The Lebanese-Palestinian Conflict in 1973:
The Social (De)Construction of Lebanese Sovereignty

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For my family, whose support means everything

Contents

Introduction: The Bases of Lebanese Sovereignty

On the morning of May 2, 1973, in broad daylight on the streets of Beirut, armed members of the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine "arrested" two Lebanese Army NCOs.[1] Almost immediately, the Lebanese military entered the impoverished Sabra quarters, situated in Beirut's "misery belt", largely inhabited by poor Lebanese Muslims and Palestinians, and surrounded the Palestinian refugee camp Shatila. The army trained its weapons upon Shatila's gates and issued an ultimatum to the camp's residents for the release of the officers.[2]

The military later claimed that the fedayeen fired first, shortly after the ultimatum was issued. Whether that was true, by 11:45 a.m., military units were unleashing a rain of fire into the camps, and the fedayeen responded with a violent onslaught of bullets.[3] At noon, Lebanese President Suleiman Frangieh held an emergency meeting of his security council. He was furious at this Palestinian instigation, and was determined to put an end to the fedayeen's established practice of taking the law into their own hands.[4] By 5:00 p.m., the military had surrounded all Palestinian camps in Beirut and firing could be heard throughout the city.[5]

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[1] This was but one group of a conglomeration of Palestinian political-military organizations which all were referred to as *fedayeen*, or those who risk, and who charged themselves with fighting a war to eventually reclaim their homeland, occupied Palestine, from its Israeli inhabitants.

[2] Internal Security Developments in Lebanon, Houghton to Secretary of State, 2 May 1973, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box2047, SNF 1970-1973, Record Group 59, NARII.

[3] *Ibid*.

[4] *Ibid*.

[5] Internal Security – Sitrep 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 2 May 1973, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, Record Group 59, NARII.

As night fell, numerous buildings lay in rubble and flames burst forth from camp windows - lighting the gathering storm on the Lebanese horizon. [6] The next day, casualties counting in the hundreds, Frangieh issued a statement to the effect that Lebanon had done as much as any Arab state for the 300,000 Palestinians on its territory, according them residence and hospitality, but that Lebanon must safeguard its sovereignty and that "…to have an army of occupation is something no Lebanese can condone."[7]

Several days later, the Palestinian Liberation Organization Executive Committee responded that the Palestinian presence in Lebanon must remain completely dedicated to the task of the liberation of its "usurped homeland" and asked "…where is this alleged occupation? Does our commitment to (the) Cairo Agreement and our determination (to) defend our existence inside (the) camps amount to an occupation army? Is this (an) infringement on Lebanon's sovereignty?"

This thesis will address the final question. It will argue that the Palestinian military presence in Lebanon problematized four key aspects of state sovereignty and will tell the story of how the Palestinian Revolutionary Movement's (PRM) relationship with the Lebanese state culminated in a 16 day conflict in May, 1973. To do this, however, it will be necessary to put the concept of sovereignty into a context that allows us to better analyze and understand the significance of the events that preceded the spring of 1973.

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[6] Internal Security – Sitrep 3, Houghton to Secretary of State, 3 May 73, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, Record Group 59, NARII.
[7] Internal Security – Sitrep 4, Houghton to Secretary of State, 3 May 73, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, Record Group 59, NARII & "Lebanese Fedayeen Relations", Houghton to Secretary State, 7 May 73, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, Record Group 59, NARII.

Social Theory as Context

This thesis adopts a social theory framework, the underlying current of which is that peoples' ideas, aspirations, and relationships matter. That is to say, we effect our situations equally as much as the material facts which are also present in our daily lives. Thus, it claims that beliefs or ideas motivate actions in certain directions.[8] While this seems obvious, the rest of this section will establish why this clarification is important.

People do not harbor ideas just for the sake of it. They act based on those ideas. We perceive ourselves as having needs, and believe there are certain ways to achieve those needs. In other words, we develop interests, or views about how to achieve our needs.[9] Thus, interests have the effects they do in virtue of the ideas which compose them.[10]

These notions of interests, perceptions, and actions all entail some sort of social dynamic. While ideas may technically be held in vacuum, interests and perceptions imply, by definition, interaction in some environment. Alexander Wendt refers to this environment as social structure.[11]

He convincingly posits three characteristics of social structure: shared knowledge, material resources, and practices. Understanding how these interact provides a valuable way to analyze history, and it is a tool I will use in this thesis.

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[8] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Camridge University Press, 1999), 124.
[9] *Ibid*, 130.
[10] *Ibid*, 135.
[11] Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," *International Security* 20, No. 1 (Summer 1995): 73.

The concept of shared knowledge captures the notion that parties have shared understandings or expectations that constitute the actors in a situation and the nature of their relationships. Wendt discusses two extremes in social relationships, noting that they can be either cooperative or conflictual. In the former, actors trust one another to resolve disputes without conflict.[12] In the latter, they are so distrustful that they make worst-case scenario assumptions and act in possibly threatening ways to defend their own interests.[13] That many gradients exist in between, in other words an ambiguity of relations, will be evident throughout this work. It is critical to see here that this shared knowledge has social implications. This thesis, consequently, must attempt to comprehend the beliefs of the various actors involved, and the interests which their ideas and beliefs created.

Material forces are the second essential element of structure. One cannot explain events without understanding their significance. But their meaning is only given by the environment in which they are found.[14] Wendt and Friedheim illustrate this by pointing out that, "The threat posed to the United States by 500 British nuclear weapons…is less than that posed by five North Korean weapons, because the British are friends and the North Koreans are not…"[15] In our case, understanding the material realities between Lebanon's army, the PRM, and other actors will help us explain the conflict, but not understand why it occurred or what its occurrence meant.

To achieve that we must look at how actors sought to fulfill their interests; how they acted and interacted with others. This involves the third element of structure:

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[12] Wendt (1995), 73.
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Alexander Wendt and Daniel Friedheim, "Hierarchy under anarchy: informal empire and the East German state," in *State Sovereignty as Social Construct*, ed. Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber, 243 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

practice.[16] Practice is simply another term for social interaction, or the relations through which ideas, perceptions, and materials become purposive. Witnessing how the Palestinians interacted with the Lebanese state, members of its society, and neighboring countries is half of the work of this thesis. Explaining how those interactions affected Lebanon's sovereignty is the other. This work of witnessing and explaining is made far more comprehensible though a concept called "social construction".

The notion of "social construction" was first introduced by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann[17], but has more recently been used by Alexander Wendt and numerous others to help explain social phenomena. An understanding of the social theory above clarifies how I use the term "social construction". Actions are based on perceptions and interests about the best way to achieve needs. People's actions and interactions, based on interests, constitute practice. The outcome of practice is, thus, said to be "socially constructed". It is the outcome of the interaction between various social forces.

I am using a more simplified understanding of social construction than strict constructivists might posit because going deeper needlessly complicates our ability to look clearly at the relationships composing Lebanese society and the results that those relationships created. Indeed, strict constructivists see numerous aspects of society as being socially constructed, from identity to religion.

Our concern here, however, because it was the concern of the leaders and citizens of Lebanese society, is with the notion of sovereignty. This thesis maintains that the

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[16] Wendt (1995), 74.
[17] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966).

bases of sovereignty, to be discussed shortly, are socially constructed. Thus, it accepts

that sovereignty is shaped through social interaction. We must now look briefly at this

slippery concept of sovereignty in order to gain a better understanding of what we mean

by the "social construction" of its bases.

Towards an Understanding of Lebanese Sovereignty

I adapt Janice Thomson's definition of sovereignty slightly and say that

sovereignty is the recognition by a country's population and by external actors that the

state has exclusive authority over activities in its territory.[18] Many scholars point to two

aspects of sovereignty, internal and external. Internal sovereignty is the right recognized

by a populace to exert ultimate authority within a given territory. It, thus, rests with the

people. External sovereignty involves recognition by other states of the right to exert that

ultimate authority.

Composing this definition of sovereignty are four critical elements which will

become the operative focal points of this thesis. These four factors of authority, territory,

population, and recognition are widely acknowledged by scholars as elemental in any

attempt to address sovereignty.[19] They also serve to reify and decouple sovereignty in a

way that allows us to look more meaningfully at what was happening in Lebanon before

and during May, 1973.

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[18] Janice E. Thomson, "State Sovereignty in International Relations: Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Empirical Research," *International Studies Quarterly* 39 (1995): 219.

[19] Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber, "The social construction of state sovereignty," in *State Sovereignty as Social Construct*, ed. Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber, 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Biersteker and Weber see each of these elements as being socially constructed, or defined through social interaction.[20] Authority flows from a state's monopoly on the use of violence within a given territory, but that authority can often be challenged by arms or even legal means, and there are many examples of governments achieving sovereign recognition without having final authority.[21] Notions of territoriality are constantly up for debate and the source of frequent conflict. A definition of population establishes the human boundaries of modern nation-states insofar as it delineates rights and obligations between the state, the citizen, and in Lebanon's case, others living within the state's territory. But these boundaries, and thus the perception of rights and obligations, are also subject to the influence of alternative loyalties and identities.[22] Recognition is the overarching social glue which allows a territory and its populations' submission to authority to be meaningful at all, but states continue to exert "sovereignty" without the full recognition of all actors.

Recognition links the bases of sovereignty with sovereignty itself. It slides along a continuum and links actors, either closely or at arm's-length, in an ongoing dance with the state. Indeed, Dion notes that actors can choose amongst multiple options in their relations to the state: actively supporting political agents, agreeing to negotiate peacefully with political agents over differences, lobbying, normal opposition (protests and

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[20] Biersteker and Weber, 3.

[21] *Ibid,* 14.

[22] Bassam Tibi, "The Simultaneity of the Unsimultaneous: Old Tribes and Imposed Nation-States in the Modern Middle East," in *Tribes and State Formation in the Modern Middle East*, ed. Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, 127 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

marches), intimidation, obstruction, terrorism, revolt, and revolution.[23] These relational options have significant repercussions for the state's sovereignty and the degree to which it can exert its authority within its territory over its population.

The degree to which a state's population and external actors lend recognition to the state is a function of the extent to which their interests are realized through practice. Insofar as dissatisfied actors will choose increasingly oppositional actions on Dion's continuum, they tend towards non-recognition of state sovereignty. Sovereignty is, thus, limited by the degree of recognition accorded through the behavior of relevant actors.

In Lebanon's case, the presence of the PRM problematized what were often already contentious social debates about authority, territory, and population. These problems culminated in a conflict involving numerous actors, and pushed most along the continuum towards a dangerous non-recognition of state sovereignty. The thesis of this work is that the PRM's presence contributed largely to the diminution of the sovereignty of the Lebanese state as it problematized the "social construction" of Lebanon's authority, territory, and population.

The Framework

The chapters of this thesis are laid out to explore the salient features of the relations between the various actors who were involved, directly or indirectly, in the May conflict and the years preceding it. While the Lebanese government[24] and Palestinians

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[23] Léon Dion, "Anti-Politics and Marginals," in *Between Sovereignty and Integration*, ed. by Ghita Ionescu, 37 (London: Croom Helm, 1974).
[24] Henceforth, usage of the "Lebanese government" will refer to the top echelon of decision-makers: the President and his advisors, the Commander-in-Chief of the

are the focal point of the conflict, the story cannot be told without mention of the interests and activities of the groupings on the Lebanese left (heretofore referred to as the "Leftists")[25], the Syrians, the Israelis, and the Sunni community.

The first chapter will review the story of the Palestinian refugee influx into Lebanon, the rise of the Palestinian revolutionary cause, and the institutionalization of the Palestinian presence which was marked by the 1969 Cairo Accord. In so doing, it will introduce the bases of Lebanese sovereignty as points of contention. These elements will then be drawn throughout the rest of the thesis. It will argue that a contest of interests arose within each basis of sovereignty. Those contests are briefly noted here.

Lebanese authority over the Palestinian camps deteriorated and was partially replaced by Palestinian institutions. The extent to which Palestinians exerted their "authority", sometimes apparent when the fedayeen carried guns in the streets, set up road blocks, and arrested Lebanese near the camps, challenged Lebanon's influence over its own internal affairs.

That a state should possess secure territorial borders, safe from infractions by its neighbors, is a second basic tenet of the concept of sovereignty. This demands a reciprocal respect for a shared border. The territorial basis of the state was called into question, nonetheless, as a result of the warring relationship between the PRM and Israel, as well as Syria's overt interference in Lebanese affairs.

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military, the Prime Minister, and the Foreign Minister. Where they cannot be so aggregated, special note will be made.

[25] These are the parties who would eventually unify under the banner of the "Lebanese National Movement" and can generally be said to have been led by Kamal Joumblatt, the Druze head of the Progressive Socialist Party.

Finally, debates erupted within Lebanon that raised questions about the very rights and obligations distributed amongst the country's population, defined as the Lebanese and non-Lebanese living within the state. Lebanese Leftists and Palestinians made common cause in an effort to redefine their "rights" and resist the state. The former had numerous socio-economic grievances; the latter, similar grievances and strategic concerns.

The second chapter will strengthen this focus on the instability of Lebanon's authority, territory, and population by showing how that instability was perpetuated by the contest of interests between various actors. It will explore the changing nature of the Lebanese regime's relationship with the Palestinians from 1970 to 1972. Along with that exploration, however, it will also analyze Lebanon's relations with Israel, the Syrians, and the Leftists. The chapter will explore each party's interests as they were defined by their ideas and shared knowledge of one another, and show how their pursuit of those interests led towards conflict.

The culmination of these interactions in the May conflict will be the subject of the third chapter. It will examine, in detail, the lead-up to and events of that 16 day period, concluding that the Palestinians, Israel, Syria, Leftists and perhaps most critically - the Sunni Muslim community - moved further towards the non-recognition of Lebanon's sovereignty.

The paper will conclude by summarizing some of the key lessons of May, and will note their relevance to the problems Lebanon faces today.

Sources

A final note must be made regarding the sources upon which this thesis is based. Secondary literature on the Lebanese civil war, and the period leading up to it, is legion.[26] However, not one piece uses the May conflict as a focal point for the dynamics of the period. Moreover, only one, Goria's *Sovereignty and Leadership in Lebanon 1943 – 1976*, has consciously used the idea of sovereignty as a theme.[27] He dedicates a well-researched chapter to the period in question and focuses upon the decisions of a few Lebanese politicians during the period. He was limited, however, by resources available at the time of his writing, mostly newspaper accounts of significant events. Nor did he use a social constructivist approach that prioritizes the elements discussed above.

While there is an abundance of material on Lebanese history, this work focuses on a limited time period for which new resources have recently emerged. In the United States and the United Kingdom, diplomatic correspondence and governmental reports of the early 1970's have only recently been declassified. Record Group 59, which houses the files of the U.S. Department of State, as well as the Nixon Research Project - both of which are located at the National Archives building in College Park, Maryland - have proven incredibly valuable. The same is true of the files of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office housed at the National Archives facility in Kew, London. These documents provide behind the scenes perspectives on events which newspapers of the day did not have, as well as detailed reporting of the history as it unfolded on the ground. Diplomats also filed frequent reports about their meetings with local actors, usually

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[26] One of the most detailed is Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2000).
[27] Wade R. Goria, *Sovereignty and Leadership in Lebanon, 1943-1976* (London: Ithaca Press, 1985).

Lebanese government officials, which revealed the latters' perceptions of the events which were occurring. They also provide a window on which concerns were actually the most critical for those in Lebanon during the period. Thus, for example, while most secondary literature reiterates the overwhelming influence of Lebanese sectarianism before the war, it will be seen that sectarian strife played almost no role in the May, 1973 conflict.

The focus on American and British archives, naturally, presents several problems. The first is the abundance of materials available in both French and Arabic about the period. Having the time and linguistic ability to access these would certainly widen the perspective from which the events could be viewed. Nonetheless, it must be noted that reliance on Lebanese papers or periodicals of the day would constitute a fragile endeavor, as they almost universally had a regional or ideological patron outside of Lebanon.

This brings me to the second problem, however, which is clearly that American and British reporting was also influenced largely by the global game in which they were absorbed, that is to say, by their perceptions. Fortunately, however, a large bulk of their job was simply to report what happened to their home office, and they had little interest in altering facts. Nonetheless, American references to Soviet involvement, for example, have to be handled carefully, as do frequent British notes about supposed French laziness, carelessness, and a host of other vices which were heaped upon the latter.

Ultimately, the U.S. and U.K. sources are limited by their perspectives as outsiders. The information they provide are only as good as the intelligence on which they have been based, their network of local informants, and the work of their own agents. As will be seen, however, they were usually very well-informed.

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Before the civil war, Lebanon was heralded as being one of the few "democratic" states in the Middle East. The essence of Lebanese democracy was consensus. For such a system to work, actors must be willing to recognize the sovereignty of the state over themselves and their affairs, the state must be willing to trust them to do so, and it must give them the chance to participate meaningfully in the consensus-building process. Sovereignty was but one factor upon which the Lebanese had to reach consensus. It is an end they continue to pursue today.

Looking back to see the way that process occurred can hopefully provide a valuable opportunity to understand the way the state's sovereignty is constrained, and provide some insight on how today's actors can ensure that they strengthen it. It is towards that endeavor that we now turn.

Chapter 1: The Institutionalization of Ambiguity

The first "foreign" participation in the post-independence Lebanese system did not occur at the behest of domestic actors – nor was it desired by the "foreigners" involved. It was the arrival of Palestinian refugees, fleeing the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948-1949. The refugees' presence added an additional weight to the Lebanese political scales as it evolved into a permanent consideration for the country. This chapter will review the experience of those refugees from 1948 to 1969 and the institutionalization of the presence of the Palestinian Revolutionary Movement (PRM) through the Cairo Accord. It will introduce the bases of sovereignty - authority, territory, and population - as points of contention within the Lebanese sphere.

Laying the Groundwork

In 1948, some five years after the Lebanese achieved their independence from France, Palestinian refugees began streaming into the country to escape the war which was raging in their homeland. By the end of the year, south Lebanon was teeming with roughly 110,000 Palestinians.[28] Hoping to avoid oppression at the hands of a military onslaught, they had fled to a country which was economically troubled and uncertain of its own political identity.[29] These factors would be critical to their reception and

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[28] Rosemary Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies: The Palestinian Experience in Lebanon* (London: Zed Books, 1994), 17.
[29] Benny Morris, "The initial absorption of the Palestinian refugees in the Arab host countries, 1948-1949," in *Refugees in the Age of Total War*, ed. Anna C. Bramwell, 268 (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988).

treatment over the course of the next twenty years, and to the eventual role of the Palestinian Revolutionary Movement (PRM) amongst the refugees.

Amidst the first waves of refugees, the Lebanese President Bishara al-Khouri hastened to the southern Lebanese city of Tyre, exclaiming to those surging north, "Welcome (to) your own country".[30] For an unprepared and undersupplied Lebanon, however, and the unsettled, frightened Palestinian masses, the welcoming could hardly have been enticing. While the state gave what little it could[31], Lebanese Christians, in particular, saw the influx as posing a significant threat to the religious balance they had worked out in the National Pact of 1943.[32] The Pact was a "gentlemen's agreement" in which the Christians renounced the protection of western powers; the Muslims, union with Syria or other Arab states.[33] It was a formula which distributed some share of power to all communities according to demographic proportionality. The President would be a Maronite, the Prime Minister Sunni, and the Parliament would have six Christians to every five Muslims. Moreover, it defined Lebanon as having Arab features and the Arabic tongue and as part of the Arab world, but as having a special character.[34] This ambiguity of identity would be crucial during the 1970s. In the 1940s, however, the issue was demography. So many Muslims, some feared, would significantly change the composition of the Lebanese population and, thus, the nature of the state. It was the

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[30] Dr. Hussain Chaaban. "Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon and the Host State Regulations" Occasional Studies No. 2 of the Palestinian Return Centre, London. (April, 2000): 1.

[31] It supplied each person with 10 kilograms of flour and three Lebanese pounds upon their initial entry. (Morris, 261)

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] Theodore Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993), 72.

[34] *Ibid*.

beginning of a perception which would shape the relationship between the Lebanese

government and the Palestinians over the next two decades.

On March 23, 1949, the Lebanese and Israeli governments signed the Rhodes

Armistice, ending hostilities, providing for the withdrawal of Israeli troops, and

establishing a border between the two states. In the haste to establish their territorial

integrity and end conflict, both sides agreed to "…transfer all 'non-military questions' to

'a later settlement'."[35] But in what would become a common trend in the history of

Lebanese agreement making, those remaining questions would never be addressed. In

December, 1949 the UN set up the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)

in order to develop a more sustainable infrastructure for assisting with the growing

problems of the Palestinian refugees. The UNRWA's mandate, reflecting the expected

brevity of the displacement, was simply to keep the Palestinians alive until a peace

agreement could be reached.[36] By the end of Lebanon's first decade, its demography had

been significantly altered and the critical elements of its future relations with the

Palestinians, ambiguity and fear, had been established.

Ambiguity

Before and during the Presidency of Camille Chamoun (1952-1958), an

ambiguity about the specific nature and modalities of Lebanese-Palestinian interaction

arose. Through technicalities of international law and diplomacy, the Palestinian

refugees were excluded from the 1951 UN Convention that was held in the wake of the

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[35] Marie-Louise Weighill, "Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon: The Politics of Assistance," paper presented as part of the Palestinians in Lebanon Conference, 27–30 September 1996. Oxford, Queen Elizabeth House, 20.
[36] *Ibid*, 6.

Second World War in order to establish the rights of refugees worldwide.[37] Had they

been included, the Palestinians would have risked never returning to their homes. They

would have risked becoming nationalized (*tawteen*) in their respective host countries.

This is something they wanted to avoid at all costs. Thus, no international agreement

dictated the rights accorded to Palestinians, and host states were left to deal with them as

they saw fit. The Palestinians were imprisoned in an unregulated legal void.[38]

In Lebanon, consequently, they were subjected to myriad bureaucratic rules.

Virtually all activities required some sort of permit, and this system of life by permission

developed into a tool of control and patronage by state officials which frustrated the

ability of Palestinians to pursue a fulfilling existence. To name a few examples, the

Central Committee for Refugee Affairs, established in 1950, issued necessary credentials

such as ID cards and travel documents.[39] If they hoped for employment, additionally,

Palestinians had to go to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for necessary

papers.[40]

Yet the Palestinians' hardship was also partially of their own making. The

refugees, under their still traditional village leadership structures, vigorously avoided

tawteen.[41] Fighting any hint of permanence, they held massive protests and issued a

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[37] Weighill, 7.

[38] Julie Peteet, "Socio-Political Integration and Conflict Resolution in the Palestinian Camps in Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16. no. 2 (Winter, 1987): 30.

[39] Weighill, 25.

[40] *Ibid*.

[41] Suheil al-Natour, "Palestinians in Lebanon: Some facts of the legal status," paper presented as part of the Conference of the Palestinian Committee in Norway, 1996. Oslo, 1.

flurry of memoranda in opposition to the idea.[42] Marie-Louise Weighill relates an almost

"mythical" tale about refugees tearing trees, planted by the UNRWA in hopes of

beautifying the camps, from the ground as the ultimate metaphor for their aversion to the

planting of roots in Lebanon or elsewhere.[43]

Thus, with the support of the traditional Palestinian leadership, the Lebanese

government prohibited the construction of permanent buildings.[44] Residents lived in huts

of wood and tin, and could not use cement to build.[45] Nor was a permanent water system

provided for the camp, "The Beirut Water Company was not allowed to supply Shateela

residents; instead there were four public water tanks filled periodically by UNRWA

lorries."[46]

Perhaps one of the greatest sources of ambiguity in the Lebanese-Palestinian

relationship, however, was the "regulation" of work previously mentioned. In 1951, the

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs issued a decree ordering Palestinians to abstain

from work, reasoning that they were laboring without permits and were competing with

potential Lebanese employees.[47] A bitter debate ensued in the National Assembly and

culminated with the Prime Minister jumping to his feet and declaring, "We are duty

bound to accord the Palestine refugees the best treatment and cannot treat them as

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[42] Rosemary Sayigh, "Palestinians in Lebanon: insecurity and flux," in *Refugees in the Age of Total War*, ed. Anna C. Bramwell, 280 (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988).
[43] Weighill, 11.
[44] R. Sayigh (1994), 39.
[45] *Ibid*.
[46] *Ibid*.
[47] Suheil al-Natour, "The Legal Status of Palestinians in Lebanon," Paper presented as part of the Palestinians in Lebanon Conference, 27–30 September 1996. Oxford, Queen Elizabeth House, 19.

foreigners!"[48] The issue being so contentious, official work legislation was put in

abeyance until 1962, with a general requirement that all have work permits (which were

difficult to obtain) but rather lackluster enforcement of any such requirement. Needing a

way to survive, therefore, many Palestinians took jobs in the informal sector.

Even where work could be found, it rarely paid well. Average wages were

between LL 2 ½ to 3 per day.[49] One day's wage could be traded for enough electricity to

keep a radio and a light bulb running every night for a month.[50] Umm Ahmad, a Shateela

resident in the 1950s noted that, "If you didn't eat meat for a week you could buy a

watch."[51] Economic hardship was a defining characteristic on the margins of society.

Struggling thus, moreover, the refugees had no way to represent their interests to

the Lebanese or any official institutional modality through which they could alleviate

their problems. This lack of representation would eventually become critical. The

Palestinians were present, and would naturally exert pressures on the government

regardless of whether those pressures were institutionally recognized or, as the case

became, ignored and suppressed. The Palestinians were a social fact, treated as a social

threat. This shortcoming left the championing of a distinctly Palestinian cause open to

any actors who were willing to embrace it. Indeed, other Arab countries and political

factions within Lebanon would seize the opportunity.

While Lebanon presented an oppressive economic climate in the 1950s, unlike

other Arab countries such as Syria and Jordan, it allowed wide latitude for Palestinian

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[48] Natour (1996), 20.
[49] R. Sayigh (1994), 44.
[50] R. Sayigh (1994), 40.
[51] *Ibid*, 82.

socio-cultural organization.[52] It was on a largely ideological plane that the Palestinians

most frequently interacted with others in Lebanese society who were growing

increasingly restless in their own system and finding several of the emerging trends of the

period quite appealing.

Arab Nationalism was chief amongst those trends. The nationalist leaders of the

Arab states of the 1920's and the 1940's had come to be seen as the allies of the West and

the progenitors of the 1948 *al-nakhba* (disaster).[53] In 1952, a group of young military

officers overthrew the Egyptian monarchy, and from them emerged Gamal Abdel Nasser.

During his years as Egyptian President (1954-1970), he would wield unrivaled influence

on the course of Middle Eastern history through his championing of this Arab nationalist

cause.

Unofficial and opposition parties begin to emerge touting the pan-Arab tropes of

the day. To an oppressed and seemingly forgotten Palestinian people, the toll of Arab

solidarity in liberation from the imperialistic West had a promising ring. These

interactions also marked the beginning of Palestinian ties with other actors who would

eventually play key roles in the 1973 conflict. Amongst them were opposition groupings

such as Kamal Joumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party, the Lebanese Communist Party,

and other left-leaning, secular parties who were proponents of Pan-Arab ideologies.[54]

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[52] R. Sayigh (1994), 30.

[53] Farid al-Khazen, "Permanent Settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon: Recipe for
Conflict," paper presented as part of the Palestinians in Lebanon Conference, 27–30
September 1996. Oxford, Queen Elizabeth House, 2.

[54] R. Sayigh (1994), 30.

One of Sayigh's interviewees remembered, "We got to know all these movements and their thinking through our discussions and relations with one another."[55]

Palestinians participated in numerous other movements, as well. Two in particular would be critical to their future relations with the government. These were the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party, and the Arab Nationalist Movement.[56] The former would eventually split into rival branches in Syria and Iraq. The latter was the brainchild of George Habash, a Palestinian medical student in Beirut in the early 1950s. Habash led a group called *Al Urwa al Wuthqa* (The Close Bond) which was composed of progressive students who held the Arab regimes responsible for the *nakhba*.[57] Its journal's title, *Revenge*, sums up the early political philosophy of Habash and his following. The journal became popular throughout camps in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, spreading Habash's name.[58] In 1955, he headed the first congress of the organization of Young Arab Men, which he soon turned into a party called the Arab Nationalist Movement.[59]

The camps were intensely ideologically active in the 1950s, and Palestinian political participation focused on the strikes and demonstrations led by the progressive parties whose Pan-Arab ideologies were gaining popularity amongst the Lebanese.[60] Just as these ideologies began to crystallize, the 1958 political crisis broke out, revealing the fault-line upon which the Lebanese edifice had been constructed.

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[55] R. Sayigh (1994), 51.
[56] Naseer H. Aruri and Samih Farsoun, "Palestinian Communities and Arab Host Countries," in *The Sociology of the Palestinians*, ed. Khalil Nakhleh and Elia Zureik, 116 (London: Croom Helm, 1980).
[57] Riad el-Rayyes and Dunia Nahas, *Guerrillas for Palestine* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), 139.
[58] *Ibid*.
[59] *Ibid*.
[60] Aruri, 117.

The 1958 conflict divided the country along pro-Arab and pro-Western lines, and General Fuad Chehab, Commander-in-Chief of the Lebanese military, was elected President of Lebanon as a figure who, it was felt, could reunify the two sides. General Chehab aggressively sought to reshape Lebanese political life through what later became known as "Chehabism", large scale administrative reforms and socio-economic development that sought to strengthen the state apparatus to the detriment of the feudal *zu'ama*.[61] He also followed a Pan-Arab foreign policy, achieving Nasser's recognition of Lebanon's territorial integrity and his commitment to non-interference in Lebanese affairs. The policy Chehab pursued towards the Palestinian population, however, hardly reflected such fraternal sentiments.

Unlike Chamoun, Gen. Chehab felt the "threats" posed by the Palestinians required resolute action. In a 1960 meeting with a delegation of the Arab Nationalist Movement, Chehab said, "…Lebanon will either repress the Palestinians or be repressed by them - and no third solution exists."[62]

Under Chehab a dangerous mutual perception was institutionalized within the Lebanese-Palestinian relationship: fear.

Fear

Rosemary Sayigh notes that Chehab pursued a policy of increasing repression of camp residents because of the "…regime's fears of the mobilizing effects of the regional

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[61] el-Khazen (2000), 176. The *zu'ama* (leaders) were the privileged, dominant class of Lebanese society.

[62] Rex Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival: The PLO in Lebanon* (Pinter: London, 1990), 29.

upheavals of the 1950s on Lebanese Muslims and 'Opposition' parties."[63] Biersteker and

Weber point out the importance of the concept of "population" to the construction of

sovereignty. According to them, the country's criterion for national citizenship

"…whether in everyday discourse or by legal proclamation - constructs the foundation of

a state's identity."[64] Chehab recognized that the Palestinians, by then comprising 10% of

the population[65], while not official citizens, were citizens "by discourse". They were

interacting on a daily basis with the Lebanese. He felt the only way to keep them from

"dominating" the other Lebanese sects, was to repress them.[66]

Chehab enacted this repression by setting up police stations and branches of the

military intelligence, or Deuxieme Bureau (DB), in every camp. The DB was charged

with restricting political activity, while the police enforced various regulations.[67]

As the DB encroached upon the lives of the refugees, the economic and social

problems of Chamoun's period persisted. The state increasingly confined Palestinian

opportunities, and resentment grew. Fawaz Turki, a Palestinian who later wrote of his

experiences in exile from his Palestinian home, recounted an incident that he placed

around the time Chehab was coming to power, but which seems rather timeless for the

period. Arriving home to the camp one afternoon he found that his mother and two

sisters had been beaten by drunken policemen after failing to produce identity cards or

some other "wretched document".[68] He remembers passionately, "That incident may be

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[63] R. Sayigh (1994), 16.
[64] Biersteker and Weber, 13.
[65] Michiel Beker and Roemer van Oordt, "The Palestinians in Lebanon: Contradictions of State-Formation in Exile." MERA Occassional Paper no. 10 (December, 1991), 10.
[66] Brynen, 29.
[67] R. Sayigh (1994), 68.
[68] Fawaz Turki, *The Disinherited* (London: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 40.

taken as marking the day I started to hate with a passion that was lunatic in its

intensity."[69]

Revolution

That others hated with such intensity cannot be assumed, but it was apparent that

many were growing restless for a better life. Hudson notes that such discontented and

"youthful" masses were ready to be mobilized.[70] The Pan-Arab movements grew in

popularity despite DB measures, and adherents met in secret. Habbash and the ANM

became more radical and activist in their ideology regarding Israel.[71] In 1962, they

decided to start training for military conflict with "the enemy", and guns were passed

through the camps on their way from the Egyptian Embassy, and other locales, to the

fighters who would train with and use them against Israel.[72] But the ANM was neither

the sole, nor the most influential, activist organization gaining influence throughout the

Arab world in the period. Another was created around 1959 by a group of young

Palestinians who had attended university together in Egypt. Gathering in Kuwait in that

year, Salah Khalaf (later called Abu Iyad), Khalil al-Wazir, Faruq Qaddumi, and the most

prominent, Yasir Arafat, started a publication called *Filastinuna* (Our Palestine).[73] The

movement which promoted this journal advocated heightened propaganda and political

activity in support of the Palestinian cause, and would eventually become known by the

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[69] Turki, 40.

[70] Michael C. Hudson, "Palestinians and Lebanon: The Common Story," paper presented as part of the Palestinians in Lebanon Conference, 27–30 September 1996. Oxford, Queen Elizabeth House, 8.

[71] Aaron David Miller, *The PLO and the Politics of Survival* (New York: Praeger, 1983), 18.

[72] R. Sayigh (1994), 75.

[73] Miller, 18.

name *Harakat al Tahrir al Filastini*, or Fatah.[74] In 1966, additionally, *Sa'iqa*

(Thunderbolt) was formed by Palestinian Ba'thists under Syrian auspices.

Even before Sa'iqa emerged, however, and in hopes of curbing such Palestinian

organizations and retaining their control over the movements, the Arab states, at the first

Arab summit meeting in Cairo in early 1964, decided to establish a "Palestinian national

organization".[75] Shortly thereafter, the Palestinian Liberation Organization came into

being. The creation of an at least nominally unifying entity sent ripples of excitement

through the Lebanese camps. So, too, did Fatah's announcement of the first military

attack within Israel by a Palestinian group on January 1, 1965. Still, the DB fought hard

to exclude these burgeoning groups, including the PLO, prohibiting representational

offices or even meetings in excess of three persons.[76] In fact, the first Fateh member to

die outside of Palestine was killed by the DB in 1966.[77]

The third Arab-Israeli war in 1967, however, marked the true birth of the

Palestinian revolution.[78] After the stunning six day defeat, the Palestinians became

convinced that they could no longer rely on the Arab regimes, but would have to fight

their own revolution, albeit from a militarily weak position. Gleaning their tactics from

other anti-imperialist revolutions being waged across the world, the Palestinian militant

groups became determined to fight a guerilla war with the Israelis from any and all

territories which they could use.

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[74] el-Rayyes, 28.
[75] Miller, 21.
[76] R. Sayigh (1994), 74 & Chaaban, 4.
[77] Hani A. Faris, "Lebanon and the Palestinians: Brotherhood or Fratricide?" *Arab Studies Quarterly* 3, no. 4 (Fall 1981): 357.
[78] *Ibid*.

George Habash's ANM became known as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Basing itself on populist ideology, the Front issued a statement in late December, 1967 which noted that,

"The struggle of the Palestinian masses in the occupied territories is an effective contribution to the Arab revolution against world imperialism and its lackeys. This demands an organic link between the struggle of our Palestinian people and the struggle of the Arab people facing the same overall danger and the same overall enemy."[79]

Such an "organic link" would have significant implications for a Lebanon whose left-leaning parties had been growing stronger since the 1958 crisis, all the more since the leftist PFLP was one of the most popular parties in the Lebanese camps.[80]

Events began to unfold at a feverish pace. In March, 1968, Palestinian *fedayeen* (one's who sacrifice), as the various militant movements began to be collectively called, repulsed an Israeli onslaught at Karama, Jordan, giving recruitment efforts in Lebanon new impetus.[81] Amongst the Palestinians in Lebanon, the *istinhad* (readiness for insurrection) was reaching its apogee.[82] The various fedayeen groups focused on infiltrating and organizing those amongst the refugees willing to participate.[83] Simultaneously, they fought the Lebanese army to establish a stronger military presence

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[79] el-Rayyes, 38.
[80] R. Sayigh (1994), 76.
[81] Beker, 12.
[82] R. Sayigh (1994), 77.
[83] Faris, 357.

in South Lebanon from which they could increase their attacks against Israel.[84] This

guerilla war introduced another factor into the sovereignty equation in addition to the

challenge to Lebanese domestic authority.

On May 12, 1968 the Israeli and Lebanese armies exchanged shell-fire after the

former retaliated against a fedayeen rocket attack on the Kibbutz Margaliot by shelling

the village of Houleh.[85] Israeli shelling intensified throughout the summer and fall.[86]

The escalation culminated in late December when Palestinian fedayeen attacked an El Al

plane in Athens on the 26th.[87] On December 27, 1968, Israeli commandos responded by

storming Beirut International Airport and destroying 13 Lebanese civilian airplanes.[88]

Lebanon found itself having to contend with more serious external threats to its territorial

integrity.

Cairo Accord

Debate within the Lebanese populace about how to handle the Palestinian issue

was raging by the winter. "Right-wing" parties, the largely Christian parties of Pierre

Gemayel, Camille Chamoun, and Raymond Eddé, had formed a coalition called the Hilf

and took the view that unrestrained Palestinian activity was increasingly problematic.[89]

"Left-wing" ideological parties, many of whom did not then enjoy a legalized status

within the state, felt the PRM should be given freedom of action. Kamal Joumblatt, who

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[84] Faris, 358.

[85] Goria, 95.

[86] *Ibid*.

[87] *Ibid*.

[88] el-Khazen (2000), 140.

[89] On January 1, 1969, the leader of the *Phalangist* party of Pierre Gemayel questioned the assistance Lebanon would be able to offer the Palestinian cause and the Resistance in particular. (Goria, 98)

later would lead these parties under the banner of the Lebanese National Movement, called for an Arab nationalist government that would prioritize the war with Israel.[90]

Amidst the political wrangling, President Charles Helou and the army were taking their own line. While fedayeen activity from and through Lebanese territory increased in frequency in late 1968 and early 1969, the Lebanese military was determined to put an end to the guerrilla activity. In April, 1969, fighting occurred between the fedayeen and the Lebanese military in the southern village of Deir Mimas and elsewhere in the region.[91] That same month, Lebanese leftist groups, including the Lebanese Communist Party, the Organisation of Socialist Lebanon, and the pro-Iraqi Ba'th Party, demonstrated against the Lebanese government's "reactionary policies" and in favor of opening the border to PRM operations.[92] Notably, Kamal Joumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), was not in favor of the demonstration, evincing a certain willingness, despite his rhetoric, to work with the regime in addressing the problem.[93] Nonetheless, the protest had significant political repercussions and the Prime Minister, Rachid Karame, resigned.[94] He stayed on to head a caretaker cabinet, however, while efforts could be made to find a formula for 'coexistence' with the fedayeen.[95] It is notable here that the idea of the need to find a "formula" to negotiate was not questioned by the Sunni Prime Minister. The same willingness was not true of the Maronite President.

On May 2, Helou issued orders through the Commander-in-Chief, Bustany, to use all possible measures to contain the fedayeen in the Southeastern part of the country,

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[90] Goria, 99.
[91] el-Khazen (2000), 142.
[92] *Ibid*, 142-143.
[93] *Ibid*, 143.
[94] *Ibid*, 144.
[95] *Ibid*, 144.

called the Arqoub, which they had occupied, and to prohibit all border-crossings.[96] He

did so, moreover, without the knowledge of Karame or any other Lebanese political

leader.[97] Helou felt he could no longer wait for a probably unachievable national

consensus on confrontation with the fedayeen, and he also did not want to "embarrass"

the Prime Minister.[98] Interestingly, in doing so, it seems Helou may have been concerned

about Bustany's full commitment to the orders, as Presidential elections were

approaching in the Spring of 1970 and it was suspected that Bustany had an eye on the

seat. Helou offered to provide the orders in writing, but Bustany insisted that the

President's verbal command was sufficient.[99]

On May 3, the Egyptian President Nasser sent an envoy, Hassan Sabri al-Kholy,

to help negotiate a *modus vivendi* between the parties.[100] On May 7, Arafat, who had

risen through the fedayeen ranks and now headed the Palestinian Liberation

Organization, arrived in Lebanon to demand that the fedayeen be allowed total freedom

of action in the country.[101] At talks held between Helou, Karame, Arafat, Salah Khalaf

(Abu Iyad) and al-Kholy, Helou rejected Arafat's demand for freedom of action, and

stated that the government would only allow Palestinian political activities to occur.[102]

Remarkably, the PRM was now attempting to negotiate definitive entitlements

with the help of an external actor. It sought specific rights which would allow it to

pursue its interests. Those interests, in Helou's perception, would concomitantly threaten

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[96] Porter to Secretary of State, 2 May 1969, Box 620, Country Files - Middle East, NSC
Files, Nixon Presidential Materials, NARII.
[97] *Ibid.*
[98] *Ibid.*
[99] *Ibid.*
[100] el-Khazen (2000), 146.
[101] *Ibid.*
[102] *Ibid.*

Lebanon's territorial integrity.   That, more generally, the establishment of rights

negotiated by non-Lebanese actors within the state would also blur the lines along which

Lebanon's authority over its populace stood, was probably not an immediate realization.

It would eventually become crucial, however.

By May 31, Helou had "totally rejected" the idea of a Palestinian military

presence.[103] The spring and summer witnessed a heightening of conflict between the

parties. By July, some 4,000 fedayeen were fighting from South Lebanon.[104] In mid-

August an Israeli air attack upon the southern villages of Jouwaya and Ain Qanyam, as

well as the town of Hasbaya, aggravated the situation further.[105]

Throughout September and October, increasing numbers of Palestinian refugees

joined in resisting, touting the slogan "never again" as an expression of their hopes to

unshackle themselves from Lebanese authority.[106] Supporting the fedayeen, Syria closed

its border and mobilized its troops along it. It also allowed PLA and Sa'iqa forces to

cross into Lebanon.[107] Moreover, Syrian army transports and armored cars were sighted

within Lebanon, evidencing direct military cooperation with the fedayeen.[108] The

fedayeen were firmly of the opinion that Helou was acting with American backing in an

effort to destroy them.[109] Joumblatt simultaneously mounted anti-government invectives,

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[103] Aruri, 133.

[104] These consisted of 1,475 Sa'iqa, 1,300 Fateh, 700 members of the Arab Liberation
Front (the militia formed in April, 1969 and sponsored by Iraq), 200 from the PFLP, and
300 from the PLA (the PLO's official army). (el-Khazen (2000), 147).

[105] Goria, 107.

[106] Faris, 356.

[107] Goria, 108.

[108] Porter to Secretary of State, 25 October 1969, Box 620, Country Files - Middle East,
NSC Files, Nixon Presidential Materials, NARII.

[109] *Ibid*.

accusing the authorities of "…repressive and savage measures…against the heroes of the Resistance…"[110]

Meanwhile, by mid to late October, Nasserist elements, most of whom were Sunni Muslims, erected barricades in Beirut.[111] The United Arab Republic's ambassador (as Egypt was then known) cautioned moderation by Sunnis, making it clear Nasser did not want problems.[112] The Egyptian hope was to capitalize on the mounting pressure to establish a mediating role for Nasser.[113] Indeed, the pressure on the Lebanese government was becoming unbearable. Syrians and Israelis were showing scant regard for Lebanese borders, the fedayeen and various Syrian-backed groups were undermining the government's authority in direct battles, and local actors joined the Palestinians in calling for new rights and an established place within the Lebanese populace. By October 27, the fedayeen had expressed three primary demands: freedom of action for fedayeen in Lebanon, removal of restrictions from refugee camps, and punishment of the army officers responsible for a "massacre" that had sparked various October confrontations in south Lebanon.[114]

The government's capacity to resist these pressures diminished greatly as October wore on. President Helou felt that Nasser's mediation held out the most reasonable prospects for success.[115] Nonetheless, government officials were "under no illusions"

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[110] Goria, 108.
[111] Porter to Secretary of State, 25 October 1969.
[112] Porter to Secretary of State, 24 October 1969, Box 620, Country Files - Middle East, NSC Files, Nixon Presidential Materials, NARII.
[113] *Ibid*.
[114] "Lebanon: Acceptance of Fedayeen Agreement May Be Only Way Out of Current Crisis", 2, George C. Denney to Secretary of State, 27 October 1969, Box 620, Country Files - Middle East, NSC Files, NPMS, NARII.
[115] *Ibid*.

that Nasser had Lebanon's best interests in mind, and were distraught when Egypt took

on an aggressive mediatory role in late October that effectively removed Lebanon's

influence over the situation.[116] Sabri al-Kholi, again acting as Nasser's interlocutor,

made trips to Jordan and Syria which were unsolicited by Lebanese officials.[117] Al-Kholi

had also not been invited to Lebanon, but came nonetheless.[118]

Michel Khoury, President Helou's confidant and son of the first Lebanese

President Bishar Khoury, told the American Deputy Chief of Mission in a meeting on

October 27 that the "Arab Solution", meaning whatever might be mediated by Nasser,

would not be ideal for Lebanon, but that it was the only realistic way out of the crisis.[119]

Accordingly, the Lebanese agreed to negotiate, but were forced to do so on terms that

Helou found undesirable. Knowing Bustany's appetite for Presidential power (which

required currying Muslim favor), he intended to send the military Chief of Staff

Shumayyit to Cairo to represent Lebanon. The Egyptians and Palestinians insisted on

negotiating with Bustany, however, and the former even pushed for him to have

plenipotentiary powers. Helou, nonetheless, while sending Bustany, would not give him

such powers and stipulated that the details of any agreement must be negotiated with the

Lebanese in Lebanon.[120] This dual constraint would prove fatal, as in Helou's mind

Bustany was not trustworthy enough to make full commitments, but in Lebanese history

issues left unresolved at the negotiating table usually remained that way. Lebanese

distrust of the Egyptians heightened when they received word that Nasser had made a

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[116] Porter to Secretary of State, 27 October 1969, Box 620, Country Files - Middle East, NSC Files, NPMS, NARII.
[117] *Ibid*.
[118] *Ibid*.
[119] *Ibid*.
[120] *Ibid*, 2.

statement to the effect that Helou must act to end the confrontation on the basis of the

PRM's "inherent right" to operate in Lebanon.[121]

Nasser was bringing incredible pressure upon Lebanon to give the PRM another

base and the latter, having little choice, acquiesced. Bustany had instructions that he not

allow for Palestinian "freedom of action", and that any agreement require that Palestinian

activity could only take place in "coordination" with the Lebanese government, and that

it be restricted to areas delineated by the Lebanese.[122] In other words, the government

was being forced to negotiate the nature of its authority over the conduct of those within

its own territory.

The results of the negotiating process are now known. The Palestinians achieved

the rights of work, residence, and freedom of movement in Lebanon.[123] The agreement

also allowed for the formation of local committees in camps through "cooperation with

local authorities" and "…within the framework of Lebanese sovereignty".[124] The

Palestinian Armed Struggle Command (PASC) [125] established itself within the camps and

would "…be responsible for organizing and specifying the existence of arms in the

camps within the framework of Lebanon's security and the Palestinian revolution's

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[121] "Lebanon: Acceptance of Fedayeen Agreement May Be Only Way Out of Current Crisis", 2.

[122] Porter to Secretary of State, 27 October 1969, 2.

[123] Paul A. Jureidini, *The Palestinian Movement in Politics* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1976), 68.

[124] *Ibid.*

[125] The PASC was the product of Fateh's attempt to unify the fedayeen after it took control of the PLO in early 1969. It acted as an umbrella group for all major fedayeen militias, the PFLP excepted. (el-Rayyes, 18-19)

interest."[126] Palestinians within the camps were also permitted to participate in the

revolution "…within the principles of Lebanon's sovereignty and safety."[127]

Ultimately, the Cairo Accord opened a debate about rights and responsibilities,

placing the PRM and the Palestinians within a realm of alternative citizenship while

making them part of the populace. The fact that so much was left open-ended, and that

no modes of enforcement existed, ensured the persistence of debates about their rights

and responsibilities. For, despite the fact that the details of the agreement were to be

worked out later, in the absence of an established mechanism to resolve disputes, or even

well-defined understandings of the concepts included in the agreements, one wonders

how the participants expected such disputes to be resolved. The answer was that it would

have to be worked out in practice, thereby resubmitting the debate to the interests and

influence of all the parties who had been involved or hoped to get involved. It is to this

institutionalization of ambiguity that we must now turn.

Institutionalized Ambiguity

The Presidential circle was immediately disappointed with the results of the

negotiations and Bustany's performance. Helou questioned Bustany's intentions and felt

he had fallen for the flattery of his "adversaries" in Cairo.[128] While Bustany made

several mistakes, Helou felt the most egregious was the status of the refugee camps.[129] It

seems likely that Helou must have objected strongly to the agreement's permissiveness

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[126] Jureidini, 68.

[127] *Ibid*.

[128] Porter to Secretary of State, 14 November 1969, Box 620, Country Files - Middle East, NSC Files, NPMS, NARII.

[129] *Ibid*.

towards the establishment of Palestinian authority within the camps. This permission would prove to be one of the most significant aspects of the text, as the Palestinians were slowly able to build a foundation of strength from which they could operate in Lebanon and further challenge governmental authority. The President asked the American Ambassador in a meeting after Cairo, "What will happen to Lebanon if tomorrow we have a Prime Minister who is unwilling to use force to control the fedayeen and an army whose leadership may be similarly unwilling or unable?"[130]

As early as October 23, the Lebanese government's presence in the camps had ended.[131] The fedayeen organizations almost immediately assumed de facto security control, monitoring access to camps and patrolling their interiors.[132] George Habbash's PFLP was present in almost every single camp, but numerous other groups were also active.[133] At Ain al-Halweh, near Sidon, eight groups immediately filled the Lebanese vacancy.[134] Seven were active at Nahr al-Barid, near Tripoli, where Sa'iqa played the most dominant role.[135] In a testament to their preparedness, the various militias had established command posts and recruitment centers within a few weeks time.[136] They recruited and then sent cadres to Syria, Jordan, and Iraq for two to three month training sessions.[137] Now, in a perfect metaphor of their release from a long-standing

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[130] Porter to Secretary of State, 2-3,14 November 1969, Box 620, Country Files – Middle East, NSC Files, NPMS, NARII.
[131] "Fedayeen and UNRWA Camps in Lebanon", Porter to Secretary of State, 17 November 1969, Box 620, Country Files – Middle East, NSC Files, NPMS, NARII.
[132] *Ibid*, 2.
[133] *Ibid*.
[134] *Ibid*.
[135] *Ibid*.
[136] *Ibid*.
[137] *Ibid*.

impermanence, the Palestinians also began constructing more permanent buildings, edifices which had long been prohibited by the Lebanese authorities.[138]

The camp residents, moreover, felt the armed fedayeen presence was necessary to protect themselves from either Israeli attacks or Lebanese government attempts to re-exert its authority.[139] Regarding the latter possibility, one camp resident was heard to say, "We won't let the gendarmes back unless we are all killed."[140] While the government intended to restore its authority, and felt only that it would take time, groups like the PFLP declared that they were not beholden to the Cairo Accord which had been signed by the PLO (an organization in which they did not participate).[141] As the PFLP was one of the most dominant players in the south, any government attempts to impose itself risked more clashes with the fedayeen and further risings of the camp populations.[142]

The fedayeen, though disunited, had established themselves as equal contenders in the negotiation over the way rights would be interpreted and enforced. Moreover, many questions that Cairo left unanswered loomed on the horizon. Amongst them: the number of fedayeen who would be permitted to enter the country, the terms under which they would be permitted to stay, and where they would be stationed.[143] The following years would see these issues addressed through greater conflict, involving far more actors than the fedayeen and the Lebanese government alone.

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[138] "Fedayeen and UNRWA Camps in Lebanon", 3.
[139] *Ibid*, 2.
[140] *Ibid*.
[141] *Ibid*, section 2, page 3.
[142] *Ibid*.
[143] Porter to Secretary of State, 19 November 1969, Box 620, Country Files - Middle East, NSC Files, NPMS, NARII.

Chapter 2: Deteriorating Relations

This chapter will focus on the Palestinian problematization of Lebanese authority, territory, and population through an analysis of the actors and relationships which shaped those spheres from 1970 to late 1972. As these components constitute sovereignty, understanding the process through which they are socially constructed is essential to achieving a more durable understanding of Lebanese sovereignty. This chapter will conclude that the boundaries of Lebanese society, in the years preceding May, 1973, were in constant flux. This flux was partially the result, and the cause, of the continuous dissatisfaction of the interested players.

Dissatisfaction leads actors to pressure to achieve their interests, which results in a continual process of negotiation and redefinition of the core basis of sovereignty. All of these negotiations revolve around "rights". Over the early 1970s, Lebanon was forced to continually negotiate these rights with various actors. Their constant dissatisfaction with their rights within the realm of authority, territory, and population, led to continued internal and external pressures, which resulted in general instability. It is in such instability that the seeds of conflict lie, and this chapter will focus on the growing instability in each realm.

The state's authority, the right to make final, binding political decisions[144], was largely undermined by the presence of the Palestinian Revolutionary Movement. From 1970 to 1972, the "rights" exercised by the Lebanese and PRM expanded and contracted according to the relations between the two. Lebanon's territorial borders suffered

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[144] Wendt (1999), 206.

perpetual ambiguity through repeated violations by the Israeli and Syrian governments who responded, pre-empted, or supported Palestinian activities in and from Lebanon. The rights and obligations of those living within Lebanon's borders - Lebanese, Palestinians, and the PRM - were subjected to continuous debate as a function of widespread socio-economic discontent and disagreements over identity. The inability to achieve a status-quo in the realms of authority, territory, and population aggravated tensions to the brink of open conflict between the Lebanese state and the PRM. This chapter will take us to the brink.

The PRM and Lebanese Authority

In the early 1970's, Lebanon suffered from a conflict of rights - the state's right to impose its will within its territory, and the Palestinians' "right", accorded to it by the Cairo Accord, to fight a revolution from that territory. This section will stress the fact that, in the case of the relationship between the Lebanese government and the PRM, those rights were always ambiguous, and were constantly redefined.

The Cairo Accord was not a final settlement, but rather a written commitment by both parties to pursue a policy of accommodation in Lebanon.[145] The PRM was determined to propagate its revolution against Israel, and so had an interest in unhindered activity. A revolution bound, after all, is no revolution at all.

Soon after the Accord had been signed, the PLO established the Higher Political Committeee for Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon (HPCPAL) as a coordinating mechanism

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[145] Jureidini, 67.

with the Lebanese government.[146] Within weeks, the HPCPAL had denied that the PLO

was willing to accept Lebanese police posts inside camps, directly challenging the state's

ability to assert its control as envisaged in the agreement.[147] As Palestinians grew bolder,

some Lebanese became more vocal in opposing them. Suleiman Frangieh, a Maronite

member of the *za'im* class from the northern town of Zghorta, issed a statement entitled

"My Country is Always Right", in which he accused politicians of being too weak in

grappling with increasing Palestinian offenses.[148] Parts of the general public were also

growing impatient with the erection of barricades by fedayeen members, with Palestinian

searches of Lebanese citizens, and with the fedayeen armed presence in the streets of

Beirut.[149] All were measures which went far beyond what the Cairo Accord permitted.

By June 1970, as Interior Minister, Kamal Joumblatt had succeeded in putting in

place some restrictions that he thought would improve Lebanese-Palestinian relations,

including a freeze on cross-border operations and the carrying of arms without permits.[150]

In what would become the paramount problem of the period, however, numerous groups

within the PRM were unwilling to recognize any 'concessions' of their rights. These

were the radical leftist and Syrian-sponsored militias who sought their own ideological

agenda independent of the PLO's guidance. George Habash's PFLP was, at the time, the

strongest of these groups. By 1970, it had splintered into several factions, one of which

was the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) led by Nayef

Hawatma.

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[146] Brynen, 54.
[147] *Ibid*.
[148] Goria, 125.
[149] David C Gordon, *The Fragmented Nation* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 70.
[150] "Situation in Lebanon", Porter to Secretary of State, 15 June 1970, File Pol 23 Leb, Box 2447, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

Formed on February 22, 1969, Hawatma's PDFLP, though a radical-leftist organization, received most of its arms and support from Sa'iqa.[151] It criticized Fatah for accepting funds from 'reactionary' Arab states, and castigated the PFLP for adopting a policy of non-interference in Arab affairs.[152] It did share with the PFLP, however, the view that the revolution was a battle against Zionism and, consequently, imperialism.[153] This brought it into conflict with any "status-quo" forces, such as the Lebanese government, whom it saw as cooperating with the American imperialists.

Also troublesome was Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command (PFLP-GC). Jibril, a former Syrian army officer, received full backing from Syria in forming a group that prioritized the military aspects of the struggle, rather than the ideological and political facets which so often led to internal discord.[154]

As Yezid Sayigh notes, the rivalry between the various militias, the PFLP, PDFLP, Sa'iqa, and the PFLP-GC, resulted in a process of outbidding (*muzayada*) for recruits which gave rise to the increasingly provocative behavior of and the fragmentation within the fedayeen.[155]

Such outbidding had, by June 1970, resulted in conflicts outside of Lebanon, as well. When it became clear that Israel, Jordan, and the United Arab Republic were all

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[151] Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement 1949-1993* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 231.
[152] *Ibid,* 231.
[153] Tareq Y. Ismael, *The Arab Left* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1976), 73.
[154] el-Rayyes, 49-50.
[155] Y. Sayigh (1997), 238.

looking positively upon the American peace initiative eventually known as the Rogers Plan, the radical leftists instigated frequent clashes with the Jordanian authorities.[156] Serious clashes between the Jordanian military and the Palestinians erupted throughout the summer, culminating in the September 6 hijacking of three planes by the PFLP. After the PFLP landed the planes at Dawson's airfield in Jordan, the monarchy and the army decided to finish the fedayeen movement. The resulting civil war, dubbed Black September, initiated a process of fedayeen dispersal, primarily into Lebanon.

It is estimated that between 1970 and 1972, up to 30,000 Palestinians displaced by the fighting, several thousand of whom were guerillas, entered Lebanon.[157] Also significant was the defection of a group of troops from the Jordanian army who disagreed with the King's aggressive policy and reformed in Syria as a Palestinian fighting force associated with the PLA. They called themselves the Yarmouk Brigade.[158]

While events were spiraling out of control in Jordan, the Lebanese political landscape shifted. In mid-August, Suleiman Frangieh was chosen as the fifth president of the Republic.[159] His election represented the resurgence of an elite-dominated politics which General Chehab had failed to eradicate.

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[156] Jureidini, 49.
[157] Brynen, 64.
[158] Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: People, Power, Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 50.
[159] According to some versions of the story, Frangieh's own armed partisans met the Speaker Hamadeh's bodyguards at gunpoint, while Frangieh threatened the latter with a revolver trying to force him to announce Frangieh President. (Jonathan Randal, *The Tragedy of Lebanon* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1983), 128.)

Frangieh presented himself as a liberator from the "Chehabism" which had restricted the Lebanese elite (*zu'ama*).[160] Ironically, this also made him appealing to Joumblatt, who had come to detest the Chehabist DB's control of the leftist political parties and Palestinians with whom he was developing a closer alliance. Frangieh also campaigned as a strong supporter of Lebanese sovereignty[161], appealing to the largely Maronite constituency for whom it served as a codeword for a crackdown on the PRM. Thus, he campaigned on a series of contradictions.

Immediately after entering office, he sought to reassert government authority over the PRM. As fighting raged in Jordan, the fedayeen increased their raids on Israel from Lebanon.[162] In response, Frangieh increased Lebanese army patrols along the southern border and set a new policy of actively restricting fedayeen operations to the Arqoub, as had been stipulated at Cairo.[163]

Frangieh's newly appointed Prime Minister, Saeb Salam, a leading scion of the Beirut Sunni community, did not reappoint Joumblatt as Interior Minister. He also told the American Ambassador that he intended to treat security as the country's foremost problem and would, consequently, assert law and order to the utmost.[164] He relayed a similar message to Arafat who, concerned with the problems in Jordan, was averse to any

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[160] William Harris, *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, wars, and global extensions* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1997), 154.
[161] *Ibid*.
[162] "The New Lebanese Government and the Fedayeen Problem", Porter to Secretary of State, 16 October 1970, File Pol 15-1 Leb, Box 2447, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[163] *Ibid*.
[164] Memorandum, Buffum to Secretary of State, 28 October 1970, File Pol 23-8 Leb, Box 2447, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

conflict with Lebanon at that time. [165] Arafat met with the guerilla leaders in Lebanon in November to quiet their activities. [166] For a brief period, the government was able to reassert its authority over the more compliant fedayeen.

The respite would not last long, however, as fighting continued in Jordan[167], more restless revolutionaries fled to Lebanon. Beginning in the late fall, the fedayeen started to acquire apartments in "strategic locations" throughout Beirut. [168] Growing weary of the renewed disregard for Lebanon's authority, Frangieh issued orders that as of May 1, the army was to fire on any fedayeen firing across or attempting to cross the border. [169] As more radical fedayeen entered the country, the status quo shifted from one maintained by agreement, to one that would have to be "negotiated" through force.

By June 1971, the Jordanian government had conquered the fedayeen, and prohibited Palestinian political organizations and combatants from circulating within its borders. Unable to fight from Egypt and their freedoms greatly restricted in Syria, the Palestinians made Lebanon the primary base of their resistance. [170]

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[165] Memorandum, 28 October 1970 & Brynen, 60. It is telling, however, that Salam professed an ignorance of the details of the Cairo Accord, actually asking an assistant that it be brought to him during his meeting with the Ambassador. (Memorandum, 28 October 1970)

[166] Jureidini, 73.

[167] The Jordanian army was not able to completely destroy the fedayeen during Black September. They endeavored to do so over the course of the next several months, however, and the fighting continued into the summer of 1971 when the PLO presence was officially ended.

[168] "Reported Fedayeen Acquisition of Strategic Locations Throughout Beirut", Buffum to Secretary of State, 28 November 1970, File Pol 23-Leb, Box 2447, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

[169] Memorandum, Buffum to Secretary of State, 21 April 1971, File Arab-Isr 12/1/70, Box 2057, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

[170] Elizabeth Picard, *Lebanon: A Shattered Country* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1996), 82.

In the mean time, Arafat concentrated on consolidating his power in Lebanon.[171] He and the other PRM leaders used militarization in order to gain control over the movement, and the already problematic paramilitary presence in the country ballooned.[172] Moreover, Arafat's arrival coincided with a similar leadership shift on the Lebanese side.

Antoine Noujaim, the Lebanese Commander-in-Chief, was killed in a helicopter accident in July, and Frangieh replaced him with Iskander Ghanem, one of his long-time friends from Zghorta. Ghanem was an uncompromising officer. In one of his first meetings with the American Ambassador, he said that Lebanon should have taken a far more vigorous stand against the fedayeen when they first appeared in the area.[173] He would spend most of the next few years trying to compensate for that mistake and reestablish the unquestioned dominance of Lebanese authority.

On New Year's Eve, members of Sa'iqa clashed with Lebanese police in the Nahr al-Bared quarter of Beirut.[174] After several of their comrades had been taken to the local police station, Sa'iqa units converged and attacked the building. When police backup arrived, they were ambushed by Sa'iqa units waiting outside. The police called for additional reinforcements and the fedayeen fled in their jeeps.[175] It was an inauspicious beginning to a catastrophic year.

On the evening of February 27, after the Israelis had attacked southern Lebanon, unchallenged, for four straight days, Frangieh called a meeting with Salam, Ghanem, the

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[171] Y. Sayigh (1997), 299.
[172] *Ibid*, 298.
[173] Memorandum, Buffum to Secretary of State, August 9, 1971, File Pol Arab-Isr 9/1/71, Box 2058, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[174] "Fedayeen Clash with Lebanese Police", Buffum to Secretary of State, 3 January 1971, File Pol 23-8 Leb, Box 2447, Subject-Numeric File 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[175] *Ibid,* 2.

Foreign Minister Abouhamad, and eleven top Lebanese political figures.[176] Kamal

Joumblatt who, as will be seen later in this chapter, had by that time occupied a position

of fierce opposition to the government, was noticeably absent. Frangieh wanted a new

modus vivendi. The Israelis would retaliate viciously for any incursions, he argued, and

the cost was becoming too much for the Lebanese to bear. He convinced even

revolutionary stalwarts such as Rachid Karame and Kamal As'ad (one of the leading

Shi'a *za'im*) that if the government did not impose firm controls over the fedayeen,

Lebanon would suffer permanent occupation at the hands of the Israelis.[177] The next

morning he met with Arafat and Abu Youssef (another Palestinian leader) who, in the

face of Frangieh's assertiveness, agreed to make concessions.[178]

The government occupied five villages in the Arqoub, the fedayeen's territory,

and sealed the frontier.[179] For the first time since 1967, the government intended to

occupy the south and prohibit fedayeen activities.[180] The Americans surmised that the

Cairo Accord had, *de facto*, been buried.[181] No such explicit statement was made

however, and the following months would prove it a premature conclusion. As had been

the case following Frangieh's imposition of tighter controls in 1971, the government's

inability to sustain punitive anti-fedayeen measures ensured that the status quo would be

continually challenged.

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[176] "Frangieh Moves to Bring Fedayeen Under Control", Buffum to Secretary of State, 29
February 1972, Pol Isr-Leb, Box 2388, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[177] *Ibid*, 2.
[178] *Ibid*.
[179] "Israel/Lebanese Border", British Defense Attache Beirut to D14, 3 March 1972, File
FCO 17/1785 Border Incidents Between Israel and Occupied Territories 1972 January 01
– 1972 December 31, Kew.
[180] "Frangieh Moves to Bring Fedayeen Under Control", 4.
[181] *Ibid*, 1.

Throughout the spring, Israelis and Palestinians traded aggression. In April, Arafat, attempting to assert the rights accorded to the PRM in Cairo, said that the fedayeen would respect the Cairo Accord and only attack within Israel, but that it was determined to stay in the Arqoub.[182] By late May, however, fedayeen radicals had aggravated both Arafat and the Lebanese government through repeated violations of the pledge to avoid cross-border activities. Arafat tried to replace the 'leftist' leaders amongst the top echelon of the fedayeen military cadre in Lebanon, but it looked as though it would cause a split in Fatah, so he backed down.[183] While Arafat could not accomplish this, however, Frangieh also acted.

On June 2, the President gave a speech in which he announced restrictive measures which included the closing of the PFLP's information offices in Lebanon.[184] By the end of the month, and after a series of Israeli attacks, the government decided to devise a better system of control over the Palestinians than the *ad hoc* approach which had previously prevailed.[185] On June 26, the government reached an agreement with Arafat to "freeze" military activity in the south.[186] Arafat's negotiating position was constricted. He wished to avoid open conflict with the Lebanese government, and took very seriously the Lebanese legislation which had recently been passed allocating $200

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[182] "Fedayeen Views RE Lebanon and UN Observers", Buffum to secretary of State, 19 April 1972, File Pol Arab-Leb 10/3/70, Box 2085, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[183] "Black September," *An Nahar Arab Report* 3, Number 22, May 29, 1972.
[184] "Frangieh Speech", Buffum to Secretary of State, 2 June 1972, File Pol 15-1 Leb, Box 2447, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[185] "Israeli Attack on South Lebanon", Wright to FCO, 26 June 1972, File FCO 17/1787 Border incidents Between Israel and the Occupied Territories 1972 January 01 – 1972 December 31, Kew.
[186] "Israel/Lebanon", Barnes to FCO, 26 June 1972, File FCO 17/1787 Border incidents Between Israel and the Occupied Territories 1972 January 01 – 1972 December 31, Kew.

million for the purchase of arms.[187] Jibril's PFLP-GC, however, rejected the freeze

order, asserting that the entire Arab nation supported the use of its territory to strike "at

the depths" of Israel, even if their governments did not.[188]

This cavalier attitude towards Lebanese sovereignty and an apparent sense of

entitlement within the PRM led to further instability over the next few months. In the

middle of September, ferocious Israeli reprisals for the Munich Olympics and other

fedayeen attacks in the south, resulted in, for the first time, fierce battles between the

Lebanese military and the IDF. In the face of imminent clashes with Israel that the

Lebanese could not win, it seemed as though the limits had been reached. On September

17, 1972, the Lebanese army declared a nationwide state of emergency and clamped

down vigorously against the fedayeen. While Arafat called upon the Arab countries to

help the Palestinians resist the restrictions,[189] Foreign Minister Abouhamad argued that

the government had to be able to assert its sovereignty, and could no longer give the

fedayeen a free hand in the country.[190]

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[187] "Significance of New Lebanese-Commando Accord: Effect on Guerrilla Position," *An Nahar Arab Report*, undated, in FCO 17/1611 Internal Policy Disputes of Fedayeen (Palestinian politico-military organisations) in Middle East, Kew.
[188] "PFLP-General Command Says Activity Will Continue; Statement also Issued by Saiqa," *An Nahar Arab Report*, undated, in FCO 17/1611 Internal Policy Disputes of Fedayeen (Palestinian politico-military organisations) in Middle East, Kew.
[189] "Lebanese Diplomatic Efforts", Buffum to Secretary of State, 19 September 1972, File Pol Arab-Leb 10-3-70, Box 2085, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[190] Memorandum, British Defense Attache to FCO, 18 Sep 1972, File FCO 17/1791 Border incidents Between Israel and the Occupied Territories 1972 January 01 – 1972 December 31, Kew.

Israel and Lebanese Territoriality

In her description of the development of the Westphalian system, Janice Thomson points out that one of the most fundamental agreements between states was their mutual responsibility to curtail private military expeditions launched from their territories into other states.[191] The corollary is that a state has a right of territorial control, which its neighbors must respect. Lebanon's fluctuating capacity to impose its authority upon the PRM led to the violation of its right to territorial control by the Israelis. During the early 1970's, the war between the fedayeen and Israel spread from the northern Galilee to Munich, and Lebanon became an arena for vengeance *par excellance*. To the Lebanese, moreover, Israeli aggression was about far more than revenge. Their consistent disregard for Lebanese territoriality also hinted at a greater ambition, the final realization of the *Eretz Yisrael*[192] through the occupation of southern Lebanon up to the Lebanese river Litani. This section will focus on the territorial ambiguity which resulted from the Lebanese-Israeli relations of 1970-1972 and their continual attempts to define their obligations vis-à-vis one another.

Lebanese-Israeli border relations were defined by two currents. The first, the coercive intervention by Israel inside Lebanese territory, is well-established in the historical record and constituted clear violations of the geographical boundaries between Israeli and Lebanese authority. The second aspect, unmentioned in the history books, was a series of secret military meetings which took place along the Lebanese-Israeli frontier. These meetings created a space through which information could be shared and based on which common interests could, if only tacitly, be maintained. This section will

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[191] Thomson, 224.
[192] The biblical Jewish homeland.

assert that both trends failed to establish a territorial status-quo and pushed the situation in Lebanon towards violent conflict.

The Israeli government held Lebanon responsible for the Palestinian resistance on two levels.[193] Its retaliations in southern Lebanon usually came in response to fedayeen border incursions and cross-border raids and rocket attacks.[194] The second involved the Palestinian terrorist attacks in other parts of the world which escalated in late 1971. Israel responded to, and eventually preempted, terrorist attacks through progressively deeper incursions into Lebanese territory.[195] Between 1968 and 1974, the Lebanese Army recorded over 3,000 violations of Lebanese territory by the Israelis, an average of 1.4 incidents per day.[196] During that time, about 880 Lebanese and Palestinian civilians were killed in Israeli attacks.[197] It is to the early part of those years that we now turn.

In January, 1970, Israel threatened that unless Lebanon moved to halt guerilla activities, it would "…adopt more severe and firm measures *in* Lebanon".[198] By March, Israeli "firm measures" were so frequent that the American Embassy wrote home claiming that a two day calm gave reason for hope (to the Israelis) that their hard-line strategies of invading Lebanon and attacking various fedayeen and civilian villages had

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[193] Picard, 83.
[194] *Ibid*.
[195] *Ibid*.
[196] Brynen, 67.
[197] *Ibid*.
[198] *Ibid*, 56. Author's italics.

paid off.[199] By June, pursuing more than just the occasional raid, Israeli soldiers were

seen actually patrolling Lebanese territory.[200]

Around the same time, the Lebanese Commander in Chief, Noujaim, met with

Israeli military personnel on the southern frontier.[201] He did so under the auspices of a

defunct institutional mechanism, the Israeli-Lebanese Mixed Armistice Commission

(ILMAC), which had been set up in 1949 to coordinate border issues, but which had

fallen into disuse after the 1967 war. The Israelis, though they no longer recognized the

validity of the Armistice after 1967, agreed to meet informally. He assured the Israelis

that the Lebanese were doing everything they could to isolate the fedayeen in the Arqoub

area.[202] Such reassurances would be repeatedly stressed in similar meetings over the next

several years, in addition to requests for more time and space to consolidate Lebanese

authority. It is a testament to the perceived importance of these communications with the

Israelis that the Lebanese would risk such undertakings. Had the meetings ever been

revealed, the wrath of the Arab world in general, and the local Palestinians and Lebanese,

in particular, could have completely undermined the credibility of the government and

shaken the system to its core.

They were not revealed, however, and the meetings continued alongside the

Israeli-Palestinian violence. After a lull in tensions which coincided with the Palestinian

troubles in Jordan during the late 1970s, the border dispute deepened. On December 30,

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[199] "Lebanon-Israel Border", Porter to Secretary of State, 9 March 1970, File Lebanon Vol II 1Feb 70, Box 621, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[200] Memorandum, Hayman to Trip, 3 June 1970, File FCO 17/1362 Israeli Lebanon Mixed Armistice Commission 1970 January 01 – 1970 December 31, Kew.
[201] Memorandum, Porter to Secretary of State, 10 June 1970, File Lebanon Vol II 1 Feb 1970, Box 621, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[202] *Ibid*.

1970, an IDF soldier was killed near Avivim.[203] The next day, Kiryat Shimona came

under rocket attacks, as it did again on January 2.[204] On January 1 and 2 three other

villages encountered mortar fire.[205] The Israelis decided to escalate the conflict to a new

level. That escalation, however, was clearly premeditated.

Several years prior to January, 1971, a man named Sa'di entered Lebanon and

was tracked by the army intelligence, who feared he was an Israeli agent. Sa'di found his

way to a fedayeen encampment in Sarafand 13 km south of Sidon. Despite the army's

warnings to the fedayeen leaders that he was an Israeli operative, they accepted Sa'di

because of his "…eloquent espousal of their cause".[206] By January 2, he had convinced a

group of fedayeen "frogmen" to undertake a night sabotage mission along the northern

Israeli coast.[207] As the first of the five ships slipped up alongside the Israeli waters, an

IDF squad ambushed its occupants.

The Israelis put one of the frogmen on television. He pleaded for mercy and

specifically divulged that the Lebanese authorities knew about the Sarafand base and

everything that went on there.[208] On January 14, Israeli helicopters flew 43 km into

Lebanese territory, deeper then they had been at any time since 1968, and landed a team

of commandos who, aided by Sa'di, attacked the Sarafand encampment, killing around

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[203] "Israeli Concern About Lebanese Border Incidents", Barbour to Secretary of State, 4 January 1971, File Pol Arab-Isr 1/1/71, Box 2057, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[204] *Ibid*.
[205] *Ibid*.
[206] Memorandum, Buffum to Secretary of State, 18 January 1971, File Pol 27-1 Arab-Isr 2/1/71, Box 2057, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[207] *Ibid*.
[208] "Military Sitrep: January 14 – 20", Barbour to Secretary of State, 21 January 1971, File Pol 27-1 Arab-Isr 2/1/71, Box 2057, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

10 fedayeen.[209] The Israelis were clearly seeking to strike fear into the hearts of the Lebanese, hoping to force greater crackdowns on the fedayeen. These intentions would become evident at a meeting shortly thereafter.

The ILMAC convened in late January to discuss the brutal killing of a Druze tractor driver residing in Israel. The Lebanese called the meeting after the Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Allon urged the Lebanese government to return the man's missing head, and said that, "Such barbaric acts will cost the enemy dearly in the fighting of soldier against soldier…"[210] At the meeting, the Lebanese wanted to know if Allon's remarks now made the Lebanese army responsible for fedayeen activities and if Israel intended to target it (the army) in future reprisal actions.[211] The Israelis responded that they did not hold the Lebanese army "directly involved" in the border violations, but left a "constructive ambiguity" about the extent to which it would hold the state responsible. A new precedent had been established whereby the Lebanese army could be more confident that Israeli day-to-day tactical objectives focused on the Palestinians, but political officials could not be certain about broader Israeli strategic interests.

In fact, the increasing depth and frequency of the Israeli incursions led President Frangieh to believe that the Israelis still harbored designs on Lebanese territory.[212] By the spring of 1971, he was diverting between 22 and 25 percent of the country's budget to

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[209] "Military Sitrep: January 14 – 20".
[210] "ILMAC Meeting on Death of Druze Tractor Driver", Buffum to Secretary of State, 28 January 1971, File Pol Arab-Isr 2/1/71, Box 2057, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[211] *Ibid*, 1-2.
[212] "Secretary's Conversation with President Frangieh", Part 2, page 2, Buffum to Secretary of State, 5 May 1971, File Lebanon Volume II Jan 71 – Oct 73, Box 621, RG 59, NARII.

defense.[213] Frangieh and the Lebanese policy-makers were fixated on Israeli violations

of the 1949 Armistice agreement, not accepting the fact that the Israelis no longer saw it

as valid and, instead, felt their relations were governed by the cease-fire established at the

end of the 1967 hostilities.[214] This difference would trouble their negotiations and,

ultimately, result in their inability to establish a settlement.

On January 14, 1972, after continued cross-border conflict, the Israelis called an

ILMAC meeting and, according to the Lebanese Ambassador Kabbani in Washington,

the Israelis told the Lebanese, "We are asking that terrorist activity from Lebanon

towards Israel will stop totally. If that is not done, we have to carry (out) a permanent

stay in the region in one form or another. Of course the consequences might bring the

people to leave, which is completely against our wish."[215] Israeli representatives then

divulged to the British Ambassador that while each side spoke to the other in a certain

way, they understood each other's position through tacit communications he would not

divulge to the British, and the two governments shared a common interest so that within

"a week or two" the Lebanese would be able to take measures which would improve the

situation.[216] The Lebanese, however, did not seem so certain of Israeli intentions. Their

combat units flooded the south, but at that point an Israeli threat alone could not merit the

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[213] "Secretary's Conversation with President Frangieh", Part 1, page 3. This was money, as will be seen later, which was sorely needed in other facets of the Lebanese economy.
[214] "Incidents Along Lebanese-Israeli Border", Bush to Secretary of State, 22 June 1971, Pol 27 Arab-Isr 9/1/71, Box 2059, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[215] "Israeli Warning to Lebanese", Sisco to AmEmbassy Tel Aviv, 14 January 1972, File Pol 27 Arab-Isr 12/7/71, Box 2059, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[216] "Israeli/Lebanese Border", Barnes to FCO, 15 January 1972, File FCO 17/1784 Border incidents between Israel and Occupied Territories 1972 January 01 – 1972 December 31, Kew.

excessive measures which would be required to forcefully deter the Palestinians, and fedayeen activity changed little.

Thus, the Israelis decided to escalate once more. On February 25, Israeli ground forces, supported by air strikes, armor, and artillery attacked border towns in the Bint Jebayl district and Habbariyeh in the Arqoub.[217] For the next four days, Israeli planes bombed and strafed border towns and fedayeen encampments while Israeli construction vehicles bulldozed roads along the heights overlooking the southern villages of Kfar Chouba, Kfar Hammam, and Habbariyeh.[218]

The Lebanese army, meanwhile, knowing that the operation was not directed against it, remained guardedly nearby, watching the events unfold and granting the Israelis *de facto* permission to hunt down the fedayeen.[219] Frangieh and Commander-in-Chief Ghanem had given strict orders not to fire unless the Israelis came north of the Hasbani.[220] While those orders created significant strain within the forces, they were almost unanimously followed.[221] Only one lone tank commander fired on the Israelis, and no complaint was made when his tank was subsequently destroyed.[222] At the orders of Frangieh, and after the meeting with top political leaders mentioned above, the Lebanese army moved into the region, "…as if the Israelis had carved out (a) way for

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[217] "Israeli Attacks on South Lebanon", Buffum to Secretary of State, 28 February 1972, File Pol Isr-Leb, Box 2388, SNF 1970-1973, NARII.
[218] *Ibid*, 2.
[219] "Israel/Lebanon", Barnes to FCO, 29 February 1972, FCO 17/1785 Border incidents between Israel and Occupied Territories 1972 January 01 – 1972 December 31, Kew.
[220] Memorandum, Buffum to Secretary of State, 1 March 1972, Pol Arab-Isr, Box 2388, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[221] *Ibid*.
[222] "Israel/Lebanon", Barnes to FCO, 3 March 1972, FCO 17/1785 Border incidents between Israel and Occupied Territories 1972 January 01 – 1972 December 31, Kew.

them".[223] For the first time since late 1969, government authority was re-exerted over the Arqoub.[224]

By the spring, the government was struggling to control the Arqoub, and Frangieh wanted to work out new "rules of the game" with the Israelis. He would not do so, however, until the latter removed observation posts that they maintained within Lebanese territory and ceased their continuous flyovers of Beirut and the south.[225] The Lebanese were willing to tolerate limited and targeted incursions, but not such prolonged infringements on their sovereignty. The Israelis would not act, however, until the Lebanese fulfilled their "obligation" to the Israelis to calm the border. They also held the Lebanese responsible for the latest attack at the Lod Airport by the Japanese Red Brigade.[226] By the fall, seeing their escalating force to be the most effective measure in their tool-kit, the Israelis were prepared to exert more pressure. After 11 Israeli athletes were killed by Black September operatives at the Munich Olympic games and Sa'iqa and PFLP-GC detachments attacked Israel sporadically throughout the beginning of the month, they decided on further operations.

On September 18, after several weeks of heightened Israeli raids, Lebanese armed forces engaged the Israeli military in extended firefights along the southern border. Never before had the military given so spirited a defense. It was, no doubt, showing a new preparedness to withstand overt Israeli incursions, but it was also growing

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[223] "Israel/Lebanon", 3 March 1972.

[224] "Israel-Lebanon", Barbour to Secretary of State, 1 March 1972, File Pol Isr-Leb, Box 2388, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

[225] "Lebanese Position on Talks with Israel", Buffum to Secretary of State, 13 March 1972, File Pol Isr-Leb, Box 2388, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

[226] Goria, 137. They held them responsible because of the large number of "terrorists" that trained in the camps throughout Lebanon.

increasingly restless to stifle the Palestinian activities it held responsible for the troubled

relations with Israel. The state of emergency which had been declared on the 16th took

hold, and the Lebanese leadership concluded that the government would have to assert its

sovereignty by restricting the fedayeen's ability to so freely attack the Israelis.[227]

Syria and Lebanese Territoriality

Territorial ambiguity was not only a characteristic of Lebanon's relationship with

Israel. It was also a critical element of its relationship with Syria. Syria, particularly

after the ascension of Hafez al-Asad, sought to protect a host of political and economic

interests in its smaller neighbor, and did so largely through manipulation of the PRM and

its other Lebanese allies. In fact, before Frangieh had even come to office, he signaled

his perceptions of Syria's intentions when he approached the U.S. wanting to know the

extents to which the latter would be willing to go for Lebanon in the event of a civil war

and Syrian intervention.[228] This distrust would become one of the most significant

elements of Lebanese decision-making before and during the May war.[229]

On November 16, 1970, Hafez al-Asad seized power in a bloodless coup in

Damascus.[230] Frangieh pursued a line of friendship with Asad, whom he had known for

quite some time, while remaining distrustful of the intentions of the Syrian elite. His

doubts were justified as, over the course of the next few years, Syria meddled deeply in

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[227] "Lebanon/Israel", Stirling to FCO, 18 September 1972, FCO 17/1791 Border incidents between Israel and Occupied Territories 1972 January 01 – 1972 December 31, Kew.
[228] "USG Concern for Stability and Independence of Lebanon", Kilgore to Seelye, 25 September 1970, Pol 23 Leb, Box 2447, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[229] The Syrian infractions are of significant interest insofar as they are not really rooted in any concept of shared rights or obligations, but are the product solely of Syrian self-interest.
[230] Cobban (1984), 53.

Lebanese affairs by courting various Palestinian militias and Baathist elements within

Lebanon.

Frangieh revealed to the American Ambassador on the same February day in

which he accepted a US offer for $12 million in arms grants, that the Syrians had shipped

5,000 rifles to its Baathist allies in Lebanon over the previous few months.[231] By the

spring of 1971, Palestinians were receiving arms from, and training in, Syria. At the end

of their training stints, they were told by the Syrians to leave.[232] With the Jordanian

border closed, they only had one option for egress.

Despite, or perhaps because of, such ominous signs, Frangieh pursued better

relations with Syria. In December of 1970, a joint Syrian-Lebanese commission was

established to deal with economic as well as border and security affairs.[233] In March,

1971, Frangieh also became the first Lebanese President to visit Syria.[234]

However, as the parliamentary elections of 1972 approached, Syria began

meddling more aggressively in Lebanese politics. In early February, initiating a process

which would become commonplace over the next thirty years, a stream of Lebanese

politicians visited Asad in rapid succession.[235] Prime Minister Salam, Kamal Joumblatt,

the former speaker Hamade, and Rachid Karame were only a few of Asad's guests.[236]

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[231] Memorandum, AmEmbassy Beirut to Secretary of State, 11 February 1971, File Pol
23-8 Leb, Box 2447, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[232] "Report on Colloquium of Palestinianism", undated, File Pol 13-10 Fed Gen Policy
Plans 1971, Box 12, Entry A(1) 5629 Lot #72d490, RG 59, NARII.
[233] "New GOL-SARG Commission Established", Buffum to Secretary of State, 23
December 1970, File Pol Leb-Syr, Box 2448, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[234] "President Frangieh Visits Syria", Buffum to Secretary of State, 19 March 1971, File
Pol Leb-Syr, Box 2448, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[235] "Lebanese Leftists and Parliamentary Elections", Buffum to Secretary of State, 11
February 1972, File Pol Arab-Leb 10-3-70, Box 2085, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[236] *Ibid*.

The candidates were all warned to expect serious Syrian opposition should they unite with anyone supported by the Iraqi Ba'ath.[237] As if a verbal warning was not enough, on February 19, Mahmoud Beydoun, a pro-Iraqi Baath leader, was abducted from the streets of Tripoli and allegedly taken to Syria.[238] On March 4, Muhammad Omran, a former Syrian deputy who was exiled to Lebanon and became involved with the Iraqi Baath, was shot to death in his home in Tripoli.[239]

The Syrian government was showing a growing willingness to interfere in Lebanese affairs. As most of the interference was of a secretive nature (leaving borders open, secretly supplying allies), the Lebanese were little-able to effect much change. Conflict with a stronger Syria would have brought Lebanon into a more visible confrontation with the Pan-Arabism than its relations with the fedayeen already had. That inability to exclude Syrian incitement within its territory weakened Lebanon's already ambiguous authority over the fedayeen, and troubled its ongoing border negotiations with Israel.

The Syrians became directly involved with the latter when, in early September 1972, they encouraged both Sai'qa and PFLP-GC to attack Israeli sites.[240] As was mentioned, these attacks, in addition to the Munich events, sparked a number of Israeli retaliatory strikes and eventually led to Frangieh's declaration of a state of emergency. The Foreign Minister Abouhamad confided to the Americans that he felt the Syrians to be

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[237] "Lebanese Leftists and Parliamentary Elections", 1-2.
[238] "Lebanon and Outer-Arab Disputes", Buffum to Secretary of State, 6 March 1972, File Pol Arab-L 10-3-70, Box 2085, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[239] *Ibid*, 2.
[240] Memorandum, Buffum to Secretary of State, 15 September 1972, File Pol 27 Arab-Isr 9-2-72, Box 2060, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

the main root of evil in the entire Middle East.[241] In order to rebut newly-arisen Syrian

and Libyan pressures to allow their troops to be posted on Lebanese territory,

Abouhamad held a meeting with a group of Arab Ambassadors and explained that until a

collective Arab approach had been formulated, Lebanon would act on its own to defend

its territory.[242] Lebanon now feared Syrian designs towards greater influence as much as

it did an Israeli appetite for its southern territories.

The Lebanese Left and the Population of Grand Liban

Roxanne Doty, in her analysis of the social construction of population, notes that

the inside/outside boundaries of the state are not solely territorial.[243] They are also the

product of the state's ability "…in the face of ambiguity and uncertainty, to impose fixed

and stable meanings about who belongs and who does not belong to the nation, and

thereby to distinguish a specific political community – the inside – from all others – the

outside."[244] These fixed and stable meanings are rooted in "focal points", and converge

to form a national identity – or the lines along which the inside and outside can be

distinguished.[245]

Basic elements of Lebanese economic and social life were in question during the

early 1970s. Debates most frequently centered around two key focal points. The first

involved the za'im aristocracy, which represented feudal economic and political relations

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[241] Memorandum, 15 September 1972.

[242] "Lebanese Diplomatic Efforts", Buffum to Secretary of State, 19 September 1972, Pol Arab-Leb 10-3-70, Box 2085, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

[243] Roxanne Lynne Doty, "Sovereignty and the nation: constructing the boundaries of national identity," in *State Sovereignty as Social Construct*, ed. Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber, 122 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[244] *Ibid*.

[245] *Ibid*, 127.

between Lebanon's elite and the rest of its population. The second involved the type of nationalism to which the Lebanese should adhere, whether "Arab" or "Lebanese". These issues, largely through the efforts of the Lebanese and Palestinian left, were woven seamlessly into support for the revolutionary cause. The lines between the inside and outside of the "populace" became blurred as the Leftists challenged the socio-economic status quo while simultaneously defending the Palestinian "rights" of action. This section will reveal how this process took place and conclude that Leftist attempts to redefine both Palestinian rights, and their own, resulted in a growing instability within the Lebanese population that played a role in the May conflict.

The za'im economy was based on a tertiary sector - trade, banking, and services - which continually expanded from 1950 to 1974.[246] It gave great powers to a small class of men, both Muslim and Christian, whose positions as bankers, landowners, and merchants were rooted in their leadership of their local religious communities.[247] The *zuama*, men such as Frangieh, Salam, Karame, relied on their political office to satisfy their clients and enrich themselves.[248] Their management, some would say abuse, of the state economy had severely deleterious effects, however.[249]

Inflation rose to 23 percent by 1973, and unemployment ballooned. As Gilsenan describes it, a new class emerged, a class of the "…defeated, forgotten, unconsidered,

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[246] Roger Owen, "The Economic History of Lebanon 1943-1974: Its Salient Features," in *Toward a Viable Lebanon*, ed. by Halim Barakat, 33 (London: Croom Helm, 1988).
[247] Roger, Owen, "The Political Economy of Grand Liban, 1920-1970," in *Essays on the Crisis in Lebanon*, ed. by Roger Owen, 26 (London: Ithaca, 1976).
[248] Arnold Hottinger, "Zu'ama' in Historical Perspective," in *Politics in Lebanon*, ed by. Leonard Binder, 86-7, 90 (New York: Wiley, 1966).
[249] Owen (1988), 39.

insignificant".[250] The Lebanese Left capitalized on this class suffering by putting itself at the forefront of organized protests against social injustice.[251] Joumblatt and the left were also able to champion the cause of any forgotten groups. Amongst them were Arab gypsies, who lacked clientele networks in the urban areas, and students, who were not yet valuable to the patrons.[252] Most important amongst those outsiders whose cause the Left would assert, however, were the Palestinians.

The Palestinian struggle was part and parcel of the second key debate within the Lebanese population, the issue of Arab versus Lebanese nationalism. Part of the National Pact signed between Muslims and Christians in 1943 mandated that the Lebanese would pursue policies in harmony with their Arab neighbors.[253] Yet this adherence became increasingly problematic when, after the rise of the PRM, segments of the Lebanese population opposed an unhindered support for a type of Arab Nationalism which engendered frequent Israeli reprisals and Palestinian abuses of the Lebanese system.

Moreover, throughout the Nasser years, the appeal to Arab Nationalism was an easily accessible tool in the Sunni rhetorical repertoire. Yet the post-1967 revolutionary Arabism - embodied in the PRM - became too radical for the Sunni zuama to comfortably espouse while simultaneously protecting their place within a "reactionary", Lebanese system.[254] This created a space for Joumblatt's PSP to champion the Arab cause. Joumblatt, demanding a degree of solidarity with the Palestinians that far exceeded that

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[250] Michael Gilsenan, *Lords of the Lebanese Marches* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), xii.
[251] Brynen, 69.
[252] Nazih Richani, *Dilemmas of Democracy and Political Parties in Sectarian Societies* (London: MacMillan, 1998), 87.
[253] Owen (1976), 26.
[254] David Gilmour, *Lebanon: The Fractured Country* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1983), 71.

shown by any other Arab state, promoted increasing confrontation with those who opposed the PRM's total freedom, the Lebanese nationalists. [255]

The idea of a separate Lebanese nationalism was rooted in the work of one of the authors of the Lebanese constitution of 1926, the Maronite Michel Chihah. He espoused a "Mediterraneanism" which distinguished Lebanon and the Near East as being part of the Mediterranean world, while the Middle East, "properly speaking", belonged to the world of the Indian Ocean.[256] Charles Corm, another Maronite intellectual, took this even further by asserting an atavistic Phoenicianism, seeking the glory of a "Lebanese" past in the inhabitants of the coastal slopes of the Mount Liban of antiquity.[257] By 1936, the Lebanese nationalist mindset became institutionalized in the Kata'eb Party of Pierre Gemayel.[258] It was this party's goal to organize and inspire immediate opposition to any force challenging the sovereignty or authority of the *Lebanese* state.[259] The Palestinians were the most typical target, and their ally, Joumblatt, perceived the Lebanese nationalists to be an "isolationist" movement that was seeking to separate Lebanon from the rest of the Arab world.[260]

This drove Joumblatt and the Palestinians closer together, but they did not cooperate alone. In August, 1970, Joumblatt used his power as Interior Minister to

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[255] Hanf, 130.

[256] Gilmour, 79.

[257] Albert Hourani, "Ideologies of the Mountain and the City," in *Essays on the Crisis in Lebanon*, ed. by Roger Owen, 39 (London: Ithaca, 1976).

[258] John P. Entelis, "Belief-System and Ideology Formation in the Lebanese Kata'ib Party," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 4, no. 2 (April, 1973): 155.

[259] Frank Stoakes, "The Supervigilantes: The Lebanese Kataeb Party as a Builder, Surrogate and Defender of the State," *Middle Eastern Studies* 11, no. 3 (1975): 221.

[260] Kamal Joumblatt, *I Speak for Lebanon* (London: Zed Press, 1982), 4.

legalize the Communist and Ba'athists parties.[261] The Lebanese Communist Party,

headed by George Hawi, shared with the leftist Palestinian groups a hatred for

imperialism, Zionism, and Arab reactionary regimes, and with the PSP an ardent zeal for

the Palestinian revolution.[262] It recruited heavily in camps such as Nabatiyya and Beirut's

misery belt, where impoverished laborers and newly displaced agrarian workers made

prime targets.[263] In the years before 1975, over half of its membership consisted of Shi'a

who were disenchanted with the system.[264] Joumblatt channeled these forces into an

opposition which he utilized with increasing effectiveness after he did not receive a

position in the cabinet formed by Prime Minister Salam in the fall of 1970.

Shortly thereafter, the Leftists began seizing any opportunity to protest the

system. In March, just as the lull in Lebanese-Palestinian problems was beginning to

disappear, the leftists staged a demonstration after the visit of David Rockefeller to

Beirut.[265] Ten thousand marchers chanted anti-imperialist slogans, and merged their

opposition to economic oppression with warnings against selling out the Palestinian

cause.[266] Rockefeller's visit, no matter how insignificant, provided an opportunity to

argue for the economic and revolutionary rights which were becoming increasingly

synonymous in the minds of the left. This pattern was repeated in numerous other

protests. Slowly, the criteria for differentiating the inside from the outside of the state

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[261] Goria, 127.

[262] Tareq Y.Ismael and Jacqueline S. Ismael, *The Communist Movement in Syria and Lebanon* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), 83 & Picard, 101.

[263] Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut* (London: Ithaca Press, 1986), 172.

[264] Picard, 100.

[265] "Anti-Rockefeller Demonstation", Buffum to Secretary of State, 10 March 1971, File Pol 23-8 Leb, Box 2447, SNF 1970-1973, NARII.

[266] *Ibid*.

became blurred and ambiguous. The debate about Lebanese identity spilled beyond its

constitutional bounds and into the gun chambers of the Palestinian resistance.

Joumblatt reacted to the Sa'iqa attacks of New Year's Eve, 1971, from Cairo, by

condemning the government security forces for causing the incident.[267] Again, the

following February, Joumblatt was the only key political figure not to attend the meeting

called by Frangieh in hopes of responding to the four day Israeli attack.[268] In early

March, he staged more protests condemning the government for "changing" the Cairo

Accord and warned it against trying to "liquidate" the fedayeen.[269]

Frangieh felt something had to be done to warn the Leftists away from their

behavior. Amidst the recriminations, the government submitted a new bill restricting the

activities of political parties. After Joumblatt verbally attacked the government, Prime

Minister Salam threatened to "…strike off the hand which attempts to harm the

country."[270] Joumblatt gravely retorted that "We have more arms than the Lebanese state

and we will tolerate no interference in the elections by the Chief of Government and his

clique."[271] In a March 15, 1972 cabinet meeting, Frangieh revealed his true perceptions

about the motives of the left, saying:

"We have seen such infernal conspiracies develop in more than one

country where they attempt to destroy from within and deprive the country of its

personality and distort its civilization. We will permit no one in Lebanon to

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[267] "Progressive Socialist Party Leader J(o)umblatt On the Outs with the Regime", Buffum to Secretary of State, 17 March 1972, File Pol 12 Leb, Box 2446, SNF 1970-1973, NARII.
[268] *Ibid*.
[269] *Ibid*.
[270] *Ibid*, 5.
[271] *Ibid*.

harm its true democracy or to stifle liberty…any hand which attacks Lebanon

will be cut off; any head which seeks to dominate Lebanon will be chopped off at

the neck."[272]

Evident in his comments was a growing perception of the Left as an international

conspiracy seeking to undermine the Lebanese state. This perception, in concert with

those mentioned previously, would shape his decisions in the lead-up to the May conflict.

In the spring of 1972, and in response to Frangieh's hardened approach, the Left made

support for the fedayeen and opposition to the party law the pillars of the their campaign

for the April elections.[273]

Also during the same period, a substantial number of student protests shook the

domestic political scene, enabling the opposition to further expand their efforts. Amongst

the most significant were January 1970 protests at Lebanese University, May 1971

student strikes at American University of Beirut (AUB), and March and May 1972 strikes

at AUB . Palestinians and Leftist, including Fatah, the PFLP, PDFLP, LCP, and the PSP,

were also involved with these strikes.[274] Karim Bakradouni, then a leader in the

Phalangist party, remembered, "…the demonstrations would start with signs demanding

branches, practical institutes, gratis education…when it reaches the Ministry of Internal

Affairs or the government house not one educational sign is left, they become yes for the

armed struggle! Yes for the Palestinian Resistance!...And suddenly (it) turns from an

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[272] "J(o)umlbatt On the Outs with Regime", 5-6.

[273] "USSR and Lebanese Leftists," Buffum to Secretary of State, 13 April 1972, File Pol 12 Leb, Box 2446, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

[274] Halim Barakat, *Lebanon in Strife: Student Preludes to the Civil War* (London: University of Texas Press, 1977), 158

educational demonstration for the LU (Lebanese University) into a Palestinian demonstration for the armed struggle."[275]

At their core, however, protests still represented a variety of mundane student interests, such as curriculum changes, anger over tuition hikes, and dissatisfaction at the shrinking job market. Moreover, Barakat emphasizes that there was no "…enduring cooperation across universities…" regarding the protests.[276] The students had genuine grievances, as did many other "unrepresented" groups, and the Leftists did an effective job of harnessing and capitalizing on their willingness to take to the streets.

The April elections resulted in a strengthening of the Frangieh regime through the reelection of traditional parliamentarians and the election of supporters of Frangieh, in general.[277] While garnering a considerable protest vote in the south, the Leftists gained no appreciable power in parliament. Joumblatt returned with eight seats but his support, primarily attributable to the Druze vote in the Chouf, was earned more in alliance with his long-time Druze counterpart Majid Arslan, than any strong expression of pro-left sentiment.[278] Joumblatt, after all, was a za'im of the Chouf, and his Druze constituents were concerned with jobs, not Joumblatt's mystical socialism. This turnout, ultimately, ensured the continuation of Joumblatt's populist measures and his rhetorical onslaught against the regime.

[275] *Harb al-Lubnan*. Episode 2. Executive Producer Omar Al Issawi. Al Jazeera Satellite Channel, 2004.
[276] Barakat (1977), 157.
[277] "Lebanese Parliamentary Elections", Buffum to Secretary of State, 3 May 1972, File Pol 14, Box 2446, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[278] *Ibid*, 2 & Memorandum, Buffum to Secretary of State, 24 April 1972, File Pol 14, Box 2446, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

Signaling a growing union with the LCP, Joumblatt was honored with the "Lenin Peace-Prize" on May 4.[279] He accepted gratefully, acknowledging the Left's leadership "…in the struggle of the Lebanese people to become engaged in the Arab struggle."[280] His was a struggle against "American imperialism and its allies", allies whom Joumblatt saw taking greater control of the state.

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By September 1972, the Lebanese state was failing in its efforts to maintain consistent authority in the south, and had declared a state of emergency. Its negotiations with the Israelis were growing increasingly problematic as the latter insisted on severely punitive strikes for every Palestinian action. The Syrians were meddling at will with Lebanese politics and the Palestinian factions in the country. Kamal Joumblatt, still participating in Lebanese democracy, was growing increasingly discontent and agitating for significant changes. The streets were filling more frequently with a portion of the populace dissatisfied with its economic situation and supportive of the PRM, their fellow citizens by default.

On October 20, Lebanese Foreign Minister Abouhamad met with the U.S. Ambassador. Confrontation with the fedayeen was not his government's objective, he stressed, but it seemed incredibly likely that one would occur within the coming

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[279] "Progressive Socialist Party Leader Kamal Jumblatt Awarded Lenin Peace-Prize", Buffum to Secretary of State, 4 May 1972, File Pol 12 Leb, Box 2446, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[280] *Ibid*, 2.

months.[281] Abouhamad stressed a second time that the government was not seeking a

confrontation but, if one did occur, he prophetically stated, it would probably result from

the fedayeen taking some action that the army found intolerable.[282]

As the fedayeen began purchasing more apartments and stashing weapons at a

rapid rate, President Frangieh asked the extent to which he could rely on the U.S. in the

event that the Syrians became involved in an internal conflict.[283] General Ghanem wanted

to know the answer to the same question upon his meeting with the Americans on

October 20.[284] He then listed an array of military equipment which the Lebanese

implored the Americans to deliver "right away".[285]

On October 25, the British Ambassador met with President Frangieh. The latter

harbored grave worries about the country's future.[286] As they spoke, Israeli jets broke the

sound barrier over the Beirut sky.[287]

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[281] Memorandum, Buffum to Secretary of State, 20 October 1972, File Pol Leb-US 9-21-72, Box 2448, SNF 1970-1973, NARII.
[282] *Ibid.*
[283] *Ibid.*
[284] Memorandum, Buffum to Secretary of State, 21 October 1972, File Pol Leb-US 9-21-72, Box 2448, SNF 1970-1973, NARII.
[285] *Ibid.*
[286] Israel/Lebanon", Wright, 25 October 1972, File FCO 17/1793 Border incidents between Israel and Occupied Territories 1972 January 01 – 1972 December 31, Kew.
[287] *Ibid.*

Chapter 3: Winter Follows Spring

This chapter opens on the brink of conflict. It will discuss the culmination of the destabilization of the three basis of sovereignty in the May conflict, and will conclude that the Palestinians, Leftists, Syrians, Israelis, and the Sunni community, emerged from the Spring even more dissatisfied with the Lebanese state and their ability to pursue their interests within its confines. The May conflict pushed each further along Dion's continuum towards the non-recognition of state sovereignty in the two years preceding the civil war.

Growing Instability

Over the months preceding the May conflict, the Lebanese army had been slowly preparing itself to confront the fedayeen. By October 1972, all Lebanese soldiers were carrying M-16's or Belgian FAL automatic rifles, and other upgrades in equipment had been made since the force confronted the fedayeen in 1969.[288] The fedayeen, however, had also been increasing their armed strength in the cities and the camps.[289] Moreover, while Arafat and the Lebanese military were taking extreme care to avoid all-out confrontation, both feared that extremist elements within the fedayeen would attempt to instigate conflict.[290] This threat was exacerbated by internal dissension within the PRM which threatened Arafat's ability to maintain discipline within its ranks.[291]

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[288] "Possible Lebanese-Fedayeen Confrontation", 2, Buffum to Secretary of State, 27 October 1972, File Pol 23-8 Leb, Box 2447, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[289] *Ibid*.
[290] *Ibid*, 3.
[291] *Ibid*, 6.

Syria had contributed to the confusion by supporting the escalation in fedayeen raids which led to the September state of emergency, then stoking internal opposition to Arafat amongst some of the PLO leaders who felt that the fedayeen should resist Lebanese efforts to control them.[292] The Israelis had a hand in the state of general instability, as well. By their own admission, they had launched mid-October raids on Lebanon just after significant disagreements broke out within the PRM over whether or not they should honor Arafat's latest promises to the Lebanese.[293]

While the Israelis attacked the Palestinians, however, they continued to negotiate with the Lebanese. On December 26, the Israelis called an ILMAC meeting at Ras Hanikra. Present at the meeting were the Israeli Director of Military Intelligence, Major General Zeira, and the Lebanese Army Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Nasrallah.[294] Zeira stated that the Israelis were prepared to withdrawal their observation posts from inside Lebanon in exchange for a written document guaranteeing that Lebanon would prevent future irregular activities from Lebanon into Israel.[295] Nasrallah replied that the Lebanese were doing their best in adhering to the "General Armistice Agreement (of 1949)", but he agreed, nonetheless, to accept the Israeli proposals in writing at an unspecified future date.[296]

Also in the fall, Lebanese Leftists deepened their opposition to the government and their ties with the Palestinians. In response to the killing of three workers during

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[292] "Possible Lebanese-Fedayeen Confrontation", 7-8.
[293] "Israel/Lebanon", 2, Douglas to Beirut, 17 October 1972, File FCO 17/1792 Border incidents between Israel and Occupied Territories 1972 Jan 01 – 1972 Dec 31, Kew.
[294] "Lebanese-Israeli Border Meetings", Day to Secretary of State, 28 December 1972, File Pol Isr-Leb, Box 2388, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[295] *Ibid*.
[296] *Ibid*, 1-2.

protests at the Ghandur chocolate factory in mid-November, Kamal Joumblatt led massive protests calling for the resignation of the government.[297] On November 27-28, a "Popular Arab Congress for the Support of the Palestine Revolution" was held at the Hotel Beau Rivage in Beirut.[298] Joumblatt was chair of the Congress and was then appointed head of the Central Committee of the "Arab Front for Participation in the Palestine Revolution", to which the conference had given birth.[299] The Congress symbolized Joumblatt's growing prestige and allowed him to assume the role of unofficial spokesmen for the pro-fedayeen front. On January 13, 1973, he exclaimed that all Arab states should join in a war of attrition against the Israelis "…even if it led to the destruction of whole Arab towns and the death of hundreds of thousands of Arabs."[300]

From the beginning of 1973, the pace of events began to quicken. In January, apparently needing to shore up his position within the fedayeen, Arafat notified the Foreign Ministry that he would be requesting that Arab ministers exert pressure upon the Lebanese government to allow for Lebanese territory to again be used as a base for attacks upon Israel.[301] On January 18, the Israelis and the Lebanese met, and the Israelis furnished a draft of the commitments they wished the government of Lebanon to make pursuant to their previous meeting. It stated simply that:

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[297] Brynen, 69 & Goria, 140.
[298] "Pro-Fedayeen Congress", Buffum to Secretary of State, 13 December 1972, File Pol 27 12-1-72, Box 2060, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[299] *Ibid*.
[300] "Israel/Syria", Doble to Hope, 13 January 1973, File FCO 93/321 Syria-Isr Clashes, Kew.
[301] "Visit of Yasser Arafat", Marshall to Robins, 26 January 1973, FCO 93/179 Attitudes of the Arab countries towards the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) 1973 Jan 01 – 1973 Dec 31, Kew.

"1. The government of Lebanon reaffirms its responsibility to maintain a complete cease-fire with Israel.

2. Accordingly, the Lebanese government undertakes to prevent strictly:

a. All fire from Lebanese to Israeli territory, and the Golan.

b. All penetration by semi-regulars and irregulars from Lebanese to Israeli territory and the Golan by land or sea." [302]

The Lebanese delegate responded on January 23 that:

"The Lebanese government, considering that Lebanon and Israel are still bound by the dispositions of the Armistice Agreement to which they both subscribed on March 23, 1949: Reaffirms that it is doing and will continue to do everything in its possibility to prevent all warlike acts, hostilities or infiltrations which could be perpetrated from the Lebanese territory against the territories controlled by Israel.

It is obvious that the Israeli government reaffirms from its own side its obligations to respect the sovereignty, the integrity of Lebanese territory, its territorial waters and its air space as well as the inviolability of its international boundaries."[303]

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[302] "Lebanese-Israeli Border Negotiations", Buffum to Secretary of State, 7 February 1973, File Lebanon Vol III Jan 71 – Oct 73, Box 621, Country Files – Middle East, NSC Files, NPMS, NARII.
[303] *Ibid*.

On February 2, the Israeli representative told the Lebanese that his government

had not expected such a reply, and as such, the deal was off.[304] The Israelis had finally

decided that escalation was their only option. Two and a half weeks later, the Lebanese

military watched on radar as Israeli boats skirted the entire length of the country's

coastline.[305] Beginning at one o'clock in the morning on February 21, the IDF executed a

combined land, air, and sea assault on the camps of Nahr el-Bared and al-Badawi, located

north of Tripoli and close to Lebanon's northern border with Syria.[306]

According to the Israelis, these camps served as training bases and headquarters

for "terrorist" activities in Israel and abroad.[307] The Israeli intelligence was so accurate

that the commandoes even killed members of the PFLP who had taken over a UNRWA

rehydration center, and about whom the UNRWA staff had been complaining for quite

some time.[308] Criticism immediately mounted in parliament that the Lebanese military

had failed to do its duty in protecting the country.

But the shock of the attack was superseded only weeks later when, in the early

morning hours of April 10, the IDF struck the fedayeen in the heart of their Lebanese

sanctuary, killing Fatah leaders Abou Youssef and Kamal Adwan, and the PLO

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[304] "Lebanese Israeli Border Meetings February 2", Day to Secretary of State, 6 February 1973, File Pol 27 Arab-Isr 2-23-73, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[305] "Monthly Report – February 1973", Cawston to Ministry of Defence, 3 March 1973, File FCO 93/101 Internal Political Situation in Lebanon 1973 Jan 01 – 1973 Dec 31, Kew.
[306] Memorandum, Ledwidge to FCO, 21 February 1973, File FCO 93/321 Border incidents Between Israel and the Arab States 1973 Jan 01 – 1973 Dec 31, Kew.
[307] *Ibid*. The Israelis distinguished fedayeen raids in the south from "terrorist" activities pursued by Palestinian or Palestinian-trained groups, such as the Lod Airport and the 1972 Munich Olympics attacks.
[308] "Israeli Raid in North Lebanon", Buffum to Secretary of State, 21 February 1973, File Political Relations Leb-Israel Leb 1973, Box 3, Entry A1(5629) Lot76D388, RG 59, NARII.

spokesmen Kamal Nasser, in their Beirut homes. The Israeli commandoes escaped with only a few shots being fired by the fedayeen, and no resistance offered by the Lebanese military.

At a cabinet meeting held later that day, Prime Minister Salam called for the resignation of the Commander-in-Chief, Iskander Ghanem.[309] Frangieh was unwilling to dismiss a man who had been one of his closest allies throughout the rising tensions of the previous years, however, and he would certainly not do so at a time when these tensions seemed to be reaching their apogee. In response, Karame resigned.

Meanwhile, fedayeen and Leftist accusations of government collusion with the CIA and the Israelis spread rapidly after news of the assassinations broke.[310] At noon on the 10th, Arafat met with Kamal Joumblatt to discuss ways of galvanizing public support for the fedayeen.[311] They called for a massive turnout to the funerals of the assassinated leaders, which were scheduled to be held on the twelfth.[312]

By mid-afternoon on the day of the funerals, a crowd of 15,000 had assembled at the Grand Mosque and was swelled by people pouring in from every direction on foot, by bus, and in trucks.[313] Armed fedayeen patrolled the streets, and the crowd chanted slogans chastising the Lebanese government, its army, and Lebanese "reactionary politicians".[314] A massive procession had been formed in a separate part of the city to

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[309] "Lebanese Cabinet Resignation", Buffum to Secretary of State, 11 April 1973, File Pol 15-1 Leb, Box 2447, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[310] *Ibid*, 2.
[311] "Fedayeen Reaction to Israeli Raid", Buffum to Secretary of State, 10 April 1973, File Pol 27 Arab-Isr 4-1-73, Box 2061, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[312] "Lebanese Cabinet Resignation", 2.
[313] "SITREP 9", 1-2, Buffum to Secretary of State, 12 April 1973, File Pol 27 Arab-Isr 4-1-73, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[314] *Ibid*, 2.

carry the bodies to their burial sites.[315] All told, 200,000 people surged onto the streets of

Beirut on April 12.[316]

On April 25, in what would prove to be one of the greatest blunders of his

Presidency, Frangieh appointed a new cabinet under the direction of the Sunni Amin al-

Hafez.[317] It was a group of Frangieh loyalists who would allow him to rule by whim, and

it would open an avenue of discontent in addition to those already expressed by the

Israelis, the Syrians, the Palestinians, and the Leftists. The Sunni notables felt that the

appointment of a "second rate" Sunni, one who was not a member of the pedigree of

leading families for whom the Prime Ministry was usually reserved, constituted an effort

to undermine their authority within Lebanon.[318] The full seriousness of that sentiment

would not be apparent until after the May conflict, however. In late April, the most

critical problems the government faced lay in the fedayeen movement and with Arafat's

decreasing ability to control it.

On April 27, the Lebanese authorities arrested three people attempting to board an

Air France flight to Paris.[319] The men were carrying 10 kg of TNT and detonating

devices in their bags.[320] The arrests seemingly represented a new policy of heightened

restrictiveness on fedayeen activities, as no such stop had previously been made at the

airport. Around the same time, the military increased its patrols in the southern part of

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[315] "SITREP 9", 12 April 1973.
[316] Johnson (1986), 175.
[317] "New Lebanese Cabinet Formed", Buffum to Secretary of State, 25 April 1973, File Pol 15-1 Leb, Box 2447, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[318] "Situation in Lebanon", 2, Buffum to Secretary of State, 14 June 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 6-1-73, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[319] "Internal Security Developments in Lebanon", Buffum to Secretary of State, 30 April 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 4-11-73, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[320] *Ibid*.

the country, greatly impeding the fedayeen's freedom of action.[321] In response, on the

morning of May 2, members of the PDFLP kidnapped two Lebanese Army NCOs.

The Conflict of May 1973

Immediately after the kidnapping, the Lebanese military surrounded the Shatila

refugee camp, where the two were believed to be held.[322] With its guns trained upon the

camp, the military ordered the release of its NCOs. The PDFLP would not relinquish the

soldiers. According to the Lebanese army, the fedayeen opened fire on their positions

outside the camp shortly after the ultimatum had been issued.[323] President Frangieh

called an emergency meeting of his security council for noon, determined to finally halt

the Palestinian abuses of Lebanese sovereignty.[324] Meanwhile, the fighting continued,

and the army surrounded each of the camps in the Beirut area: Mar Elias, Burj al-

Barajneh, which flanked the airport road that ran past Shatila, Jisr al-Bachra, which was

located on the hills of east Beirut, Tel al-Za'atar, which was nestled in the Dikwaneh

suburb of east Beirut, and Dbayeh, which rested along the coast north of Beirut.

To varying degrees, firing continued at all camps throughout the day.[325] One

British report describes how the "…Fedayeen fired on army patrols with small arms and

used mortars to attack nearby barracks and military installations."[326] The army's

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[321] "Internal Security Developments in Lebanon", 3, 30 April 1973.
[322] "Internal Security Developments in Lebanon", Houghton to Secretary of State, 2 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[323] "Internal Security-SITREP 2", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 2 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[324] "Internal Security Developments in Lebanon", 2 May 1973.
[325] "Internal Security-SITREP 2", 2 May 1973.
[326] "Lebanon/Fedayeen Tel. 123", BRITDEFAT to FCO, 3 May 1973, FCO 93/101 Internal Political Situation in Lebanon 1973 Jan 01 – 1973 Dec 31, Kew.

activities were officially limited to "defensive" operations, responding only to attacks on its installations and personnel near the camps.[327] It defended quite aggressively, nonetheless, pounding the camps with tank fire.[328] By two in the afternoon, the fighting had spread. The army used small arms fire, 90mm, and 40mm vehicle mounted weapons during engagements at Tel Zaatar and Jisr al Basha.[329] The fedayeen struck back by attacking the army fuel station, which was adjacent to the Golf Club of Lebanon, and the Main Post Office beside the *Cite Sportive*.[330] They also reportedly attacked the homes of prominent Lebanese politicians with rockets. Saeb Salam and Pierre Gemayel were amongst the targets.[331]

Meanwhile, while struggling to prevent the camp firefights from breaking out into open warfare throughout Beirut, the army largely succeeded in maintaining quiet in the countryside. By five in the evening, the situation did not yet appear as though it had broken out of control. Nonetheless, the army had suffered as many as 50 casualties; the fedayeen, at least 100.[332] Critically, the various confessional communities remained uninvolved.

The army was in touch with Arafat throughout the day on the 2nd, moreover, and Kamal Joumblatt headed afternoon negotiations to resolve the crisis.[333] The fedayeen released the Lebanese army NCOs at six in the evening. By seven, the two sides had

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[327] "Lebanese Palestinian Relations Tel. 338", Wright to FCO, 2 May 1973, FCO 93/101 Internal Political Situation in Lebanon 1973 Jan 01 – 1973 Dec 31, Kew.
[328] *Ibid*.
[329] "Lebanon/Fedayeen Tel. 123".
[330] "Internal Security-SITREP 2", 2, 2 May 1973.
[331] "Internal Security Situation-SITREP 3", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 3 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[332] "Internal Security-SITREP 2", 2, 2 May 1973 & "Internal Security Situation-SITREP 3", 2, 3 May 1973.
[333] "Internal Security Situation-SITREP 3", 2, 3 May 1973.

announced a cease-fire which took effect several hours later.[334] Arafat, however, had lost

control of extremist elements within the fedayeen camp.

The conflict had become about something much more than the arrests.[335] It was,

instead, the culmination of mutual perceptions, exacerbated since April 10, that a

collision had been in the offing for a number of months. By May, as Foreign Minister

Abouhamad had projected the previous fall, any catalyst could spark a showdown. The

conflict would then take on a logic of its own which had little to do with the catalyst. The

same pattern was repeated 23 months later when the Lebanese civil war was sparked by a

gunfight in the streets of Ayn el-Rummaneh.

On the morning of May 3, the cease-fire was broken by members of the PDFLP

and PFLP-GC seeking to instigate further conflict.[336] Fighting in the Sabra quarter

followed soon thereafter, and the fedayeen began to occupy buildings throughout Sabra

and outside the Mar Elias camp, demonstrating a shift towards an urban-guerrilla

mobilization.[337] Meanwhile, Arafat was furious with the PDFLP. He allowed Fatah to

take part in the fighting, but restricted an all-out confrontation, searching for a negotiated

solution with the Lebanese.[338]

Fighting continued throughout the morning, and was particularly violent at Tel

Zaatar, where Saiqa militiamen disregarded the truce and had destroyed one Lebanese

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[334] "Internal Security Situation-SITREP 3", 2-3, 3 May 1973.
[335] "Lebanese Palestinian Relations Tel. 337".
[336] "Lebanese Request for USG Assistance", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 21 May 1973, File Lebanon Volume III, January 71-October 73, Box 621, Country Files – Middle East, NSC Files, NPMS, NARII.
[337] "Internal Security Situation-SITREP 3", 3, 3 May 1973.
[338] *Ibid,* 3.

tank by midday.[339] Moreover, three Lebanese gendarmes were killed, and seven wounded, in an ambush near the suburban Sands prison.[340] Throughout the afternoon, the Lebanese army pounded Tel Zaatar and Dbayeh with tank and artillery fire.[341] It also attacked buildings which the fedayeen had occupied, and reports circulated that the fedayeen had been firing indiscriminately at Beirut residential buildings from Tel Zaatar.[342]

Frangieh released a statement on the afternoon of the 3rd that stressed the importance of the discipline and restraint which had been exercised by the army, and emphasized that it was firing only in self-defense.[343] It was in this statement that he also said that "…to have an army of occupation is something no Lebanese can condone."[344] Frangieh had stressed self-defense in the early fighting, but it was sounding increasingly as though he saw a way, through the violence, to clamp down on the fedayeen in a final expression of Lebanese authority over the resistance. To do so, however, he would have to overcome more than just a single adversary.

As the day wore on, reports reached the Director General of the Presidency, Boutros Dib, that the Yarmouk Brigade - the mutinous Jordanian army brigade - was surging towards, and had possibly crossed, the Lebanese-Syrian border at Dar al Achar.[345] The moves coincided with a shift in the tone of Radio Damascus, which had

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[339] "Lebanon/Fedayeen Tel. 123", 2.
[340] "Internal Security: SITREP 4", Houghton to Secretary of State, 3 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[341] *Ibid*, 2.
[342] *Ibid*.
[343] *Ibid*.
[344] *Ibid*.
[345] "Internal Security – SITREP 5", Houghton to Secretary of State, 3 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

previously been conciliatory towards the Lebanese handling of the situation. Now, it aired PLO denouncements of the Lebanese position and "…suspect(ed) attempts (to) strike and liquidate (the) Palestinian revolution."[346]

In the late afternoon, the Lebanese Air Force was called into action for the first time in its history.[347] Jets descended upon Beirut, firing upon the Sabra district as well as a concentration of fedayeen who had been attacking the airport.[348] By 8:30 in the evening, the army was in violent conflict throughout Beirut while it also looked as though the Syrians would unleash their "volunteers" in full. Tony Frangieh, son of the President and one of his closest confidants during the crisis, called the American Embassy and stated that Lebanon "…wished U.S. government assistance, the sooner the better."[349] The extent to which the Syrians had become involved, however, was still uncertain, and the American Deputy Chief of Mission cabled home that Washington must consider immediately what assistance could be provided in a situation "…which we have all so long feared."[350]

Under the cover of darkness on the evening of May 3, as many as three hundred vehicles, including troop carriers, moved into Lebanon from Syria.[351] The Lebanese could not obtain exact figures, but estimated that over one thousand members of the Yarmouk Brigade had crossed into Lebanese territory.[352] The military, sparse in number outside of Beirut, confronted the "volunteers" in a line stretching from just south of the

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[346] "Internal Security – SITREP 5", 2, 3 May 1973.
[347] *Ibid.*
[348] *Ibid.*
[349] *Ibid.*
[350] *Ibid.*
[351] "Internal Security", Houghton to Sisco, 3 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, NARII.
[352] *Ibid.*

Beirut-Damascus highway (from Dar al-Achar to Yanta to Aita al-Fakhar) all the way to

Rouchaya al-Foukhar, in the southern Arqoub.[353]

Meanwhile, Frangieh also encountered political difficulties. Rachid Karame and

Kamal Joumblatt, unhappy with Frangieh's tough approach to suppressing the fedayeen,

attempted to persuade Amin al-Hafez to resign.[354] The President apparently threatened to

appoint a military government if he did so.[355] While Hafez did submit his resignation at

midnight, he was unable to give his letter to Frangieh personally, and stated that he would

be willing to retract it in light of any favorable developments regarding negotiations with

the fedayeen.[356]

Several trends had unfolded in the hours preceding his "resignation" which

pointed towards such favorable developments. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat

intervened by calling both Frangieh and the Syrian Prime Minister Ayyubi.[357] Added to

the Egyptian pressure on the Syrian government was a fierce Lebanese military resistance

to incursions from Syria. The Lebanese Air Force, for example, used Hawker Hunters

against anti-aircraft equipment which had been brought in from Syria.[358] Thus, Egyptian

pressure combined with Lebanese aggression forced the Yarmouk Brigade and other

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[353] "Internal Security", 3 May 1973.
[354] "Internal Security", Athens for Amb Buffum, 3 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, NARII.
[355] *Ibid* & "Lebanese Palestinian Relations", 2,Wright to FCO, 5 May 1973, FCO 93/101 Internal Political Situation in Lebanon 1973 Jan 01 – 1973 Dec 31, Kew.
[356] "Internal Security-SITREP 6", Houghton to Secretary of State, 3 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[357] President Asad, interestingly, was "not available" to speak with him. ("Egyptian Reaction to Lebanon Fighting Remains Moderate", Greene to Secretary of State, 4 May 1973, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.)
[358] "Internal Security, SITREP 10", Houghton to Secretary of State, 6 May 1973, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

Syria-backed "volunteers" to stand down.[359] The next day, Prime Minister Ayyubi of

Syria promised that the brigade would be withdrawn under the cover of night on the

evening of May 4.[360]

After witnessing the resolve displayed by Frangieh and the military, the fedayeen

leadership seemed more eager to negotiate. At 2 a.m. on May 4, the Lebanese army held

talks with Arafat's second-in-command, Abu Zaim, who pledged to enforce the cease-

fire.[361] He claimed that the PDFLP and other groups were trying to inflame the situation,

and promised to combat them.[362] Several hours later, a new cease-fire was announced.

Tony Frangieh and Director General Dib notified the U.S. that its help would hopefully

not be needed.[363] When Hafez withdrew his resignation, the situation seemed to be

measurably improving.[364]

Yet, the dust of the first round of fighting settled upon an inflamed Lebanese

political landscape. While, on May 5, the two sides had agreed to a ceasefire and the

withdrawal of forces to positions previously held, Kamal Joumblatt became more

extreme in his stance. He demanded unconditional support for the Palestinians.[365]

Moreover, in an unprecedented show of unity, Muslim leaders, including Saeb Salam and

Rachid Karame, held a meeting from which they emerged to criticize the government for

its actions and, most significantly, to call for a greater Muslim voice in the affairs of

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[359] "Internal Security, SITREP 7", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 4 May 1973, Pol
13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[360] "Internal Security, SITREP 8", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 4 May 1973, Pol
13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[361] "Internal Security, SITREP 7", 2, 4May 1973.
[362] *Ibid*.
[363] *Ibid*, 3.
[364] *Ibid*.
[365] "Lebanese Palestinian Relations", 2,Wright to FCO, 5 May 1973, FCO 93/101
Internal Political Situation in Lebanon 1973 Jan 01 – 1973 Dec 31, Kew.

state.[366] From May onward, both Joumblatt and the Muslim camp grew increasingly

dissatisfied with the Lebanese government and used the Palestinian cause as an

instrument to express that discontent.

Frangieh, rather than taking conciliatory gestures to open dialogue with them,

announced that he intended to stop irresponsible actions by "certain elements" within the

fedayeen, and to apply the law equally to all.[367] Around noon on the 5th, the British

Ambassador cabled home that "…we are a long way from being out of the wood."[368]

Indeed, they were traipsing more deeply into it.

Meetings were held from the 5th through the 7th in an attempt to resolve the crisis.

The participants included prominent Lebanese politicians, fedayeen leaders, and the host

of Arab "mediators" who had descended upon Beirut. Such mediators included Egypt's

Hassan Sabri al-Kholi, the Arab League's Mahmoud Riad (also Egyptian), and Syria's

Foreign Minister Abdul-Halim Khaddam, amongst others.[369] Frangieh was adamant that

any new *modus vivendi* would have to allow the government to place tighter controls on

the fedayeen than had previously existed.[370] He was determined not to return to the

status-quo, implying he wanted some sort of departure from the Cairo Accord.[371] The

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[366] Lebanese Palestinian Relations", 2, 5 May 1973 & "Internal Security SITREP 10", 6 May 1973.

[367] "Lebanese Palestinian Relations", 2, 5 May 1973.

[368] *Ibid*.

[369] "Situation in Lebanon", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 7 May 1973, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

[370] *Ibid*.

[371] "GOL Attitude Re Lebanon", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 7 May 1973, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

Palestinian news agency, however, insisted that no negotiation of the Cairo Accord would be permitted.[372]

Frangieh stressed to everyone involved that Lebanon had as much of a right to exercise its sovereignty over the Palestinians as did the Egyptians and Syrians, whose envoys were the most active in the negotiations.[373] Tactically, the army and Frangieh stayed largely aloof from the negotiations, planning for the Lebanese Muslims and Arab representatives to first "lose their voice", at which time the military could move in to negotiate actual details of a working relationship.[374]

It seemed that Frangieh saw an opportunity to capitalize on the conflict and strengthen Lebanon's position vis-à-vis the fedayeen. His intention was to vest enough power in the army for it to perform the negotiating role mentioned above, but also have the power to enforce that negotiation. So doing, however, would require that the President, rather then the Prime Minister, retain the most significant decision-making capacity regarding the application of force. Through Hafez, Frangieh was able to achieve such control. However, it was a tactic which would come back to haunt him through the rest of the month and the years which would follow, as it simultaneously disenfranchised the Sunni leadership.

This attempt to shift state power was also evident in the expanding role which the military took in maintaining law and order. On May 6, General Ghanem issued a decree that "…those responsible for any subversive act committed on Lebanese territory which

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[372] "Lebanese Palestinian Relations", 2, 5 May 1973.
[373] "Situation in Lebanon", 2-3, 7 May 1973.
[374] *Ibid*, 3.

jeopardizes the state…" would be responsible to the military, not civilian authority.[375] In

perhaps the conflict's deepest irony, Frangieh also began making plans to strengthen the

Deuxieme Bureau, the military's intelligence apparatus, which he had dismantled during

the beginning of his Presidency.[376] Moreover, the government pressured Arafat

significantly, forcing him to change the tone and wording of various PLO statements and

to condemn anti-Lebanese statements by other fedayeen groups.[377] On the eve of May 7,

Frangieh was in an incredibly strong position. There were many interested parties,

however, who would not allow that to continue.

Between 7:00 and 7:30 p.m. on the 7th, Syria's Sa'iqa, in concert with the PDFLP

and the Lebanese Communist Party, let loose a rain of indiscriminate rocket attacks and

small arms fire in an effort to destabilize the situation once more.[378] The groups pursuing

such destabilizing efforts would come to be known by the Lebanese during the civil war

that followed as the "third force". It was a term used to explain any unknown group who,

at any given time, broke the stability. During May, no one knew exactly who this third

force was. It only emerged later that Leftist and Syrian elements were often working in

tandem to disrupt the situation.

On May 7, this third force was successful. By 11:30 that evening, the government

had announced a state of emergency which would allow it to deal with the "…subversive

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[375] The measure effectively replaced several functions of the Ministry of Interior and
Justice with army authority. ("GOL Attitude Re Lebanon", 3, 7 May 1973.)
[376] Chehab's Deuxieme Bureau was seen as a threat to the za'im class and dismantling it
was one of the key elements of Frangieh's run for the Presidency. (*Ibid.*)
[377] *Ibid.*
[378] "Lebanese Request for U.S. Government Assistance", 3, 21 May 1973.

elements (that) were tampering with the security of the country".[379] Fighting broke out

across the city, but was mostly concentrated around the Shatila camp.[380]

At 8 o'clock the next morning, Prime Minister Hafez resigned.[381] Later in the

day, the military departed from its defensive posture, taking the fight to the fedayeen.

Around mid-afternoon, after the fedayeen failed to comply with a Presidential command

to surrender their heavy weaponry, Lebanese aircraft began bombing Sabra and

Shatila.[382] The army followed the air assaults with ground attacks using infantry, APC's,

and tanks.[383] The troubles also spread to Sidon, where fedayeen took up positions in

residential buildings and fired on the army, which could not respond for fear of killing

civilians.[384] The fedayeen subsequently took control of both Sidon and Tyre.

The world was on fire, and the Lebanese turned out on balconies, roofs, and

hilltops to watch it burn. [385] Sunbathers were hardly roused from their spots on the beach

while explosions roared in the background.[386] It was a snapshot of the madness of

modern times, and an awful omen of the dark days ahead.

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[379] "Lebanese Internal Security", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 7 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[380] *Ibid*.
[381] "Internal Security SITREP 1", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 8 May 1973, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[382] "Internal Security SITREP 4", Houghton to Secretary of State, 8 May 1973, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII & "Internal Security SITREP 6", Houghton to Secretary of State, 8 May 1973, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[383] *Ibid*.
[384] "Internal Security SITREP 3", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 8 May 1973, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[385] "Lebanese / Palestinian Relations Tel. 365", Beirut to FCO, 9 May 1973, File FCO 93/102 Internal Political Situation in Lebanon 1973 Jan 01 – 1973 Dec 31, Kew.
[386] Gordon, 78.

Despite the Lebanese military advantage in Beirut, another factor arose on the 8th which equalized the military imbalance. Radio Damascus, the official mouthpiece of the Syrian government, announced that the Lebanese were behind a "plot" aimed at the Palestinian and Lebanese people, and urged the Lebanese and Palestinians to "…stand firmly as one rank against the Lebanese authorities".[387] The announcements claimed that the Lebanese government had sabotaged Foreign Minister Khaddam's efforts to negotiate between the two sides.[388] Furthermore, Syria closed its border with Lebanon, an act that would have significant economic repercussions, as roughly two-thirds of Lebanese exports reached the Arab world through Syria in that period.[389]

Also dangerous to Frangieh, Cairo began to take a stronger, publicly pro-Palestinian stance on the crisis. In a statement on May 8, the Egyptians urged that any violence committed by Arabs against the Palestinians could only serve Israeli interests. Cairo, thus, "strongly warn(ed)" against the "grave results" of strikes against the Palestinians.[390] Despite the vague warning being directed against the "results" of the strikes (rather than the strikes themselves), it was clear that Arab public opinion and the rhetoric of neighboring governments imposed greater pressure on Frangieh, from the 8th onward, to back down. This public face differed notably from the private activities of the

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[387] "Syrian Attitude Re Lebanon", Houghton to Secretary of State, 8 May 1973, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[388] *Ibid*.
[389] Najib Saliba, "Syrian-Lebanese Relations," in *Toward a Viable Lebanon*, ed. Halim Barakat, 158 (London: Croom Helm, 1988).
[390] "GOE Statement on Renewed Clashes in Lebanon", Greene to Secretary of State, 9 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

Egyptians, whom Frangieh still felt were being helpful to his government, when Riad and

Kholi left for Damascus to allegedly dissuade Asad from interfering further.[391]

To a Lebanese state in crisis, however, public gestures mattered more than private

nuances. The Lebanese street and Arab public opinion played an equally, if not a more

important, role in Presidential decision-making then Arab private *demarches*. For

Frangieh, it was an impossible mix at the worst time.

The fighting continued in the southeast parts of Beirut on May 8th and 9th. The

army's immediate concern, however, shifted to southern Lebanon. On the night of the

8th, Lebanese detachments moving north to reinforce Beirut were ambushed in the area of

Tyre and Sidon.[392] The fedayeen also attacked the army barracks at Tyre.[393] Moreover,

despite the Syrian border being closed, hundreds of Sa'iqa volunteers had found their

way into Lebanon throughout the afternoon of May 8th.[394] Heavy engagements erupted in

the Arqoub and the Bekaa Valley, and Lebanese border positions suffered heavy artillery

shelling and mortar attacks from both sides of the border.[395] The army and air force

counter-attacked, destroying artillery placements in Syria.[396] By the afternoon, combined

Lebanese air and army attacks had inflicted heavy losses on the fedayeen, and as the

Syrians seemed unwilling to further escalate the conflict, fighting diminished in the

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[391] "Internal Security SITREP 8", 3, Houghton to Secretary of State, 9 May 1973, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[392] *Ibid*, 2.
[393] *Ibid*.
[394] "Israeli Analysis of Lebanese-Fedayeen Confrontation", Zurmellen to Secretary of State, 9 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[395] "Internal Security SITREP 8", 2, 9 May 1973.
[396] *Ibid*.

south.[397] By that time, the army had also taken the high ground and buildings which dominated Beirut, and a cease-fire was announced.[398]

Concurrently, on the 8th and 9th, political discussion ground to a halt. Frangieh refused to accept Hafez's resignation and the cabinet was effectively immobilized. The National Assembly convened on the 9th so that angry members could vent their wrath against Frangieh.[399] While they did so, fedayeen detachments fired upon the Parliamentary building.[400]

Critically, there seemed little sign of confessional unrest. The Shia Imam appealed to the Lebanese people "…not to give way to sectarianism"[401], and the Sunni populace stayed largely uninvolved.[402] The most significant domestic opposition came from the Leftist camp, from which Joumblatt was showing signs of more dangerous opposition to Frangieh's policies. British reports indicated heavy Leftist involvement in transferring arms to the fedayeen.[403] On May 8, two of Joumblatt's deputies in the National Assembly were arrested for attempting to smuggle weapons from Syria into Lebanon.[404] Around the same time, Joumblatt issued a declaration with some other

[397] "Internal Security SITREP 9", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 9 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[398] "Internal Security SITREP 7", Houghton to Secretary of State, 8 May 1973, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[399] "Internal Security SITREP 8", 2, 9 May 1973.
[400] "Lebanese / Palestinian Relations Tel. 365", 9 May 1973.
[401] "Lebanese Palestinian Relations Tel. 368", Wright to FCO, 9 May 1973, File FCO 93/102 Internal Political Situation in Lebanon 1973 Jan 01 – 1973 Dec 31, Kew.
[402] "Internal Security SITREP 8", 3, 9 May 1973.
[403] "Lebanese / Palestinian Relations Tel. 365", 2, 9 May 1973.
[404] "Internal Security SITREP 8", 3, 9 May 1973.

Muslim leaders that the Lebanese should lend support to the Palestinians "…by all possible means".[405]

While a cease-fire was declared on the evening of May 8, it was scantly respected by recluse fedayeen elements. Arafat repeatedly claimed to the media and to the Lebanese government that the southern problems were being caused by Sa'iqa, over whom he exercised no influence.[406]

The fighting in the Bekaa and Arqoub continued at a low intensity throughout the evening of May 9-10.[407] Based on the precision of the attacks on a military air base the previous day, and during the night fighting that followed, the Lebanese army began to suspect that Syrian regular artillery and communications units were supporting the fedayeen.[408] By the end of May 9, the Deuxieme Bureau estimated that some 2,000-3,000 fedayeen were stationed in the Bekaa and Arqoub, compared to 800 before May 2.[409] In other words, the Syrians had allowed for the significant infiltration of "volunteers", exactly as the Lebanese had predicted. More dangerous, perhaps, only days after the border had been closed, Lebanese foodstuffs were depleting and prices began to rise sharply.[410] Many workers did not show up at the port because of the conflict, and it became congested as about forty ships waited to be unloaded.[411]

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[405] "Lebanese / Palestinian Relations Tel. 365", 2, 9 May 1973.
[406] "Internal Security SITREP 9", 2, 9 May 1973.
[407] "Internal Security Situation SITREP 11", 1-2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 10 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[408] *Ibid*.
[409] "Internal Security SITREP 10", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 10 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[410] "Lebanese/Palestinian Relations Tel. 375", 2, Wright to FCO, 10 May 1973, File FCO 93/102 Internal Political Situation in Lebanon 1973 Jan 01 – 1973 Dec 31, Kew
[411] "Internal Security Situation SITREP 11", 3, 10 May 1973.

These must have been grave concerns for Frangieh, and in the presence of Arab opposition and the absence of tangible external support, he was virtually powerless to push for the full crackdown on the fedayeen that he desired. The British believed Frangieh, lacking alternatives, was listing away from the aggressive stance he had previously taken in aiming, essentially, to re-negotiate the Cairo Accord.[412]

As of the 10th, the Lebanese army had lost 35 soldiers, and 150 more were injured.[413] Fedayeen losses were estimated by the Lebanese at about four times those estimates.[414] The Lebanese army's material losses stood at four APC's, two armored cars, three tanks, and a small number of utility vehicles.[415] On that day, both the military and the fedayeen exercised some measure of restraint. They also attempted to implement a series of cease-fire measures upon which they had agreed the evening before.[416] When the cease-fire continued to hold on the 11th, Frangieh began consulting with various Lebanese and Arab political leaders in search of a way out of the crisis.[417] In each meeting, he stressed Lebanon's need to ensure respect for its authority and sovereignty everywhere in the country.[418] He could not understand, moreover, why the fedayeen needed to store heavy weaponry 100 miles from the Israeli border, and could only conclude that the weapons were intended for use against the Lebanese government.[419]

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[412] "Lebanese/Palestinian Relations Tel. 375", Wright to FCO, 10 May 1973, File FCO 93/102 Internal Political Situation in Lebanon 1973 Jan 01 – 1973 Dec 31, Kew.
[413] "Internal Security SITREP 10", 2, 10 May 1973.
[414] *Ibid.*
[415] *Ibid.*
[416] "Internal Security SITREP 11", 2-3, 10 May 1973.
[417] "Internal Security SITREP 14", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 11 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[418] *Ibid*, 2.
[419] "Soviet Ambassador's Call on President Frangieh", AmEmbassy Beirut to Secretary of State, 12 May 1973, File Pol 23-8 Leb, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

Consultative meetings continued throughout the 12th, but no definitive solution was reached. The relative calm of the 13th and 14th was broken by occasions of sporadic violence, but no serious conflict occurred. In Beirut, the military patrolled streets, manned major intersections, and occupied rooftops throughout the city.[420] Saeb Salam acted as a go-between, meeting with both Frangieh and Arafat on the 13th. He apparently told Frangieh that he (Salam) represented Sunni opinion, and demanded the restoration of a civilian government and an agreement with the fedayeen on the basis of the Cairo Accord.[421] Frangieh reportedly retorted that if Salam was that enamored with the fedayeen, he could move into the camps with them, but he (Frangieh) would never concede Lebanese sovereignty even if the conflict that resulted led to an actual geographic division of the country.[422] Despite their differences, Salam emerged from the meeting saying that "God willing, we are on our way to safer shores."[423] He must have been a man of extraordinary faith.

Negotiations

On the 15th, the ninth day of the state of emergency, direct negotiations between the Lebanese and the fedayeen finally began. Almost simultaneously, on the southern frontier with Israel, a meeting of the ILMAC was convened. The Israelis, who had been largely quiet during the conflict, were disappointed that Lebanese military dominance

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[420] "Internal Security Situation – SITREP 16", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 14 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[421] "Internal Political Situation", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 15 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[422] *Ibid*.
[423] "Internal Security Situation – SITREP 16", 2, 14 May 1973.

over the fedayeen had not been established, and wanted to warn the Lebanese before the negotiations commenced.

The Israeli representative opened by asking what Israel could do for the Lebanese in this "difficult period".[424] The Lebanese representative asked if his response would in any way change Israeli plans, and the Israeli acknowledged pleasantly that it would not.[425] He then warned the Lebanese that Israel would be obliged to invade if the Syrians or any others threatened the Israeli "flank", and that the Israeli government would "not accept" that any part of Lebanon remain under fedayeen control.[426] Indeed, the Israelis told the British in a meeting shortly thereafter that if the present Lebanese regime could only continue on the condition that the fedayeen could operate in and around Lebanon, then its survival was not in Israel's interest.[427] Around this time, moreover, members of the PFLP-GC began reoccupying parts of the southern Lebanese border region.[428] Thus, the seeds of Israeli dissatisfaction with May - Palestinian activities had not been finally curbed - were sown alongside the Sunni and Leftist anger which had blossomed during the crisis.

In Beirut, meanwhile, through his negotiators, Frangieh demanded an inventory of fedayeen weapons, removal of all heavy arms from the camps, access to the camps for the Lebanese army, and application of Lebanese laws and justice to all Palestinians, even

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[424] "Meeting of the Mixed Armistice Commission", Houghton to Secretary of State, 17 May 1973, Pol 13-10 Arab 5-15-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[425] *Ibid*.
[426] *Ibid*.
[427] "The Crisis in Lebanon", Ledwidge to Craig, 16 May 1973, File FCO 93/102 Internal Political Situation in Lebanon 1973 Jan 01 – 1973 Dec 31, Kew.
[428] "Meeting of the Mixed Armistice Commission", 2, 15 May 1973.

those within the camps.[429] While knowing and fearing the implications of a renewed outbreak of fighting, he was attempting to push his position as far as possible.

Representing the Lebanese were the army Colonels Ahmed al Haj (Commander of the NCO Academy) and Dib Kal (Lebanese liaison officer to the fedayeen), Lt. Col. Selim Mughabghab (the Army's chief legal officer), and two other civilians.[430] The Palestinian team included Abu Zaim of Fatah, Salah Salah of the PFLP, and the PDFLP's Abu Adnan.[431]

On May 17, an "understanding" was reached between the Palestinians and the Lebanese at the Hotel Melkart. Though it was later referred to as the Melkart Protocol, it was anything but official. Director General Dib told the Americans that it was not a new agreement, only unilateral promises made by the Palestinians to undertake certain actions.[432] Though a detailed list is difficult to obtain, the key promises, made in response to Frangieh's demand that "Lebanese sovereignty" be "fully respected", were as follows[433]:

    a. Commitment not to undertake cross-border raids.

    b. To remain a specified distance from sensitive border areas:

        i. Absent from the western most portion of South Lebanon.

        ii. 8-10 km away from the border in the central sector.

[429] Memorandum, Section 1, Page 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 15 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-15-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[430] "Internal Situation SITREP 19", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 16 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-15-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[431] *Ibid.*
[432] "Government Request for USG Assistance", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 18 May 1973, File Pol 23-8 Leb, Box 2447, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[433] "GOL-Fedayeen Arrangement", Houghton to Secretary of State, 18 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-15-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

iii. North of the Hasbayah to Chebaa road in the Arqoub, except

for two or three specified and controlled spots.

c. To cease using Beirut as an information/propaganda headquarters.

d. To cease training in camps.

e. To remove heavy weapons from camps.

f. To acknowledge the supremacy of Lebanese law over Palestinians.

g. To remove all "foreign elements" (i.e. non-Arabs).

h. To allow Lebanese security forces access to camps and posts outside

to police camp traffic.

The army subsequently focused on setting up a commission to force the fedayeen to implement these promises, but as was the case with the Cairo Accord, there was never any tangible enforcement mechanism to ensure they would do so. For all practical purposes, the situation remained the same, if not more aggravated and explosive, as that which existed before the conflict.

Recognition

The ultimate result of the May conflict was continued ambiguity in the Lebanese-Palestinian relationship and the heightened dissatisfaction of the Palestinians, Leftists, Sunnis, Syrians, and Israelis with the situation in Lebanon. This dissatisfaction pushed all closer to a non-recognition of Lebanese sovereignty.

The Palestinians became convinced that the Lebanese government intended to liquidate them. While the hazy spirit of the Melkart Protocol implied Palestinian

demilitarization in the camps, in fact the opposite occurred. Yasir Abd Rabbu,

spokesman of the PDFLP, outlined new plans for wide-scale mobilization of the

fedayeen, the construction of shelters and fortifications in all fifteen camps, and a new

"Vietnamese" style approach to make camps impregnable from forces led by the U.S. and

Israel who were trying to repeat Black September.[434] Fatah's Abu Iyad reiterated those

themes while also calling for closer alliance with Leftist and progressive forces, i.e.

Joumblatt's nascent Lebanese National Movement.[435] The two would indeed grow closer

and fight together throughout the beginning of the Lebanese civil war.

The hallmark of that new relationship was a conference held on June 18-19 by the

"Arab Front for the Participation in the Palestinian Revolution". Kamal Joumblatt and

Yasir Arafat were the keynote speakers. Revealing the new Palestinian strategy of

building alliances with members of the local populace (which they had not done in

Jordan), the latter praised the support given to the fedayeen by the Leftists during May

and noted that US-Israeli aggression was aimed at the fedayeen and the Leftists alike.[436]

The conference issued a statement tying the Israeli raids in April and the Lebanese

"premeditated and deliberate" aggression in May into one US-Zionist-reactionary plot.[437]

It was a plot which the Leftists were now convinced justified more than

constitutional expressions of opposition such as protests and mass marches. As early as

late May, the fedayeen distributed a fresh cache of thousands of smuggled arms to Leftist

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[434] "GOL-Fedayeen Relations", Houghton to Department of State, 20 June 1973, File Pol
13-10 Arab 6-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[435] *Ibid*, 2.
[436] *Ibid*.
[437] *Ibid*.

groupings, and intensified arms-smuggling into Joumblatt's Chouf region.[438] In June,

Kamal Joumblatt sent 250 of his followers to Syria for paramilitary training.[439]

The Sunnis did not yet begin wholesale preparations for violent alternatives.

Indeed, the community would even be a latecomer to the fighting during the civil war that

started in 1975. Rather, the Sunnis moved towards more blatant opposition and non-

participation in government activities. The real thrust of Sunni discontent during the May

fighting did not reveal itself in full until after the violence subsided. At that time, Sunni

anger over Hafez's appointment, and "reappointment" on May 19, manifested itself in

complaints that they were not being consulted in decision-making and in demands for

higher-ranking jobs in the bureaucracy and the military.[440] On June 12, Frangieh

attempted to push through a confidence vote on Hafez, believing the Sunnis would not

risk confessional strife by absenting themselves.[441] His judgment in handling the Sunni

situation again proved erroneous.

The Sunnis, in alliance with the Leftists, boycotted the session.[442] They were

developing a dangerous animosity towards the state which had roots in the state's conflict

with the Palestinians. As Johnson expressed, "The events of May ended with the

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[438] "Lebanese Syrian Relations", 2, 8 June 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 6-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[439] *Ibid*.
[440] "Some Thoughts on Our Relationship with President Frangieh", Korn to Sisco, 3 August 1973, File Pol Leb-US, Box 3, Entry A1 (5629) Lot # 76D388, RG 59, NARII.
[441] "Lebanese Internal Situation and Relations with Syria", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 5 June 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 6-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[442] Only 4 of 20 Sunnis attended. "Cabinet Status Still Unresolved", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 13 June 1973, File Pol 15-1 Leb, Box 2447, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

Lebanese more clearly polarised into confessionally based pro- and anti-Palestinian groupings."[443]

All three malcontent groups also developed stronger relations with the Syrians, who saw a new opportunity to influence Lebanese politics in a multitude of subversive ways. The Syrians immediately allowed the rearmament of the fedayeen through its border even though the border was still "closed". An American report claimed Syrian, Iraqi, and Soviet weapons were flowing through, and suspected Algerian and Libyan weapons were also being delivered via Syria.[444] Syria waged a very public campaign for a change in Lebanese policies towards the Palestinians and encouraged the Lebanese Ba'ath to agitate for increased opposition to the government.[445]

Most revealing of Syria's exploitation of the Palestinian issue, however, was the substance of a meeting held along the Lebanese-Syrian frontier in early July. After vaguely demanding that the Palestinians be "protected" and their identity be "strengthened", Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam began to address a host of other issues.[446] He demanded full work benefits for Syrian workers in Lebanon, co-ordination between the Lebanese government and Syria to allow Syrian security officials to pursue persons who Syria deemed as plotting against its national security, and restrictions on the Lebanese press to silence criticism of the Syrian regime.[447] It was a bold agenda, and one to which the Lebanese could hardly acquiesce in full. Most importantly, it was a portent of the type of influence Syria would seek in Lebanon from that period onward.

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[443] Johnson (1986), 175.
[444] "Situation in Lebanon", 2, AmEmbassy Beirut to Secretary of State, 14 June 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 6-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[445] *Ibid*, 3.
[446] el-Khazen (2000), 213.
[447] *Ibid*.

The Israelis expressed their discontent in far more violent terms. After May 1973, they greatly escalated their incursions into Lebanese territory in pursuit of the fedayeen. The Lebanese had recorded roughly 1.4 incursions a day by the Israelis from 1969 to 1974. In 1974-1975, roughly 7 a day were noted.[448]

And Winter Follows Spring

If Frangieh had intended to redefine and clarify relations with the fedayeen during May, he must have been incredibly disappointed. The only result of the fighting was further disenchantment with the system on the part of all interested parties. The new reality was that, for the all the reasons that became apparent during May, the Lebanese government and military would be increasingly limited in their ability to exert authority over the fedayeen, protect its borders, or quell the teeming unrest of the populace. For Frangieh, it was indeed a grim realization, and he no doubt envisioned dangerous sectarian implications as the growing militias sought to fill the security void.

Frangieh, like most others in Lebanon, began looking inward to his own community. According to Karim Bakradouni, then member of the Christian Phalangist party, as it became clear that Frangieh would have to negotiate in May, he called the two most significant Christian leaders, Camille Chamoun and Pierre Gemayel, to his office. He had to stop the army, he told them. "I realize the consequence of this decision, after today, there is no Lebanese army. Rely on yourselves."[449] It was a message that, over

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[448] Brynen, 67.
[449] *Harb al-Lubnan*. Episode 2. Executive Producer Omar Al Issawi. Al Jazeera Satellite Channel, 2004.

the following two year descent into civil war, found its way to the rest of the Lebanese

populace.

Conclusion: Lessons of Spring

This thesis has defined sovereignty as the recognition by a country's population and by external actors that the state has exclusive authority over activities in its territory.[450] It has argued that the presence of the Palestinian Revolutionary Movement in Lebanon contributed largely to the diminution of the sovereignty of the Lebanese state as it problematized the "social construction" of Lebanon's authority, territory, and population.

As outlined in the introduction, the process of the social construction of authority, territory, and population involves the pursuit by various actors of their interests within each realm. The Palestinian interest in revolution clashed with the Lebanese *raison d'etat* which resulted in constant conflict over Lebanon's authority and Palestinian freedom of action. That freedom of action led to Israeli reprisals, further Lebanese aggression towards Palestinians, and Syrian interference on behalf of the Palestinians. This cycle undermined Lebanon's ability to exclude external actors from interfering within its territory. In other words, Lebanon could not achieve full external recognition of its authority within its territory. Finally, within the Lebanese population, Leftists and Palestinians mixed agitation for greater economic rights with support for the revolutionary cause which, as their discontent grew, manifested itself in more violent expressions of non-recognition of the Lebanese state.

In sum, the erosion of Lebanese sovereignty was reflected in the shift of all interested actors towards non-recognition of the state's sovereignty after the conflict of

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[450] Thomson, 219.

May 1973. Only 23 months later, Lebanon lost what little recognition it still enjoyed as the country descended into civil war. This conclusion will summarize the key lessons of May in hopes of adding some insight to current thinking about Lebanon's problems. It will finish with a note on the way forward.

<div align="center">*The Controlling Factors*</div>

The conflicts which raged within the realms of Lebanese authority, territory, and population, were the product of a complicated mixture of components which every analyst has weighed differently. This study of the May 1973 conflict hints that there were five critical factors that contributed to Lebanese discord. The crisis of the post-colonial Arab identity, the power of radicals, the militarization of politics, external interference, and the failure of Lebanese unity played the most critical roles in the instability that preceded and heightened after May.

This thesis opened by claiming that ideas matter. For those who doubt the power of ideas, Lebanon provides a prime example of how the abstract becomes reality. The May conflict reflects, in part, the crisis of a post-colonial Arab world trying to grapple with an ethnic versus a civic (territorial) identity. At a time when other Arab states chose territorialism - both Egypt and Syria, to name only two, had greatly restricted Palestinian freedoms in their lands - the Arab ideological contradiction was pushed towards and isolated within Lebanon. Thus, the unresolved crisis of the post-colonial Arab identity played a key role in catalyzing instability and civil war in Lebanon.

Lebanon, however, was not only the victim of an identity crisis. The most destabilizing events prior to and during May were executed by radical groups dissatisfied

with the Palestinian cause as a whole. The Lebanese government, however, was unable to isolate and attack radical factions. The overall crackdown, thus, drew the more conciliatory PLO into increasing conflict with the state. The radicals precipitated and prolonged the conflict. Indeed, only a week after the Melkart Protocol emerged, members of the PFLP kidnapped three Lebanese soldiers. In the months that followed, the affiliations of fedayeen captured while attempting to smuggle arms made it clear that groups such as the PFLP, the PFLP-GC, and the PDFLP were unwilling to recognize a change in relations. [451] Internal dissension heightened to the point that, in 1974, radical groupings including the PFLP and PFLP-GC formed the "Rejection Front" in opposition to the PLO. It was, indeed, this "Front" that the Lebanese "nationalists" initially opposed in the early days of the Civil War, seeing them as the main catalysts of instability in Lebanon.

But the radical groups were given such disproportionate power by another factor of recent Lebanese life: the militarization of politics. Today, armed "political" groups, such as Hizbullah and, even still, the PLO and the PFLP-GC, function largely outside of the state's purview. The presence of arms leads to fears amongst sectarian groupings that they are threatened and will have little leverage to pursue their interests in the face of evolving challenges. These fears ignite an arms race which can potentially culminate in conflict. This is precisely what happened in the months preceding the civil war.

Members of the Lebanese Forces, the political-military organization which later formed from various nationalist militias such as the Phalangists and Chamoun's "Tigers", recalled the extent to which Christians felt directly threatened by the fedayeen as they

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[451] "Lebanese Internal Situation", 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 31 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-15-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

armed more heavily and aligned themselves more closely with various Muslim groups. They perceived the Palestinians and Muslims to be "gearing up" for war.[452] Joumblatt, ironically, felt the Lebanese nationalists (who he referred to as "isolationists") to be the main instigator, "…the Maronite legions, the Phalangists, and (Chamoun's) 'Tigers' were receiving more and more arms. Sleiman Frangie(h) himself, as he has admitted to some of his guests, was encouraging the Maronite factions' armaments bonanza."[453] Conflict, then, became a self-fulfilling prophecy as force was seen as the only means of dispute resolution. For, if other channels had succeeded, or if easy resort to armament had not been an option, the various groups would not have viewed force as a viable alternative to politics.

Yet, Lebanon still may have been able to cope with the problems within its borders were it not for the further contributions to instability made by the Syrians and the Israelis. During the second wave of fighting, the Lebanese army had to bring half of its southern forces into Beirut to contain the camp violence.[454] This left a weak southern flank that could be exploited by the Syrians if they chose to infiltrate with more than just the "volunteers" which they had already allowed to pass. Coupled with Syrian belligerence was a lack of overt support for Lebanese sovereignty from any foreign ally. In the event of renewed fighting, the Lebanese government feared massive infiltrations by Sa'iqa, the Yarmouk Brigade, and the PLA, and would receive little help in opposing

[452] Dr. Rachid Rahme, interview by author, Beirut, Lebanon, 26 September 2005 & Toufic Hindi, interview by author, Beirut, Lebanon, 27 September 2005.
[453] Joumblatt, 6.
[454] "Situation in Lebanon", Part 2, Page 3, Houghton to Secretary of State, 12 May 1973 File Pol 13-10 Arab 5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

them.[455] Moreover, Syria supported several of the most troublesome fedayeen groups.
The PDFLP was largely armed by Syria.[456] The PFLP-GC was created by a former
Syrian officer and received full backing from his home state, and Syria largely controlled
Sa'iqa, as well.

The Israelis, for their part, were focused solely on restricting Palestinian activities
regardless of the ramifications on the Lebanese internal crisis. This was evident in
statements made by Israeli leaders and in their continued military escalations. Frangieh,
particularly in 1972, in meeting with other Lebanese politicians, relied on the argument
that taking harsh measures against the Palestinians was the only way the Lebanese would
be able to exclude Israeli intervention. The Israelis, however, continued their attacks and
did so, as of October 1972, without instigation by the fedayeen. This damaged what little
leverage Frangieh retained in convincing his fellow politicians that a full crackdown was
necessary. He would, from late 1972 onwards, pursue the path of anti-fedayeen
aggression, along with only a small cadre of supportive Maronite officials, which
eventually undermined his relations with other sectarian groupings within Lebanon and
more divisively split the country into sectarian folds.

This collapse of Lebanese unity, no matter how unstable from the outset, was the
last, and most critical, pillar to shatter under the weight of the problems associated with
the Palestinian presence. The Leftists constituted a dangerous threat but were, for all
practical purposes, numerically quite small. Their protests and marches were
problematic, but could not in and of themselves catalyze wholesale social chaos. It was

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[455] Memorandum, Section 1, Page 2, Houghton to Secretary of State, 15 May 1973, File
Pol 13-10 Arab 5-15-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.
[456] Y. Sayigh, 231.

not until the Sunni community, and eventually the "Movement of the Disinherited" under Muqtada al-Sadr, lost faith in the government in the months preceding April 1975, that the true foundations of the Lebanese state came tumbling down.

From May onward, Frangieh lost Sunni support for his anti-fedayeen tactics. His attempt to undermine the Sunni role in government and shift state power to the military and the Presidency, through Amin el-Hafez, caused an irreparable rift in Sunni-Presidential trust. Wishing to retain control of the content of the negotiations, Frangieh would not entertain the thought of forming a new government before their conclusion.[457] Yet, he was operating under Arab pressure to compromise and the fear of continued conflict, Syrian intervention, and confessional instability. He offended one of his few sources of domestic support while he was simultaneously restricted by the regional environment.

The Weakness of Lebanese Agreement-Making

Even had he included the Sunnis, however, there was little assurance that the Melkart Protocol could have changed Lebanese-Palestinian relations any more than the Cairo Accord. Conflict stems from the failure to agree. In the Lebanese case, it would be more accurate to say that it stems from the failure to agree properly. Perhaps the greatest Lebanese fault lies in its long history of poor agreement-making. As the country seeks a way out of its current crisis following the death of Rafik Hariri, it must learn lessons from the failings of its past. From the 1949 Armistice that set aside military questions, to the 1991 Ta'if Accord which relied on Arab enforcement and oversight of the Syrians,

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[457] "GOL Position on Negotiations with Fedayeen", Section 2, Page 1, 12 May 1973, File Pol 13-10 Arab5-1-73, Box 2047, SNF 1970-1973, RG 59, NARII.

Lebanon has been the producer *par excellence* of deeply flawed resolutions. The most essentials parts of Lebanese agreements have been ambiguous or reliant upon unlikely external assistance for enforcement.[458] Moreover, the interested parties have been unwilling to make the hard compromises which are necessary to make agreements work.

The terms used in the Cairo Accord lacked actionable qualities or even clear definitions. The accord repeats words like Lebanon's security, Palestinian "interests", and sovereignty. What were the boundaries of Lebanon's "security" or the Palestinian revolution's "interest"? Even understood as it is in this thesis, how can sovereignty serve as a concrete element of contractual obligations? The agreement did not actually stipulate *how* sovereignty was to be respected or even what it specifically was. Quite simply, Lebanese agreements have often institutionalized ambiguities which had originated the problems they were supposed to rectify.

Moreover, the Lebanese government felt it would have Arab support in enforcing the promises in the Melkart Protocol. Why it would make such an unfounded assumption is puzzling. It was such logic that had been used in making the Cairo Accord, and the same rationale can be found in the Ta'if Accord. The assumption in all was that the other Arab and international players shared Lebanon's interest in enforcing and limiting the fedayeen, and later Syrian, actions in Lebanese territory. Time would reveal that they did not, and as their support was never forthcoming, the debates around which the Cairo Accord, the Melkart Protocol, and the Ta'if accord centered, remained unresolved. The first two agreements stood as mere footnotes to irreconcilable conflicts which led to

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[458] For example, it would require a consensus of all the signatories of the Ta'if Accord to force the Syrians out of Lebanon, something they were not willing to give amidst the first Gulf war crisis.

increased unrest, instability, and eventually, civil war. Ta'if allowed for Syrian occupation to continue until 2005.

Finally, both the Cairo Accord and the Melkart Protocol lacked the necessary compromises. The Leftists and the Palestinians were obstinate that the fedayeen should enjoy full freedom of action. This was a desire, however, which neighboring Arab states had already recognized as a threat to stability and order, and which even Chafik el Hout of the PLO later recognized as untenable when he said, "It was an attempt to organize, in my opinion, an impossible relationship between the concept of state and the concept of revolution."[459] Moreover, the Leftists' support for the Palestinians, while not wholly instrumental, was primarily rooted in the significant economic hardship and inequity of the Lebanese socio-economic structure. In the period surrounding the Melkart Protocol, President Frangieh might have significantly weakened Palestinian leverage by honoring the mass request for a more just economic order. His attachments to the *za'im* artistocracy, however, prohibited him from making any such compromises, and the radical Palestinian-Leftist alliance solidified into a unified bloc during the early phases of the civil war.

Note on the Beirut Spring

Indeed, Lebanon faces a great number of challenges in attempting to heal its wounds and establish a sound infrastructure which can satisfy the needs and aspirations of its populace. Weapons still abound in Lebanon, and neighboring countries continue to interfere. Still today, Israel bombs PFLP-GC posts within Lebanon, and the Syrians have

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[459] *Harb al-Lubnan*. Episode 2. Executive Producer Omar Al Issawi. Al Jazeera Satellite Channel, 2004

been implicated in a sleight of recent political killings. Lebanon can only grapple with such challenges if it does so united, as a people dedicated to state institutions which can provide for their mutual satisfaction. To that extent, ideas and identity are still elemental to Lebanon's problems. As long as power is structured along sectarian lines, and the competition for resources takes on a communal hue, the prospects for Lebanese unity and sovereignty remain bleak.

Without unity, Lebanese sovereignty will remain eternally subjugated to the immediate goals of tactical politics, where communal security and patrilineal prosperity are the ends, and the state is the means. Until a new generation, tired of the partiality and impotence of the current system, decides that the state, cooperation, and compromise are the ends, they will remain irreparably divided. The civil war was only the most recent manifestation of this unchecked reversal of the order of ends. After all the analysis and blame, after all the battles and blood, Lebanon's sovereignty will be only what the Lebanese themselves decide. If they decide to unite around a common vision of a sovereign state, the Lebanese could usher forth a cooperation which would allow for the free practice of any faith and pursuit of any personal vision; a cooperation that will function for pluralism, rather than in spite of it.

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