

CPO 2408:
COMPARATIVE POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA
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LEBANON





I. GEOGRAPHY

As in any mountainous region, the physical geography of Lebanon is extremely complex and varied.

Landforms, climate, soils, and vegetation undergo some sharp and striking changes within short distances.

Four distinct physiographic regions may be distinguished:

- a narrow coastal plain along the Mediterranean Sea,
- the Lebanon Mountains (Jabal Lubnān), in north central Lebanon
- Al-Biqā' (Bekaa) valley, in Northeast Lebanon
- and the Anti-Lebanon and Hermon ranges running parallel to, and east of, the Lebanese Mountains.



II. HISTORY

As is the case with much of the Middle East, the area that is now Lebanon had previously been under colonial rule by outside empires, to include: Phoenicians, Persians, Greeks, Ancient Egyptians, Muslim Caliphate, Romans, as well as Ottoman, then falling under the French Mandate, following WWI. With Lebanon, the French established the first self-ruled, sovereign state in the area in recorded history.



La Marche des Femmes, lors de l'indépendance du Liban, le 12 novembre 1943

Lire la suite sur : <http://libnanews.com/en/the-chronology-of-independence-of-lebanon/>

French Mandate

During the height of the First World War, the Sykes–Picot Agreement of 1916, a pact between Britain and France, delineated which portions of the Ottoman colonies would be governed by whom, should the Allies win the war.

After the Allies emerged victorious in the war, the Ottoman Empire collapsed, leaving Lebanon and its surrounding areas under French occupation.

In following with the tradition of history, the area once again fell again into foreign rule. Within 25 years, however, the area to become known as Lebanon would first experience local self-rule.

Soon after the war, Patriarch Elias Peter Hoayek, representing the Maronite Christians, successfully campaigned for an expanded territory at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, also including areas with significant Muslim and Druze populations in addition to the Christian-dominated Mount Lebanon.

The area, never previously ruled by local peoples, was granted independence as a sovereign nation in 1943.



1. Hillenbrand, Carole (2000). *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*. Psychology Press. pp. 20–21. ISBN 978-1-57958-354-5. Archived from the original on 5 September 2015. Retrieved June 2015.

2. ^ Jump up to: ^a ^b ^c ^d ^e ^f ^g ^h ⁱ Najem, Tom; Amore, Roy C. (2021). "Chronology; Introduction". *Historical Dictionary of Lebanon* (2nd ed.). Lanham Boulder New York London: Rowman & Littlefield. pp. xxi–xxxv, 2–9. ISBN 978-1-5381-2043-9.

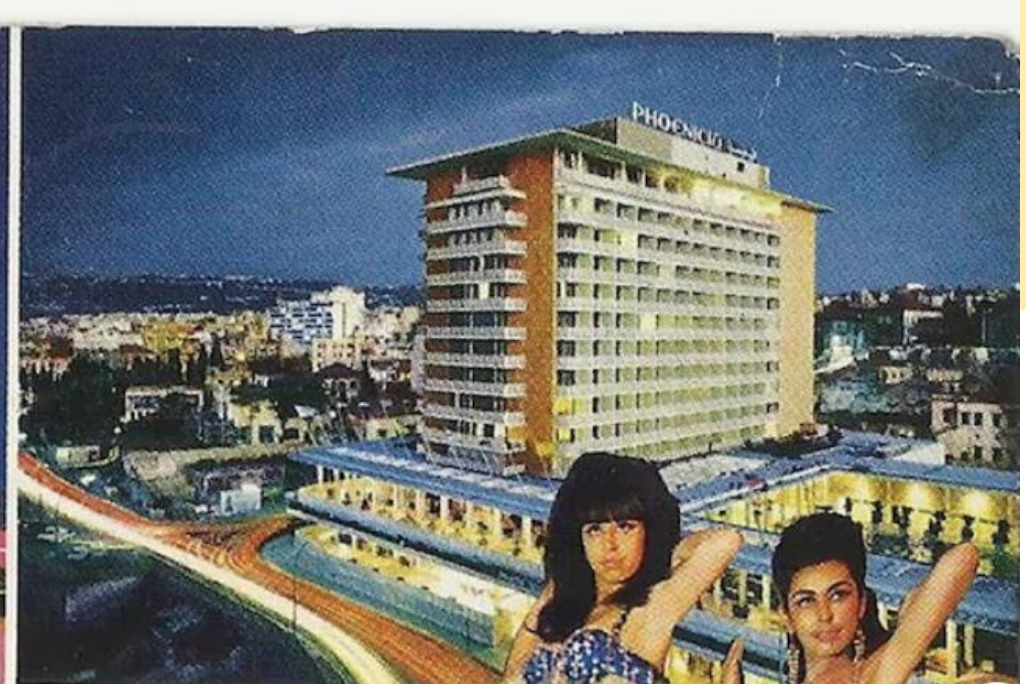
1. Najem, Tom; Amore, Roy C. (2021). "Chronology; Introduction". *Historical Dictionary of Lebanon* (2nd ed.). Lanham Boulder New York London: Rowman & Littlefield. pp. xxi–xxxv, 2–9. ISBN 978-1-5381-2043-9.

The Switzerland of the Middle East

Following WWI, the area known today as Lebanon was granted more self-rule under the French Mandate than ever before having been known. As Lebanon had never previously existed as a sovereign state, the balance of interests was difficult, tenuous, delicate... yet successful.

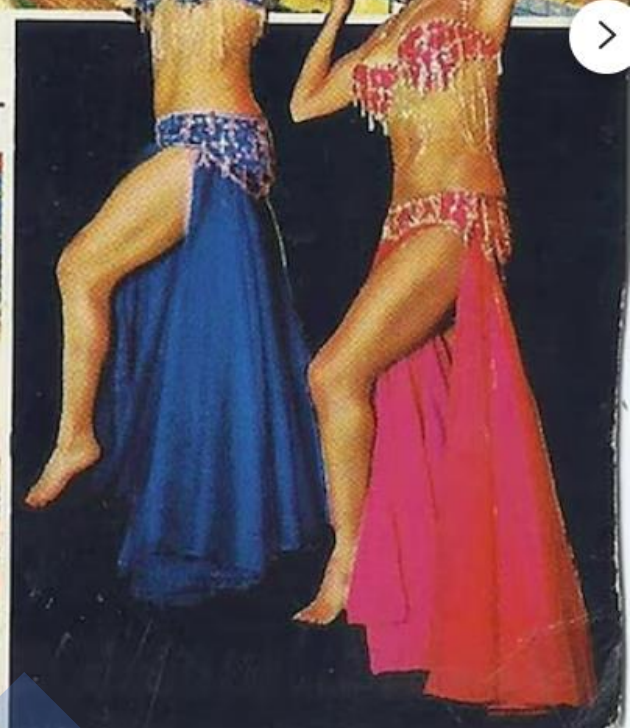
Its capital, Beirut came to be known as the “Switzerland,” and often the “Paris,” of the Middle East.”



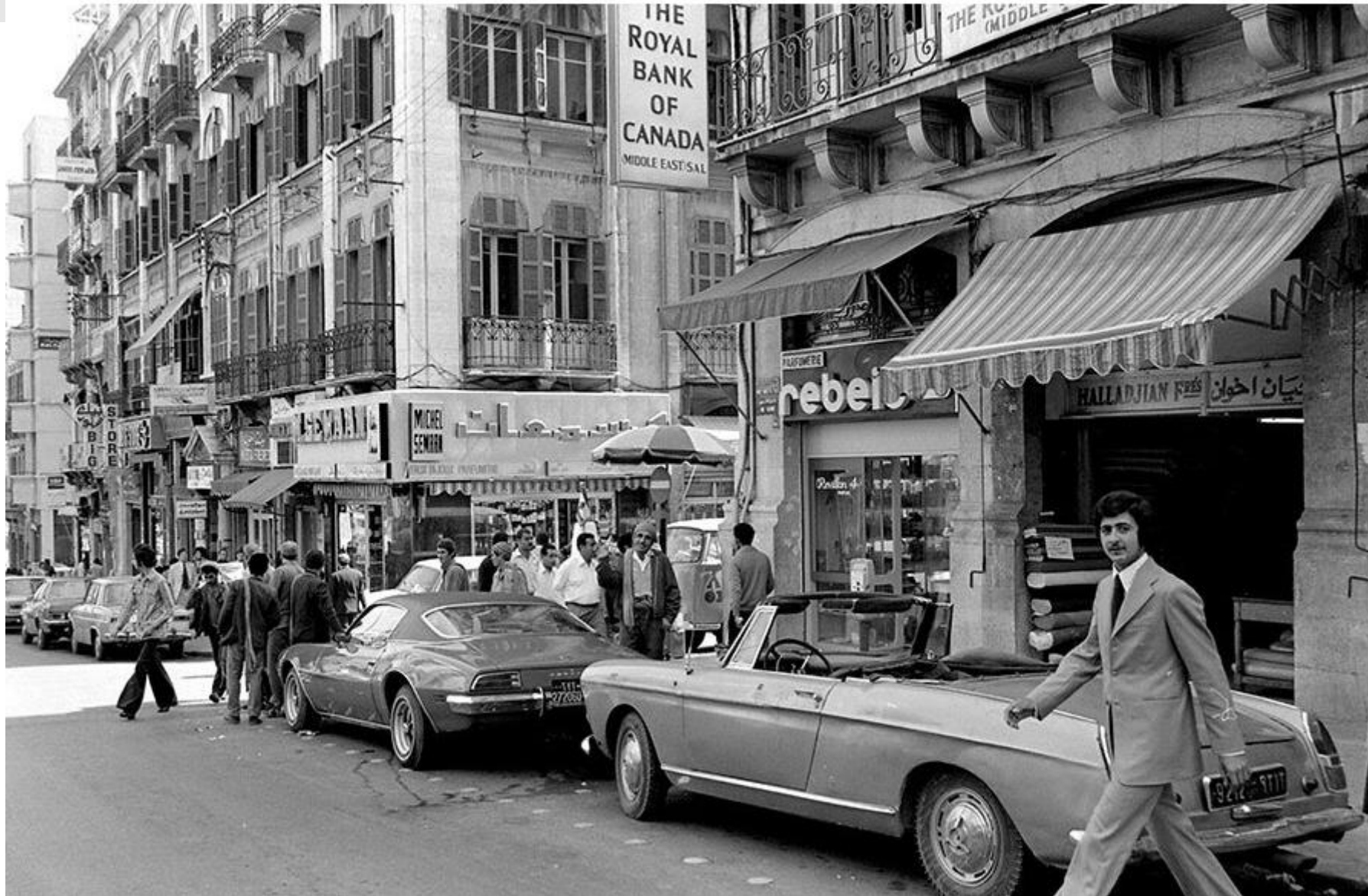


Beirut

CITY OF 1000 AND 1 NIGHT



The delicate peace based on a balance of both politics and religion had been reinforced under the French Mandate from 1920 to 1943, and the country's parliamentary structure favored a leading position for Lebanese Christians, who constituted the majority of Lebanon's population.



A man in a suit walks past cars, awnings, and signs including The Royal Bank of Canada along a busy commercial street in Beirut, Lebanon in 1974.

The glamor and prosperity associated with Lebanon, following the initial decades after independence in 1943, later saw an increase in civil strife and upheaval. Largely, and unfortunately, much of this turmoil has been rooted in unrest imported from the larger region of the Middle East and North Africa.

In particular, the influx of thousands of Palestinians, principally in 1948, contributed to Lebanon's demographic shift towards an eventual Muslim majority.

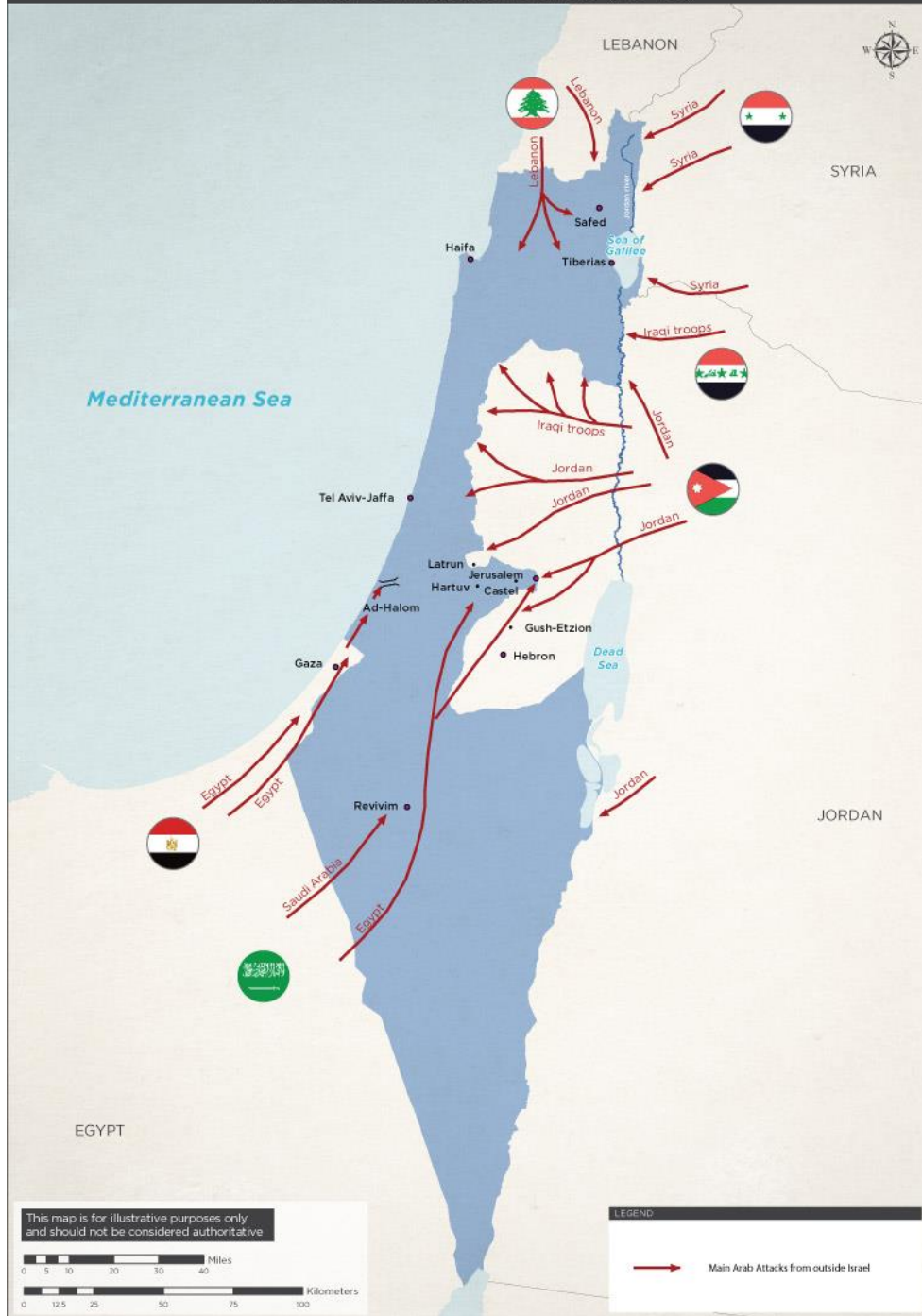
Many of these Palestinians chose to leave Israel/Palestine before the pan-Arab attack on Israel in 1948, and others were removed following the attack. Many were militants, as those pictured to the right.

The Palestinians, and particularly their militant leadership, would soon undo the delicate balance and harmony achieved by Lebanese of diverse backgrounds.



Abd al-Qadir al-Husseini with aides and Palestinian fedayeen militants, Jerusalem district, February 1948.

Most would soon be routed from Jerusalem, and flee to Lebanon.



Lebanon and Israel's War of Independence (1948)

Lebanon paid a price for its role in the Arab attack on Israel, although Lebanon played a minor role in the attack, and the Christian Maronites of Lebanon have struggled against their Muslim countrymen to establish relations with Israel.

Following the adoption of the Partition Plan by the UN in November 1947, and as the British were preparing their withdrawal from the area, local Arabs, joined by paramilitary militias from the surrounding Arab countries, increased their attacks against the Jewish communities. Immediately after Israel's Declaration of Independence on 14 May 1948, the armies of six Arab countries - Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Iraq - together with the local Arab militia forces attacked the nascent Jewish state from all directions.

The avowed Arab goal was to prevent the implementation of the UN Partition Resolution and to violently remove the Jews from the land.

The State of Israel fought to retain its independence and succeeded in defeating the Arab armies, but in doing so lost around 4,000 Jewish soldiers and 2,000 civilians, approximately 1% of its total population at the time.

There was a significant and unintended consequence of Lebanon's decision to participate in the attack on Israel, as well... Israel won, fending off the invasion. As the Palestinians and their leadership had participated in this attack, 110,000 Palestinians were driven out of Israel, some by choice, and others by force, into Lebanon.

The Lebanon Crisis

This domestic trend of peaceful cohabitation among Lebanese Christians and Muslims, that began with its founding was eventually shattered with civil unrest, followed by civil war.

Unfortunately, the downward spiral in which Lebanon would find itself was largely caused largely foreign intervention, often beyond the nation's control.

Militant Palestinian activity from unsanctioned bases in Lebanon invited reprisals and interventions from abroad, to include Jordan, Syria, Egypt, and Israel.

This agitation caused clashes with the Lebanese government, disrupting a peaceful, yet delicate balance of peace between Lebanese Christians and Muslims, eventually leading to the Lebanese Civil War in 1975.

The first major confrontation provoked by the Palestinians in Jordan was the "Lebanon Crisis" in 1958.

A demolished Israeli farmhouse, after Palestinian fedayeen attacked from their base in Lebanon (1956). →



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fedayeen#/media/File:Fadayun_attack_Tel_Mond.jpg

<http://147.237.72.31/topsrch/datafile/wwwm1161.gif>

Background Of The Crisis

Lebanon experienced sporadic civil unrest between Maronite Christians and Muslims in 1958.

This tension was manageable, yet increased with the regional Cold War pressures, as related to Egypt.

As Egypt drifted toward the Soviet Communist sphere, animosity had been building between Lebanon & Egypt.

Tensions escalated further when President Camille, who was a pro-Western Christian, failed to break diplomatic relations with the Western countries, namely including France and Great Britain, which had attacked Egypt during the Suez Crisis.

SUEZ CRISIS

https://youtu.be/0e7LZu_ceZQ?si=lbsLQT8opclpUFWE



The Egyptian president, Gamel Nasser, was angered by President Camille's action to the point that he was willing to do whatever it would take to sever his relationship with Lebanon. The tensions were further fueled with President Camille's support for the Baghdad Pact which was also pro-western and seen by President Nasser as a hindrance to the Arab Nationalism.



In response to this threat, Syria and Egypt united to form the United Arab Republic with Lebanese Prime Minister Rashid Karami supporting the Egyptian president.

Many Muslims in Lebanon demanded that the country join the UAR while Christians preferred the country align itself with Western powers.

President Camille's reluctance to give in to the Muslims' demand led to a rebellion by many Muslims.

This tension was exacerbated by the fact that the UAR, through Syria, was supplying weapons, yet another example of outside influences increasing tensions within Lebanon.



The final blow to the embattled president was a bloody military coup in Iraq on July 14, 1958, in which Iraq's pro-Western king and prime minister were killed. This coup was inspired by Arab pan-Nationalism, which was aided and encouraged by the Soviet Union. President Camille was forced to call for American intervention.

In 1958, the thirty-seven-year Hashemite monarchy of Iraq, which had strong Western relations, was overthrown in a coup d'état.

The Free Officer group, led by General Abd al-Karim Qasim and his associate Colonel Abdul Salam Arif, was inspired by Pan-Arab nationalism and Nasser of Egypt's 1952 overthrow of the Egyptian monarchy.

Like some other Iraqis, the Free Officers were frustrated by Western, particularly British, influence on the country.

The UK and U.S. supported the creation of the Baghdad Pact between Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey in 1955, which was seen as aggressive by Egypt and was resented by many Iraqis.

This grievance was exacerbated in 1956 when Iraq's King Faisal II supported the British invasion of Egypt during the Suez Crisis.



Alexei Kosygin (left) with Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr (right) signing the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Iraq and the USSR.

With the advent of weapons from Muslim Syria, and the murder of the secular, pro-Western leaders in Iraq, the now international crisis led to pro-Western Chamoun's desperate appeal for assistance by US military intervention. The intervention lasted three months up until the end of the term of then-president, Camille Chamoun. The president requested the intervention, with the American and Lebanese forces successfully occupying the port and the international airport of Beirut at the end of the intervention.



US Marine sits points a machine gun towards Beirut, Lebanon, in the distance.

Over the following fifteen years, Lebanon was able to maintain relative peace, yet often with challenges. Lebanon rejected calls by other Arab governments to participate in the 1967 Six-Day War.

Militarily weak in the south, Lebanon could not afford conflict with Israel.

Lebanon shared with Israel a pro-Western outlook, enjoying a relatively secular-with-freedom-of-religion atmosphere, as reflected in a very insightful essay by Sean Foley (right).

However, militant Palestinians in the country, emboldened by the 6-Day War, began to wage unsanctioned attacks on Israel, heightening tensions between the countries.

Full 12 p. essay...



https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/meria/meria_jun05/meria05_fos01.pdf



IT WOULD SURELY BE THE SECOND: LEBANON, ISRAEL, AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI WAR OF 1967

By Sean Foley^{1*}

This essay will discuss how three factors shattered this seemingly permanent settlement. First, the military balance following the Six-Day War ended the role of Syria and Egypt as bases for attacks on Israel and, eventually, the intention that these states would deliver a victory over Israel for the Palestinians. Second, Israel's total victory over Arab armies empowered the Palestinians to take direct command of their struggle to eradicate Israel, and to use Lebanon, which already housed 110,000 Palestinian refugees from the Galilee, as a base for direct attack of Israeli territory. Third, the Palestinians' use of Lebanese territory to attack Israel, combined with Israel's retaliation, strained Lebanon's already fragile political institutions to the point of collapse and postponed any hope of a peace treaty between Israel and Lebanon for years.

In the four decades between the advent of the Six-Day War in 1967 and 2003, there have been few places which have witnessed more violence in the Arab-Israeli conflict than Lebanon and the lands adjacent to its border with Israel. Throughout that period, the peoples of these areas suffered invasion, shelling, attacks, and occupation. By contrast, Israel's borders with Egypt, Jordan, and Syria have remained largely quiet, particularly since the end of the October 1973 war.

In this context it is easy to forget that Israel's border with Lebanon was the quietest in the region in the years between 1949 and 1967, and that Lebanon, along with Jordan, was seen as one of the Arab states most "likely" to reach a permanent agreement with

Israel.² The Israeli-Lebanese border witnessed less violence than marked Israel's borders with Egypt, Syria, and Jordan in the 1950s and 1960s. Of the armistice agreements that Israel reached with its four neighbors in 1949, the only agreement fully operative by the time the Six-Day War broke out was with Lebanon.³ From the perspective of the Maronite-dominated and Western-leaning government of Lebanon, it was as though the partition of Palestine in 1947 and the Arab-Israeli war of 1948-1949 had permanently settled the Palestinian question.⁴

Khartoum Conference, 1967

Following the failed attempt to eliminate Israel in the Six Day War in June, 1967, Lebanon's Christian-dominated government had been facing increasing levels of opposition from Muslims, pan-Arabists, and a number of left-wing groups.

The pan-Arabists remained resolute in their opposition to Israel, as reinforced at the Khartoum Conference in August-September of the same year. This meeting was the setting for the famed "3 No's" in the Arab world. No recognition of the state of Israel, no negotiations with Israel, and no peace with Israel (see following slide).

Countries such as Lebanon, that refused to concur, faced harsh opposition by their peers.

This was exacerbated by the fallout of "Black September," which resulted in an influx of Palestinian PLO and fedayeen forces who had been forced out of Jordan.

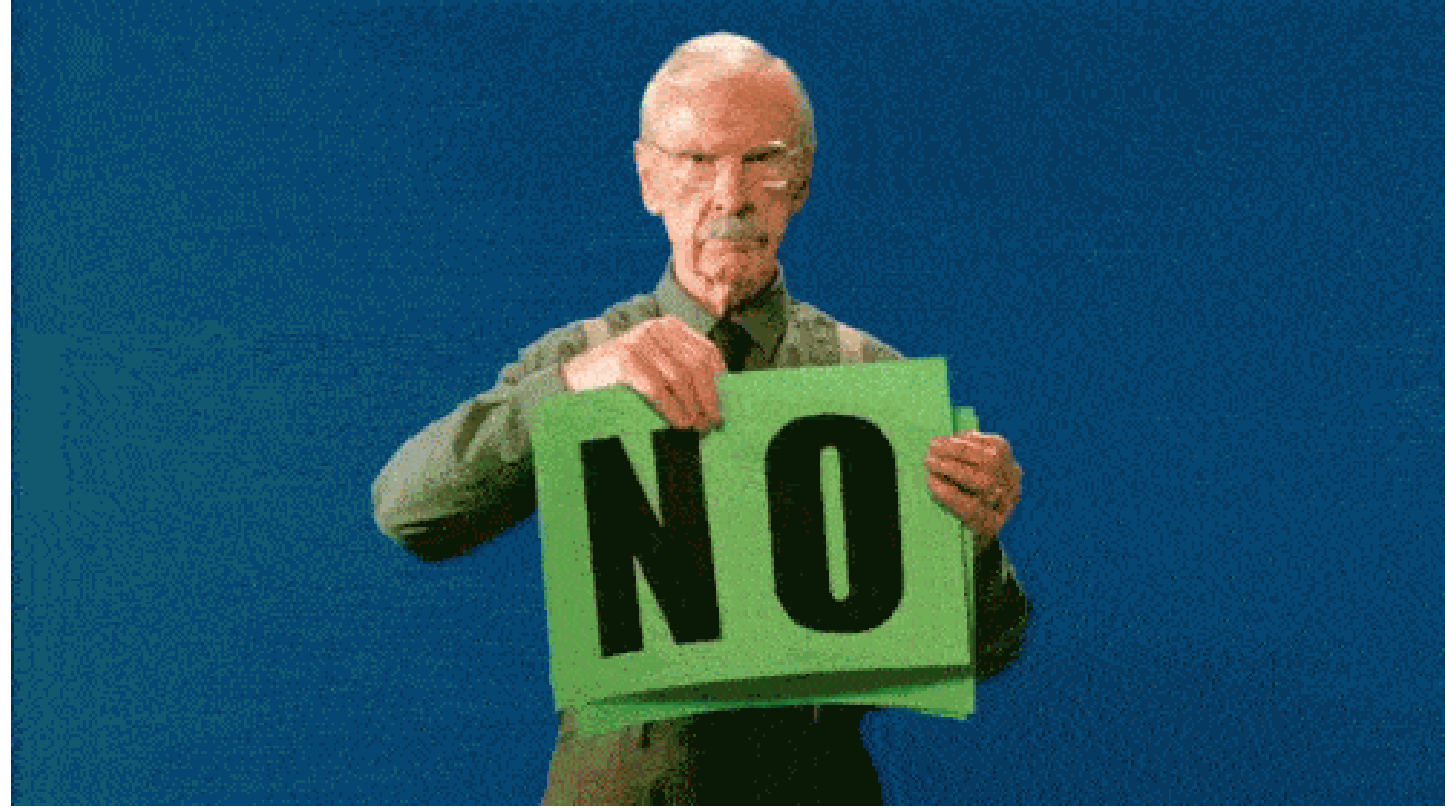


(L-R) Faisal of Saudi Arabia, Nasser of Egypt, Sallal of Yemen, Sabah of Kuwait and Arif of Iraq meeting in Sudan, August 29, 1967. Photo: Bibliotheca Alexandria

“Three No’s”

The Arab League summit in Khartoum, Sudan, ends with the signing of the Khartoum Resolutions, best known for the conclusions that become known as the “Three Nos”: no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with Israel and no peace with Israel.

The summit is held in the shadow of the Arab defeat in the Six-Day War in June 1967. Israel’s victory over Egypt, Syria and Jordan resulted in the capture of the Golan Heights, the West Bank and the Sinai peninsula.



Leaders of eight Arab states gathered in Khartoum on Aug. 29 to make plans for recapturing the lost territory and defining their relationship with Israel. In addition to rejecting peace, negotiations or recognition in their dealings with Israel, the Arab states declare their unity in their military, political and diplomatic efforts to regain the captured land, emphasize Palestinian rights, reject the use of an oil boycott against the West to pressure Israel, and call for the expedited removal of foreign military bases in Arab nations.

The “Three Nos” come as a shock to the Israeli government and people. After the war, Foreign Minister Abba Eban had said, “Everything is negotiable,” and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan had said, “Israel is waiting for a phone call from the Arabs.” Now that the Arab League has figuratively cut the phone lines, peace seems out of reach. Prime Minister Levi Eshkol calls the Arab League irresponsible and says the Khartoum Resolutions strengthen Israel’s determination “not to permit a return to conditions that enabled her enemies to undermine her security and act against her sovereignty and her very existence.”

The preceding events serve to clarify pressures placed on pro-Western governments and movements in the Middle East, that they should abandon support for the West.

Russian/Soviet aims in the region far preceded Western interests in the region, and the authoritarian nature of Soviet and Islamic rule served to further this alliance. Sovereign rule was to become increasingly difficult for pro-Western democratic trends in the Middle East.

Unfortunately for Lebanon, this meant that the thriving economy and openness would be compromised. Unrest created by the Palestinian leadership in nearby Jordan would lead to their ejection from the country, and into Lebanon, where unrest was further realized.

