water contamination, construction and rehabilitation of adequate wastewater treatment facilities, in both the urban and rural areas, remain urgently needed.

Asbestos—Use of a Carcinogen in Infrastructural Development

Under the guise of infrastructural development and public welfare, the Lebanese authorities expanded and promoted the use of asbestos fiber in the production of cement pipes and roof tiles. The Lebanese authorities also planned to use asbestos cement pipes for drinking water systems in Tripoli, Akkar, Nabatiyya, Sidon, Tyre, and Ras al-Matin. (Asbestos pipes for drinking water had been planned for Batroun as part of the “Batroun Water Supply Project,” but local opposition forced the authorities to change their plan and use asbestos-free pipes.) The authorities likewise planned to use asbestos cement pipes for sewage systems in Tripoli, Tyre, Akkar, Jiyya south of Beirut, and the Kisrwan region. The Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), the Ministry of Public Works, and the Ministry for Water Resources and Electricity have been financing and overseeing these projects. In March 1997 the Ministry of the Environment signed a protocol with the Lebanese Eternit factory, allowing the company to use asbestos forever. (Ironically, in 1996 the Ministry issued three decrees regarding asbestos literally within days of each other. The first decree required licenses for the importation of asbestos; four days later, another decree subjected “the import of asbestos to prior approval from the MoE”; the very next day the importation of asbestos was prohibited.) The 1997 protocol not only encouraged the use of asbestos in infrastructure projects but also completely disregarded the safety of the workers at the Eternit factory and the residents of Shikka. This disregard is apparent in three items in the protocol. First, Eternit was required to measure the asbestos fiber content in the air inside the plant, but the permissible levels of asbestos fiber, and the methods through which the factory must conduct these measurements, were not stated in the protocol. Second, at the Eternit waste dump south of Shikka, Eternit was allowed to dump one fiber of asbestos per cubic centimeter of air, despite the lack of scientific accuracy in measuring asbestos fiber in the open air. Third, the factory was required to conduct yearly medical examinations for workers older than 35 years, while younger workers, also inhaling asbestos, would be tested only once every three years (Greenpeace Mediterranean, 5 June 1998).

The health concern is both for the workers at Eternit and the residents of Shikka, where asbestos is produced, and for the people in the areas where asbestos will be used. The people most at risk are workers in the Eternit factory in Shikka, where asbestos cement pipes and roof panels are produced, and construction workers dealing with these products. Numerous people in Shikka and Koura have died due to asbestos during the past years. The Eternit company usually pays victims' families compensation of US\$ 5,000, thereby officially recognizing responsibility for their death. The residents of Tripoli, Akkar, Nabatiyya, Sidon, Tyre, and Ras al-Matin, where asbestos cement pipes will be used in the drinking water systems, also face a risk to their health. There is considerable concern in the scientific literature about the harmful effects of asbestos fibers in drinking water and the extent of health risks from ingestion of fibers (AWWA, 1986). Asbestos may become airborne when released into the air during a shower, and, according to the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, *there is no safe threshold of exposure for airborne asbestos*. Inhalation of asbestos dust could cause asbestosis, lung cancer, and malignant mesothelioma. In addition, although the risk may be small, there may be a direct association between asbestos in drinking water and gastrointestinal cancer (Toft, 1984). Furthermore, people may be exposed to inhalation to airborne asbestos fibers released from the disruption of concrete asbestos pipe (Landrigan and Wise, 1996).

Since a serious risk to human health from the production and use of asbestos was known, an alternative should have been used. Eternit claimed that the alternative to asbestos pipes would be too expensive and would lead to the factory's closure. Even if cost were a serious concern for the Eternit company owners, the cost of the alternative definitely could not be more than the "cost" of the continued production of asbestos on human health.

Numerous countries worldwide have recognized the danger of asbestos and have banned its use. The United States, the European Union, and Saudi Arabia ban the use of asbestos in almost all applications. Saudi Arabia recently banned import of asbestos and all asbestos-containing products; three years earlier Saudi Arabia had stopped using asbestos in almost all applications. Syria prohibits the use of asbestos pipes in drinking water systems, and only allows its use in sewage pipes. In addition, the British Health and Safety Commission recently proposed further restrictions on the importation, supply, and use of chrysotile asbestos; chrysotile asbestos has been officially promoted by the Canadian Embassy in Lebanon, with the active support of Eternit.

Through their support of the Eternit company and their continued promotion and use of asbestos, the Lebanese authorities revealed a callous disregard for human health. The authorities also displayed a double standard in their implementation of this infrastructural development. "Why," asked Fouad Hamdan, then Lebanon's Greenpeace coordinator, "did the CDR insist on using asbestos cement pipes in sewage projects in al-Minya in Akkar, in Jiyya south of Beirut, and in the 'Dam Wa-Farz' district in Tripoli, while they have opted for safer alternatives in other areas?"

CONCLUSION

Rebuilding a country after a devastating war is a difficult task, no doubt. Perhaps one should forgive environmentally detrimental activities that have occurred in this rebuilding process, and then hope to rectify the situation at a later date, when Lebanon is more "stable." However, environmental health cannot be relegated to a more convenient date in the distant future, just as concern for the health of an individual cannot be postponed without having to contend with ensuing illnesses. Neither is the protection of the environment such a burdensome task that it could not have been undertaken alongside the rebuilding of Lebanon.

Instead of incorporating the environment into their policies, the Lebanese authorities attempted to rectify environmental problems after the fact. In their attempts to confront environmental problems, the Lebanese authorities at times exacerbated the situation, failed to enforce their own laws, and deliberately attempted to silence opposition to their plans. This approach may be a route to *rebuilding* Lebanon, but it was not a path toward Lebanon's *rebirth*.

Vitally needed is a holistic perspective to development, a firm understanding that the environment has to be considered in the rebuilding process or else the health of the land and the people will be threatened. Government institutions delegated with environmental responsibilities need to coordinate their activities and strive toward the equal and full enforcement of their laws and regulations. Furthermore, since environmental policy issues directly affect the lives and health of the people, free and public hearings should be held and the concerns of the people should be addressed.

In the words of Jean Rostand, "The obligation to endure gives us the right to know." The Lebanese people must be aware of the environmental consequences of the actions of their government as well as their own individual actions. Free and public hearings should be held and the concerns of the people should be addressed. Together, then, with the increased environmental awareness of the Lebanese public, and a leadership[dedicated to rehabilitating and protecting Lebanon, the health of Lebanon's land, air, and water can be restored.

NOTES

1. Because of the increased availability of other combustibles, the use of forests for firewood has declined by a factor of more than 1,000 over the past thirty years. In 1963 firewood consumption was estimated at 377 million cubic meters, all produced locally by logging oak coppices (METAP, 1995). In 1988

the figure dropped to 482,000 cubic meters, and in 1991 to 300,000 cubic meters (MoE, 1991).

2. Fires also pose the danger of detonating land mines. One such victim in 1998 was a resident of Binya in the Shuf, who sustained slight burns as the flames detonated a number of land mines. Lebanon is strewn with an estimated 200,000 mines, a legacy of the 1975-1980 civil war and Israel's 1982 invasion. Approximately 4,000 people have been maimed in Lebanon during the past two decades; the number killed is unknown. The Lebanese army is the sole force clearing mines, using dangerous traditional methods. Between 1990 and 1997, 12 men were killed and 85 maimed while clearing mines with the Lebanese army. The work of de-mining needs years to be completed (Reuters, 1998).

3. Preventive measures are feasible through proper silvicultural management. However, such management is not always possible in the occupied south of Lebanon, where numerous fires have been deliberately sparked by Israel. For example, in October 1998 Israeli artillery batteries targeted the forested areas with phosphorous rounds, and consequently destroyed thousands of hectares and the livelihoods of many farmers (*Daily Star*, 15 October 1998).

4. The composition of solid waste is 60 percent domestic waste, 20 percent commercial waste, 19 percent industrial waste, and 1 percent waste oils, vehicle tires, and other wastes. More than half of the domestic waste is of vegetable and decayable constituents (50-65 percent); paper and cardboard, and plastic constituents comprise the remaining large proportions of this waste (METAP, 1995). This high proportion of vegetable and putrescible material (much higher than that commonly found in northern Europe or the U.S.) makes the waste very suitable for composting.

5. The CDR was established in 1977, partially in replacement of the Ministry of Planning, to be the governmental unit responsible for reconstruction and development. The CDR was granted unprecedented powers to bypass any administrative checks that could, in the CDR's own words, "slow down the reconstruction process, especially in the financial field." Since 1991, the CDR has become increasingly active in development projects. Projects for more than US \$3 billion have been awarded, mostly in the sectors of Power, Health, Education, Water and Waste Water, Telecommunications, Transportation, and Roads and Highways.

6. In 1993 the CDR signed a contract with the private company Sukkar Group to deal with the waste. Sukkar Group thus inherited the two incinerators. Sukleen, Sukkar Group's sub-firm, has been collecting the 1,700 tons of waste generated daily in greater Beirut and dumping most of it in the Burj Hammoud landfill. The landfill was shut down in July 1997 after an environmental campaign led by Greenpeace.

7. Currently, hospital waste is collected and disposed of by the municipalities without removing or separating pathogenic wastes, thus creating a serious risk of epidemic and infection (METAP, 1995).

8. Fairhurst International, the British company that built the Naama landfill, has admitted to Greenpeace that the plastic linings underneath the dump will not last more than 10 years.

9. The removal of 20,000 tons of waste and 10,000 tons of contaminated soil from Monteverde to the port was completed by January 1998 (Greenpeace Mediterranean, 21 January 1998).

10. Faced with a decrease in water supply and an inadequate infrastructure, individuals drilled private wells to meet their needs. The increase in private wells has resulted in increased ground water salinization and a drop in the water-table level.

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