The London School of Economics and Political Science

From Peacemaking to 'Vigorous Self-Defense':
**US Foreign Policy and the Multinational Force in Lebanon
1982-1984**

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Abstract

This thesis is a study on the use of military force in United States peacemaking in Lebanon between 1982 and 1984. It argues that the failure of the Reagan Administration to understand accurately the complex political landscape of the Lebanese Civil War resulted in the US and the Multinational Force in Beirut becoming intertwined in the broader Lebanese conflict. Because of this, President Ronald Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz applied a policy focusing on military force with a vague peacekeeping vision which led to catastrophic US casualties. This thesis also argues that US policy in Lebanon was inaccurately designed because, from the outset, Washington did not see Lebanon as a key policy frontline. However, the Administration's failed attempts to resolve the crisis and Reagan's personal pursuit for international credibility bound the US to one of the world's most complicated and violent conflicts.

By examining newly released archival material this thesis will show how the foundations of the US' interventionist policy in Lebanon came from the Reagan Administration's desire to see the US as the key military power in the Middle East rather than protecting Lebanese sovereignty or containing the Soviets. This thesis offers a fresh perspective on the impact of the US intervention and the decision-making drivers that led Reagan into the Lebanese Civil War. It challenges the notion that Reagan deployed US Marines under the ideals of international peacekeeping. Rather it will argue that the Multinational Force withdrew from Lebanon as a failed military force having made little progress.

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However, this thesis is ultimately dedicated to my parents, Dr Margaret and Dr Miklos Varady, without whom it would never have been completed. Your love, support and incredible wisdom are what I acknowledged here beyond anything else.

List of Abbreviations

AAPSS- The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science

AIPAC – American Israel Public Affairs Committee

APP – American Presidecy Project

AWACS – Airborne Warning and Control Systems

CENTO – Central Eastern Treaty Organisation

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

CLOHP – Carter Library Oral History Project

CMF – Combined Maritime Forces

CPPG – Crisis Pre-Planning Group

DDEPL – Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library

DNC – Democratic National Committee

DNSA – Digital National Security Archive

DOD – Department of Defence

DOSA – Department of State Archives

DSB – Department of State Bulletin

FCO – Foreign and Commonwealth Office

FMS – Foreign Military Supplies

FOIA – Freedom of Information Act

FRUS – Foreign Relations of the United States

GOL – Government of Lebanon

IDF – Israeli Defence Force

IPPRC – International Public Policy Research Corporation

IPS – Institute for Palestine Studies

JCPL – Jimmy Carter Presidential Library

JCS – Joint Chiefs of Staff

JVL – Jewish Virtual Library

L'OLJ – L'Orient Le Jour

LAF – Lebanese Armed Forces

LAT – Los Angeles Times

LOC – Library of Congress

MAPS – Military Assistance Programs

MARG – Mediterranean Amphibious Ready Group

MAU – Marine Amphibious Units (United States)

Memcon – Memorandum of conversation

METO – Middle East Treaty Organisation

MFO – Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai

MNF – Multinational Force in Lebanon

MNFI – First Multinational Force (18 August – 10 September 1982)

MNFII – Second Multinational Force (20 September 1982 – 30 March 1984)

NARA – National Archives and Record Administration

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NER – Near East Report

NPO – Popular Nasserite Organisation

NSA – National Security Affairs

NSC – National Security Council

NSDD – National Security Decision Directive

NSPG – National Security Planning Group

NYT – The New York Times

ONA- Office of National Assessment

OPEC – Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries

PLO – Palestine Liberation Organization

PPP – Public Papers of the Presidents

PREM – British Prime Minister's Papers

PRM – Presidential Review Memorandum

RAC – Remote Archive Capture Program

ROE – Rules of Engagement

RRPL – Ronald Reagan Presidential Library

SAF – Syrian Armed Forces

SALT – Strategic Arms Limitation Talks

SAM – Surface-to-Air Missile

SARG – Syrian Arab Republic Government

SFRC – Senate Foreign Relations Committee

TARP – Tactical Airborne Reconnaissance Pod

UKNA – United Kingdom National Archives

UNARMS – United Nations Archives and Records Management Section

UNIFIL – United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

USG – United States Government

USMNF – United States Marine contingent of the MNFII

WHCF – White House Central File

WP – The Washington Post

WSJ – The Wall Street Journal

Introduction

On 25 August 1982, Reagan appealed to the heroism of the 850 US marines who were bound for Lebanon under the Multinational Force (MNF),[1] stating that 'you are tasked to be once again what Marines have been for more than 200 years - peacemakers.'[2] The Reagan Administration charged the Marines with a mission, beyond the realms of the UN or NATO, to intervene militarily in what Reagan called 'this long-tortured city.'[3] The Multinational Force I (MNFI) arrived as a limited force of fewer than 2000 international troops, entrusted with overseeing the implementation of the Israeli-Palestinian ceasefire agreement and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) fighters' expeditious withdrawal from Beirut.

Following the massacre of many hundreds of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila, from 16-18 September 1982, Reagan held a press conference at the Oval Office, declaring that 'there is little that words can add, but there are actions we can and must take to bring that nightmare to an end.'[4] Little did Reagan realize that his commitment to action over words would mark the beginning of a nightmare for the US itself.

As Reagan unwittingly committed himself to a violent conflict, he failed to realize that this would eventually have tragic and humiliating consequences for the

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[1] For reasons of specificity, the Multinational Force (MNF) will be spilt into two distinct bodies, namely Multinational Force I (MNFI), from 29 August-10 September 1982 and Multinational Force II (MNFII) from September 20 1982-17 February 1984. For the purpose of this research, the broader reference to the Multinational Force (MNF) will include both MNFI and MNFII.

[2] Statement by President Reagan [Message to US Marine Forces Participating in the Multinational Force in Beirut, Lebanon], 25 August 1982, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library (hereafter RRPL), p.1.

[3] *ibid.*

[4] [Address to the Nation Announcing the Formation of the New Multinational Force in Lebanon], 20 September 1982, RRPL, p.1.

US in general and his Administration in particular. By October 1983, the presence of the Multinational Force II (MNFII) had escalated to 5800, French, Italian and British troops.[5] The intensification of the conflict and the MNFII's offensive engagement led to the force sustaining devastating casualties. By 17 February 1984, with the final withdrawal of the US marine contingent from Lebanon and redeployment of the Marine Amphibious Units (MAU) back to the Mediterranean Sea, the key decision-makers in the Reagan Administration questioned if any good had come from the US intervention in Lebanon.[6] Indeed, this was a time for reflection. The US had withdrawn without completing any of its initial mission objectives and left Lebanon as a failed state, still plagued with violent sectarian and regional conflict.[7] In reference to the US intervention in Lebanon, US Secretary of State, George Shultz, stated, 'I can't resist using that old image that the light you see at the end of the tunnel may be the train coming towards you.'[8]

This thesis examines peacemaking and the use of military intervention in US foreign policy in Lebanon from 1982-1984. The Reagan Administration's intervention through the deployment of the MNF is an example of a questionable US operation that sought to bring peace through the use of military force. Outlining five major phases of US policy, this research will consider the period from August 1982, following Israel's Operation Peace for Galilee, until the withdrawal of US Marines and the collapse of the MNFII in February 1984. The focus of this analysis is the shift in US policy from peacemaking to the use of military force. Several key research

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[5] '5800 "soldats de la paix"', *Le Monde*, 25 October 1983, p.1.

[6] [Statement on the Situation in Lebanon], 6 February 1984, University of Texas, Online: http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1984/20684c.htm, Accessed 20 March 2014.

[7] Ralph Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy, (New York: Praeger, 1991), pp 123-134, xi.

[8] Bernard Gwertzman, 'Washington Frustration', *New York Times (*hereafter *NYT)*, 17 February 1984, p.1.

questions relating to US policy in Lebanon and the MNF are explored here: namely; was Lebanon of such strategic importance for the US as a policy frontline that Reagan risked the possibility of long-term conflict? What were the key drivers affecting US policy in Lebanon, specifically in relation to the Israeli, Syrian, Palestinian and Soviet influence? Was the use of military force responsible for the MNFI and MNFII's inefficiencies and failures?

Original Contribution and Arguments

The original contribution of this thesis is threefold. It provides a comprehensive, detailed analysis of the executive level US decision-making during the Lebanese Civil War from 1982-1984, based on US documents that have only recently been declassified. It also adds to the existing scholarly literature on the civil war, especially the 'internal' and non-Christian narratives of the conflict. Finally, and most importantly, the research findings re-calibrate the historical judgment of the intervention by proposing an alternative framework. Rather than focusing on whether or not the initial mission objectives were executed effectively, this thesis posits that a thorough examination of the thinking behind the mandates, orders and escalations is required in order to truly determine the success or failure of US policy in Lebanon. An in-depth analysis of the ways in which the mandates continually changed throughout the deployment of the MNF will demonstrate that Lebanon, in the early 1980s, represented an untenable landscape that neither the UN nor the US could possibly control.[9]

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[9] Theodor Hanf, 'Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation', (London: Centre for Lebanese Studies, Tauris & Co, 1993), pp.551-566.

This thesis advances three key arguments regarding US policy in Lebanon and the MNF's history. First, building upon the dominant academic views that claim that the MNF (both MNFI and MNFII) was an example of a failed military-led peacekeeping mission, it will be argued here that US policy in Lebanon was conceptually flawed due to the Reagan Administration's failure to accurately recognise Lebanon's complex consociational and sectarian dynamics.[10] One example of such miscalculation was Shultz and Reagan's unwavering support for Christian Lebanese President Amin Gemayel, whose political impotence in the crisis impeded the process of national reconciliation and unity.[11]

Second, this thesis reasons that the newly-elected Reagan Administration became involved in Lebanon because Reagan saw this as an easy way to resolve several Palestinian-Israeli issues. If successful, the MNFI intervention could have been Reagan's equivalent of the Camp David Accords mediated by President Jimmy Carter. Instead, the deployment of the US military force weakened Reagan's commitment to peacekeeping and quickly escalated US military engagement. As a result, this created an uncontrollable spiral of offensive and defensive policy measures, thus transforming the US-led peacekeeping force into an active party in the internal Lebanese crisis. By committing themselves to unrealistic, lofty goals, Reagan and Shultz unintentionally bonded themselves to resolving both the complex

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[10] Ramesh Thakur, 'International Peacekeeping, UN Authority and US Power', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 12, 1987, pp.461-492; Ann Marie Baylouny, 'US Foreign Policy in Lebanon', in Robert Looney, ed., *Handbook on U.S. Middle East Relations*, (London: Routledge, 2009), pp.310-323, 315; Theodor Hanf, 'Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation', pp.174-175; Agnes Korbani, 'U.S. Intervention in Lebanon, 1958 and 1982: Presidential Decisionmaking', (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991), p.94 & Ramesh Thakur, 'International Peacekeeping in Lebanon: United Nations Authority and Multinational Force', (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987).
[11] James Nathan & James Oliver, 'United States Foreign Policy and World Order', (Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1989), p.469.

Lebanese and the wider regional conflict, which the US neither understood nor could handle.

Thirdly, this thesis argues that the Reagan Administration's biggest mistake was the establishment of the MNFII in September 1982, as its construction was impractical, ambiguous and even – in the words of Colin Powell – 'goofy from the beginning.' [12] It was never the Reagan Administration's intention to become offensively engaged in the Lebanese crisis. However, with the creation of the MNFII's free wielding principles and incremental escalation policies, particularly regarding the use of military force, the US became trapped. Avoiding a public defeat became the Reagan Administration's primary focus as it struggled to protect its credibility.

Thesis Structure

Chapter One outlines the history of Lebanon and the Lebanese Civil War from the foundation of the modern state to the outbreak of the initial Christian-Palestinian conflict and finally the 1982 Israeli invasion to provide background and context for the subsequent chapters. Chapter Two outlines the history of US policy and decision-making in the Middle East and Lebanon, specifically focusing on two key periods, the Eisenhower Administration's intervention under Operation Blue Bat in 1958 and the Carter Administration's non-interventionist policy from 1978-1981. This background illustrates the US foreign policy context and more specifically the discontinuities in US policy in Lebanon prior to Reagan's intervention.

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[12] Lou Cannon, 'President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime', (New York: Public Affairs, 2000), p.354.

This thesis is then structured chronologically in accordance with the five phases of US policy in Lebanon from 1982 to 1984. Chapter Three discusses the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June 1982 and the PLO in Lebanon as a backdrop to the eventual landing of US troops and the MNFI's inauguration from 26 August-10 September 1982. It argues that the MNFI was established in order to enable Reagan to leave his mark on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and illustrate his Administration's interventionist foreign policy. Chapter Four examines the MNFII's first phase, namely, the decision for US marines to return to Lebanon on 20 September 1982, and posits that the MNFII's mandate was so ambiguous that it eventually led to the force's 'interposition' between the Israeli Defense Force and the Syrian Armed Forces. The chapter also outlines Shultz's involvement in the Israeli-Lebanese May 17th Agreement as a diplomatic means for the US to prepare for a possible withdrawal. Chapter Five deals with the Soviet-Syrian alliance due to the increasing US-Syrian tensions in 1983 and the MNFII's operational evolution from 'peacemaking' to 'aggressive self defense' to, finally, 'vigorous self defense.' It argues that, due to the failure of US diplomatic attempts to coerce Israel and Syria to reach a lasting ceasefire, the Reagan Administration moved towards an escalation of the MNFII and establishment of a separate US military force. Chapters Four and Five also posit that the MNFII's mandate had changed so significantly since the MNFI's initial deployment in 1982 that no semblance of peacekeeping remained by October 1983, and that this change was directly responsible for the US becoming an active target within the Lebanese conflict. Chapter Six examines US responses to the 23 October, 1983 US Marine Barracks bombing and its impact on US military strategy in Lebanon. It argues that the bombings placed the Reagan Administration under great domestic and congressional pressure to withdraw quickly and therefore find a

credible, face-saving exit from the Lebanese crisis. Chapter Seven covers the final days of the US in Lebanon, with Reagan and Shultz's attempts to secure a last-ditch success. This chapter discusses how the Reagan Administration resigned Lebanon's fate to Syrian dominance and examines how Shultz and Reagan distanced themselves from the humiliation of the MNFII's failure. The final two chapters suggest that US policy at the end of the MNFII was determined exclusively by the need to find a face-saving exit for US troops rather than due to any concern about stability or security in Lebanon.

Analytical Framework

The conceptual framework employed here to analyze the empirical data is foreign policy analysis, focusing on Reagan and Shultz as the MNF's key architects. However, this does not mean that Reagan and Shultz were the only actors in the policy decisions. This research will also examine the inter-governmental, organisational perspectives of foreign policy and the roles of the National Security Advisor, National Security Council, Joint Chiefs of Staff and, most importantly, Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger and Secretary of State Alexander Haig. Furthermore, the thesis analyzes the broader process of policy development, as well as the final executive orders, by questioning Reagan's full knowledge of the policy details laid out by the other members of the Administration.[13] Scott accurately argues that the Reagan Administration's constant vacillation on use of military force and Reagan's fluctuating personal involvement in foreign policy decisions makes

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[13] Constantine Menges's memoirs, as special Assistant to President Reagan, labels the executive decision makers noted in this thesis as manipulative and deceitful. Constantine Menges, 'Inside the National Security Council: The True story of the making and unmaking of Reagan's Foreign Policy', (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), pp.11, 346-347.

theoretical modelling under a unitary approach difficult.[14] Indeed, the ambiguous nature of the Administration's interventionist foreign policy is particularly evident in Lebanon.

While this thesis does not undertake a comprehensive analysis of US foreign policy-making, it will draw upon the leading approaches that apply to the Reagan Administration's intervention in Lebanon. The initial decision to intervene under the MNFI followed a rational decision-making model whereby the Administration outlined areas of national interest and how the net benefit of the opportunities for the Administration seemingly outweighed the potential risks.[15] However, subsequent decisions revolved around indeterminate, reactionary diplomatic and military responses to the changing, uncontrollable Lebanese context best seen through the incremental decision-making model.[16] With this incremental decision-making came greater input from other levels of executive decision-making within Washington, thus diluting the structure of rational decision making, as illustrated under a bureaucratic political approach.[17]

This thesis also draws upon the risk aversion theory suggested by Kahneman and Tversky's 'Prospect Theory', which argues that decision-makers will be risk averse when decisions relate to specific gains and risk seeking when decisions involve a certain loss. This counters the traditional decision-making proposition suggested by

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[14] James Scott, 'Deciding to Intervene: the Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy', (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), pp.6-13.

[15] Thomas Brewer, 'American Foreign Policy: A Contemporary Introduction', (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1980), pp.27-46.

[16] Rainey, Ronquillo & Avellaneda, 'Decision Making in Public Organisation', in Paul Nutt & David Wilson, eds., *Handbook of Decision Making',* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), pp.361-365.

[17] Morton Halperin & Priscilla Clapp, 'Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy' (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2006), pp. 243-300; Jerel Rosati, 'Developing a Systematic Decision-Making Framework: Bureaucratic Politics in Perspective', *World Politics'* Vol.33, No.2, 1981, pp.234-252 & Lauren Holland, 'The U.S. Decision to Launch Operation Desert Storm: A Bureaucratic Politics Analysis', *Armed Forces & Society*, Winter 1999, pp.219-242.

Bernoulli's 'Expected Utility Theory', which states that a decision-maker will choose between risky decisions by comparing the expected value. Prospect Theory allows this research to challenge the view that Reagan and Shultz' continual policy amendments occurred not because they calculated the potential or expected gains but rather in the face of significant loss.[18]

Contextually, this thesis also examines, in brief, Eisenhower and Carter's foreign policy construction in both of their forays into Lebanon. This will create a more comprehensive US-Lebanese model, beyond the MNF intervention alone, considering the bureaucratic politics and inter-organisational models of International Relations.[19] For example, under his Administration, Eisenhower made brothers John Foster Dulles and Allen Dulles Secretary of State and Director of the CIA, respectively. In contrast, Carter and Reagan created an oppositional environment within the executive level of decision-making as evidenced by the Brzezinski-Vance mistrust and Shultz-Weinberger rivalry.[20] Usually, White House rifts amongst the President's advisors led to a power play for the President's attention. For example, one such debate that is highlighted in this thesis was created between Weinberger's doctrine on the careful marriage of military force *and* diplomacy against Shultz's staunch support for the use of force *as* foreign policy. This does not suggest that Weinberger was an anti-interventionist but rather that he saw intervention and force as a supportive component rather than as leading foreign policy. Weinberger believed that: 'US diplomacy not backed by military strength is ineffectual. Leverage, as well

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[18] Daniel Kahneman & Amos Tversky. 'Prospect Theory: an Analysis of Decision Under Risk', *Econometrica*, 1979, pp.263–291.

[19] Patrick Haney, 'Organising for Foreign Policy Crises: Presidents, Advisers, and the Management of Decision Making', (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980).

[20] Richard Halloran, 'Shultz and Weinberger disputing use of force', *NYT*, November 30 1984, p.1.

as good-will is required. Power and diplomacy are not alternatives: They must go together…'[21]

Literature Review and Historiography

Since the landing of US marines in Lebanon in 1958 under President Eisenhower's Operation Blue Bat, analysts and political scientists have questioned the US intervention in Lebanon's motives and objectives.[22] Although several seminal works have focused on the Lebanese Civil Wars, Eisenhower's intervention, and US policy in the Middle East and Arab-Israeli conflict, limited primary archival work has been undertaken on the 1982-1984 MNFI and MNFII deployments.[23] Although this thesis examines US policy construction and the deployment of the MNF in Lebanon, it is also important to outline the Reagan Administration's construction of US foreign policy more broadly as well as the existing historical narratives regarding the MNF in Lebanon. US involvement in the broader Arab-Israeli conflict has inspired scholars to produce narratives that focus on the regional instabilities.[24] However the 1975-1990 Lebanese Civil War's internal political and military complexities also provide a context for rich historical analysis that is essential for this thesis.

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[21] Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy, p.xiv.

[22] Robert Stookey, 'The United States', in Edward Haley & Lewis Snider, eds., *Lebanon in Crisis: Participants and Issues'*,(New York: Syracuse University Press, 1979).

[23] Michael Hudson, 'The Precarious Republic: Political Modernization in Lebanon', (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1985), Kamal Salibi, 'A house of Many Mansions- the History of Lebanon Reconsidered', (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1993); Theodor Hanf, 'Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation'; Marius Deeb, 'The Lebanese Civil War', (New York: Praeger, 1980); Wade Goria, 'Sovereignty and Leadership in Lebanon 1943-1976', (London: Ithaca Press, 1985); Tabitha Petran, 'The Struggle over Lebanon', (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987); B.J. Odeh, 'Lebanon: Dynamics of Conflict', (London: Zed Books, 1985); Samir Kassir, *La guerre du Liban: De la dissension nationale au conflit regional, 1975-1982'*(Beirut: CERMOC, 1994) & Ahmad Beydoun, 'Le Liban: Itineraires dans une guerre incivile', (Beirut: Cermoc, 1993).

[24] Naseer Aruri, 'U.S. Policy toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict,' in *The United States and the Middle East: A Search for New Perspectives*, ed. Hooshang Amirahmadi (Albany: University of New York Press, 1993), pp.89-124.

US foreign policy in the Middle East and the Reagan Doctrine

Given the contested associated narratives of US foreign policy, it is important to outline the historical perspectives relevant to the subsequent research regarding the Reagan Administration and foreign policy decision-making.[25] Alden, Aran, Scott and Peterson highlight the importance of the executive level leadership in the Reagan Administration's construction of US foreign policy in the Middle East, specifically focusing on the Reagan-Shultz relationship.[26] However, Manley argues that the National Security Council and Congress' influence rendered isolated Presidential or Oval Office foreign policy decisions almost impossible. Lindsay, Sayrs and Steger also argue that the Administration's policy decisions were even more accountable to domestic public opinion than to the machinations of Capitol Hill.[27] To this, Peterson adds an important study regarding the three broad forms that US foreign policy

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[25] For historiographical frameworks for examining US foreign policy see: Dominic Sachsenmaier, 'Global Perspectives on Global History: Theories and Approaches in a Connected World', (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp.11-109; Chris Alden & Amnon Aran, 'Foreign Policy Analysis: New Approaches', (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2011), pp.1-30; Mary Fulbrook, 'Historical Theory', (London: Routledge, 2002), pp.12-50; Jonathan Gorman, 'Historical Judgment', (Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), pp.17-66; M.C.Lemon, 'The Discipline of History and the History of Thought', (London: Routledge, 1995), pp.134-261; Marcus Cunliffe, 'American History' in Martin Ballard, eds., New Movements in the Study and Teaching of History, (London: Temple Smith, 1970), pp.116-133; Meera Nanda, 'Against Social De(con)struction of Science: Cautionary Tales from the Third World' in Ellen Wood & John Foster, eds., *In Defense of History*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997), pp. 74-97; Matthew Jacobs, 'Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918-1967', (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); William Lucey, 'History: Methods and Interpretation', (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984), pp. 18-44; Burton Sapin, 'The Making of United States Foreign Policy', (Washington: The Brookings Institution: 1966), pp.15-33 & Ruland, Hanf & Manke, eds., 'U.S. Foreign Policy Toward the Third World: A Post-Cold War Assessment', (London: M.E. Sharpe, 2006).

[26] Chris Alden & Amnon Aran, 'Foreign Policy Analysis: New Approaches', (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2011), pp.62-76; James Scott, 'Deciding to Intervene: the Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy', (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 6-13 & Paul Peterson, 'The President, the Congress, and the making of foreign policy', (London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), pp.4-6.

[27] John Manley, 'The Rise of Congress in Foreign Policy', *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (hereafter *AAPSS*), Vol. 397, 1971, pp.60-70 & Lindsay, J.M, Sayrs, L.W. & Steger, W.P, 'The Determinants of Presidential Foreign Policy Choice', *American Politics Research*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 1992, pp.3-25.

construction must consider; namely, institutional, constitutional and issue oriented policy development.[28] Most significantly, the author argues that executive decision-makers under the Reagan Administration needed to determine *how* to present a military intervention in a foreign country as a national interest-oriented policy before either the legal or institutional justifications in order to gain the domestic American public's support.[29] It is important for this thesis to ascertain the extent of public opinion's role in the US decision-making process, as well as identify how the US congress or the NSC shaped and pressured the Administration's policy decisions.

Reagan is often characterized as an aggressive, confrontational 'Rambo-style' figure, whose foreign policy was merely a reverberation of bold ideological and doctrinal battles.[30] From this archetype of the 'trigger-happy cowboy' grew the broader, more relevant discourse of US imperialism in the 1980s.[31] The degree to which the Reagan Administration considered global interventionism as a primary foreign policy goal is seen, in Lebanon's case, through the US' emerging international identity as the global peacemaker. However, the international and domestic US context in the 1970s was politically relevant to US foreign policy choices in the 1980s as it created both limitations of absolute executive power and substantive momentum with regard to certain policy areas. Every US President also experienced a diminished sense of freedom following the Vietnam War (especially at an Agency level, such as the CIA).[32] The Vietnam War left behind a more engaged American public, resulting in all public foreign policy missions being open to criticism by both Congress and the

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[28] Peterson, 'The President, the Congress, and the making of foreign policy', pp. 4-6.
[29] George Herring, 'American and Vietnam: The Unending War', *Foreign Affairs*, December 1991, pp.104-119
[30] Coral Bell, 'The Reagan Paradox: American Foreign Policy in the 1980s', (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), p.88.
[31] *ibid.*
[32] George Herring, 'American and Vietnam: The Unending War', *Foreign Affairs*, Dec 1991, pp.104-119.

general public. As Manley and Layne note, the Vietnam War's legacy left Reagan with both public and legalistic challenges with regard to pursuing an interventionist policy globally. Similarly, Congressional support for interventions became conditional on immediate national security interests.[33] For example, in the context of the 1979 Iranian revolution and the Soviets in Afghanistan, the US had to manage its proxy involvement with great care if it were to convince Congress of the long-term US interests in these phenomena.[34] Kolko sees the lasting effects of the Vietnam War as binding the US to a more subtle imperialist policy, where Reagan's confrontational, impulsive rhetoric had to be equally measured with caution and rationality.

Pervin, Spiegel and Quandt suggest that US policies in Lebanon and the Middle East were as much a pursuit for regional recognition as the identification of the US as the primary international peacekeeper.[35] Without directly contradicting this argument, Taylor carefully qualifies this by stating that US-Lebanese relations were defined more by the need for the stronger US military identity in the region than by any commitment to peacekeeping and international law.[36] Moreover, Hanf and Stookey raise the question of whether the US in the Middle East during the 1980s was in fact a broader part of the Cold War and of the degree to which Soviet influence, at the international level, shaped the Reagan Administration's policy in Lebanon, a

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[33] Manley, 'The Rise of Congress in Foreign Policy', pp.60-70 & Christopher Layne, 'Requiem for the Reagan Doctrine', in David Boaz, eds., *Assessing the Reagan Years*, (Washington: Cato Institute, 1988), pp.100-105
[34] 'US Foreign Policy, The Reagan Imprint', (Congressional Quarterly: Washington, 1986), p.1, 118-132.
[35] David Pervin & Steven Spiegel, eds., 'Practical Peacemaking in the Middle East: Arms Control and Regional Security', Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 1995) pp.21-84, 207-246; William Quandt, ed.,'The Middle East: Ten Years after Camp David', (Washington: Brookings Institution: 1988), pp.357-236.
[36] Alan Taylor, 'The Superpowers and the Middle East', (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991). pp. 33-60.

question which is fundamental to this thesis.[37] To this, Velasco responds that the Cold

War provided the necessary momentum for Reagan's foreign policy 'crusades'

because the US President himself was set on confronting global communism.[38]

Similarly, Hanf's research on the Lebanese Civil War argues that any US or Soviet

interference in Lebanon during the 1980s should be analyzed under a broader Cold

War framework, where superpower confrontation was indirectly played out through

the Israeli-PLO and Israeli-Syrian conflict.[39]

Stein argues that Reagan inherited an international context characterised by

the increasing Soviet-US tension and heightened awareness of 'Third World'

countries as the frontier for a proxy conflict between the two superpowers.[40]

Hallenbeck, Taylor and Nelson also argue that the US pursuit of domination in the

region is particularly important in the context of the superpower dynamic by linking

the US to a legacy of western imperialism and viewing Soviet influence as a product

of a Tsarist legacy of expansionism, both poised at the frontiers of the 'Third

World.'[41] Soviet involvement in the Middle East is defined as 'a special endeavour to

promote a Soviet-sponsored "anti-imperialist" front against the United States and

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[37] Hanf, 'Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation', pp.174-176; Robert Dallek, 'Ronald Reagan: The Politics of Symbolism', (London: Harvard Press, 1984), pp.129-155 & Robert Stookey, 'The United States', in Edward Haley & Lewis Snider, eds., *Lebanon in Crisis: Participants and Issues'*,(New York: Syracuse University Press, 1979).

[38] Jesus Velasco, 'Neoconservatives in U.S. Foreign Policy under Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush', (John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 2010), pp.38-111.

[39] Hanf, pp.174-175.

[40] Janice Stein, 'Flawed Strategies and Missed Signals' in David Lesch, *The Middle East and the United States- A Historical and Political Reassessment,* Fourth Edition, (Colorado: Westview Press, 2007) and Ruland, Hanf & Manke, eds., 'U.S. Foreign Policy Toward the Third World: A Post-Cold War Assessment', (London: M.E. Sharpe, 2006).

[41] Taylor, 'The Superpowers and the Middle East', pp.4-22; Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy, pp. 67-80 & Richard Nelson, 'The Multinational Force in Beirut', in Anthony McDermott and Kjell Skjelsbaek, *The Multinational Force in Beirut 1982-1984*, (Miami: Florida International University Press: 1991), pp.98-100.

Israel.'[42] Meanwhile, US 'imperial' policy aimed 'to contain Soviet expansionist moves by filling the power vacuum emerging from the incipient withdrawal of Great Britain and France from the area.'[43] Certainly, a historically Christian, pro-European ideology allowed the US to align itself with nations and regimes that had recently abandoned their French and British sponsors and Fieldhouse's thesis maintains that US interests in Lebanon evolved directly out of the power vacuum left behind by the French.[44]

Westad demonstrates how Reagan's active engagement with the 'Third World' from 1981 onwards aimed to reduce Soviet influence in resource-rich developing countries and also led to Washington's push for market-based economies in previously Marxist-inspired countries.[45] While Westad's thesis on the Cold War is essential to the dialogue of superpower relations in the Middle East, his perceptible silence on Lebanon implies that he does not regard Reagan's Cold War offensive as including the Lebanese Civil War.[46] Much of this is because, as Freedman also argues, while the renewal of superpower tensions created a struggle for a greater military identity, the Soviet Union was preoccupied with the Iran-Iraq and Afghan Wars and therefore less inclined to enter the Lebanese conflict directly.[47]

To this discussion, Contemporary or New Cold War historians in the Middle East, such as Westad and Khalidi, argue that the Cold War ideology and its effects on foreign policy interventions should be examined with caution. Restraint must be

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[42] Taylor, 'The Superpowers and the Middle East', p.137.

[43] *ibid.* p.25.

[44] David Fieldhouse, 'Western Imperialism in the Middle East 1914-1958', (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) pp.304-336.

[45] Odd Arne Westad, 'The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the making of our time', (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.331-363.

[46] *ibid.* pp.348-353.

[47] Robert Freedman, 'Patterns of Soviet Policy toward the Middle East', *AAPSS,* Vol. 482, 1985, pp.40-64

exercised regarding the application of a neoconservative view to any discussion of the Lebanon crisis, where there is a risk of overstating the superpower dynamic's role as the driving motivation for US intervention there.[48] It is important to recognise that, by the early 1980s, the Soviet Union faced challenges associated with its international clients, where control of and support for pro-Communist armed groups were unsustainable, as the waning Soviet support for the PLO evidenced.[49]

While discussing the broad ideological links between Presidents or Administrations can prove challenging, Reagan's Administration has often been recognised for its role in reviving and confronting global moral dialogues.[50] The Reagan Doctrine was a concept that illustrated a distinct break from the non-interventionist policies that had, in many ways, made President Carter appear politically impotent on the international stage.[51] Shultz deemed this policy reversal 'the ecology of international change', since US policy was ultimately thrust into the act of 'preventing war' because 'old diplomacy is not going to be sufficient to meet the novel threats of world security.'[52] Reagan renewed the neoconservative's view of

[48] Campbell, 'The Soviet Union and the United States in The Middle East', *AAPSS*, Vol.401,1972, pp.126-135.

[49] Westad, 'The Global Cold War', pp.331-363 & Rashid Khalidi, 'Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East', (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), pp.145-150.

[50] Ronnie Duger, 'On Reagan: The Man & His Presidency', (New York: McGraw Book Company, 1983), pp.350-392; Condoleezza Rice, 'U.S.- Soviet Relations', in Larry Berman, ed., *Looking Back on the Reagan Presidency*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1990), pp.71-89; Dallek, 'Ronald Reagan', pp.30-62; Theodore Lowi, 'Ronald Reagan - Revolutionary?', in Salamon & Lund, eds., *The Reagan Presidency and the Governing of America*, (Washington: The Urban Institute, 1984), pp.29-56; John White, 'The New Politics of Old Values', (London: University Press of New England, 1988), pp.7-22;

[51] Christopher Layne, 'Requiem for the Reagan Doctrine', in David Boaz, ed., *Assessing the Reagan Years*, (Washington: Cato Institute, 1988), p.96.

[52] George Shultz, 'The Ecology of International Change' in Greg Schmergel, ed., *US Foreign Policy in the 1990s,* (London: Macmillan, 1991), pp.3-14.

foreign policy in creating the US' assertive role in confronting the Soviet Union and providing the world with a quasi-democratic revolution.[53] However, as Layne notes,

…the Reagan Doctrine failed to give Americans a convincing answer to the crucial question of why the United States should become involved in regional disputes that were, at best, only peripherally connected to its national security.[54]

The executive-level doctrines, which will be referred to throughout the research, namely, the Eisenhower, Carter, Reagan and Weinberger Doctrines, have all been discussed widely on the international platform, with critics and proponents alike drawing broad ideological generalisations. While Shultz never proposed a formally recognised 'doctrine', this research recognises his staunch support of the 'use of military force' as the Secretary of State's doctrinal vision even though it was never formalised.[55]

The Reagan-Shultz and Eisenhower-Dulles relationships are particularly important in the development of these doctrines as, under both Administrations, the President represented the ideologue while the Secretary of State was granted operational and strategic flexibility to execute these broader doctrines. In Lebanon's case in particular, Bell supports the belief that 'the Eisenhower-Dulles period seems the true exemplar and predecessor of the Reagan period.'[56] Meanwhile, President Carter's notorious hands-on, domineering approach to the wording, structure and message of each policy and operational document (often handwritten) contrasted with Reagan's confrontation of the broader, big picture policy goals, with his Secretary of

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[53] Jesus Velasco, 'Neoconservatives in U.S. Foreign Policy under Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush', (John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 2010), pp.38-111.

[54] Christopher Layne, 'Requiem for the Reagan Doctrine', p.103.

[55] Alexander George, 'The Role of Force in Diplomacy: A Continuing Dilemma for U.S. Foreign Policy', in Chester Crocker, Fen Hampson and Pamela Aall, eds., *Managing Global Chaos,* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996) pp.209-222.

[56] Bell, 'The Reagan Paradox', p.7.

State and Middle East Envoys holding ultimate responsibility for the details.[57] This disparity ultimately led to significant differences arising between each Administration, disproportionate to the limited contextual differences that each faced in Lebanon and the Middle East. That is, both Administrations existed during the Lebanese Civil War, the Israeli invasions of Lebanon (in 1978 and 1982) and the ongoing Arab-Israeli tensions.

Lebanon and the Multinational Force

The existing historical narratives relating to the 1982 US intervention in Lebanon, and more specifically the MNF, are often portrayed as merely a component of the complex foreign interference that characterized the Lebanese Civil War. Prominent research on the Lebanese Civil War, such as that by Hanf, treats US intervention as a minor subtopic of the conflict's regional dynamics, depicting the MNF as an extension of Syria's and Israel's regional occupation, which drew in the European and American powers.[58]

However, several scholarly works on US intervention examine the MNF as a policy vehicle in itself; these include Hallenbeck, Nelson, Norton, Kemp, and Thakur who largely maintain that the MNF in Lebanon marked Reagan's foreign policy program's complete failure.[59] The historical debates regarding the MNF are centred on three key questions. First, did the intervention in Lebanon represent a strategic

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[57]Gabriel Kolko, 'The Roots of American Foreign Policy', (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p.138.

[58] Hanf, 'Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon', pp.174-175.

[59] Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy; Nelson, 'The Multinational Force in Beirut'; Norton, 'The Demise of the MNF'; Kemp, 'The American Peacekeeping Role in Lebanon', in Anthony McDermott and Kjell Skjelsbaek, *The Multinational Force in Beirut, 1982-1984*, (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991) & Ramesh Thakur, 'International Peacekeeping in Lebanon: United Nations Authority and Multinational Force', (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987).

policy decision such that the MNF should be seen as securing broader US goals? Second, was there an increasing variance between the US vision of peacemaking and those espoused by the UN that ultimately led the Reagan Administration to consider itself above the international legal parameters? Third, was the Cold War the key that led to US intervention in Lebanon or are claims of US concerns over the Soviet Union overplayed?[60]

Hallenbeck argues that criticism of the MNF should focus on how US military policy was applied rather than the force's initial establishment itself. He calls the US intervention a 'thankless but right-minded undertaking.'[61] Bell also maintains that the MNF was operationally ill-conceived, doomed to failure from the beginning of its deployment. She states:

> The commitment of the Marines in August 1982 and the Reagan Plan initiative in September must, to my mind, be classed as strong declaratory signals rather than true operational commitments. When Eisenhower put Marines into the Lebanon in 1958 he used about 15,000 and left them there until the US objectives of the time had, for good or ill, been temporarily secured. The Reagan commitment of 1600 Marines, in contrast, was at a token level. They did not have a military purpose but a diplomatic and political one: that is they constituted a declaratory signal.[62]

However, both Korbani and Bell's loosely guided rational approach imply that the initial MNF deployment was undertaken because the Reagan Administration had calculated that its potential net gains would be overwhelmingly in the US' favour. Korbani argues that the decision to intervene was due to 'the could be factor', which considered the gain that the United States could get if order and peace were established.'[63] This argument proposes that the Reagan Administration made an

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[60] Condoleezza Rice, 'U.S.- Soviet Relations' & Robert Leiber, 'The Middle East', in Berman, *Looking Back on the Reagan Presidency*, pp.50-70, 71-92.
[61] This could owe, in part, to Hallenbeck's role as US Chief of Current Operations in the Directorate of Operations and Plans between 1983-1984.
[62] Bell, 'The Reagan Paradox', p.88.
[63] Agnes Korbani, 'U.S. Intervention in Lebanon, 1958 and 1982', (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991), p.94.

active, conscious decision to enter Lebanon as a means of implementing wider regional or international goals. Similarly, while Hanf fails to consider the MNF as a cogent military influence, he agrees that US involvement was fundamentally entwined in the pursuit of other, even more substantial US policy objectives in the Middle East, including Palestinian settlement.[64] It is important therefore to challenge the view that US policy under the MNF was fundamentally aimed at establishing stability and sovereignty in Lebanon, as the Administration claimed.[65]

Indeed, Hallenbeck identifies how the US pursuit of diplomacy over military involvement was initially discussed in the White House, given the concerns about domestic public opinion. However, the need to deter the Soviet Union and the sense of responsibility regarding the Israeli-Palestinian aggression 'committed the U.S. government to a strategy in Lebanon.'[66]

Thakur further maintains that, while the strategic benefit for the US in entering Lebanon was minimal, the wider ramifications associated with the US' failure to have acted tangibly in the conflict could have threatened Washington's regional and international military credibility. He argues that the UN's failure to exert its peacekeeping powers in Lebanon, given the continual failure of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), led to US justifications for the MNF.[67] Rather than upholding the principles of sovereignty and integrity, as Reagan proclaimed, the US deliberately moved away from a UN resolution so that the Administration could control the MNF's operations and strategy without UN involvement.[68] Schou argues that the US

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[64] Hanf, 'Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon', pp.174-175, 264-274.
[65] Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy', pp.15-18.
[66] *ibid.* p.10.
[67] Thakur, 'International Peacekeeping, UN Authority and US Power', pp.461-492.
[68] Francis Wilcox, 'The United States and the United Nations', *AAPSS*, Vol. 336, (1961), pp.114-126 & Harrington Cleveland, 'The Future Role of the United States in the United Nations', *AAPSS*, Vol.342, 1962, pp.69-79

should have engaged with UNIFIL in its peacekeeping mission if it truly wished to promote neutral, humanitarian mediation of the conflict rather than to escalate it.[69] Pfaltzgraff, Eichelberger and Ovinnikov attribute US refusal to use UNIFIL to the fact that the US knew that the Soviet Union would have preferred a UNIFIL mission rather than the US-led MNF. Furthermore, the historians argue that because the US believed that the Soviet Union saw the MNF deployment as a vehicle for a US-led Soviet containment policy, the Reagan Administration could use the MNF to further threaten and exclude the USSR from the region.[70]

Gabriel, however, asserts that UNIFIL's seemingly soft approach toward the PLO was both a 'flagrant violation of UN regulations' and a 'failure of the UN forces to curtail PLO activity in the zone.'[71] Even though the Reagan Administration wished to avoid being perceived as being unconditionally aligned with Israel in case Israeli actions threatened US diplomacy with the neighbouring Arab states, the US State Department ordered that the Palestinians should to be handled by the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) rather than by UNIFIL in order to reduce Israeli protests over UNIFIL's protection of the PLO in Southern Lebanon. Baylouny also highlights the MNF's relationship with the PLO as an extension of US policy toward the Palestinians, given that 'the PLO has long been a problem for US policy.'[72] Gabriel accurately concludes that that UNIFIL's inability militarily to control either the IDF

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[69] Arlid Schou, 'The Breakdown of Conflict Management in Lebanon', *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, Vol. 20 No. 2, 1989, p.201.
[70] Eichelberger, 'The Role the United Nations in the East-West Dispute', *AAPSS*, Vol. 336, 1961, pp.106-113; Richard Ovinnikov, 'The USSR Position on Disarmament in the United Nations', *AAPSS*, Vol. 414, 1974, pp.51-63 & Robert Pfaltzgraff, 'The Superpower relationship and U.S. National Security Policy in the 1980s', *AAPSS*, Vol. 457,1981, pp.186-197.
[71] Richard Gabriel, 'Operation Peace for Galilee: The Israeli PLO War in Lebanon' (USA: Collins Publishers, 1984), p.50.
[72] Baylouny, 'US Foreign Policy in Lebanon', pp.310-323.

or the PLO meant that UN forces became an ineffective buffer between both groups, ultimately leading Reagan to deploy the MNF.[73]

Stoddard posits the opposite, specifically that the Reagan Administration did not view the Arab-Israeli conflict as a threat or concern for American interests in the Middle East as 'it [the US] sees no crisis to manage.'[74] Both he and Sisco question whether the MNF was devised to prevent the impending violence between Israel and Palestine, such as the Sabra and Shatila massacre proved or, rather, if the establishment of the US mission was ultimately an impulsive decision that illustrated the Administration's failure to comprehend the Lebanese crisis for what it was; namely a kaleidoscope of internal sectarian violence and regional interference.[75] Thakur specifically regards US opportunism over the Israeli invasion of Lebanon as fostering US influence in the region, with little concern for either Arab-Israeli or Lebanese peace. He therefore sees the MNF as 'the imposition of a *pax americana* in the Middle East.'[76]

As the literature review and historiography demonstrate, the scholarly research has focused on two areas. First, the Lebanon crisis as a potential opportunity for the Reagan Administration to implement wider foreign policy goals in the Middle East and second, the role of the Soviet Union and the Arab-Israeli conflict as important factors in the conflict's regional and international dynamics. What the existing literature so far has failed to provide is an examination of how the US' regional approach failed to engage the internal Lebanese factions, thus creating policy inefficiencies throughout the MNF deployment. This thesis aims to fill this gap.

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[73] Gabriel, 'Operation Peace for Galilee', pp.45-55.

[74] Philip Stoddard, 'U.S. Policy and the Arab Israeli Conflict: Observations on the current Scene', *AAPSS*, Vol. 482, (1985), pp.19-39.

[75] *ibid* & Joseph Sisco, 'The United States and the Arab-Israeli Dispute', *AAPSS*, Vol.384, 1969, pp. 66-72.

[76] Thakur, 'International Peacekeeping', p.472.

Methodology and Sources

This thesis is an empirical study of executive US decision-making in Lebanon from 1982-1984. It adopts an incremental rather than a neo-institutional or exclusively rational approach to examine US policy in Lebanon, which was characterised by significant policy discontinuity. It also focuses on the role of personalities, particularly Reagan and Shultz and their confrontational leadership style. As Aran and Alden note, the role played by personalities in foreign policy construction provides an important context for the specific policies themselves.[77] As such, this research cautiously considers Reagan's key ideological and doctrinal discourses around Lebanon. This thesis draws upon a wide range of primary sources, many of which were only declassified between November 2010 and April 2014, including National Security Council, Presidential and State Department diplomatic cables. The US archival material is complemented by further research undertaken in the UN and British national archives. The latter holds the European communications between the other MNF partners: Britain, France and Italy.

In addition to the national archives, the Presidential archives were consulted. The Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California has released the majority of the documents on Lebanon from the National Security Council (NSC), the Joint Chiefs of Staff as well as the working papers and cables from the US Middle East Ambassadors Philip Habib, Morris Draper and Robert McFarlane. Key daily reports and communication cables from the US-Middle East envoys and ambassadors have been released and provide the crucial diplomatic and military intelligence behind the US intervention's main policy phases. This library also contains communications between Secretary of State George Shultz and the State Department's envoys from

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[77] Alden & Aran, 'Foreign Policy Analysis', pp.23-25.

1983-1984. It should be noted that many of these documents were only declassified in early 2012. All of the White House Office of Records Management files have been released, as have the majority of the White House Staff Office Files (up to 1985), including cable files between US-Middle East Special Envoy Donald Rumsfeld, Lebanese President Gemayel, Shultz, Weinberger and Reagan. The NSC working papers and National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) meetings and reports have all been declassified up to 1985. Although the Habib mission reports have been partially redacted, the full documents are also archived at the Department of State. Also, numerous NSDD files relating directly to pre-crisis and crisis decision-making, NSDD103 'Strategy of Lebanon', NSDD 109 'Responding to the Lebanon Crisis' and NSDD123 'Next Steps in Lebanon' (amongst others), and the William Burns Files which contain the Crisis Pre-Planning Group (CPPG) meeting notes for 1984 are now available. [78]

The files which have not been released are the Lebanon Situation Cables around the 1983 April US Embassy Bombing and the October Marine Barracks Bombings. These contain the Barracks' field reports and the operational military and security communications in the aftermath of the bombings. Similarly, US-Israeli operational and military task force documents remain classified. As the focus of this thesis is on high-level foreign policy decision-making, the unavailability of the military operational reports does not constitute a significant obstacle.

Research was also conducted in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and James Earl Carter Presidential Library. The former holds both President

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[78] Eisenhower established the National Security Council's Presidential directives as a means of disseminating executive level and Presidential orders. This NSC system evolved into Presidential Directives under Carter and finally into NSDDs under Reagan. This thesis will examine each NSDDs' development in turn, as these represent the key policy signposts at an executive level and so are of great importance to this research.

Eisenhower's personal communications and internal documents in the Ann Whitman File from 1953-1961. The NSC Staff Papers from 1948-1961 also hold records relating to the Lebanon Disaster File and the Operations Coordinating Board of the Secretariat series. The Carter Library has a large holding of material relating to the Camp David Accords but little material that deals directly with Lebanon. US Ambassador John Gunther Dean's cables to Lebanon provide the most detailed narrative of the Carter Administration's policy in Lebanon, although much of the diplomatic community has shunned Dean due to his alleged claims of an Israeli assassination attempt against his person.

The Department of State's 'Released Documents' collection holds numerous communiqués between Middle East Envoys, Secretary of State Shultz and US Embassies in Beirut and Tel Aviv to the Department of State from 1982-1984. CIA reports are limited but provide valuable interagency communications throughout the period regarding US security and US-Soviet policy. The CIA has also released a number of reports and Intelligence papers regarding the Middle East and Lebanon. These files, such as NIIIA84-10012 'Interagency Intelligence Assessment - Soviet Policy toward Lebanon' are particularly useful for understanding the extent to which concerns over Soviet expansion, armaments and influence in the region affected US policy in Lebanon. Much of what is declassified in the CIA archives relates to US-Soviet policy and interagency or intelligence information papers.

The UN Archives and Record Management Section at the UN headquarters in New York offer extensive available materials regarding UN policy and communication over Lebanon and the Middle East, housed in the UNIFIL archive files. The materials at the UNARMS consist of peacekeeping cables, daily intelligence reports from Beirut, Secretariat reports and communication cables

between the Secretary General and the White House. The documents released pertaining to the early 1980s include the private communications and papers of UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar. The documents related to the UNIFIL strategy in southern Lebanon, as well as the PLO/Israeli and Lebanese/Israeli ceasefire negotiations, are most relevant to this thesis.

While a large amount of US archival material was available, this was not the case for French archival material. Unsuccessful applications were made to *Archives Nationales: Département de l'exécutif et du législatif, Archives Présidentielles de François Mitterrand* and *Archives Diplomatique* in Paris. The files requested unfortunately remain closed, based on national security issues and foreign policy classifications and are not expected to open until 2044. As such, this research is unable comprehensively to examine the domestic French decision-making process except from US, UN and British perspectives on French activities and communiqués. Fortunately, the holdings on the MNF at the UK National Archives at Kew, with many released in April 2014, cover the perspectives, communications and minutes of the European MNF partners including France. There are numerous letters from British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to Presidents Ronald Reagan and François Mitterrand as well as Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe's meetings and negotiations with Italian and French Foreign Ministers Giulo Andreotti and Claude Cheysson. While the British contribution to the MNF was the smallest, and the British joined the MNFII last, Thatcher and Howe's close alliance with the Regan Administration means that these papers provide important insights into the other MNF partners. The Italian archives are excluded from this research due to access difficulties. Also little Lebanese material exists, given the destruction of many of the administrative repositories during the Lebanese Civil War.

In addition to this wide range of archival sources, memoirs of Eisenhower, Carter, Reagan, Gemayel, Shultz, Haig, Weinberger and former Lebanese Foreign Minister Salem have also been consulted. While Reagan's Presidential Diary is a daily account of his time in office, it offers limited analytical insight.[79] As Egerton argues, the use of memoirs to construct political history should be approached with caution, as the line between 'historical truth and personal apologia' can become blurred, especially with regard to accounts of a public failure during the author's tenure or Administration, as is the case with Reagan.[80] Scalmer further argues that such autobiographies and memoirs can lead to a more popular, ambitious and 'interventionist' flavour than the historical truth might have provided.[81]

Last, but certainly not least, the archives of key international newspapers such as the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *L'Orient Le Jour*, *Maariv*, *La Repubblica* and *Le Monde* were consulted, to establish the chronology and provide a perspective on the public discourse on the Lebanese conflict, the MNF partners, and US decision-making.

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[79] Ronald Reagan, 'The Reagan Diaries' (USA: Harper Collins, 2007); Amine Gemayel, 'L'Offense et le Pardon', (Paris: Gallimard et Lieu Commun, 1988); Caspar Weinberger, 'Fighting for Peace: Seven Critical Years in the Pentagon', (New York: Warner Communications, 1990); Alexander Haig, 'Caveat: Realism, Reagan, and Foreign Policy', (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984); George Shultz, 'Triumph and Turmoil: My Years as Secretary of State', (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1993) & Elie Salem, 'Violence and Diplomacy in Lebanon, The Troubled Years 1982-1988' (London: Tauris, 1995).
[80] George Egerton, 'The Politics of Memory: Form and Function in the History of Political Memoir from Antiquity to Modernity', in George Egerton, ed., *Political Memoir: Essays on the Politics of Memory*, (London: Frank Cass & Co Ltd, 1994), pp.3-6.
[81] Sean Scalmer, 'The Rise of the Insider: Memoirs and Diaries in Recent Australian Political History', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol.56, No.1, 2010, pp.82-104.

<h1 style="text-align:center">Chapter One</h1>

<h1 style="text-align:center">Lebanon: A crowded state without a nation</h1>

Two events are credited with sowing the seeds of one of the Middle East's most complex civil conflicts. On 26 February 1975, the Mayor of Sidon and founder of *al-Tanzim al-Sha'aby al-Nassery*,[1] Marouf Saad, was assassinated by an unknown sniper while protesting at the popular fishermen strikes in Sidon. These protests were organised against former Lebanese President and Chairman of the Maronite National Liberal Party, Camille Cham'un's, decision to monopolise the fisheries along the coast. Many Lebanese sympathized with the fishermen, viewing the industrial monopolization as detrimental to the social economy. Saad's assassination sparked violent confrontations between the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the predominantly *Sunni* protestors, ending in 16 casualties.

On 13 April 1975, five hooded gunmen drove past the convoy of the founder of the Martonite Christian *Al Kata'eb al Loubaniyya* party, Pierre Gemayel, and killed four of his security entourage. Gemayel was attending Sunday mass as the gunmen attempted to assassinate the anti-Palestinian *Kata'eb* leader. In response to this attempted assassination, Christian militiamen ambushed a bus carrying Palestinian and Lebanese Muslim football fans who were passing through Ain Rummaneh on their return from a match, killing 27.[2]

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[1] Otherwise known as the Popular Nasserite Organisation (NPO).

[2] Wade Goria, 'Sovereignty and Leadership in Lebanon 1943-1976', (London: Ithaca Press, 1985), pp. 181-183 & Yusif al-Haytham, 'Battles of Survival', *Middle East Research and Information Project,* No.44, February 1976, p.12.

While neither of these events was exclusively responsible for the 15-year conflict that followed, they are widely recognised as the events that ignited what was an already fragile Lebanese political landscape.

The outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War was in some ways foreseeable as it arose from the communal tensions that had predominated since the state's independence in 1943. However, the conflict's protracted nature was surprising, even to the factional leaders and militias who participated in the violence. At the heart of the communal tensions lay the challenges that Lebanon faced with regard to its national identity formation. The Phoenician, Syriac, Roman and Ottoman legacies, coupled with Lebanon's more recent French colonial experience from 1920-1943, resulted in the emergence of a fragmented yet fused, distinctive but vulnerable syncretistic identity which was institutionally represented by Lebanon's consociational political system. As this system started to break down, communal allies became enemies and historical enemies became aligned. The resulting internal power struggle between the key sectarian factions – (Maronite) Christians, *Sunnis*, *Shi'as* and *Druze* – illustrated the degree to which military, religious, national and communal discontinuity had been fuelled by the Lebanese consociational system.[3] It also invited Lebanon's neighbours, Syria and Israel, to intervene, further complicating the fragile political dynamics.

This chapter looks at the origins of communal tensions in Lebanon and the 1975-90 Lebanese Civil War, which must be understood as an amalgamation of

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[3] Consociationalism in the Lebanese context will be defined as constitutionalised power sharing along politico-religious lines. Referring to the broader parliamentary system, it is separated from sectarianism, which will be defined by social, religious, intra-communal and inter-communal relationships. Arend Lijphart, 'Consociational Democracy', *World Politics*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 1969, p.207-215 & Oren Barak, 'Intra-communal and Inter-communal Dimensions of Conflict and Peace in Lebanon', *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* Vol. 34, No.4, 2002, pp.619-644.

numerous smaller conflicts, both internal and external, in order to situate the intervention by the US in 1982. Unlike the seminal works on the Lebanese Civil War by Hudson, Hanf, Salibi, Deeb, Goria, Petran, Beydoun and Kassir, this chapter does not aim to provide a detailed account of the constantly vacillating political or military histories.[4] Rather, it will subdivide Lebanese history into five sections to create an overview of the development of Lebanese identity and the history of the Civil War. The first section looks at the *Mutasarrifiyya* during which the foundations of communalism were laid. The second section analyzes the French Mandate period which established the consociational political system. The third section discusses the 1958 crisis also known as the first Lebanese civil war. The fourth section looks at the internal dynamics of the second Lebanese civil war while the fifth section explores the external influence focusing on the Palestinians, Syria and Israel. This brief analysis of Lebanese identity and the Lebanese conflict will serve as a basis for assessing the extent to which the Reagan Administration accurately comprehended Lebanon's internal dynamics in the lead up to and during the US intervention. Indeed, it will serve to illustrate that the US developed a foreign policy that was exclusively focused on the conflict's regional characteristics, as if the Lebanese Civil War were merely an extension of the broader Arab-Israeli or Middle East tensions.

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[4] Michael Hudson, 'The Precarious Republic: Political Modernization in Lebanon', (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1985), Kamal Salibi, 'A house of Many Mansions- the History of Lebanon Reconsidered', (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1993); Theodor Hanf, 'Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation', (London: Centre for Lebanese Studies, Tauris & Co, 1993); Marius Deeb, 'The Lebanese Civil War', (New York: Praeger, 1980); Goria, 'Sovereignty and Leadership in Lebanon 1943-1976'; Tabitha Petran, 'The Struggle over Lebanon', (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987); B.J. Odeh, 'Lebanon: Dynamics of Conflict', (London: Zed Books, 1985); Samir Kassir, '*La guerre du Liban: De la dissension nationale au conflit régional, 1975-1982*'(Beirut: CERMOC, 1994) & Ahmad Beydoun, 'Le Liban: Itineraires dans une guerre incivile', (Beirut: Cermoc, 1993).

Mutasarrifiyya: laying the foundations of communalism

Lebanese historian Kamal Salibi proposed that 'to create a country is one thing; to create a nationality is another.'[5] Indeed, it could be argued that Lebanon has never managed to create a unified national identity, one that encompasses all of the country's diverse religious and social groups. Similarly, Reinkowski maintains that modern Lebanon's construction involved the establishment of a state but not of a nation-state, largely due to the Lebanese system, in which communally-apportioned executive leadership roles and religious representation in the political structure form the bedrock of the parliamentary system.[6]

Lebanese nation-building began during the Ottoman Empire's Tanzimat period. The Tanzimat reforms gave rise to the creation of the semi-autonomous state or *mutasarrifiyya* of Mount Lebanon. They also legislated for religious tolerance across the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, edict 10 of the 1856 Imperial Reform, *Hatt-ı Hümayun*, stated that:

> As all forms of religion are and shall be freely professed in my dominions, no subject of my Empire shall be hindered in the exercise of the religion that he professes, nor shall be in any way annoyed on this account. No one shall be compelled to change their religion.[7]

This progressive legislation, while affirming the Ottoman Sultan's authority as supreme leader, allowed each religious sect's patriarchal leader to preside over social jurisprudence issues. The system defined broader concepts of equality whereby all subjects held equal class of entry for education and mixed religious tribunals. It was under this initial reform that many elements of religious nationalism were espoused.

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[5] Salibi, 'A house of Many Mansions', pp.19-37.

[6] Maurus Reinkowski, 'National identity since 1990', *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Politik und Wirtschaft des Orient*, Vol.39, 1997, p.493.

[7] Hatt-ı Hümayun, 'Edict 10', *Atatürk Institute of Modern Turkish History,* Boğaziçi University, Online: http://www.ata.boun.edu.tr/Department%20Webpages/ATA_517/Rescript%20of%20Reform, %2018%20February%201856.doc, (The translator is unknown), Accessed June 2011.

This established a social and religious system that was equitable and yet divided, introducing communalism in an attempt to bring about greater religious and sectarian freedom.

This communalism meant that each subject belonged to a religious community within this system, although their definitive membership was still within the Sultanate. The communalist system was not simply characterised by religious divisions. These divisions were further extended by differences in communal wealth, culture, international alliances and competing perspectives regarding national identity and Lebanese sovereignty.[8] As such, these factors strengthened the individual's communal identity and, in the long run, elevated communal over national identity. This marked the birth of confessionalism in Lebanon and these constitutional reforms ultimately became one of the greatest influences on the National Pact, which was decreed fewer than 90 years later.[9]

During the nineteenth century sectarian tensions between the Christians, *Druze* and Muslims resurfaced, this time with British and French backing. Lebanese Christianity comprises a majority Maronite population who, unique to the Levant, derive their beliefs from Eastern Syriac Orthodoxy. The remainder of Lebanese Christianity includes Melkite Christian Orthodox, Greek and Armenian Orthodox, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism and, to a lesser extent, Coptic Christianity. The *Druze,* like the Maronites, are unique to the Levant and follow an *Ismaili Shi'a* denomination though they do not consider themselves *Shi'a* or identify as a part of the broader Lebanese Muslim population.

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[8] Kais Firro, 'Inventing Lebanon: Nationalism and the State Under the Mandate', (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002), pp.43-46.
[9] Ralph Crow, 'Religious Sectarianism in the Lebanese Political System', *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 24, No.3, August 1962, p.493.

With French support and open opposition to the Ottoman Empire, the Maronite Christians battled with the *Druze* (supported by a British-Ottoman coalition) for supremacy over Mount Lebanon. This sectarian war began with hostilities between the Sunni-born Christian convert Bachir Sahib II, the *Wali* of Mount Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley and Jabal Amel, and Bachir Jumblatt, feudal leader of the *Druze* community.[10] Bachir II attempted to break the parochial feudal system in favour of a Christian-dominated protectorate and further resentment was fermented in the *Druze* community after Bachir II executed Bachir Jumblatt. As Traboulsi argues, such violent actions led the Ottoman Sultanate to justify further divisions of Mount Lebanon along sectarian lines in an attempt to ease the tension. The European support in splitting Mount Lebanon into two protectorates or *Qaimaqam*s each led by a *Druze* or Maronite *Wali* only divided the communities further and, as such, religiously-charged attacks raged.[11]

The *Druze* retaliated against the Christian population who had risen up in 1859 against the *Druze* leaders in the peasant revolt of Kisrwan. Petran and Fawaz both argue that the conflicts such as the 1860 Battle of Deir al Qamar left an inedible mark on the development of Lebanon's nation-building as they 'hardened its sectarian outlook.'[12] As civil war broke out between the *Druze* and Maronites, with the *Druze* and *Sunni* massacre of Maronite civilians and monastics, the war ultimately spread as

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[10] *Wali* means the provincial or district Governor, in this case of Mount Lebanon.
[11] Fawaz Traboulsi, 'A history of Modern Lebanon', (London: Pluto Press, 2007), pp.37-42.
[12] Leila Fawaz, 'Zahle and Dayr al-Qamar', in Nadim Shehadi & Dana Haffar Mills, eds., *Lebanon: a History of Conflict and Consensus*, (London: I.B. Tauris: 1988), pp.51-59 & Petran, 'The Struggle over Lebanon', p.24.

far as Damascus where three days of ethnic cleansing took place in July 1860, leading to the death of thousands of Christians.[13]

In response to the European outcry at the massacre of Christians in the Ottoman Empire, Napoleon III established a European and Ottoman convention in August 1860 to discuss a resolution to the conflict. Driven by France's self-ascribed historical role of protectors of the Christian population as well as the desire to increase French influence over the Ottoman Empire and the silk trade, Napoleon III took the lead in mediating a European intervention in Mount Lebanon and Greater Syria. By 5 September, the French Emperor's agreement had been signed in Paris, inaugurating, in effect, a multilateral peacekeeping force known as *Réglement Organique*. While the French contributed half of the 12,000 troops and held the ultimate responsibility in leading the force, the *Réglement Organique* also included British, Austrian, Prussian and Russian contingents. Relevant to the later chapters on the MNF, *Réglement Organique* in many ways represented the first Western peacekeeping force in Lebanon, notably led by the French. This also illustrated that, even before the state of Modern Lebanon was created, communal coexistence relied heavily on outside intervention when the system broke down.[14]

Akarli highlights that this primarily French force intervened to establish a power-sharing system within Mount Lebanon that would protect the Maronites' existence and Orthodox interests while also recognising the *Druze* and to a lesser extent *Sunni* and *Shi'a* populations.[15] However Akarli also argues that the French system that came with this intervention, *'Réglement et protocole relatifs a la*

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[13] Meir Zamir, 'The Formation of Modern Lebanon', (London: Croom Helm, 1985), pp.1-38 & Leila Fawaz, 'An Occasion for War', (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), pp.78-101.

[14] Hannah Stewart, 'Lebanon's National Identity: Walking between raindrops?', *Levantine Review*, Vol.1. No. 2., 2012, p.159.

[15] Engin Deniz Akarli, 'The Administrative Council', in Shehadi & Mills, *Lebanon*, p.79- 81.

reorganisation du Mont Liban', was ineffective in increasing inter-communal socio-political dialogues. Hence without a consensus on social norms and political institutions, these administrative reforms only led to further communal separation. The war of 1860 and subsequent reforms fomented a deeper 'confessional setocracy' that penetrated the fabric of administrative, social and political life.[16] As Makdisi notes,

> In the aftermath of 1860, a culture of sectarianism developed in the sense that all sectors of society, public and private, recognized that the war and the massacres marked the beginning of a new age - an age defined by the raw intrusion of sectarian consciousness into modern life.[17]

Mount Lebanon's inherited violent history, coupled with its confessional legacy, highlighted the need to handle these ongoing religious and communal differences with great sensitively in order to maintain a tense but sustained peace. While underlying confessional tensions continued throughout the early nineteenth century, a negotiated peace was established under a tenuously united Mount Lebanon.

The French Mandate: formalising the consociational democracy

The Ottoman Empire's break-up after World War I paved the way for the establishment of Greater Lebanon.[18] Modern-day Lebanon's foundations were internationally proposed in 1920, under a League of Nations Mandate. The Muslim population wanted a British controlled, Arab-centric constitution, even going so far as to side with the Hashemite, pan-Arab, Faisal ibn Husayn, in Syria.[19] The Lebanese *Sunni* did not want to be separated from their *Sunni* brethren in Syria. In contrast, the

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[16] Petran, 'The Struggle over Lebanon', p.26.

[17] *ibid.*

[18] Zamir, 'The Formation of Modern Lebanon', pp.38-96.

[19] Faisal ibn Husayn was King of Syria for four months in 1920 and was controversial in his support for the Zionist movement, mostly due to the British support for his leadership. In July 1920, when the French Mandate was announced in Syria, Faisal was removed.

Christians saw Lebanon as French or Europe-oriented and wanted to create a Greater Lebanon, which encompassed territory beyond Mount Lebanon in order to ensure economic viability that was separate from Syria. The Armenian and Greek Orthodox community ultimately had the swing vote which otherwise would have cut off the isolated Maronites from their co-religionists in the rest of the Arab world.

The modern state of Lebanon would include the urban ports of Beirut, Sidon, Tyre and Tripoli. It would extend east to the Bekaa Valley as far as Baalbeck and Rashayya. Salibi states that this expansion made no sense to Maronite objectives for Christian control because it ultimately meant taking in Muslim populated areas and thereby an increased population of *Sunni*, *Shi'a* and *Druze* in the proposed Christian territories.[20] The Maronite community, however, saw the boundaries as being more culturally, economically and nationally defined, due to their profound Christian Maronite sense of the Lebanese homeland as well as a sense of historical and civilizational connectedness to the Phoenicians who predated the Arabs.[21] The Lebanese Maronites immediately welcomed the French as liberators, freeing them from the Arabist chains under Faisal's influence.

With French support the Lebanese Christians won the League of Nations debate with the declaration of the French Mandate over Lebanon at the San Remo Conference in April 1920 and the ensuing Treaty of Sèvres in August that year.[22] However, as Fieldhouse notes,

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[20] Salibi, 'A House of Many Mansions', pp.19-37.
[21] Crow, 'Religious Sectarianism in the Lebanese Political System', pp.492-498
[22] D.K. Fieldhouse, 'Western Imperialism in the Middle East 1914-1958', (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.314-319; Stephen Longrigg, 'Syria and Lebanon under the French Mandate', (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp.334-365; Khalaf, 'Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon', pp.62-151; David Gordon, 'Lebanon: The Fragmented Nation', (London: Croom Helm, 1980), pp.17-49 & Zamir, 'The Formation of Modern Lebanon', pp.38-96.

Greater Lebanon was a nation only in the eyes of the Maronites and some of their Christian allies. For the rest of the population it was an imposed state dominated by the Maronites in which they felt less at home than they had been when they were part of the Ottoman *vilayet*.[23]

This ensured that, from its conception, the modern state of Lebanon saw 'a force called Arabism, acting from outside and inside the country' standing 'face to face with another exclusively parochial social force called Lebanism,'

…and the two forces collided on every fundamental issue, impeding the normal development of the state and keeping its political legitimacy and ultimate viability continuously in question…it was certainly no accident that the original proponents of Lebanism in the country were almost exclusively Christians, and for the most part Maronites, while the most unbending proponents of Arabism, as a community, were the Muslims.[24]

This issue over Muslim and *Druze* Arabism and Maronite Lebanism plagued the path of state and nation building from the start. It undermined the state, making it unable to placate the communal tensions in the lead up to Civil War. Similarly, the Christian-Muslim spilt on a broader level was used to justify the periodic Christian proposals for the partition of Lebanon between North and South.[25] Salibi makes the most important point concerning the country's 'Lebanist' identity. He argues that unlike many of the post-war Arab nations constructed by the French or British mandate, the Maronite majority themselves 'willed it [Lebanon] into existence.' Lebanon, therefore, was not dictated its confessional or communal terms.[26]

However Modern Lebanon's very foundations contained a rift between the Maronites on one hand and the other Lebanese communities over the vision of a

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[23] Fieldhouse, 'Western Imperialism in the Middle East 1914-1958', p.333.

[24] Salibi, p.19. Several other historians also identify Arabism and Lebanism/Lebanonism as being particularly important components of Lebanese identity. See: Stewart, 'Lebanon's National Identity: Walking between raindrops?', pp.159-164; Zamir, 'The Formation of Modern Lebanon', pp.38-96; Raghid El-Solh, 'Lebanon and Arabism: National Identity and State Formation', (London & New York: I.B Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2004), pp.200-287 & Makdisi, 'Reconstructing the Nation-State', pp.23-25.

[25] Saeb Salam, 'Lubnan wahad la lubnanan', *American University of Beirut Collection*, No. 5, 17 April 1961, p.402.

[26] Salibi, pp.19-37.

unified Lebanon. If Lebanon as a confessional state was to thrive, the relationship between these communal groups needed to be formalised. As such the Ottoman Empire's legacy and development of a divided Lebanese identity are crucial for understanding how the 1943 Lebanese National Pact was formed.

Christian President Bishara al-Khouri and *Sunni* Prime Minister Riyad al-Solh's unwritten agreement stipulated that the Lebanese Christians would relinquish European protection on condition that the Muslim population (exclusively represented by the *Sunni* elite at that time) abandoned its pan-Arab ambitions. The National Pact also demarcated leadership positions along communal lines, with the Christians holding sway, followed closely by the *Sunnis*. The *Druze* and *Shi'a* were relegated to lower positions, without executive control. This was justified as a proportionate political and social allocation and based on the out-dated 1932 census data that saw a 6:5 ratio of Christians to Muslims, respectively. Odeh states that the 'usage of Muslim/Christian categories, to the exclusion of virtually all others, robs the Lebanese of his humanity.'[27] Yet, the fact that formalised confessional politics had played a role in Lebanon's instability since the National Pact is undeniable.

According to Arend Lijphart's consociational democratic theory, Lebanon provided the perfect environment in which to develop an overarching sense of Lebanese nationalism that would have reduced the Muslim-Christian cleavages and enhanced the potential opportunities for minority or subgroup participation.[28] Lijphart

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[27] Odeh, 'Lebanon: Dynamics of Conflict', p.20.

[28] Lijphart, 'Consociational Democracy', p.207-.215; Stewart, 'Lebanon's National Identity: Walking between raindrops?', pp.153-180; Richard Dekmejian, 'Consociational Democracy in Crisis: The Case of Lebanon', *Comparative Politics*, Vol.10, No.2, 1978, pp.251-265; Brenda Seaver, 'The Regional Sources of Power-Sharing Failure: The Case of Lebanon', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol.115, No.2, 2000 pp. 247-271; Barak, 'Intra-communal and Inter-communal Dimensions of Conflict and Peace in Lebanon', pp.619-644; Imad Salamey, 'Failing Consociationalism in Lebanon and Integrative Options', *International Journal of Peace Studies,* Vol.14, No.2, 2009, pp.83-105; Hudson, 'The Lebanese Crisis', pp.109-115 &

defines consociationalism as rare cases of 'fragmented but stable democracies.'[29] However, Lijphart's consociational democracy model relies on a continuum of control by communal elites over their own clients as well as the other minority communities. This presumes that there is a modicum of inter-communal cohesion. In Lebanon, the development of a formal Lebanese political power-sharing model was directly affected and undermined by a dynastic clientelist system, which, in turn evolved into a deeply sectarian social system. This created socio-communal divisions that extended beyond the politicized confessional lines.

Clientelism dominated the modern Lebanese political landscape such that it, as Hamzeh describes, represented an '"addendum" to the central institutional modes of organization, interaction and exchange.'[30] While the patronage system is not unique to Lebanon, the degree to which the client-patron relationship transcended many of the national system's components makes clientelism particularly important in post-independence Lebanon's development.[31] It also meant that the relationship between the community and their clientelist leaders was stronger than the relationship with any regional or national leadership, fundamentally undermining the power-sharing system that the National Pact was supposedly formalising. The *Za'im* and *Qabaday*'s roles are an important component of the Lebanese clientelist system as the *Zu'ama* were notable families within each community that controlled the Lebanese political context at a local and social level.[32] Khalaf argues that this *Za'im*-led clientelist system created stability on a communal and local level where consociationalism and the

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Imad Salamey & Rhys Payne, 'Parliamentary Consociationalism in Lebanon: Equal Citizenry vs. Quoted Confessionalism', *The Journal of Legislative Studies,* Vol.14, No.4, pp.451-473.

[29] Lijphart, 'Consociational Democracy', p.211.

[30] Nizar Hamzeh, 'Clientalism, Lebanon: Roots and Trends', *Middle East Studies*, Vol.37, No.3, 2001, p.167.

[31] Johnson, 'Class and Client in Beirut', 1986, p.2.

[32] *ibid.* p.12.

National Pact could not.[33] Hudson correctly rejects this, arguing instead that the patronage system was yet another inefficiency of the Lebanese system where any national democratic electoral program becomes redundant if communal leadership and control remain uncontested. As Hudson explains, Lebanese consociational democracy was tenuously developed upon unstable, unrepresentative 'democratic' institutions, which both limited social mobilisation and distorted the distribution of wealth and modernisation.[34]

This was a reality that meant that the control of local politics was not determined by the state but rather by the most powerful or wealthy parochial dynasties.[35] This domination reflected, not each sect's demographic proportions, but rather each *Za'im*'s economic wealth.[36] The subversive culture which existed between the *Zu'ama* and the community ensured that the less wealthy remained economically dependent upon their leaders and hence were submissive to their political decisions. The few elite families who held control over each area also regulated the community's wealth and political decisions. These relationships between the *Za'im* and clients were far from being an equal exchange, but rather driven by a trade-off of welfare services and state patronage distributions. In return, the client would guarantee the patron electoral support, again undermining any true sense of democracy.

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[33] Khalaf, 'Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon', pp.159-165.

[34] Hudson, 'The Lebanese Crisis', pp.109-115.

[35] Goria, 'Sovereignty and Leadership in Lebanon 1943-1976', p.10.

[36] Augustus Richard Norton, 'Changing Actors and Leadership among the Shiites of Lebanon', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 482, 1985, p.112.

The 1958 Crisis: Arab Nationalism, awakening and identity

The exponential economic growth during 'Lebanon's Golden/Gilded Age' in the 1940s and 1950s challenged the fledgling Lebanese system's flexibility.[37] The rise of economic prosperity was concomitant with a social and intellectual awakening in Lebanon, where previously subordinated communities and minority leaders contested what they believed was the disproportionate representation within the broader political system. The first major challenge to the Lebanese system was the 1958 Civil War, which illustrated the flexing of pan-Arabist ideological muscle.[38] The decline into civil war can be traced back to the Suez Crisis and the decision by Sunni Prime Minister Rashid Karami to side with Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, while the Maronite President Camille Cham'un refused to break ties with Western powers in line with other Arab League states. Nasser's rise as the great pan-Arab leader after Suez ensured that Nasserism played a significant role in Lebanon's 1957 parliamentary elections. This was further consolidated by the establishment of the United Arab Republic (UAR) under Nasser's leadership in February 1958 and attempts by parts of northern Lebanon to secede in order to join the UAR. Equating Nasserism with communism, Cham'un called for US assistance under the Eisenhower doctrine in an attempt to secure his second, unconstitutional, term as president. In July, US Marines landed in Beirut to assist the Christian-led Lebanese Army to ease the tensions.

Considering this episode from the perspective of the National Pact, both the *Sunni* and Christian leaders had openly undermined their promises to uphold unity and stability. The 1958 Civil War was the precursor to the Lebanese State system's full breakdown and vividly illustrated the degree to which the system had fuelled the

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[37] Khalaf, 'Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon', p.151.
[38] Seaver, 'The Regional Sources of Power-Sharing Failure', p.249.

confessional divide. The conflict ultimately forced newly-instated President Fouad Chehab to reform the administrative system with an equal split between Christians and Muslims, placing the *Sunni* community almost exclusively in charge of 50% of the state civil service functions. The 1958 Civil War, the Chehabist national unity reforms and Nasser's ideology's interregional strength led some Lebanese *Sunni* to believe that their pursuit of Arab Nationalism had paid off. These initial victories paved the way for pan-Arab expansion within Lebanon, fundamentally undermining the national system. The miraculous economic growth that had characterized the early 1960s under President Fouad Chehab, faded under his successor, Charles Helou. The 1966 Intrabank crash, the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, and rural discontent led to a growing 'revolution from below.' [39] Increased social mobilisation and rapid urbanisation meant that the urban population increased in proportion from 27% to 60% within a decade.[40]

The top-down conditions that Lijphart deems crucial for a successful power sharing system had broken down and the Chehabist veneer of national unity meant that only a semblance of true communal participation and social order had been achieved.[41] The *Sunni*-led *al-Musharakah* (participation) campaign demanded a more proportionate sharing of the executive control, which the *Sunnis* had enjoyed under Chehab's alliance with Karami. This was followed by both *Shi'a* and *Druze* campaigns for greater representation under Imam Musa Sadr and Kamal Jumblatt respectively. [42] However Crow argues that the lack of Lebanese communal participation neither created the political instabilities that were evident in a Chehabist

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[39] Tabitha Petran, 'The Struggle over Lebanon', (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987), p.130.
[40] *ibid*. p.169.
[41] *ibid*. pp.161-163.
[42] *ibid.* pp.110-131 & Augustus Norton, 'Amal and the Shi'a', (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), pp.37-58.

Lebanon nor would Lebanon have stabilized had the inter-communal inequalities been removed.[43] In fact, Khalaf, Entelis and Harik see these sectarian groupings as an opportunity for development and stability in Lebanon rather than simply creating divisiveness.[44]

However, in the prelude to the Lebanese Civil War in 1975, Hudson argues that the divisions precipitated by consociationalism were to blame for the power-sharing experiment's failure to establish nation-building and thus led to the outbreak of the war.[45] From an exclusively consociational perspective, such as Lipjhart's work, it is easy to assert that the post-independence Lebanese identity formation was merely characterized as an extension of an oversimplified confessional split. Odeh argues that this would reduce the tensions in Lebanon to a cursory Muslim-Christian contest without understanding their innate social or communal identity undercurrents.[46] Similarly, Goria argues that, while Chehab held the factional tensions at bay in the early 1960s, he did little to deal with the structural holes that were growing in the Lebanese system.[47] From 1970-1975, the abolition of Chehab's *Deuxième Bureau*, which had kept the population under close surveillance, also signalled a reduction in central administration control. When *Druze* leaders called for an intervention by Syria and the fast transition of power to President Suleiman Frangieh, the Lebanese system as a concept broke down.[48]

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[43] Crow, 'Sectarianism in the Lebanese Political System', pp.493-519.
[44] Khalaf, 'Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon', pp.208-211; John Entelis, 'Ethnic And Religious Diversity In Lebanon', *Society*, Vol. 22, No.3, 1985, pp.48-51 & Judith Harik, 'The Public and Social Services of the Lebanese Militias', *Centre for Lebanese Studies,* September 1994, pp.2-13.
[45] Hudson in *Lebanon: a History of Conflict and Consensus*, p.234.
[46] Odeh, 'Lebanon: Dynamics of Conflict', p.15.
[47] Goria, 'Sovereignty and Leadership in Lebanon 1943-1976', pp.250-251.
[48] Elie Chalala, 'Syrian Policy in Lebanon, 1976-1984: Moderate goals and pragmatic means', *Journal of Arab Affairs,* Vol. 4, No. 1, 1985, pp.67-87.

The structural weaknesses that plagued the Lebanese system, by 1975, had led to an inability to create a nation out of a state and thereby had led to an unstable environment in which the participants, both internal and external could exploit these insecurities. The outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War was a vivid reminder that consociationalism was merely a tool for coexistence rather than the product of long-term nation building.[49] It was inevitable, given the deeply divided sectarian ruptures that the internal religious dynamics eventually undermined the wider state structures.[50]

Internal dynamics of war: The Lebanese Civil War and Sectarianism

Consociationalism alone, however, was not to blame for the outbreak of the Civil War or indeed its prolonged duration. Without the continual destabilization by the various internal sectarian actors, Lebanon's political system would not have collapsed.[51] Hanf regards the complex sectarian disputes between the Lebanese factions as essential to understanding how the communal instabilities escalated to war from the first phase until the Syrian intervention in 1976.[52] Stewart also argues that the outbreak of the conflict was a result of the sectarian elite's inability to coalesce. 'In 1975, just as in 1860 and 1958, while the ruling elites fought amongst themselves, the Lebanese were either drawn into conflicts not of their own making, or else subjected to their consequences.'[53] Makdisi highlights the relationship between these elites and the undercurrent of sectarianism that emerged from it:

[49] Gordon, 'Lebanon: The Fragmented Nation', pp.70-72.
[50] Odeh, 'Lebanon: Dynamics of Conflict', pp.147-150.
[51] Deeb, 'The Lebanese Civil War', p.14.
[52] Hanf, 'Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon', pp.181-226.
[53] Stewart, 'Lebanon's National Identity', p.171.

> The popular sectarianism accentuated the untenable contradictions upon which the nation was anchored. Whereas compromises between the elites were meant to divide power among different communities, they in fact divided power among elites of various communities at the expense of the divided and disenfranchised majority.[54]

Understanding Lebanon's sectarian dynamic also requires recognition of the essentially inter-communal characteristics that transcend the formal national parliamentary system. It also means acknowledging that the differences between the sectarian groups were more than merely religio-political divisions but also reflected complex social dynamics. This sectarianism weakened the fragile national system to the point that, as Norton argues, the regional powers were in fact drawn in by the internal Lebanese factions to challenge other Lebanese sectarian parties.[55] Hanf's work on the relationship between the internal and external parties illustrates how this deeply-rooted sectarianism led to a conflict momentum that transformed it from a civil into a regional conflict.[56]

By October 1975, with the April ambush on the bus carrying Palestinian and Sunni Lebanese football fans still firmly in people's memory, *al-Mourabitoun*, a *Sunni*-majority Nasserite militia, opened fire on Christian positions and civilians from the Murr Tower in the Minet-el Hosn area of Beirut. In response, the Maronite paramilitary force *Kata'eb* (also known in French as *Phalanges Libanaises*) under the leadership of Pierre Gemayel's son, Bachir Gemayel, and William Hawi ordered the militia to take up position within the occupied hotels there, launching the 'Battle of the Hotels.'[57] The sectarian war was fought between the Christian *Kata'eb* on one side and a Palestinian and pan-Arabist coalition, *Al-Harakat al-Wataniyya al-Lubnaniyya*

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[54] Makdisi, 'Reconstructing the Nation-State', p.26.

[55] Augustus Norton, 'Instability and Change in Lebanon', *American Arab Affairs*, No. 10, 1984, p. 84.

[56] Hanf, 'Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon', pp.190-202.

[57] Edgar O'balance, 'Civil War in Lebanon, 1975-92', (London: Macmillan Press, 1998), pp. 20-41.

(Lebanese National Movement, LNM) coalition on the other. During this time, four *Kata'eb* militiamen's bodies were found in East Beirut and the murders were blamed on the LNM. In revenge, *Kata'eb* militiamen drove throughout the area, firing into the crowd, indiscriminately killing and abducting Muslims. Roadblocks were set up throughout Beirut's main streets, with *Kata'eb* checkpoints preventing Muslim and Palestinians from entering Christian-controlled neighborhoods. Frequently, if their identity card revealed Palestinian or Muslim community membership, civilians were shot dead on the spot. This retaliation was known as Black Saturday.

Following Black Saturday, on 18 January, 1976 East Beirut's PLO-controlled, Muslim-majority Karantina slum was overrun by *Kata'eb* and *al-Noumour* fighters, who slaughtered over 1000 Syrians, Palestinians and Armenians. As a result, pro-LNM, Palestinian fighters attacked Damour, a Christian village south of Beirut, killing hundreds of Christian civilians and scores of *Kata'eb* militia. A ceasefire between the *Kata'eb* and the LNM was called in April 1976 and brought to an end the Battle of the Hotels. The sectarian violence that occurred during the Civil War's first phase led to the establishment of the 'Green Line', which separated the Christian East Beirut from the Muslim and *Druze* West Beirut.

In January 1976, the significant threat of a national partition was almost realized. The National Dialogue Committee in October and November was a reconciliation committee divided along confessional lines, attempting to seek a resolution to the violence that had characterised the early part of 1975.[58] As the *Sunni*, *Druze*, *Shi'a* and LNM leaders challenged the Christian monopolisation of the parliamentary system, the *Kata'eb* pushed for Lebanon's partition.[59] The *Kata'eb* leaders wished to create a separate, autonomous Christian state out of historically

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[58] Odeh, 'Lebanon: Dynamics of Conflict', pp.147-150.
[59] *ibid.* pp151-153 & Norton, 'Amal and the *Shi'a*', pp.59-83.

Christian lands, namely East Beirut, Jounieh and Mount Lebanon, with a separate Muslim state outside. Lebanese President Suleiman Frangieh as well as Maronite leaders Pierre Gemayel and Camille Cham'un, sensing an imminent military defeat for the Lebanese Christians and Maronites formally invited Syrian President Hafez Asad into Lebanon in the hope that Syria could force a ceasefire on the leftist Muslims and Palestinians. This gave Asad a carte blanche to exploit further Lebanon's geopolitical opportunities.

The clear sectarian conflict during the war's initial phases was accompanied by more permanent, intra-communal sectarianism, which became increasingly evident from the growth of the more radical Islamist groups in terms of their number and power. Dekmejian, Dessouki and Rougier refer to the rise of *Shi'a* groups, such as *Hizbullah*, *Harakat Amal,* or *Sunni* groups, like *al-Mourabitoun and al-Jamma'a Islamaiyah*. This illustrated the split *within* the communities as much as *between* them.[60] For example, both *Shi'a* militias, *Harakat Amal* and *Hizbullah*, fought each other in April 1988 for control of southern Beirut. Similarly, the *Sunni* organisations *al-Jamma'a Islamiyah* and *Harakat at-Tawhid al-Islami* were opposed over the issue of Lebanese nationalism and pluralism.[61] While the first two years of the Civil War are often attributed to internal Lebanese sectarianism, the undercurrent of sectarian and factional conflict continued until the very end. Moreover, various Lebanese factions invited regional actors into Lebanon in an attempt to boost their own position. Israel, Syria and the Palestinians, in turn, manipulated their Lebanese allies for their own domestic and regional political agendas.

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[60] Richard Dekmejian, 'Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World', (New York: Syracuse University Press), 1995, pp.1-15; Ali Dessouki., 'The impact of Islamism on the Arab System' in Guazzin, ed., *The Islamist Dilemma*, (1995), pp. 256-260 & Bernard Rougier, 'Everyday Jihad: The rise of militant Islam amongst Palestinians in Lebanon', (Harvard University Press, 2007), pp.260-275.
[61] Hamzeh, 'Islamism in Lebanon', pp.47-50.

The Civil War and External Influence: Syria, Israel and the Palestinians

The Lebanese *Shi'a* spiritual leader, Sheikh Muhammad Fadallah, 'likened Lebanon to the lung through which the problems of the area breathe. Thus, Lebanon was not created as a national home for its citizens but a laboratory for international political experiments in the region.'[62] Indeed, as the Lebanese state system collapsed and sectarian violence came to characterize the Lebanese landscape, any remaining resistance to regional influences also disappeared.

Khalaf defines Lebanon's Civil War as 'largely a reflection of destabilizing interplay between internal divisions and external dislocations.'[63] Goria asserts that Lebanon's nation-building's overall failure left it vulnerable to regional and international intervention.[64] Similarly, Hudson's criticism of Lebanon's political system is rooted in the belief that the national system's breakdown left it unable to protect the nation-state against Palestinian, Syrian and Israeli influence.[65] This regional involvement thus created the necessity for international forces (UNIFIL, MNFI and MNFII) to mediate and intervene between the warring nations.[66] Schou argues that it was this regional and subsequently international interference that compelled the domestic forces to continue the war, even when the outcome was far from guaranteed.[67] Hanf sees the regional Arab-Israeli conflict's impact on the

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[62] Mahmoud Soueid, 'Interview with Shaykh Muhammad Hussayn Fadallah', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol.25, No.1, 1995, pp.1-2.
[63] Khalaf, 'Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon', p.209.
[64] Goria, 'Sovereignty and Leadership in Lebanon 1943-1976', pp.39-43.
[65] Hudson, 'The Lebanese Crisis', pp.112-115.
[66] Mina Toksoz, 'The Lebanese Conflict: Political Shifts, Regional Impact and Economic Outlook', (London: The Economist Publications Ltd 1986); Martha Wenger, 'Lebanon's Fifteen-Year War 1975-1990', *Middle East Report*, No.162, 1990, pp.23-25; Salibi, 'Crossroads to Civil War', & Arnon Soffer 'Lebanon: Where Demography is the Core of Politics and Life', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 22, No.2, 1985, pp.197-205.
[67] Schou, 'The Breakdown of Conflict Management in Lebanon', pp.193-204.

Lebanese conflict as creating a playground for superpower politics between the US and Soviet Union.[68] Internationalising the conflict had the overall effect of increasing the instability and violence throughout the early 1980s such that the conflict's momentum became unstoppable.[69] These various regional influences (that will be briefly outlined here and discussed in greater depth below) became entangled in the regional politics that were being played out in Lebanon.

The PLO and the Palestinians in Lebanon

The role of the Palestinian diaspora and Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) is relevant to the discussion about the causes of the Civil War's outbreak and escalation. The PLO's umbrella organisation of smaller groups, such as *al-Saiqa*, *Al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li-Tahrir Filastin* (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - PFLP), PFLP's General Command, *Al-Jabha al-Dimuqratiya Li-Tahrir Filastin* (Democratic Front for the Freedom of Palestine - PDFLP) and *Al-Fatah*, created obstacles to Palestinian unity and identity in Lebanon. The groups did not work well together and Gabriel argues that the PLO was not unified on any social or political agenda, more specifically, Israel's position or indeed the Palestinians' role in Lebanon.[70] Gabriel also argues that *Al-Saiqa*, founded in 1967 in Beirut and Damacus, was controlled and owned by the Syrians.[71] Conversely, the PFLP, controlled by George Habash, was established not as a nationalist but as a radical, anti-Israeli ideological movement. The PDFLP was a PFLP splinter group, with a Marxist ideology and greater ties to the Soviet Union and Syria. In 1969, the Cairo Agreement was signed, giving the PLO

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[68] Hanf, 'Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon', pp.143- 150.
[69] Itamar Rabinovich, 'The War for Lebanon: 1970-1983', (London: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp.34-59.
[70] Richard Gabriel, 'Operation Peace for Galilee', (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985)*,* p.37.
[71] *ibid.* pp.30-35.

areas of operation outside the national parliamentary system and the strict Christian-led *Deuxième Bureau* monitoring of the Palestinian refugee camps was terminated. The expulsion of the Palestinians from Jordan in 1970 and 1971 resulted in creating a 'state within a state' in southern Lebanon that commonly became known as 'Fatahland' situated along Israel's northern border which gave the PLO a strategic vantage point for renewed attacks.

Between 1970 and 1973, Syria increased its funding and arming of PLO fighters, particularly *Al-Saiqa*, sending them to Lebanon in order to weaken further the central government and increase Lebanon's future vulnerability to Syrian influence.[72] In order to avert the challenges posed by the Jordanian war in 1970, the now strengthened and militarized PLO established strong ties with Lebanese Muslim groups, thereby creating substantive fears among the Christian community of becoming significantly outnumbered. Feghali argues that while in 1910 the Christian Lebanese community was seventy per cent of the population, by 1971 it accounted for a mere thirty per cent. With over three hundred thousand Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the threat of the Palestinians and PLO creating closer ties with the leftist Muslim factions led the Christian population to become significantly anxious.

Beyond acting as the conflict's catalyst in 1975, the Palestinians also had considerable links to its internal sectarian dynamics. Norton illustrates how in the early days of the civil war *Al-Fatah* represented the Lebanese Sunni community, whereby 'as the fortunes of the PLO have waned in Lebanon, so have those of the Sunni community.'[73] Rougier also highlights the inherent Sunni identity of Palestinians in Lebanon, but notes that the PLO's main objective in the face of both

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[72] Asher Kaufman, 'Contested Frontiers in the Syria-Lebanon-Israel region', (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014), pp.111-127.
[73] Norton, 'Amal and the Shi'a', p.136.

Syrian and Israeli intimidation was focused more on attaining Palestinian legitimacy regionally than pursuing a Lebanese Sunni identity.[74]

Although the PLO became entangled in the Lebanese conflict, the Palestinian agenda was never concerned with domestic issues of Lebanese stability. This caused a fluctuation of relations between the Palestinian movement and the internal Lebanese groups. Moreover, other sectarian factions, including the *Druze* and *Shi'a*, showed some degree of solidarity with the PLO leading up to the war but mainly as a way to confront the anti-Palestinian, Christian establishment.[75]

Al-Asad's desires for Lebanon: creating a pax Syriana

Syrian ambitions for dominance in Lebanon are founded on a historical *pax Syriana* and the claim of a Greater Syria, which included modern Lebanon, Israel and Palestine. This precedes the Ottoman Empire to a time when Syria ruled the regional caliphate of *Bilad al-Sham*. Researchers such as Kaufman, Rabil, Hourani, El-Husseini and Koury, who have focused on Syria's claims over Lebanon and the Levant, refer to this historical relationship's importance.[76] In the contemporary discussion of Greater Syria, Ma'oz argues that Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's strategy of creating a new empire under a modern Greater Syria naturally included the desire to control Lebanon as a vital geostrategic post on the frontline against Israel. Ma'oz also claims that Asad's interest in Lebanon arose from a need to control the anti-Syrian groups that were growing in Lebanon; to establish Syrian military

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[74] Rougier,'Everyday Jihad' 2007, p.56.

[75] Kamal Joumblatt, 'I speak for Lebanon', (London: Zed Press, 1977), p.64-69.

[76] Rabil, 'Embattled Neighbours: Syria, Israel, Lebanon'; Kaufman, 'Contested Frontiers in the Syria- Lebanon-Israel region'; Albert Hourani, 'Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay', (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968); Rola El-Husseini, 'Pax Syriani: elite politics in postwar Lebanon', (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2012) & Enver Koury, 'The crisis in the Lebanese System', (Washington: AEI for Public Policy, 1976).

positions in Southern Lebanon aimed at threatening Israel; and to maximize the economic trade opportunities through the port of Beirut.[77] Prior to the 1976 Arab League's Riyadh Summit decision to deploy the Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) in Lebanon, Asad had armed and supported the Syrian-aligned PLO fighters and their continued battle with the *Kata'eb* forces. By 1976, as the PLO grew in strength and joined forces with the leftist Lebanese Muslim factions, Asad questioned if his Greater Syria strategy would be more easily implemented with a weak Christian government. Had there been a partition of Lebanon, Israel would have been brought into the conflict. As such, Asad turned against Kamal Jumblatts' *Al-Hizb al-Taqadummi al-Ishtiraki* or Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) and the Palestinian forces, with Syria launching attacks against them until October 1976 with only minimal success. Deeb argues that Syria's influence at this time was largely responsible for the conflict's escalation through both the ADF and Syrian Armed Forces (SAF). He also claims that the Lebanese system's vulnerability and instability intrinsically justified Syrian opportunism.[78] Avi-Ran regards the Syrian intervention in 1976 and Syrian power's consolidation in Lebanon throughout 1981 as the primary motivation for the 1982 Israeli invasion.[79]

At the Arab League and President Frangieh's invitation, Asad was invited to contribute the majority of troops to the ADF in Lebanon. The ADF was loosely mandated as a peacekeeping force, although objective peacekeeping measures were never established.[80] The ADF was ultimately a Syrian intervention, disguised as a

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[77] Moshe Ma'oz, 'Syria and Israel: From War to Peacemaking', (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp.161-163.

[78] Deeb, 'The Lebanese Civil War', pp.2-15, 189-195.

[79] Reuven Avi-Ran, 'The Syrian Involvement in Lebanon since 1975', (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), pp. 117-131.

[80] Istvan Pogany, 'The Arab League and Peacekeeping in the Lebanon' (Aldershot: Avebury, 1987), pp.93-105.

collaborative peacekeeping force, and although Frangieh invited Syria to intervene in Lebanon, Syria's aim was to replace the Lebanese leadership with a Syrian-dominated one.[81]

In February 1978, Syrian forces, through the ADF, and Christian Lebanese Forces (LF) fought over the increased Syrian presence in East Beirut, known as '*La Guerre des Cent Jours.*' The attempts to curb Syrian hegemony failed on all fronts and, following heavy Syrian shelling of Christian positions, a ceasefire was reached. On 26 October 1978, the ADF mandate was extended by Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss, leading the Lebanese Christians accurately to prophesize the possibility of total Syrian domination. Avi-Ran maintains that the Syrian intervention fundamentally undermined the domestic Lebanese factions' legitimacy within the national system, in turn increasing their dependence on Syria.[82] Even following the ADF's disbandment, Syria used the superficial peacekeeping pretext, claiming that the LAF was unable to control the situation and refusing to withdraw the SAF. Hanf's views the Syrian presence in Lebanon as significantly responsible for the international involvement and the Israeli invasion under Operation Peace for Galilee.[83] The divisions between the pro-Syrian and anti-Syrian Lebanese groups obstructed any possibility of national reconciliation and Syria remained in Lebanon throughout the remainder of the Civil War and up until 2005.[84] Chapters Four and Five examine, in greater detail, Syria's emerging role, its alliance with the Soviet Union and the impact of this on US policy decisions in Lebanon.

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[81] *ibid.* pp.226-228.
[82] Avi-Ran, 'The Syrian Involvement in Lebanon since 1975', p.225.
[83] Hanf, 'Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon', pp.210-215, 237-241.
[84] Deeb, 'The Lebanese Civil War', pp.2-15.

Israel's invasions of Lebanon

Operation Litani and Operation Peace for Galilee are the most well known Israeli actions recognized during the Lebanese Civil War. However, Israeli policies and actions toward Lebanon are not merely contained by these two physical battles nor can Israel's policy toward Lebanon be superficially explained by the PLO-Israeli conflicts. There had been a string of confrontations between Israel and the PLO in Lebanon prior to the Civil War's outbreak. Rabil argues that Operation Spring of Youth in 1973 demonstrated that Israel's pursuit of influence in Lebanon was only partially driven by an Israeli desire to control the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel was also seeking out the geopolitical opportunities that a weakened Lebanese system presented.[85] As Caplan argues, the Camp David Accords spearheaded by US President Jimmy Carter from 1977-1978 heralded a new path for Arab-Israeli 'cold peace' which delivered security but little opportunity. While Israeli Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon claimed that Israel's actions in Lebanon were driven by security concerns and the pursuit of an Israeli-Lebanese Peace Agreement, Sharon or Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's reluctance to establish negotiations suggests that the Israeli military invasions formed part of a broader control strategy in the region.[86]

On 14 March 1978, Israel invaded Lebanon in response to a Palestinian hijacking and attack on an Israeli bus traveling from Haifa to Tel Aviv on 11 March. The attack left 37 Israelis dead and 78 wounded but also created an opportunity for

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[85] Robert Rabil, 'Embattled Neighbours: Syria, Israel, Lebanon', (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), p.43.
[86] Daniel Del Castillo, 'Machinations: Ariel Sharon's attempt to liquidate the Palestinian Question through invasion and the Siege of Beirut', *Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies*, 2003, pp.1-10; George Ball, 'Error and Betrayal in Lebanon', (Washington: Foundation for Middle East Peace, 1984), pp.25-29; David Pollock, 'Israel since the Lebanon War' in Robert Freedman, ed., *The Middle East after the Israeli Invasion*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1986), pp.262-263 & Brian Parkinson, 'Israel's Lebanon war: Ariel Sharon and 'Operation Peace for Galilee', *Journal of Third World Studies*, Vol. 24 No. 2, 2007, pp.65-69.

Israel to establish greater control over the region's geopolitical context. Operation Litani was officially proposed by the Knesset as an Israeli Defense Force (IDF) mission to establish a buffer zone between the Palestinian military positions and Israel's northern border. However the underlying Israeli intention was to punish the Palestinians for the hijacking and to demolish all PLO infrastructure south of the Litani River.[87] The Israeli invasion also bolstered the Lebanese Christian idea of a possible national partition. While Lebanese President Elias Sarkis supported the partition, Lebanese Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss shared Asad's view that this would strengthen the Christian-Israeli coalition.

The invasion of Lebanon, which occurred under Operation Peace for Galilee on 6 June 1982, not only heralded another Israeli-led invasion but also signalled the arrival of international troops that Odeh argues were sent to placate Arab disquiet about an Israeli-Western conspiracy.[88] The invasion was justified by Sharon as proportionate retaliation for Palestinian attacks throughout 1981 under the 'War of the Kaytushas' which saw thousands of civilians flee from Israel's northern region.[89]

However UN and international condemnation of the Israeli actions argued that the military mission was not proportionate to the threat that the PLO posed in southern Lebanon and, in fact, illustrated Sharon and Israeli Foreign Minister Itzhak Shamir's broader military strategy in the region. Salem believes that the Israeli invasion of 1982 was key in transforming the Civil War from sectarian 'violence' into an international war, arguing that the Syrian and Israeli invasions of 1976 and 1978 respectively lacked a sense of global urgency, and hence the precursors to internationalize the conflict were lacking. However, Operation Peace for Galilee not

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[87] Kirsten Schulze, 'The Arab-Israeli conflict', (New York: Pearson Longman, 2008), p.57.
[88] Odeh, 'Lebanon', pp.194-197.
[89] Schulze, p.58.

only regionalised the conflict by antagonizing the Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian forces present in Lebanon, but also provided an incentive for the Reagan Administration to establish the MNFI. This ultimately diluted the domestic Lebanese conflict's importance, transferring attention to the regional players instead.[90] Later chapters will examine the Israeli-Lebanese and Israeli-American relationship in greater depth as a key component of the establishment of US policy in Lebanon.

Conclusion

Lebanon's consociational system formalized communal divisions that date back hundreds of years. The Ottoman Empire *Mutasarrifiyya*, subsequent French Mandate and evolution toward Modern Lebanon illustrate the complexities associated with establishing nation-building in such a fragmented and disjointed context. The seemingly progressive confessional reforms passed down by the Ottoman Empire ultimately became inherent weaknesses within the Lebanese system, which relied on stability to ensure a measure of success in the power-sharing model. Lebanon's identity is a unique amalgamation of regional histories that led to the equally complicated Lebanese Civil War. The war was an inescapable frontier of interconnected communal, national, regional and international tensions.

The subsequent chapters do not detail the machinations of every Lebanese faction and their engagement with the complex Civil War, but separating the Lebanese context from the analysis of the US-led MNF would lead to the same mistakes that this thesis argues occurred under the Reagan Administration, which often overlooked these same intrinsically Lebanese dynamics, viewing the war instead

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[90] Elie Salem, 'Violence and Diplomacy in Lebanon, The Troubled Years 1982-1988' (London: Tauris, 1995), p.242.

as being essentially caused by regional tensions and thereby merely an extension of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

US policy has always been ill-fated in Lebanon because every US President and Administration has failed to understand accurately the country or conflict's dynamics, although it also could be said that, at the apogee of the Lebanese Civil War's chaos, neither could many Lebanese leaders predict what would happen next.

<div align="center">Chapter Two</div>

Discontinuity and Legacy: US policy in Lebanon and the Middle East

On 5 January 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower delivered a passionate speech to the US Congress that would become the hallmark of his Administration's policy toward Lebanon. The President outlined what is informally known as the Eisenhower Doctrine, a broad foundation to guide the Eisenhower Administration's foreign policy goals, as well as the values of subsequent US administrations.[1] Eisenhower set a precedent not only by attempting to leave his mark on the Middle East's political complexities, but also by using Lebanon as a means to demonstrate the potency of the US presidency, through direct military intervention, diplomacy or a combination of the two.[2]

Lebanon's geostrategic position and internal divisions made it particularly susceptible to regional influences and conflict, as evidenced by the two modern Lebanese Civil Wars, in 1958 and from 1975-1989. This vulnerability also extended to international interventions by European and US governments seeking to advance their own foreign policy goals. Hence this chapter takes a closer look at US policy toward the Middle East and Lebanon before the Reagan presidency in order to understand the historical relationship between the US and the region and the conceptions, misconceptions, and 'historical baggage' that comprised the context for

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[1] Eisenhower speech, [President Eisenhower's Speech on the U.S. Role in the Middle East], Capitol Hill, Washington, 5 January 1957, Council of Foreign Relations, http://www.cfr.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/president-eisenhowers-speech-us-role-middle-east-eisenhower-doctrine-1957/p24130, Accessed 19 March, 2014.

[2] Jeffrey Michaels, 'Dysfunctional Doctrines? Eisenhower, Carter and U.S. Military Intervention in the Middle East', *Political Science Quarterly,* Vol. 126, No. 3, 2011, pp.465-492.

the Reagan Administration's Multinational Force (MNF) in the 1980s. It will start with a brief discussion of US foreign policy construction and then analyze the emergence of the US as the leading Western power under President Truman, the changes in the balance of power after the Suez Canal crisis, the formation of Eisenhower's Middle East Resolution, Washington's pro-Israeli shift under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and the effects of détente on US foreign policy in the Middle East.

The focus, however, will be on two key periods in US-Lebanese history, namely the Eisenhower Administration between May and October 1958 and the Carter Administration between 1978 and 1980. The first period will examine the US-led Operation Blue Bat in 1958, which was the first and the only other direct US military intervention in Lebanon, in light of the question of lessons learnt and legacies created. The second period, the Carter Administration, will be examined in order to understand why the Reagan Administration made such a distinct policy shift away from diplomacy.

This chapter advances three arguments. First, it argues that while Operation Blue Bat created a precedent for US intervention in Lebanon, the Reagan Administration's interventionist approach was not inherited from his predecessor. President Carter did not consider Lebanon a policy frontline because he believed Lebanon represented an unrealistic challenge and he did not want to jeopardise his work on the Egyptian-Israeli peace talks for an unlikely victory in Lebanon. Second, it argues that the Reagan Administration inherited a complicated context in Lebanon, characterised by US policy discontinuity.[3] The vacillation between interventionist and

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[3] Tad Szulc, 'The Vicar Vanquished', *Foreign Policy,* No.43, 1981, pp.173-186; William Kristol & Robert Kagan, 'Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs,* 1 July 1996, pp.18-32; Thomas Meager, 'Carter, Reagan, and Congress: The Changing Dynamics of

non-interventionist policies resulted in the creation of a complicated and contradictory history for US foreign policy in Lebanon. Third, this chapter further argues that Reagan's actions in the 1980s demonstrated that his Administration had not learnt important lessons from Eisenhower's military intervention or Carter's diplomatic manoeuvring around the respective Lebanon crises.

War Powers and Washington's foreign policy construction

The US military involvement in World War II illustrated that Washington's isolationism had been replaced by an internationalist approach. This meant US foreign policy became increasingly more important as each post-war US administration sought opportunities for international influence and control. Dowty identifies the following seven important factors of foreign policy development that relate to the Reagan, Carter and Eisenhower Administrations: small nations' vulnerability, US actions' legality, indirect aggression, danger to the state, the need for economic development, the non-permanent U.S. presence and the need for arms control.[4] As a result, there is an ongoing struggle for the balance of power between US foreign policy goals, international order, moral agency and 'extraregional hegemony.'[5] Layne, Dobson, Marsh and Herring argue that US motivations for

Security Assistance and Arms Sales', *The Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management Journal,* Vol.13, No.3, Spring 1991, pp.104-117 & Lindsay, Sayrs & Steger, 'The Determinants of Presidential Foreign Policy Choice', *American Politics Research,* Vol.1, No.2, 1992, pp.3-25.

[4] Alan Dowty, 'Middle East Crisis- U.S. Decision-Making in 1958, 1970 and 1973', (USA: University of California Press, 1984), pp.84-87.

[5] Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusion: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present*, (London: Cornell University Press, 2006), p.5.

greater international influence were driven by US desires for global hegemony in a shattered post-War international system.[6]

Indeed it was this fractured international landscape that created both a challenge and opportunity for the US. As the US took up the mantle as the leading western power, a growing rift ensued between the restraints of the US constitutional system and the agency and power of the foreign policy machine.[7] Expanding this rift was the distribution of power within Washington specifically between the legislative and executive branches. On the one hand the President holds the chief executive authority and responsibility for broad US diplomatic actions including the deployment of US troops overseas and the inauguration of broad doctrinal policies. This also includes the Department of State and Department of Defense as the key cabinet bureaucracies responsible for US foreign policy.[8] On the other hand, the US Congress is the constitutional legislature exerting influence and limiting controls over the authority of the US Presidency. An example was the War Powers Resolution of 1973 which *theoretically* gave greater controls to Congress to limit Presidential executive powers by requiring the approval of Congress for the deployment of troops and the operational strategy. This technically meant that the President had to declare US intentions to commit troops overseas 48 hours before a deployment, as well as, limiting such a deployment to 90 days. Any escalations or extensions thereafter also required congressional approval.

While the aim of the Was Powers Resolution was to ensure greater executive branch accountability, there were alternative avenues for the executive authority to

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[6] *ibid.* pp.15-50; Alan Dobson & Steve Marsh, ' US Foreign Policy since 1945', (London: Routledge, 2001), pp.4-17 & George Herring, 'From Colony to Superpower', (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.594-596.
[7] Dobson & Marsh, ' US Foreign Policy since 1945', p.12.
[8] Richard Sobel, 'The Impact of Public Opinion on US Foreign Policy since Vietnam', (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp.9-48.

overcome these bureaucratic and legislative controls.[9] For instance, if an intervention is launched under an 'executive agreement' then under the 22 August 1972 Case-Zablocki Act (USC 112a & 113) the President is required to submit the text and terms of the *agreement* to Congress for pre-approval before it can be officially ratified.[10] However, if the intervention or treaty is considered an *understanding* between the US and a foreign country then it is not required to be pre-approved. This distinction was fundamental to Reagan's deployment of the MNF in Lebanon because the terms and mandate of the force were outlined under a '*Memorandum of Understanding'* between the Christian Lebanese Government and the US, rather than an international *executive agreement*.[11] The Reagan Administration circumvented the authority of Congress over the intervention in Lebanon so as to avoid statutory limitations being placed on the flow of economic or military aid as had occurred in 1982 with the Contras fight against the Sandinista Junta in Nicaragua. In this case, while the Congressional directives proved relatively ineffective, Congress actively tried to prohibit the Administration and CIA from furnishing the Contras with military aid.[12]

Because of the numerous occasions that the executive authority circumvented these Congressional controls, Rosati and Scott argue that controls over Washington's purse strings are 'only somewhat' useful in advancing Congress' authority over the President. Yet the threat of a statutory economic block, nonetheless, is an obstacle for any Administration requiring Congressional approval to implement a foreign policy

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[9] *ibid.* pp.7-17.
[10] Congressional Act, [Case-Zablocki Act], US Congress 112a, 22 August 1972, Department of State, FOIA, pp.1-2.
[11] Memorandum of Understanding, Foreign Minister Fouad Boutros to US Ambassador Robert Dillon, September 15 1982, folder [SSG Meeting], pp.1-2.
[12] Louis Fisher, 'How tightly can Congress draw the purse strings?', *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol.83, No.4, 1989, pp.758-759.

agreement.[13] This issue becomes more significant when the US develops its active and interventionist foreign policy. As such this is more relevant, for example, during the Carter years than during the Eisenhower era which, in part, accounts for why Eisenhower had little resistance when he launched the enormous 14,000-strong intervention in Lebanon under Operation Blue Bat.

The flexibility of foreign policy decisions also fluctuate depending on the US House of Representatives and Senate majorities in the Congress. Given that a two-thirds Senate majority is required for diplomatic appointments and international treaties, congressional support varies depending on a Democratic or Republican majority, especially in the Senate. While Carter enjoyed a rare dual House and Senate Democratic majority throughout his Presidency, Reagan benefitted from a Republican majority in the Senate. Indeed, this was the first Republican majority in either chamber since the 83rd Congress which occurred during Eisenhower's first two years from 1953 to 1955. Conversely Democrat President Harry Truman struggled through what he labelled a 'Do-Nothing Congress' with both chambers holding a Republican majority. It made the justifications of Truman's foreign policy vital to being able to pass his bills through the Congress.[14]

The Truman Doctrine: laying the foundations for US Middle East policy

Although the 'Do-Nothing Congress' obstructed Truman's domestic and international decision-making process, the President still managed to transform the US from an

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[13] Jerel Rosati & James Scott, 'The Politics of United States Foreign Policy', (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2010), pp.316-321.

[14] Robert Watson, 'Truman the Bipartisan? Reassessing the record of the "Do-Nothing" Congress', in Donald Ritchie, ed., *Congress and Harry S. Truman: A Conflicted Legacy,* (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2011), pp.110-115.

inward looking country into actively seizing the international opportunities presented by the aftermath of World War II. While this transformation is usually discussed with respect to the post-War reconstruction of Western Europe and containing Soviet expansionism, this section will argue that the Truman doctrine also created the foundations for an active and interventionist US foreign policy in the Middle East.[15] Groisser argues that 'before 1947 the United States did not have a clearly thought-through policy in its dealings with the Middle East…the United States relied on Britain and France to represent and protect its vital interests.'[16] However by 1947 the French mandates in Lebanon and Syria as well as the Italian colonial occupation of Libya were over. As such, Britain was left as the only remaining European power in the region. Yet British dominance was waning as it continued to struggle through the economic downturns after the World War.[17]

On 21 February 1947, the British government, under Prime Minister Clement Attlee, announced that by 31 March British military and financial assistance, which had previously been given to Greek King Geórgios II to protect the Greek monarchy from a communist overthrow by factions unified under the *Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo* or National Liberation Front, would cease. As there had been few directs links between the Soviet Union and the Greek communists the mere withdrawal of British assistance from Geórgios did not justify US intervention in and of itself. However, Soviet actions, in the other nearby northern tier states, Turkey and Iran, in

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[15] Robert Pauly, 'US Foreign Policy during the Cold War', in Pauly, ed., *US Foreign Policy,* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), pp.29-45.
[16] Phillip Groisser, 'The United States and the Middle East', (Albany: State of University of New York Press, 1982), p.164.
[17] Burton Kaufman, 'The Arab Middle East and the United States', (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), pp.1-3.

the pursuit of oil resources and geopolitical control triggered the US into action.[18] The 'Truman Doctrine', announced on 12 March 1947,[19] saw its first priority in providing four hundred million dollars of economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey to combat the communist forces as part of its broader policy of Soviet containment by actively confronting communist threats in the 'free world.'[20]

The Truman Administration also supported the creation of the state of Israel as a means of solidifying the US position in the region.[21] Truman himself gave *de facto* recognition to the Jewish state before it had even been declared, angering many in his own Administration, particularly the State Department.[22] Truman's decision to effectively become 'the midwife of the State of Israel' was as much to do with the unstoppable momentum of the Jewish state in Palestine as the threat of Soviet influence in supporting and recognising the Israeli state first.[23] Bryson argues that Truman's decision to recognise and support the creation of the Israeli state was an 'aberration in the nation's foreign policy' because it threatened the US relationship

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[18] Peter Boyle, 'The British Foreign Office and American Foreign Policy, 1947-48', *Journal of American Studies*, Vol.16, No.3, 1982, pp.373-389.

[19] Truman speech, [Recommendation for Assistance to Greece and Turkey], 12 March 1947, 80th Congress, Washington, pp. 1-2; [Loy Henderson's draft of President's Message], 10 March 1947, Subject File, J.M. Jones Papers & Cable from John Cabot to Secretary of State George Marshall, [The Truman Doctrine], 6:55pm 14 March 1947, Cable# 260, in Truman Papers, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library (hereafter HSTPL), Online: http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/doctrine/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1947-03-12&documentid=5-9&pagenumber=1, pp.1-2.

[20] Ralph Magnus, 'Political-Strategic Interests', in George Lenczowski, ed., *United States Interests in the Middle East*, (Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1968), pp.14-17.

[21] Jacob Abadi, ' Britain's withdrawal from the Middle East, 1947-1971', (Princeton: Kingston Press, 1982), pp.1-37.

[22] Telegram, [New Jewish State], 14 May 1948, Record Group 59, Department of State & Letter, [Truman recognition of Israeli state], 14 May 1958, Charles G. Ross File, US National Archive and Records Administration, Online: http://www.archives.gov/global-pages/larger-image.html?i=/education/lessons/us-israel/images/recognition-telegram-l.jpg&c=/education/lessons/us-israel/images/recognition-telegram.caption.html, Accessed June 2014.

[23] Zvi Ganin, 'Truman, American Jewry, and Israel 1945-1948', (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1979), pp.180-189.

with the oil producing Arab states upon which the US depended.[24] However, given the USSR's aggressive actions in Europe in 1948, namely the blockade in Berlin and the Soviet annexation of Czechoslovakia, Truman's desires to contain Soviet influence and create a strong Middle East ally in Israel, seemed justified.[25] Truman also personally believed that establishing Israel was the morally right thing to do in light of the Holocaust and therefore, in part, created Judeo-Christian religious justifications for the Zionist movement and bond between the US and Israel.

The early 1950s also illustrated a key time in the evolution of US policy in the Middle East as the US developed stronger economic and military ties with countries where British influence was in decline. This could be seen in Egypt throughout 1950 and 1951 where the ruling Egyptian *Hizb al-Wafd* party and the growing Egyptian nationalist movement called for the removal of the British from Suez[26] and in Iran following the May 1951 nationalisation of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company by Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh.[27] While the British appealed to the US to assist with a military intervention at the Abadan oil fields, Truman refused to overthrow the Iranian leader while the US continued negotiating with Iran for oil supplies. Even though he took a hard public line against Mossadegh, Truman saw him as the only option in Iran throughout 1952 going as far as providing economic and military assistance to Iran to keep them away from the Soviet Union.[28]

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[24] Thomas Bryson, 'American Diplomatic Relations with the Middle East, 1784-1975', (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1977), pp.171-173.
[25] T.G. Fraser, 'The USA and the Middle East since World War 2', (London: Macmillan Press, 1989), pp.24-50.
[26] Kirsten Schulze, 'The Arab-Israeli conflict', (New York: Pearson Longman, 2008), pp.21-23 & G.E.K., 'Anglo-Egyptian Relations, 1950-51', *The World Today*, Vol.7, No. 11, 1951, pp.458-465.
[27] Andreas Etges, 'All that Glitters is not Gold: The 1953 Coup against Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol.26, No.4, 2011, pp.495-509 & Bryson, 'American Diplomatic Relations with the Middle East', pp.178-180.
[28] Bryson, p.180.

The Eisenhower Doctrine: curbing Arab Nationalism

While the Truman Administration was inherently concerned with Soviet expansion, Podeh, Donovan and Lenczowski claim that the last years of the Truman presidency both aggravated American-Soviet relations and also led to the failure to secure US interests in the Middle East.[29] As a result President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was inaugurated in January 1953, launched a more active Soviet containment policy.[30]

A significant difference between the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations came with Eisenhower's handling of Mossadegh. Moving away from supporting the Iranian leader, Eisenhower approved a CIA mission known as Operation TP-AJAX, in collaboration with the British, to topple Mossadegh. The covert operation succeeded and the US supplanted British dominance with the appointment of the US-backed Shah Reza Pahlavi's.[31] The Iranian operation illustrated Eisenhower's commitment to military, albeit covert, intervention in protecting US resource interests and confronting Soviet influence in the region. Indeed with respect to this, many scholarly arguments focus on the impact of the Soviet Union on Eisenhower's US foreign policy making.[32] Dawisha, Halliday, Taylor and Smolansky posit that Soviet

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[29] Elie Podeh, 'The Perils of Ambiguity: The United States and the Baghdad Pact', in David Lesch, *The Middle East and the United States- A Historical and Political Reassessment*, 4th Ed, (Colorado: Westview Press, 2007), pp.99-101; John Donovan, 'U.S. & Soviet Policy in the Middle East 1945-56', (New York: Facts on File, 1972), pp.187-264 & Lenczowski, 'American Presidents and the Middle East', p.64.

[30] Robert Bowie & Richard Immerman, *Waging peace: how Eisenhower shaped an enduring cold war strategy*, (New York: Oxford, 1998), pp.140-150.

[31] Etges, 'All that Glitters is not Gold', pp.499-502 & Lenczowski, pp.31-39.

[32] Ray Takeyh, 'The Origins of the Eisenhower Doctrine: The US, Britain and Nasser's Egypt, 1953-57, (London: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Alan Taylor, 'The Superpowers and the Middle East', (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991); John Donovan, 'U.S. & Soviet Policy in the Middle East 1945-56', (New York: Facts on File, 1972); Salim Yaqub, 'Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East', (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); O.M. Smolansky, 'The United States and the Soviet Union in the Middle East', *The Academy of Political Science,* Vol.33, No.1, 1978; Karen Dawisha, 'The U.S.S.R in the Middle East: Superpower in Eclipse?', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.61, No. 2, 1982; Adeed Dawisha & Karen Dawisha, eds., 'The Soviet Union and the Middle East: Policies and Perspectives, (London: Heinemann for the Royal Institute of

containment lay at the heart of foreign policy decision-making under the Eisenhower Administration. However, Magnus accurately notes that the Soviet Union did not enter the Arab-Israeli context until 1955 with the Soviet Union's sale of arms to Egypt through Czechoslovakia.[33] The Czech crisis was ultimately about the US not selling arms to Nasser. As a result the Egyptian leader began buying arms from the Soviet Union through Czechoslovakia. The Egyptian-Czech arms crisis signalled both the Soviet entrance into the Middle East and the possibility of an arms race in the region. This, in turn, as Polk argues almost led Syria and Saudi Arabia following in Egypt's footsteps in requesting aid from the Soviets, as well as, the end of US mediated 'northern tier' security.[34] It created a heightened awareness in the US of Soviet influence in the Middle East and it set the ball rolling for the 1956 Suez Crisis.[35]

Reacting to what the US perceived as Egypt sliding into the Soviet camp, the US cut the funding of the building of the Aswan Dam. In need of money to continue the construction of this prestige project Nasser nationalised the Anglo-French Suez Canal Company on 26 July 1956. Fearing that the loss of control of the West's key oil channel would precipitate a loss of colonial control throughout the Middle East and North Africa, France and Britain colluded with Israel to attack Egypt in order to depose Nasser on 29 October 1956.[36]

Eisenhower publicly condemned the attack on Egypt, concerned that it could provoke the Soviets into action if the French, British and Israelis refused to withdraw.

International Affairs, 1982) & Fred Halliday, 'The Great Powers and the Middle East', *Middle East Research and Information,* Report 151, 1988, pp.3-6.

[33] Magnus, 'Political-Strategic Interests', p.19.

[34] William Polk, 'The United States and the Arab World', (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp.372-376.

[35] Fawaz Gerges, 'The Superpowers and the Middle East: Regional and International Politics, 1955-1967', (Colorado: Westview Press, 1994), pp.51-54.

[36] Bertjan Verbeek, 'Decision-making in Great Britain During the Suez Crisis: Small Groups and a Persistent Leader', (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp.61-80.

Placing considerable pressure on the European leaders to withdraw Eisenhower was able to, on 7 November, effect a ceasefire and a UN peacekeeping force in Egypt, followed by British and French withdrawal on 22 December 1956.

Eisenhower's diplomatic wrangling during the Suez Crisis became the bedrock of the US president's management of policy in the Middle East that included protecting Western interests and preventing Soviet control.[37] The Anglo-French political misfortunes of Suez created an opportunity for a new beginning in US foreign policy which US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles believed led to the need for an 'American moral superiority.'[38] Yet, as Lenczoswki argues, it also bolstered Soviet influence on Arab leaders at the expense of the Western powers.[39] Both became the underpinnings of the Eisenhower Doctrine, which was a response to the spread of Nasser's Arab nationalism and the emergence of a growing revolutionary Arab nationalist movement rejecting the US.[40] The Eisenhower Doctrine, signed on 9 March 1957, stated,

> that the President be and hereby is authorized to cooperate with and assist any nation or group of nations in the general area of the Middle East desiring such assistance in the development of economic strength dedicated to the maintenance of national independence.[41]

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[37] Richard Damms, 'The Eisenhower Administration: American strategy in the Middle East after Suez', in Simon Smith, ed., *Reassessing Suez 1956,* (London: Ashgate, 2008), pp.180-185.

[38] Albert Hourani, 'Conclusion', in Louis & Owen, eds., *Suez 1956: The Crisis and its consequences',* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), pp.530-535; Wright, Shupe, Fraser & Hipel, 'A Conflict Analysis of the Suez Canal Invasion of 1956', *Conflict Management and Peace*, Vol.5, No. 1, 1980, pp.27-40; Christian Pineau, '1956/Suez', (Paris, Opera Mundi, 1976), pp.159-161; Tore Peterson, 'Post-Suez Consequences: Anglo-American Relations in the Middle East from Eisenhower to Nixon', in Smith, ed., *Reassessing Suez 1956,* pp.215-218; Robert Schulzinger, 'The Impact of Suez on United States Middle East Policy, 1957-58', pp.251-265 & Alfred Atherton, 'The United States and the Suez Crisis: The Uses and Limits of Diplomacy', in Selwyn Ilan Troen, *Suez-Sinai Crisis 1956, The: Retrospective and Reappraisal* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1990), pp.200-206.

[39] Lenczowski, 'American Presidents and the Middle East', pp.64-66.

[40] Mufti, 'The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism', p.141.

[41] Public Law, [85th Congress, H.J.Res 117], 9 March 1957, Middle East- Lebanon July 16-23 1958 File, Box 12, Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-61 Series, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (hereafter DDEPL), pp.1-2.

Under the resolution US allies, such as Lebanon, were guaranteed economic assistance and an assurance that their country's integrity was the Eisenhower Administration's priority.[42] The resolution's aim was twofold: firstly, to confront Soviet expansion in the Middle East and secondly to counter the destabilising, anti-Western effects of Nasser's pan-Arabism on US-aligned Arab governments. The resolution further outlined that,

> to this end, if the President determines the necessity thereof, the United States is prepared to use armed forces to assist any such nation or group of such nations requesting assistance against armed aggression from any country controlled by international communism.[43]

This was the start of a policy that would see the Arab world on the frontline of an emerging US imperialism because it created an avenue for threatened leaders to request US support. However, the Middle East Resolution ultimately represented an opportunity for the region's leaders, such as Lebanese President Camille Cham'un, to get their houses in order with the assistance of the US military and political machine. Indeed Cham'un, who wanted a second term as Lebanese president despite constitutional restrictions to one term, blamed the Arab nationalists for the political turmoil in the 1957 parliamentary elections and the communal tensions triggered by his personal ambitions. Pointing an accusing finger at Nasser, Cham'un met with the US Ambassador to Lebanon, Robert McClintock, in 1958 asking for US support as he was now critically threatened by communist forces.[44]

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[42] Telegram from Cham'un to Eisenhower, [Special message from President Chamoun to President Eisenhower], 24 April 1957, Beirut, Box 37. Papers as President 1953-61, International Series, DDEPL, p.1 & Eisenhower diary, [July 14 1958], Ann Whitman- Diary July 1958 File, Box 10, Eisenhower Series, DDEPL, p.1.

[43] H.J.Res. 117, [Joint Resolution to promote peace and stability in the Middle East], 9 March 1957, Washington, Public Papers, DDEPL, p.2.

[44] Briefing notes by CIA Director Allen Dulles, [Meeting at the White House with Congressional Leaders], 14 July 1958, Memoranda of Tel.Conv. Gen. File, Box 8, Telephone Conversations Series 1951-1958, DDEPL, p.3.

The 1958 Lebanon Crisis and Operation Blue Bat

The history of US policy in Lebanon often begins with the deployment of US Marines on the beaches of Beirut under Operation Blue Bat on 15 July 1958.[45] Indeed Operation Blue Bat has been referred to as Eisenhower's 'finest hour' because he successfully placated communal and regional tensions as well as instituting change in the Lebanese leadership.[46]

The existing scholarly literature regarding Eisenhower's motivation for intervening in Lebanon advances two key arguments, one focusing on regional, the other on the internal justifications. With respect to the former, Traboulsi maintains that the regional build up of Nasserite Arab nationalism (and its tacit alignment with the Soviet Union) was the US administration's main interest in Lebanon.[47] Similarly Mehta, Taylor and Saltonstall claim that the US attempted to create a 'ring of steel' around the Soviet Union where Lebanon was merely an extension of this superpower frontline. They argue that an aggressive policy of encircling the Soviet Union meant strengthening US Arab allies such as Cham'un.[48]

With respect to the latter Alin posits that it was the internal political instabilities in Lebanon that led Cham'un to turn to Britain, France and the US to

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[45] Michaels, 'Dysfunctional Doctrines?', pp.465-492; Irene Gendzier, Notes from the Minefield: United States Intervention in Lebanon 1945-1958, (New York: Columbia, 1997), Erika Alin, 'The United States and the 1958 Lebanon Crisis', (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), Douglas Little, 'His Finest Hour? Eisenhower, Lebanon and the 1958 Middle East Crisis', *Diplomatic History*, Vol.20, No.1, 1995, pp.27-54 & William Rouger Louis and Roger Owens, eds., 'A Revolutionary Year: The Middle East in 1958, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002).

[46] Little, 'His Finest Hour?', pp.27-28.

[47] Fawaz Traboulsi, 'A History of Modern Lebanon', (London: Pluto Press, 2007), pp.133-137.

[48] Gaganvihmi Mehta, 'Foreign Policies of Dulles', *IQ*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1963, p. 12; Alan Taylor, 'The Superpowers and the Middle East', (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991) p.58 & Leverett Saltonstall, 'Western Military Strength and Security', *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 336, 1961, pp.62-74

intervene and save his presidency rather than merely a Nasserite threat. [49] Alin, Gendzier and Little argue that the close relationship between the US and Lebanon was more a result of economic security of the lucrative Trans-Arabian Pipeline (TAPLINE) and the relationship between the US and the Lebanese bourgeoisie that had developed under Cham'un rather than the broad ideological anti-communist or anti-Nasserite movement.[50]

This thesis places its argument between these two positions, carefully separating the motivations that influenced Cham'un to invite the US to intervene in Lebanon and those fundamentally underpinning the US decision to intervene. The US decision to intervene in Lebanon was the product of growing ideological debates in Washington that were heightened by the 14 July 1958 coup against the Iraqi monarchy. Given the Europeans had failed to secure the Suez Canal, Eisenhower saw the pro-British monarchy's swift overthrow in Iraq and the impending crisis in Jordan as a sign of radical changes in the region.[51] The deployment of 14,000 conventional US troops to Lebanon ultimately symbolized Washington's commitment to protecting US regional allies against the threat of both Arab nationalism and communism. Whether or not it succeeded is questionable. However this thesis agrees with Alin that Cham'un's request for assistance was ultimately driven by the leader's fear for his presidency rather than the broad ideological threats that the region faced.

Operation Blue Bat

At 2:30pm on 14 July 1958, Cham'un sent an urgent message to Eisenhower, requesting immediate military support to intercede in the Lebanese tensions within 48

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[49] Alin, 'The United States and the 1958 Lebanon Crisis', pp.135-136.
[50] *ibid.* pp.100-136; Gendzier, 'Notes of a Minefield', pp.3-10 & Little, 'His Finest Hour?', pp.27-54.
[51] Gendzier, pp.151-170.

hours. In making this request Cham'un was invoking the Eisenhower Doctrine's Middle East Resolution, claiming that Lebanon's sovereignty was under threat of a Communist and Nasserite takeover.[52] Cham'un's claims of a communist or Nasserist uprising were unverified and the perceptible threat to his presidency was questionable.[53] Although Cham'un was democratically elected he had failed to manage the influx of Nasserite forces from the United Arab Republic (of Egypt and Syria) and control the internal communal tensions portraying him as politically and militarily impotent.[54] The State Department believed that Cham'un was a 'panicky individual' who had turned to the US for a quick-fix solution given the crisis affecting Jordan and Iraq. Even Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev challenged the legitimacy of Cham'un's leadership.[55]

Yet, the Eisenhower Administration's recognition of Nasserite and Soviet influences in the Middle East did not, in itself, justify costly military intervention in Lebanon. US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles even asked, 'has Lebanon any intrinsic value - isn't there a less costly way of blaming Nasser than this?'[56] While the US publicly acknowledged 'the perception that Arab nationalist and Western interests stood poised against one another in the Middle East', caution was also exercised to avoid further polarising the Arab leaders and running the risk of pushing them to take

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[52] Memorandum, [July Crisis 1958, Middle East], 14 July 1958, Middle East 1958 File, Box 6, Harlow Bryce N.: Records 1953-1961 Series, p.7 & Public Law, [85th Congress, H.J.Res.117], 9 March 1957, Middle East- Lebanon July 16-23 1958 File, Box 12, Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-61 Series, DDEPL, pp.1-2.

[53] Memorandum from the State Department, [Observations on the Lebanon development], 19 July 198, Gerard Smith 1958 File, Box 1, Gerard C. Smith Series, DDEPL, p.2.

[54] Telegram from Cham'un to Eisenhower, [Special message from President Chamoun to President Eisenhower], 24 April 1957, Beirut, Box 37, Papers as President 1953-61, DDEPL, p.1.

[55] Letter from Eisenhower to Khrushchev, [Lebanon], 19 July 1958, Box 4, Papers of John Foster Dulles, DDEPL, p.6.

[56] Notes from Dulles, [Post Lebanon moves], Gerard Smith 1958 File, Box 1, Gerard C. Smith Series, DDEPL, p.1.

sides with Nasser or the USSR.[57] On the one hand Dulles strongly questioned whether *military* intervention was the right way to handle the tensions that were playing out in Lebanon.[58] On the other, however, a failure to act quickly would also have been the death knell for the Eisenhower Doctrine and would have illustrated US reluctance to fulfil its promise to the Middle East.

As key US regional allies became concerned that the Nasser-led UAR would become an existential and strategic threat to Lebanon, the US was forced to consider some sort of intervention. Saudi Arabia's King Faisal told the US that if he did not see tangible US action relating to the Lebanon crisis, then the Saudis would be forced to cooperate with UAR policies.[59] Similarly, as Shlaim argues, Israel's Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, worried that should the UAR's influence spread across the Middle East Israel would be surrounded by pan-Arabist groups that rejected Israel's existence.[60] Ben-Gurion argued that the immediate threat to Lebanon could not be solved simply through dependence on the US but rather that it would be cutting off Nasser and his Arab nationalist support for the internal Lebanese groups in Lebanon that would ensure this.[61]

Even once the final decision to deploy troops in Lebanon was made, Eisenhower remained reluctant to commit himself to a possible intervention.[62] As Eisenhower stated,

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[57] Alin, 'The United States and the 1958 Lebanon Crisis', p.136.

[58] Notes from Dulles, [Post Lebanon moves], p.1.

[59] Memorandum, [July Crisis 1958, Middle East], 14 July 1958, Middle East 1958 File, Box 6, Harlow Bryce Series, DDEPL, p.2.

[60] Avi Shlaim, 'Israel, the Great Powers, and the Middle East crisis of 1958', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 27, No.2, 1999, pp.177-192.

[61] Letter from Prime Minister Ben-Gurion to President Eisenhower, [Nasser and the Middle East], 24 July 1958, Lebanon July 16-23 File, Box 12, Staff Secretary: Records Series, DDEPL, pp.1-7.

[62] Memcon, [Telephone call to Mr Irwin], 14 May 1958, Memoranda of Tel.Conv.Gen. File, Box 8, Telephone Conversations Series, DDEPL, p.1.

> There were a few minor unpleasantnesses until the news of Iraq came and the fact that Lebanon had, under the Eisenhower Doctrine, asked for our aid…. The decision had apparently been made to go into Lebanon…The second and more important question is do we, or do we not, stick by our friends, in this case, Chamoun. The answer has to be that we do.[63]

Consequently, he stated that the 'landing should be [a] surprise' for all domestic, regional and international parties including Cham'un.[64] Neither Eisenhower nor Dulles wished to issue a forewarning either to Cham'un or the other factions in Beirut that the US was going to enter Lebanon, in order to continue the pressure on all parties to negotiate.[65] Furthermore Dulles was certain that he was not sending US troops into Beirut to support the upcoming possible 're-election' of Cham'un as president. Rather, Dulles focused instead on instating Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) Commander, General Fouad Chehab, as president at the end of the US mission given that the Lebanese general enjoyed considerable popularity within the Muslim communities and because the US Secretary of State believed that 'Cham'un will fall after we get out.'[66]

By 15 July 1958, the US marines had landed in Lebanon and additional US tanker aircraft and military divisions were prepared for deployment.[67] By 16 July Eisenhower had decided to send former Undersecretary for Political Affairs, Robert Murphy, to Lebanon as the President's key aide.[68] The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) situation report on 16 and 17 July indicated that all US Marines had landed without

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[63] Diary entry, [July 14 1958], Ann Whitman- Diary July 1958 File, Box 10, Eisenhower Series, DDEPL, p.1.

[64] Presidential Events, [Timetable of events of week of July 14-19 in connection with Mid East.], Ann Whitman- Diary July 1958 File, Box 10, DDEPL, p.1.

[65] Memcon, [Telephone call to Mr Irwin], 14 May 1958, DDEPL p.1.

[66] *ibid.* & Memcon between Lodge and Dulles, [The Middle East, July Crisis], 8pm, 16 July 1958, Memoranda of Tel.Conv.Gen. File, Box 8, Dulles, Telephone Conversations Series, DDEPL, p.1.

[67] [Timetable of events of week of July 14-19], pp.1-2.

[68] *ibid.* p.2 & Memorandum from Colonel Paul Phillips for General Goodpaster, [Lebanon Operation], 16 July 1958, Lebanon July 16-23 1958 File, Box 12, Staff Secretary: Records International Series, DDEPL, pp.1-2.

disruption and that Beirut was once again stable.[69] While Chehab had committed fully

to the US intervention, the growing discontent amongst the Sunni elites meant that he

did not believe that the LAF's non-Christian contingents would support him.[70]

There was also a heightened risk of the US encountering aggressive resistance

from Nasser or UAR fighters, meaning that the effort it would take to shape a

definitive victory was no longer practical.[71] Within four days of the US troop

deployment in Lebanon, Eisenhower, Dulles and the State Department realized that a

negative outcome of the Lebanese intervention could have serious implications for the

Administration's foreign policy elsewhere. All too late, the State Department alleged

that further pressure to make Cham'un consider reconciliation terms would have been

more appropriate than the deployment of US troops.[72] Realising Eisenhower's worst

fears, the mission became a threat to the Administration as it quickly realized that

Lebanon was a political vacuum where little justification for US actions existed.

As a result it is questionable whether Operation Blue Bat had in fact been

Eisenhower's 'finest hour' or whether perhaps the US President had, in part, been

lucky. First, Cham'un's removal and Chehab's inauguration meant that stability

returned to Beirut.[73] Although Chehab's 'election victory' raised the possibility of

future Nasserite influence in Lebanon, the incoming president was the only viable

leader who had the power to resolve the crisis and ultimately bring peace to

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[69] Situation Report JCS, [Middle East Situation Report 16 July 1958], pp.1-6 & [Middle East Situation Report 17 July 1958], Joint Chiefs of Staff July 16-18 File, Box 4, White House Office: Subject Files, Department of Defense Series, DDEPL, pp.1-4.

[70] *ibid.*; Memcon, [Telephone call to Mr Irwin], 14 May 1958, p.1 & Memcon between Lodge and Dulles, [The Middle East, July Crisis], p.1.

[71] Eisenhower speech, [Message from the President to United Sates Forces in Lebanon and the Mediterranean area], 19 July 1958, Washington, File OF116-SS, Box 507, DDEPL, pp.1-2.

[72] [Observations on the Lebanon development], p.2

[73] NSC Report, [Issues arising out of the situation in the Near East: Current Policy Issues], 31 July 1958, 374th Meeting of NSC 31 July 1958 File, Box 10, NSC Series, DDEPL p.1.

Lebanon.[74] Chehab's election fundamentally enabled the US to consider a withdrawal before any catastrophic damage to US credibility occurred. However the fate of Cham'un's presidency was already sealed prior to the US intervention given the internal and regional momentum for his removal by May 1958.

Second, because there had been no major loss of US personnel during the operation Eisenhower had not faced much domestic criticism and was easily able to justify the intervention as a deterrent peacekeeping mission. Eisenhower painted the intervention as an 'unswerving adherence to the principles' of the UN's peacekeeping charter and that military force was necessary to overcome the aggression faced by a democratically-elected President.[75] However, not only had the UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld opposed the US' hastiness to militarily intervene but also had the mission become entangled in a protracted offensive between the US forces and the internal Lebanese or UAR-sponsored militias it could have quickly changed from a deterrent peacekeeping mission into a US combat force.[76]

Combined, it is arguable that these two factors allowed Eisenhower and Washington's decision makers to claim victory and sense of accomplishment in the deployment of the troops in Lebanon.

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[74] [Discussion at the 374th Meeting of the National Security Council], pp.1-2.

[75] Eisenhower Speech, [Draft of President's Speech at the United Nations], 11 August 1958, Middle East Crisis – Presidential Speech to U.N. File, Box 8, Jackson, C. D.: Papers 1931-67 Series, DDEPL, p.2.

[76] Memcon between Lodge and Dulles, [The Middle East, July Crisis], p.1; Campbell, 'Defense of the Middle East: Problems of American Policy', p.141 & Memorandum for the Record, [July Crisis 1958, Middle East], 14 July 1958, Middle East 1958 File, Box 6, Harlow Bryce Series, DDEPL, p.3.

Courtship, Détente and Dissonance: 1961-1978

It would be twenty-four years between the withdrawal of US troops under Operation Blue Bat and the next official US-led military intervention in Lebanon under President Ronald Reagan. And while Eisenhower's animated concerns over Nasserite and communist influences in the Middle East led to military intervention in Lebanon, the following two decades saw Lebanon take a back seat in US foreign policy.

This section will briefly outline the development of US foreign policy under the presidencies of John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford as a background to the Carter Administration. Particularly this section examines the US decision-making policy shifts in reference to the Soviet Union and Israel. Three key arguments are advanced. First, both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson laid the foundations for a decisive pro-Israeli shift in US policy in the 1960s. Second, there was a waning influence of the Soviet Union with the introduction of détente under both Nixon and Ford meaning the relevance of Soviet influence in US policy in the Middle East diminished by 1974. Finally, the outbreak of the 1973 *Yom Kippur/Ramadan* War demonstrated the fundamental limitations of détente but also elevated the position of Egypt in the lead up to the Egyptian-Israeli peace talks in 1978.

Divorce and Courtship: Nasser and Israel

While the election of President Kennedy in 1961 saw a continuation of the global Soviet containment policy as under both Truman and Eisenhower, Kennedy decisively shifted away from the anti-Arab nationalist ideology that had been a part of

US policy in the Middle East during the previous decade.[77] As a *coup d'état* in Syria in September 1961 led to Syria seceding from the UAR, the grand Nasserite vision for pan-Arab unity faded.[78] As a result Kennedy worked to overcome American fears of Nasser and reach out to the Egyptian president and other regional Arab nationalist leaders. Kennedy believed that an economically strong and independent Egypt, free of both Soviet and Western control, could in fact support long term US interests in the region. It would also show that globally 'the United States could live with political and economic diversity.' [79]

Kennedy truly believed that increased aid to Egypt and greater US participation in Arab-Israeli mediation would further cut off the Soviets in the Middle East. As such, Kennedy managed to briefly convince Nasser into a working partnership while US aid money flowed steadily into Cairo. However, by September 1962, with the Nasserite supported republican revolutionary Abdullah as-Sallal's *coup d'état* in Yemen over royalist leader Imam Muhammad al-Badr, the US-Nasser relationship was tested to breaking point.[80] Not only did the crisis demonstrate that Kennedy had failed to create a sustainable alliance with Nasser, both practically and ideologically, but that regional US allies such as Israel, Jordan and Saudi Arabia were rapidly growing concerned with the ambiguity of US policy. Specifically they worried about Kennedy's view that Nasser and the Arab nationalists may hold the solution to the tensions in the Middle East.[81]

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[77] Herring, 'From Colony to Superpower', pp.702-705 & Lenczowski,'American Presidents and the Middle East', pp.67-78.
[78] Israel Gershoni, 'Rethinking the formation of Arab Nationalism in the Middle East', in James Jankowski, ed., *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, (New York: Columbia Press, 1997, pp.3-5.
[79] Douglas Little, 'The New Frontier on the Nile: JFK, Nasser and Arab Nationalism', *The Journal of American History*, Vol.75 No. 2, 1988, pp.502-505.
[80] Lenczowski,'American Presidents and the Middle East', pp.79-88
[81] Gerges, 'The Superpowers and the Middle East', pp.145-162.

By 1963 the Yemeni crisis and Nasser's refusal to cooperate with US requests to withdraw Egyptian troops, created the basis for the Kennedy Administration to undermine the three-year US rapprochement with Egypt and return to healing the bruised relationships with Israel and Saudi Arabia. Kennedy's idealism in attempting to reconcile US influence with the Arab secular nationalists had come further than other US presidents but still failed to produce a long lasting relationship.[82]

This resulted in another important shift during the 1960s to a more pro-Israeli foreign policy. While Kennedy's assassination cut short his constantly changing Middle East policy, his initial policy changes with Israel sowed the seeds for his successor, President Johnson, to become the most pro-Israeli US President up until that period.[83] As Bass highlights, without significant consultation with his Administration, Kennedy manoeuvred around the State Department and opened up legislation allowing unlimited arms sales to Israel in 1962.[84] In 1965, Johnson decided to begin the sale of M48A3 Tanks and A-4 Skyhawk Aircraft to Israel believing that this would deter Nasser and the Soviets from creating an Arab arms race in the Middle East.[85]

The new found closeness between Israel and the US was not without its limitations and the Six Day War in 1967 demonstrated that above all, Johnson did not want to become entangled in another direct military intervention in the region, especially if it was to be seen as unequivocally supporting Israel against Arab nations, allies or otherwise.[86] Johnson referred the crisis to the UN to find a solution but did

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[82] *ibid.* pp.186-189.

[83] Warren Bass, 'Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the U.S.-Israel, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp.163-164.

[84] *ibid.* pp.174-176.

[85] Halabi, 'US Foreign Policy in the Middle East', pp.46-47.

[86] Avi Shlaim, 'The Impact of U.S. Policy in the Middle East', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol.17, No.2, 1988, p.18.

not demand an immediate Israeli withdrawal of occupied territories that Israel had won until after a sustainable peace settlement could be found.[87] Quandt astutely proposes that Johnson genuinely wished to avoid war but had ultimately given a 'yellow light' to the Israelis when he realized that war was unavoidable. That is, the policy shift was subtler than the simplistic argument of US-Israeli collusion or a US 'green light' for the Israeli attacks. However, the shift is still significant because it created the bedrock of the US-Israeli special relationship in the wake of the 1967 War.[88]

Détente and the Middle East

The 1960s came to a close and with the new decade came a wide spread reduction in Soviet influence in US foreign policy internationally. The days of Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy's confrontation with the Soviets in the 'Third World' waned. As Hanhimäki argues, détente was a conservative policy that was aimed at reducing the Soviet threat to the US brought on by the nuclear arms race and Vietnam. Similarly this section argues that détente with the Soviet Union overall led to a relaxed US position in the Middle East while US Presidents Nixon and Ford attempted to extricate themselves from the Vietnam war and its aftermath.[89]

Aside from the continued Soviet sponsorship of Syria there was a thawing of superpower tensions in the Middle East between 1969 and 1973. However, the October 1973 Arab Israeli war threatened this rapprochement. The US had believed the Israelis would win the war quickly and wanted to keep the Soviets from

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[87] UNSC Resolution 242 [1967 War], UNARMS p.1.

[88] William Quandt, 'Lyndon Johnson and the June 1967 War', *The Middle East Journal*, Vol.46, No.2, 1992, pp.198-228.

[89] Jussi Hanhimäki, 'Détente: a three way discussion: Conservative goals, revolutionary oucomes', *Cold War History*, Vol.8, No.4, 2008, p.504.

intervening in support of Egypt and thereby risking a direct superpower conflict.[90]

Egyptian successes as they moved into the Sinai bolstered morale that had been shattered by the 1967 War. While the war ultimately demonstrated the limitations and vulnerability of détente it also led to a shift in the position of Egypt regionally as Nixon was forced to accept Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's new found power as '*Batal al 'ubur*' or Hero of the Crossing. As a direct antecedent to Carter's Camp David Accords, the 1973 War illustrated Israel's complacency and Egypt's elevated importance in any Arab-Israeli negotiation.[91]

Feeling the effects of Nixon's Watergate scandal, a US economic recession and a burgeoning public discontent, Ford's forays in Middle East were limited. The lack of progress on the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations after the 1973 War, the emerging power of the political lobby groups and public opinion in foreign policy meant Ford had little recourse when Lebanon erupted into conflict in 1975.[92] With congressional blocking of military aid to Vietnam and the announcement on 21 April 1975 that the US involvement in the Vietnam War was over, Ford was unable to request funds for an intervention in Lebanon, especially where no proven US interest existed.[93] Even when US Ambassador to Lebanon Francis Meloy Jr. was assassinated by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Ford refused to militarily respond and risk further derailing the Egyptian-Israeli talks.[94] The CIA inquiry into Meloy's murder cited that it was done to 'induce a state of tension and chaos' and

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[90] Fraser, 'The USA and the Middle East', pp.98-113.

[91] Steven Cook, 'The Struggle for Egypt: From Nasser to Tahrir Square', (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 135-137.

[92] Jussi Hanhimäki, 'The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy', (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp.302-390 & Lenczowski,'American Presidents and the Middle East', pp.147-1953.

[93] Joel Migdal, 'The United States in the Middle East', (New York: Columbia Press, 2014), pp.85-104.

[94] Shlaim, 'The Impact of U.S. Policy in the Middle East', p.19.

because of 'anti-American attitudes' that came from the US' regional Arab-Israeli involvement rather than anything exclusively or uniquely Lebanese.[95] The extent of Ford's engagement with Lebanon was to order the evacuation of US diplomatic and civilian personnel from Beirut in 1976. As though a precursor to the Carter Administration's policy in the region, Ford demonstrated that Lebanon was far from being a priority for US policy in the region.[96]

Carter and US policy towards Lebanon

US President James Earl Carter is often portrayed as being one of the key Presidential peacemakers in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict.[97] Carter's pursuit of a diplomatic solution to the regional tensions resulted in the Camp David Accords on 17 September 1978, which formed the basis for an Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement in 1979. Carter's personal mediation between Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat resulted in the Carter Administration receiving international recognition.

The reinvigoration of the moribund talks between Begin and Sadat was Carter's greatest accomplishment and represented the US President's patch on the complicated, volatile Arab-Israeli quilt. However, while the announcement of the peace accords sent rapturous congratulations to Washington from all over the world, a volatile war was still being played out in Lebanon. Carter believed that Lebanon represented an unrealistic challenge to the type of diplomatic resolution for which the US President was being celebrated elsewhere. This section examines how the Carter

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[95] CIA Report [The Assassination of Ambassador Francis Meloy], B-647-3184, 26 June 1986, CIA FOIA, pp.2-4.
[96] Pauly, 'US Foreign Policy during the Cold War', pp.36-38.
[97] Kristol & Kagan, 'Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy', pp.19-26.

Administration circumvented the conflict in Lebanon and analyzes the principal reasons for this.[98]

Lebanon on the periphery

By 18 September 1978, the six-month-old UN Interim Force (UNIFIL) in Lebanon had failed to enforce a recognised ceasefire between the Lebanese factions, the PLO, Israel and Syria. Carter did not favour US involvement in Lebanon, either military or diplomatic, as he believed, correctly, that it would backfire on his Administration. This thesis argues that Lebanon was not a policy frontline for the Carter Administration but was, in the main, disregarded, even though the President recognised the seriousness of the conflict. One reason for Carter's seemingly uninterested, detached policy toward Lebanon was the Egyptian-Israeli talks and the careful strategy that Carter employed to avoid upsetting or distracting either of the leaders, Begin or Sadat. While Carter acknowledged Lebanon's 'chronic troubles', 'sense of hopelessness' and the tragic humanitarian quagmire, Carter chose to do nothing, despite his deep commitment to human rights.[99] No more appropriately could Carter's policy in Lebanon be exemplified than in the President's own memoirs, where Lebanon is only referenced casually.

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[98] Harry Howard, 'The Regional Pacts and the Eisenhower Doctrine', *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 401, 1972, pp.85-94; Burton Kaufman & Scott Kaufman, 'The Presidency of James Earl Carter, Jr.', (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006); James Nathan & James Oliver, 'United States Foreign Policy and World Order', (Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1989), pp.356-369; John Dumbrell, 'The Carter Presidency: A Re-evaluation' (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993); Walter Russell Mead, 'The Carter Syndrome,' Foreign Policy (2010); Julian Zelizer, 'Jimmy Carter' (New York: Times Books, 2010); Erwin Hargrove, 'Jimmy Carter as President: Leadership and the Politics of the Public Good' (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988); Kenneth Stein, 'Heroic Diplomacy: Sadat, Kissinger, Carter, Begin, and the Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace', (New York: Routledge, 1999).

[99] Jussi Hanhimäki, 'The Rise and Fall of Détente: American Foreign Policy and the Transformation of the Cold War', (Dulles: Potomac Books, 2013), pp.101-124; Carter, 'Keeping Faith', p.279 & Nathan & Oliver, 'United States Foreign Policy and World Order', pp.355-357.

> Sadat asked if I had devoted much time to this problem [Lebanon], I had to admit that since direct American interest was aroused primarily in moments of crisis, we had not mounted a concerted effort to find a permanent solution to the continuing Lebanese tragedy.[100]

There is a tension between how Carter recognised the 'tragedy' in Lebanon and the way he openly admitted that this did not constitute what his Administration saw as vital to US national interest. Lebanon was in many ways doomed not to be a policy frontline from the beginning of Carter's Presidency.[101]

Another reason for Carter's refusal to become involved in Lebanon was that the he no longer saw Soviet military influence in Lebanon of concern. Moreover, the Arab communist parties throughout the region had been decisively crushed by the Carter period. As Assistant to the National Security Advisor, William Quandt, explained,

> The USSR has progressively lost ground over the past eight years in the booming Middle East and North African market, according to a CIA report. Although the loss of economic contact with Egypt is apparent, the Soviets have also seen their market share decline in such nations as Iraq and Syria[102]

In fact, during US Ambassador to Lebanon John Gunther Dean's meeting with the Soviet Ambassador to Lebanon, Alexander Soldatov, a cooperative dialogue between the two superpowers was suggested. Soldatov wanted the Soviet Union to be kept abreast of all US aid and support programs in Lebanon to establish a shared platform on which to collaborate. 'I remarked that the USSR and the US seemed to have some

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[100] Carter, 'Keeping Faith', pp.368-369.

[101] *ibid.* pp.304-305 & Laurence Shoup, 'The Carter Presidency and Beyond: Power and Politics in the 1980s', (California: Ramparts Press, 1980), pp.113-115.

[102] Memorandum from William Quandt to Brzezinski, [Weekly Report], 13 April 1978, National Security Council, Washington, RAC, NLC-10-6-8-5, p.1.

policies in common in Lebanon, i.e., maintenance of the cease-fire and strengthening the central government.'[103]

Operation Litani

In January 1978, the Carter Administration became aware that the Israelis saw Syrian influence in Lebanon as 'naughty' and further claimed that the,

> growing armed build-up in south Lebanon as a worrisome factor and the possibility that Boumediene "running around the area" was a prelude to some kind of blow-up in south Lebanon which 'would be the last thing we need at this moment.[104]

The Israeli position was clear in that 'Israel preferred the vacuum in south Lebanon be filled by the terrorists rather than the Syrians.'[105] The Israelis wanted the territories in the south to be handed back to President Sarkis and the LAF, despite the fact that it was clear that both lacked the military or diplomatic capital needed to monitor the Palestinians or the Syrian-led Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) presence. Israel argued that Sarkis, whom they considered an impotent leader, coupled with an unruly region, was better than Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's hegemony so close to Israel's northern border.[106]

As a result, on 15 March 1978, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) moved into Southern Lebanon in a targeted attack against the Palestinians stationed there. Israel claimed that retaliation was justified due to the Coastal Road Massacre, which was a fatal PLO hijacking of an Israeli bus from Haifa on its way to Tel Aviv on 11 March.

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[103] Cable from Dean to Secretary of State, [Dean meeting with Ambassador Soldatov], 15 November 1978, Lebanon: Correspondence/Telegrams November 1978 File, Box 8, John Gunter Dean Series, JCPL, p.2.
[104] Telegram from Vance to the White House [Secretary Vance's meeting with Prime Minister Begin], 19 January 1978, Jerusalem, in Arab-Israeli Dispute, January 1977 – August 1978, *FRUS, 1977-1980*, Vol. VIII, p.958.
[105] Memcon between Vance, Habib and Rabin, Peres & Allon, [Discussions between Secretary Vance and Prime Minister Rabin], 16 February 1977, *FRUS*, p.49.
[106] *ibid.*

The Israeli invasion was known as Operation Litani and Schmitt argues, evidenced by

the operation's name, that Israel's primary goal was to push the Palestinian forces

north beyond the Litani River.[107] Containing and forcing the Palestinians north was,

however, not the only reason for the Israeli invasion.

Authorised by Begin, Operation Litani signalled the beginning of Israel's

interventionist policy in Lebanon. In April and May 1978, Israeli Special Forces made

another incursion into the Lebanese cities of Beirut and Sidon to raid the Popular

Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) and *Fatah*.[108] While

Operation Litani had all the hallmarks of a clear-cut international invasion of a

sovereign nation and also illustrated Israel's broader agenda of controlling the

geopolitical opportunities arising from Lebanon's instability, Carter decided to remain

neutral. Carter believed that the Lebanese conflict's cessation and the removal of the

IDF was ultimately the responsibility of the Lebanese leadership and the LAF.

> Obviously, the responsibility for resolving the Lebanon question rests
> primarily on the shoulders of those who live there… We gave them some aid
> so that the President of that country can control the affairs of the country
> itself.[109]

Aside from Carter's prayers and the symbolic planting of a Cedar of Lebanon in the

White House grounds on 28 April 1978, the US President did little to address the

Lebanese conflict. While acknowledging the difficult, violent situation, no tangible

support was offered outside a proposed strengthening of US-Lebanese relations.[110]

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[107] Michael Schmitt, 'Change Direction 2006: Israeli Operations and the International Law of Self-Defense', *Michigan Journal of International Law,* Vol. 29, 2008, pp.127-130.

[108] Cable from Dean to Vance, [Israeli Raids], Lebanon: Correspondence/Telegrams May 1980 File, Box 11, John Gunter Dean Series, JCPL pp.1-3.

[109] [The President's news Conference of September 28 1978], 28 September 1978, in 'Jimmy Carter: 1978 Vol. 2', (Washington: Office of the Federal Register, NARA, 1979), p.1658.

[110] [Planting Ceremony], 28 April 1978, in 'Jimmy Carter: 1978 Vol.1 ', (Washington: Office of the Federal Register, NARA, 1979), pp.794-795.

However, the Carter Administration placed more pressure on Lebanon than on Israel, in an attempt to force Sarkis to pass a Lebanese defense bill, which was amenable to the majority of fractured Lebanese communities.[111] The proposed bill mandated that the LAF would take control of those areas currently under the ADF and UNIFIL within a few months.[112] Yet the reality of Sarkis being able to reconcile all parties to enable this to happen was improbable, as Carter was aware. He stated, 'the Lebanese government could not even send troops into its own southern territory.'[113]

As a result, Sarkis turned to France in order to bolster his position and reassure the Lebanese Christians that their political status in Lebanon would remain secure.[114] Sarkis' discussions with France effectively relieved Carter of the obligation to resolve the Lebanese crisis and allowed the US to forge ahead with the Israel-Egyptian process.

The Camp David Accords

The Israeli-Egyptian negotiations leading up to the Camp David Accords demonstrated President Carter's commitment to a diplomatic solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. When Carter 'looked at the Arab-Israeli conflict he was not particularly overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task. He thought it could be resolved.'[115] However, the commencement of the negotiations required Carter's active participation, given that both sides were hesitating following Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in November 1977. Progress in the talks was not simply about coaxing

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[111] Cable from Dean to Vance, [Beirut], 11 November 1978, File Lebanon: Correspondence/Telegrams November 1978, Box 8, John Gunter Dean Papers, 1959-2006, JCPL, pp.1-2.
[112] *ibid.* p.2.
[113] Carter, 'Keeping Faith', p.352.
[114] Cable from Dean to Vance, [Dean meeting with President Sarkis], 13 November 1978, File Lebanon: Correspondence/Telegrams November 1978, Box 8, John Gunter Dean Papers, 1959-2006, JCPL, p.1.
[115] Quandt, 'Jimmy Carter: Foreign Policy and Post-Presidential Years', p.160.

Begin and Sadat to the negotiation table but also about defusing the growing tensions in the region that threatened to derail the peace process.

Carter's challenge regarding the Camp David Accords was two-fold. First, Carter had committed the US to revitalising the waning Egyptian-Israeli peace talks. Second, he realized that there were significant cleavages between Israeli Prime Minister Begin's government and Egyptian President Sadat who was facing severe criticism by Arab leaders for his discussions with Israel.[116] The Lebanese crisis and the 1978 Israeli invasion were directly threatening Carter's mediation between Sadat and Begin as it was fuelling the growing hostility among Egypt's Arab neighbours. A significant fear for the Administration was that Sadat would walk out of the peace negotiations.[117] If the US intervened militarily in Lebanon in order to appease the Arab states, this would have exacerbated the political fractures within Begin's cabinet over a viable US-mediated Egyptian-Israeli agreement.[118] Thus, Carter kept Washington's position non-committal despite Egypt's desire for US intervention in Lebanon.[119]

While the signing of the Camp David Accords in September was hailed as a victory for the Carter Administration, the President faced great political challenges in its aftermath. The large majority of the 'Framework for Peace in the Middle East' agreed at Camp David covered the terms of Palestinian autonomy and a solution to the 'Palestinian problem' to be agreed by Egypt, Israel and Jordan.[120] These arrangements ignored the fragmented Palestinian voice and proved ineffective in

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[116] Memorandum from William Quandt to Brzezinski, [Weekly Report], 13 April 1978, National Security Council, RAC, NLC-10-6-8-5, p.2.
[117] *ibid*. p.2.
[118] Memcon, [Meeting between President Sadat and President Carter], 19 September 1978, Middle East: Negotiations File, Zbigniew Brzezinski Series, JCPL, pp.1-2.
[119] Carter, 'Keeping Faith', p.305.
[120] [Framework for peace in the Middle East agreed at Camp David], Camp David Agreement, #17853, 17 September 1978, UNARMS, pp.41-43.

creating a unified Palestinian movement. Yet they are important as they establish issues of legacy for the Reagan Administration from 1981 onwards.

Although generally in lockstep on Egyptian-Israeli negotiations, the Carter Administration's foreign policy team had obvious cleavages by March 1979. While Carter's Secretary of State Cyrus Vance remained committed to the administration's ideals in the Palestinian autonomy talks, he exploded during an NSC meeting in 1979 over the concern that Carter's appointment of Robert Strauss as envoy to the autonomy talks meant that the president did not want Vance engaged in Middle East diplomacy, including the Lebanon crisis. Importantly this suggests that the Carter Administration, which was so focused on the Arab-Israeli arena, had clearly miscalculated in assuming that the Palestinian issue in Lebanon was not linked to the broader Arab-Israeli dispute.[121]

As 1979 came to a close and Israel had withdrawn from Lebanon, Carter saw the Lebanese conflict as of lesser concern than the situation in Iran. Strikes and protests paralysed Iran leading to the overthrow of the pro-western Iranian monarch, Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi, by the Islamic revolutionary Ruhollah Khomeini and his loyal forces in April 1979.[122] In November, Iranian students from *Dânešjuyân Mosalmân Piru Xatt Emâm* stormed the US Embassy taking fifty-two American personnel and civilians hostage for over a year. The Carter Administration was criticised for its handling of the crisis and Carter himself was seen as a weak and indecisive leader. The Iran hostage crisis and its impact on the Carter Administration

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[121] Cyrus Vance, 'Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy', (New York: Simon & Schuster: 1983), pp.140-146.
[122] Yakub Halabi, 'US Foreign Policy in the Middle East', (Surrey: Ashgate Press, 2009), pp.79-97.

was twofold.[123] First, it was clear that the success of Carter's trademark diplomacy during the Camp David talks was not easily exported to other parts of the Arab and Islamic world. Second, there were now clear signs of an anti-American Islamic movement in the Middle East using radical violence to achieve its political goal.

However, while Carter and Brzezinski continued to believe in creating an Islamic 'green-belt' with pro-American Islamic leaders in order to keep the Soviet Union out of the region, they both failed to handle the Iranian and growing Islamist crisis effectively.[124] Carter's soft-handed approach in the face of the hostage crisis sent the opposite message he had hoped to send to Arab and Islamic leaders. Instead of being resolute and strong in the face of a threat to the US, Carter inadvertently showed that his Administration would hesitate and crumble. Hence, coupled with a poor US economy, Carter's attempts to mediate the Iranian crisis cost him re-election. In 2014 Carter stated:

> …well I could've been re-elected if I'd taken military action against Iran, shown that I was strong and resolute and, um, manly and so forth. But, er, I think if I, I could have wiped Iran off the map with the weapons that we had, but in the process a lot of innocent people would have been killed, probably including the hostages and so I stood up against all that…[125]

With the political fallout of the Iran hostage crisis looming over Reagan, the question was not if he would take strong, resolute military action in the Middle East, but rather, when.

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[123] David Farber, 'Taken Hostage: The Iran Hostage Crisis and America's First Encounter with Radical Islam', (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp.165-170.
[124] Hooshang Guilak, 'Fired Beneath the Ashes', (Bloomington: Xlibris, 2011), pp.165-168; John Limbert, 'Negotiating with the Islamic Republic of Iran: Fifteen points to remember', in Brumberg and Shehata, eds., *Conflict, Identity and Reform in the Muslim World',* (Washington: US Institute of Peace, 2009), pp. 485-487.
[125] [CNBC Interview with Jimmy Carter], 1 October 2014, Available [Online]: http://www.cnbc.com/id/102049678#, Accessed January 2015.

Legacy or Discontinuity? Lessons from the Eisenhower and Carter Administrations

Eisenhower and Carter's policies for handling the Lebanese crisis and conflict represent two poles of US foreign policy, from the use of military intervention on the one hand to restrained, limited diplomacy on the other. Eisenhower and Carter, not to mention all of the post-WWII presidents, inherited significant unrest in the Middle East. However, not all presidential decision-making has been the same and not all decisions achieved a similar outcome. No more apparent is this discontinuity than in Lebanon's case.

Eisenhower: the military intervention precedent

This thesis argues that Operation Blue Bat created a precedent for direct US military intervention as a policy vehicle in Lebanon. This mission's legacy was to create a practice whereby, should US national interests be threatened in Lebanon, a US Administration had both the proven capability and willingness to launch a unilateral military operation without concern for the UN frameworks.[126] This therefore gave birth to the idea of a non-UN 'peacekeeping' force, illustrating that even if a consensus could not be achieved between UN Security Council members, specifically the Western powers and the Soviet Union, the US would establish an independent 'Free World Force.'[127] Given Eisenhower's insistence on every country's unanimous participation in the UN, the formation of a US-led, non-UN sanctioned military force in the Middle East appeared something of a contradiction. However, this contradiction

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[126] Memorandum for the Record, [July Crisis 1958, Middle East], 14 July 1958, File Middle East 1958, Box 6, Harlow Bryce N.: Records 1953-1961 Series, DDEPL, p.7.
[127] Classified memorandum from Smith, [Factors in the backwash of Lebanon], 18 July 1958, File Gerard Smith 1958, Box 1, Dulles, John Foster Papers, Gerard C. Smith Series 1951-1958, DDEPL, p.1.

came about due to a major failing of the Middle East Resolution as no quantifiable measures were established that set out the degree to which a 'communist threat' needed to be *confirmed* rather than *perceived*. Without such measures or clear definitions, the impending crisis in June and July 1958 created an obligation for the US to uphold its ambiguous promises.

Several key issues were created by the legacy or, as Assistant Secretary of State for Policy Planning Gerard Smith called it, the 'backwash' of Operation Blue Bat. These are important to consider in the context of subsequent US policy in Lebanon. Most importantly in these findings, Smith stated that 'if anything approaching a constructive solution comes out of this episode, it will result in an increased appetite in some quarters for other resorts to force.'[128] While Eisenhower recognised that the outcome of Operation Blue Bat would lead to a future obligation to protect other threatened nations, the President stated that 'if we had let Lebanon down, not a single free country on earth would again feel secure in its freedom.'[129]

Much of the Eisenhower Administration's apparent success arose due to two key military strategies which represent significant differences between Operation Blue Bat in 1958 and the MNF from 1982 to 1984. The first was a strategy of deterrence rather than combat and the second was a military strategy of limitation. In Lebanon in 1958 it is questionable as to what degree the Nasserite-sponsored forces would have engaged US troops. Primarily this was because the 14,000-strong US force was so intimidating in its sheer size, that it did not encounter any offensive

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[128] *ibid.* p.2.
[129] Eisenhower Speech, [Television talk on the Mid-East], 29 July 1958, File Middle East Crisis –Working Papers, Results, Box 8, Jackson, C. D.: Papers 1931-67 Series, DDEPL, p.3.

combat.[130] This is particularly relevant to later chapters that deal with the MNF in Beirut, as the size and ambiguity in the MNF's deployment was held directly responsible for the duality of US mission between a peacekeeping deterrent on the one hand and pre-emptive combat on the other. Similarly the US in 1982 remained in Lebanon exponentially longer than the short three-month mission launched in 1958, thus making the MNF a part of the internal landscape. The extended deployment period resulted in the force becoming entangled in the prolonged and violent Lebanese Civil War.

Discontinuity and a 'Neglected' Lebanon: Carter

In hindsight, Carter's views on the 'sense of hopelessness' over a possible US intervention in Lebanon were proven correct, evidenced by the most negative outcomes of Reagan's brainchild in 1982 through the MNF's establishment.[131] Carter's forays in the Middle East and marginalisation of Lebanon created both elements of legacy and discontinuity for the Reagan Administration.

The most important issue relates to foreign policy legacy. Reagan inherited a 'neglected' Lebanese conflict which had not been considered a frontline of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Even though the Palestinian autonomy talks collapsed, Carter's success in the Camp David Accords created an obligation for Reagan to also influence the Arab-Israeli crisis. However, there was a distinct policy reversal as Reagan's Secretary of State, George Shultz, moved his attention away from the Camp David successes to the belief that Lebanon held the key to the Palestinian-Israeli issues. As

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[130] Eisenhower Speech, [Special message to the Congress on the Situation in the Middle East], 5 January 1957, Available [Online]: http://www.presidency.uscb.edu/ws/?pid=11007, Accessed, 18 March 2014.
[131] Carter, 'Keeping Faith', p.279.

such, this new focus towards Lebanon also obliged Reagan to make headway on the escalating conflict that ignited with the Israeli invasion in June 1982.

Unlike Reagan, Carter saw the UNIFIL's formation as commensurate with his participation in a peacekeeping solution in Lebanon. The Carter Administration had decided that it would only engage in the Lebanese crisis through a UN framework. Given that Carter would not readily alienate Israeli or Arab members at a critical point in the negotiations, it was implausible that he would intervene either militarily or politically outside UNIFIL.[132] If the US had actively interfered in Syria's agenda in Lebanon, Carter believed that he would also have had to interpose similar restrictions on Israeli, Saudi Arabian, Egyptian and even Lebanese involvement. Without an even-handed approach to all internal and external parties in Lebanon the US could never expect to see a regional consensus. However, no one in the Reagan White House had the foresight to see that objectively or diplomatically transcending the divisive inter-communal and regional conflict that characterised Lebanon in the 1980s was an impossible task.

Conclusion

The Eisenhower and Carter Administrations are important in demonstrating the degree to which US policy in Lebanon follows no specific formula. US foreign policy's discontinuity in Lebanon in the 1980s can be explained, in part, by Reagan's inheritance of both interventionist and non-interventionist policies. Ultimately, neither policy proved able to secure long-term peace in Lebanon nor engage with the Lebanese reconciliation's structural issues. No US president is likely to step in to take

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[132] [The President's news Conference of September 28 1978], p.1659.

high-profile, executive action on foreign policy unless it is either a major strategic threat and/or has a prominent domestic political component. In the Carter years, as opposed to those during Eisenhower's presidency, rightly or wrongly, US policymakers did not view Lebanon through either of those lenses.

While Eisenhower's military intervention served to create the image of a strong, unrelenting president, Carter's soft-handed response was geared at finding a sustainable diplomatic solution for the wider Middle East issues. Eisenhower deployed a considerable US force in Lebanon to deter opposition to the Lebanese President, Camille Cham'un, while Carter ultimately marginalised Lebanon, given his primary focus on the Israeli-Egyptian treaty.

However, most importantly both the Eisenhower Administration and Carter Administrations had an operational strategy of neutrality. Lebanon was and still remains a communally and ideologically-charged context. From Arab nationalism, Communism, regional proxy wars, internal factionalism and radicalism the only way to handle Lebanon is with an operational strategy that takes on none of these broad ideological goals and remains limited in its mission. Unfortunately this lesson was not taken on board by the Reagan Administration. If the Administration had foreseen the challenges that would arise from intervening in Lebanon both Reagan and Shultz would have avoided it. Rather, into this context, Reagan deployed the Multinational Force I as a means of securing peace, credibility and strength for the US regionally.

<div align="center">Chapter Three</div>

Operation Peace for Galilee and the Establishment of the MNFI
<div align="center">Multinational Force I (6 June- 28 September 1982)</div>

President Ronald Reagan took office in January 1981, inheriting a worsening conflict in Lebanon. There was a marked increase in the Palestinian Liberation Organisation's (PLO) military presence in Southern Lebanon where its confrontations with Israel were escalating. The Syrian-led Arab Deterrent Force's (ADF) actions illustrated none of the force's alleged peacekeeping strategies. Rather, the ADF was the vehicle for Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's greater political agenda in realizing Syrian dominance in Lebanon. As the pro-Israeli *Kata'eb* party began to resist Syrian domination, with Israeli support, the Lebanese Civil War entered into another violent, ruinous phase. Yet, despite the aggression from non-Lebanese forces inside Lebanon, the Reagan Administration, throughout 1981, did not see direct military intervention as serving US interests.[1]

This changed in June 1982, with Israel's Operation Peace for Galilee when Lebanon became the frontline for a dramatic Palestinian-Israeli military confrontation. Freedman argues that the June 1982 Israeli invasion was a turning point not only for Lebanon but also for the entire region. He claims that Operation Peace for Galilee significantly weakened PLO leader Yassir Arafat's position in the Israel-Palestinian conflict, further ignited PLO-Syrian tensions, drew the US directly back into the conflict and drove Jordanian King Hussein to consider peace

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[1] Alexander Haig, 'Caveat: Realism, Reagan, and Foreign Policy', (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), pp.171-180.

negotiations with Israel.[2] Had these been the only outcomes that Israeli Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon had achieved the operation might have been considered an unmitigated success for Israel. However, Sharon's military mission backfired domestically, leading to his removal as minister and ultimately the replacement of his conservative Likud Party with the National Unity government led by the moderate Shimon Peres.

While Operation Peace for Galilee sent shock waves throughout the Middle East, heralding a new chapter in regional aggression, the invasion also surprised Washington. At the same time Sharon's actions presented the Reagan Administration with the perfect political justification to enter the Arab-Israeli conflict and leave Reagan's mark as the primary international peacemaker.

This chapter considers the Reagan administration's Lebanon policy in 1981 and 1982, starting with Washington's relaxed diplomacy over the 1981 Zahleh Crisis and culminating in Reagan's direct involvement after Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982. It examines the shift in US policy from diplomacy to military intervention, exploring the extent to which Reagan's initial non-interventionism was a Carter administration legacy. It then analyzes the establishment of the Multinational Force I (MNFI) in Lebanon in the context of the Israeli invasion, focusing on the MNFI's peacekeeping mandate and how it compared to the actions of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in southern Lebanon.

This chapter advances three key arguments. First, it will argue that Reagan adopted the diplomatic legacy left by the Carter Administration and its handling of Lebanese conflict which meant Lebanon continued to be marginalised for the first 18 months of Reagan's Presidency. Second, that this soft-handed diplomacy and side-

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[2] Robert Freedman, 'The Middle East after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon', (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1986), pp. xiii-xviii.

lining was replaced by a clear military interventionist strategy with the resignation of Secretary of State Alexander Haig and the appointment of George Shultz. This led to a focus on the US-Israeli relationship and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict thus becoming the central reason for the creation of the US-led MNFI. Third, that US interpretations of the Lebanese conflict overstated the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, thus downplaying the internal undercurrents that also characterised the Lebanese Civil War. Indeed, it was this early misreading of the Lebanese situation that led to Reagan's false sense of accomplishment, allowing him to consider the Multinational Force II (MNFII) as merely an extension of the MNFI mission which, as subsequent chapters show, was manifestly not the case.

Reagan's refusal to intervene: the 1981 Zahleh Crisis

The Zahleh crisis began in April 1981. Zahleh, the third largest city in Lebanon, was a majority Christian city, located in the Bekaa Valley, a strategically important point along the main Beirut-Damascus route. This location led to Syria's influence in the city since October 1976 following the Arab League's announcement of ADF deployment.[3] This placed the ADF on the road to confrontation with the *Kata'eb*, who not only saw the ADF as an occupying army but who were also committed to protecting Zahleh's Christian residents. In the winter of 1980-81, the *Kata'eb*, who in the meantime had merged, with the Tigers Militia, into the Lebanese Forces (LF) started constructing a road to link isolated Zahleh to the Christian enclave in Mount Lebanon.[4] In an effort to prevent this link-up the Syrian air force repeatedly bombed it. In April 1981, the confrontation between the LF and Syria escalated when Syria

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[3] Maurius Deeb, 'Syria's Terrorist War on Lebanon and the Peace Process', (New York: Palgrave, 2003), pp.56-63.
[4] Michael Johnson, 'All Honourable Men', (London: I.B.Tauris, 2001), pp.148-151.

laid siege to Zahleh with some 20,000 troops in order to trap and wipe out the estimated 1000 LF inside the city. The siege of Zahleh drew in Israel in support of its Maronite allies. On 28 April 1981, Sharon ordered a limited but damaging air strike against the Syrian positions on Zahleh's periphery.[5] Two Syrian helicopters were shot down by Israel, leading the Syrians to deploy Surface to Air Missiles-6 (SAM-6) to the Bekaa Valley. What had begun as a battle between the ADF and LF became a direct Syrian-Israeli confrontation, with Israel threatening to bomb the Syrian missiles sites. If Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin had ordered the bombing of the Syrian missiles it would have undoubtedly ignited a greater war against Israel which would have included Syria, the PLO and possibly Soviet Union support. However, as Boykin states, neither Begin nor Asad wanted to engage in a direct war against one another and, while the aggressive rhetoric raged between both sides, US Middle East Envoy Philip Habib became the diplomatic lifeline for both to avoid an escalation.[6]

The Syrian assault on Zahleh continued for another three months, with the siege finally ending on 31 June 1981 when Habib and the Arab League mediators negotiated a ceasefire.[7] Despite claims by the LF that the Christians were victorious, Bachir Gemayel and the LF were forced to retreat to Beirut, leaving Zahleh firmly under Syrian control.[8]

The Zahleh crisis indicated the Reagan Administration's reticence for the US to intervene directly in Lebanon, despite the congressional pressure to do so. The US

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[5] Antoine Jaoude & Adel Iskandar, 'The Battle of Zahleh: From activism to online-passivism in the age of social media', Georgetown University CCTP 706, 13 December 2011.

[6] John Boykin, 'Cursed is the Peacemaker: The American Diplomat Versus the Israeli General, Beirut 1982', (Belmont: Applegate Press, 2002), pp.44-47.

[7] 'Syria ends siege of Lebanese town, raising hopes for an easing in the crisis', 1 July 1981, *New York Times*, p.1.

[8] Lebanese Forces, 'The Battle of Zahle 1981', Online: http://www.lebaneseforces.com/blastfromthepast009.asp, Accessed 19 March 2014 & Elaine Carey, 'Lebanon's Zahle siege ends - each side chalks up political gains, and some losses', 2 July 1981, *Christian Science Monitor,* p.1.

Congressional Foreign Affairs Committee (CFAC) sent Reagan a signed five point congressional petition in April 1981, requesting immediate action in the Bekaa Valley in support of the anti-Syrian LF. The CFAC argued that, should Syria continue to occupy the city, it would undermine the Christian government's stability and security under Lebanese President Elias Sarkis. The Congressional petition also raised significant concerns over Syria's position in Lebanon under the ADF which it saw as a front for broader Syrian interests.[9] This petition was supported by the US Senate's Foreign Relations Committee who viewed the Syrian occupation as the fundamental cause of Lebanon's destabilization.[10] In May 1981, during the Battle of Zahleh, US Secretary of State Alexander Haig was questioned about where the Reagan Administration saw the 'red line' in Lebanon.[11] These questions were left unanswered and, although substantive evidence existed to show that the Syrian and Palestinian military positions in the Bekaa Valley had strengthened, the Reagan Administration ignored this, continuing to see Lebanon as a 'diplomacy only mission' headed by Habib.[12]

Reagan wrote to President Sarkis in May, committing the US to an exclusively diplomatic presence and arguing that negotiations between Christians and Syrians would assist 'Lebanon's national goals and your country's unity, sovereignty,

[9] Congressional Petition, [Lebanon], 7 April 1981, Committee on Foreign Affairs, CO086 Lebanon 031092 File, Box 118, WHORM: Subject Files, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library (hereafter RRPL), pp.1-3.
[10] Senate Report, [Lebanon], 10 April 1981, Committee on Foreign Relations, CO086 Lebanon 031092 File, Box 118, WHORM: Subject Files, RRPL, pp.1-3.
[11] Cable from State Department to US Embassy Tel Aviv, Beirut & Damascus, [Israeli Media Comments], 7:08pm 8 May 1981, Habib Mission- Reporting Cables File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat NSC: Cable Series, RRPL, pp.1-2.
[12] *ibid.*

territorial integrity and pluralistic democracy.'[13] However, the negotiations did little to bolster the Christian position. This neutral diplomatic posturing was reconfirmed on 22 June with the arrival of the new US Ambassador to Lebanon, Robert Dillon, who was charged with continuing the 'diplomacy only' line of communication with Sarkis. Reagan still refused to offer anything more than moral support and a 'channel of communication between us [Lebanon and the US].'[14] The main reason for US non-intervention militarily was that it was obvious to Habib that both Syria and Israel wished to avoid entering into direct combat. As Langhorne, Weisbrode and Goodby argue diplomacy is nurtured as a substitute for war when both sides are reluctant to fight and the opportunity cost of an unguaranteed offensive is too great.[15] Asad knew that the Syrian Armed Forces (SAF) were still too weak to resist an Israeli Defense Force (IDF) ground attack in the long term and did not want to jeopardise Syrian influence through the ADF mandate. Begin, also, did not believe that the Zahleh crisis or the threats to the LF warranted an expensive war, which the Knesset would see as unjustified. While Habib had successfully kept the communication channels open between Syria and Israel, the conflict between Israel and the PLO continued.[16]

Israel threatened: 'War of the Katyushas' and the Arab Peace Plan

At the beginning of July 1981, the PLO began a ten-day offensive, launching Katyusha rockets into northern Israel, forcing the flight of over 5,000 Israeli civilians

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[13] Message from Reagan to Sarkis, [Presidential message for President Sarkis], 5:26pm 7 May 1981, 'Lebanon- President Sarkis Cables' File, Box 21, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Head of State Series, RRPL, p.2.

[14] Message from Reagan to Sarkis, [Presidential Letter for President Sarkis], 3:41pm 22 June 1981, 'Lebanon- President Sarkis Cables' File, Box 21, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Head of State Files, RRPL, pp.1-2.

[15] Richard Langhorne, 'Contemporary Diplomacy', *Global Society*, Vol. 23, No.1 , 2009, pp.97-99 & James Goodby, 'Redirecting US Diplomacy', *Parameters*, Vol. 43. No. 4, 2013-2014, pp.27-33.

[16] Boykin, 'Cursed is the Peacemaker', pp.44-47.

with many camping outside Begin's residence as a means of pressuring the government to retaliate. This Palestinian attack, known as the 'War of the Katyushas', did provoke an Israeli response and, on 10 July 1981, the Israeli Air force began bombing the PLO positions in Southern Lebanon.[17] The Israeli casualties equalled only a fraction of those suffered by the Palestinian and Lebanese, with Israel's disproportionate use of force labelled a contravention of the UN Security Council's Resolution 467.[18] The Security Council also condemned the Israeli breaches of Lebanon's territorial integrity and the subsequent Security Council Resolution 490, on 21 July 1981, criticized the 'deplorable events' taking place in Lebanon.[19]

In response, the PLO returned fire on IDF positions until Habib brokered a ceasefire on 24 July. Sarkis urged Reagan to reconsider the Palestinian issue in Lebanon as the Lebanese President believed that a lasting peace could only be achieved if all parties were considered and this also meant the Palestinians in Lebanon.[20] The PLO's provocation was still not considered severe enough by the Reagan Administration to warrant an intervention and as a result Israel continued to feel that it did not enjoy the same relationship with Washington as it had under Presidents Carter and Ford. Cobban claims that Reagan believed that the US-Israeli relationship was driven more by seeing Israel purely as a strategic asset for the US than by a traditional or moral explanation.[21]

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[17] *ibid.* p.46.

[18] UN Security Council Resolutions (hereafter UNSC Res), [Resolution 467 (1980)], 24 April 1980, S/RES/467, United Nations Archives and Records Management Section (hereafter UNARMS), p.1.

[19] UNSC Res, [Resolution 490 (1981)], 21 July 1981, S/REA/490, UNARMS, p.1.

[20] Message from Sarkis to Reagan, [Presidential correspondence letter from President Sarkis to President Reagan], 8:26am 11 June 1981, 'Lebanon- President Sarkis Cables' File, Box 21, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Head of State Series, RRPL, p.1.

[21] Helena Cobban, 'The U.S.-Israeli Relationship in the Reagan Era', *Conflict Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1989, pp.2-6.

Furthermore, Israel became defensive with the announcement of the eight-point Fahd Peace Plan on 7 August 1981, sponsored by the Saudi Arabian Crown Prince, Abdul Aziz bin Fahd. Referencing UN Resolutions 242 and 338, the peace plan demanded an Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories back to the 1967 boundaries.[22] Begin stated that 'the problem of the so-called Saudi peace plan' was that it 'in fact is a plan of how to liquidate Israel in stages.'[23] Much of this came from Begin's broadly defensive and nationalist worldview. Begin argued that 'borrowed freedom is not freedom.'[24] Gordis claim's Begin believed 'the Jewish people would not survive without military power and a willingness to use it.'[25] The plan heightened concerns within Israel of regional Arab posturing over the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and Israel's neighbours' increasing interest to turn to the Soviet Union for support.

King Hussein divulged to Washington, after a meeting with the Soviet leadership, that the Soviet Union was attempting to create cordial relations with Saudi Arabia and that Saudi Arabia had given Asad $3 billion to purchase Soviet SAMs. Hussein also told President Reagan that he himself had accepted $200 million dollars

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[22] UNSC Res 242 and 338 referred to the two previous Arab-Israeli conflicts in 1967 and 1973. UNSC Res 242, [1967 Arab-Israeli Ceasefire Agreement], 22 November 1967, S/RES/242 & Resolution 338, [Termination of fighting], 22 October 1973, S/RES/338, in UNSCR Public Files, UNARMS.

[23] Interview with Prime Minister Shamir, [Interview with Prime Minister Begin on ABC Television], 1 November 1981, Online: http://MNFa.gov.il/MNFA/ForeignPolicy/MNFADocuments/Yearbook5/Pages/70%20Interview%20with%20Prime%20Minister%20Begin%20on%20ABC%20Tele.aspx, Accessed 21 March 2014.

[24] Speech, [Begin to the Knesset], Tel Aviv, 20 February 1962, Israeli Democracy Institute. p.11.

[25] Daniel Gordis, [Menachem Begin: the Battle for Israel's Soul], (New York: Schocken Books, 2014), pp.14-26.

of Soviet arms, because Washington's doors had been closed to Jordan, and that Iraq had also requested a significant arms deal, prioritizing short-range artillery.[26]

It was in this context of rapid Arab arms modernisation that Israel complained that neither the UN nor the US had provided adequate support. The Reagan Administration did not wish to exacerbate Israeli-US tensions but was concerned that the Soviet Union was coordinating arms deals with historical US allies. In response, the Reagan Administration announced one of the largest ever arms deals in US history with Saudi Arabia. Although the $8.5 billion sale of US Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) to the Saudis garnered both internal (Congressional and US Israeli Lobby Groups) and external protests from Israel, the move illustrated Reagan's solidarity with the pro-Western Gulf state.[27] In a speech on 5 September 1981, Israeli Foreign Minister Shamir emphasized Israel's concerns with the Reagan Administration's tacit support for the Saudi kingdom's role in mediating various Arab issues.[28]

> This is not to say that our problems with America are all settled to our entire satisfaction. In spite of our very close relationship, there are, at times, differences of opinion…Thanks to its considerable financial capacity, Saudi Arabia is covering the expenses of Syria's occupation of Lebanon and is contributing toward the continued rape of Lebanon by the Syrian army. Even more ominous is the fact that the Saudi government is heavily subsidizing the P.L.O. and its share in the destruction of Lebanon in addition to which it is supplying the terrorists with quantities of arms.[29]

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[26] Memcon, [Summary of the President's meeting with King Hussein of Jordan], 10:30am 3 November 1981, 'Memcons- President Reagan December 1981' File, Box 49, Executive Secretariat Files: NSC Records Series, RRPL, p.6.

[27] Nicholas Laham, 'Selling AWACS to Saudi Arabia: The Reagan Administration and the Balancing of America's competing interests in the Middle East', (Westport: Praeger Publishing, 2002), pp. 2-119.

[28] Mujtaba Razvi, 'The Fahd Peace Plan', *Pakistan Horizon,* Vol.34, No.4, 1981, pp.48-61.

[29] Speech, [Address by Foreign Minister Shamir to the Zionist Organization of America Conference], 5 September 1981, Online: http://MNFa.gov.il/MNFA/ForeignPolicy/MNFADocuments/Yearbook5/Pages/51%20Addres s%20by%20Foreign%20Minister%20Shamir%20to%20the%20Zioni.aspx, Accessed 21 March 2014.

In November 1981, US Secretary of State Alexander Haig (the leading pro-Israeli decision-maker in the US Administration) stated that overt pressure would not come from the US for Israel to sign an Arab-sponsored peace proposal with the Palestinians which he believed 'could cause Israel to lash out into Lebanon.'[30] However, Reagan remained determined to contain Soviet alliances by drawing in the Arab leaders and adopted a policy pressing Israel for 'total withdrawal for total peace', including from the West Bank and Gaza territories.[31] The cracks began developing within the White House as this difference in opinion between the President and his Secretary of State grew. Reagan stated that 'we have to make sure that we don't go after this with one side asking for the moon and the other side asking for "green cheese."'[32]

The Israelis believed that Habib's ceasefire agreement with the PLO did not serve the long-term objectives of demilitarising the PLO in Southern Lebanon.[33] In fact, they thought that the US and UN's failure to act militarily was allowing the PLO to regroup and Syria to increase its SAM positions in the Bekaa Valley. Israel's passing of the Golan Heights Law on 14 December 1981 extended Israel's territorial claim over that area, the fertile region on the Israeli-Syrian border, sparking Reagan's fury. As a result, the US President suspended the memorandum of understanding between Israel and the US, which Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and Sharon had negotiated in November of that year.[34] The message to the Israelis was clear: the Reagan Administration would not unconditionally support them. While

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[30] [Summary of the President's meeting with King Hussein of Jordan], p.2.
[31] *ibid.*
[32] *ibid.*
[33] M. Habib affirme que " toutes les parties intéressées " souhaitent le maintien du cessez-le-feu au Sud-Liban' *Le Monde,* 10 March 1982.
[34] Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [Golan Heights Law], 14 December 1981, Online: http://www.MNFa.gov.il/MNFa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/golan%20heights%20law.aspx, Accessed 3 March 2014 & UNSC Res 497, [Golan Heights Law and Israel], 17 December 1981, S/RES/497, in UNSCR Public Files, UNARMS, p.1.

Israel was a key strategic ally in furthering US policy regionally, it could expect resistance if it jeopardised the Reagan Administration's relations with its Arab allies.[35]

It was also evident that the Israeli leadership under Begin, Sharon and Shamir had little time for the Reagan Administration except for Alexander Haig, who continued to see Israeli intransigence in the light of Sharon's claims of PLO terrorism.[36] Haig tied the Israeli-Palestinian conflict directly to the Lebanese conflict. He believed that, if the PLO could demonstrate responsible action and demilitarisation in Lebanon, the US and UN could convince Israel to concede on points in other areas that the Israeli state otherwise refused to negotiate. Haig's special relationship with Begin would ultimately be the US Secretary of State's downfall as he was considered to have become too close to Israel, a policy incongruous with Reagan's hard line on Israeli aggression. Haig was also criticized for having offered tacit support for Israel's invasion of Lebanon long before June 1982.[37]

On 18 December 1981, Saudi Arabian Minister Ahmad Zaki Yamani, having seen the Israeli response to the ceasefire agreement, the Fahd Plan, and the suspension of the US' strategic cooperation agreement, ominously warned Reagan to prepare for an impending major Israeli strike against the PLO in Lebanon.[38] As Sharon began

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[35] Cobban, 'The U.S.-Israeli Relationship in the Reagan Era', p.8.

[36] Hussam Mohamad, 'PLO Strategy: From Total Liberation to Coexistence', *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics*, Economics and Culture, Vol.4, No.2, 1997, pp.2-5.

[37] Jeremy Pressman, 'Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics', (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008), p.108; R.K. Ramazani, 'The Impact of Khomeini's Iran', in Robert Freedman, ed., *The Middle East after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1986), p.155; Rowland Evans & Robert Novak, 'Israeli group sure Haig paved invasion route', *Journal World,* 7 July 1982; Tom Wicker, 'In the Nation; Haig and Israel', *New York Times* (hereafter *NYT*), 29 June 1982 & Bernard D. Nossiter, 'Haig, at U.J.A., Criticizes Reagan's Mid East Plan', *NYT,* 15 September 1982.

[38] Memcon, [Summary of the President's meeting with the Saudi Arabian Minister of Petroleum and mineral Resources, Ahmad Zaki Yamani], 3:00pm 18 December 1981, 'Memcons- President Reagan December 1981' File, Box 49, Executive Secretariat Files: NSC Records Series, RRPL, p.2.

secretly developing plans for an attack, the Reagan Administration naively believed that Israel would never invade Lebanon without a solid legal justification and, more importantly, informing the White House.[39]

Significant doubt hung over the Reagan Administration's policies that saw the Lebanese conflict as little more than a diplomatic frontline for PLO-Israeli tensions, throughout 1981. First, despite Syria's occupation of Zahleh, the US refused to intervene.[40] Second, even though it was clear to the Reagan Administration, and specifically Haig, that Israel's focus on Arafat and the PLO's presence in Lebanon would eventually lead to a confrontation, Reagan concentrated on Arab proposals for peace between Israel, Lebanon and the Palestinians, inciting protest and derision from the Israeli leaders, Begin and Sharon. The US Administration's relations with Israel in late 1981 to early 1982 were strained. As a result, the distance created between Israel and the US meant that the Reagan Administration had little influence over Israeli decision-making leading up to the June 1982 invasion.[41]

Operation Peace for Galilee

On 6 June 1982, Sharon launched Operation Peace for Galilee, a military operation aimed to 'liquidate the Palestinian question' and the PLO infrastructure in Southern Lebanon and Beirut.[42] The motivations for the Israeli invasion have created much

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[39] Francis Cornu, 'Jérusalem menace d'intervenir à nouveau au Sud-Liban', 2 February 1982; 'Les rumeurs au sujet d'une intervention au Sud-Liban se multiplient', 9 February 1982 & 'Une nouvelle intervention israélienne contre l'O.L.P. au Liban?', *Le Monde,* 8 April 1982.

[40] Deeb, 'Syria's Terrorist War on Lebanon and the Peace Process', pp.56-63.

[41] Lucien George, 'Les raids israéliens contre les " bases palestiniennes " au Liban L'opération ne représente qu'un avertissement déclare le chef des services de renseignements de l'armée de Jérusalem' *Le Monde*, 23 April 1982.

[42] Daniel Del Castillo, 'Machinations: Ariel Sharon's attempt to liquidate the Palestinian Question through invasion and the Siege of Beirut', *Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies*, 2003, pp.1-10.

speculation by historians. More than simply focussing on the PLO, Feldman and Rechnitz-Kijner accurately argue that Sharon had four dominant motives in launching the operation: namely the creation of a 43km PLO buffer zone, an ADF and SAF withdrawal, the 'destruction' of the PLO forces and headquarters in Beirut and the signing of a peace treaty with the Maronite Christian President.[43] Ball argues that Sharon's geo-political vision for Lebanon grew from the Zionist belief that Lebanon represented a 'detachable weak link.'[44] That is to say, a significant opportunity existed to disintegrate the anti-Israeli Arab-Islamic movement while supporting the Maronite Christians toward a partition. Furthermore, Pollock states that, under the 'thinly disguised' justification of carving out a security zone, Sharon intended to install Bachir Gemayel as President and thereby consolidate Israeli control over the Lebanese government and LAF-controlled territories.[45] However, Schulze argues that Sharon and Shamir had, in fact, devised the Operation in January to link up 'Bashir's quest for the presidency with a large-scale Israeli Operation.'[46] This meant a coordinated and aggressive Israeli attack alongside the Lebanese Forces against the PLO in Lebanon. Moreover, Parkinson maintains Sharon had always viewed Lebanon as more than a growing PLO stronghold; it was also an opportunity for Israel to widen its reach throughout the region and, in particular, strike a direct blow at Syrian

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[43] Briefing from the Israeli Permanent Mission to UN Secretary General, [Israeli's Redeployment to the Awali River], in Israel/Lebanon Agreement (On Troop Withdrawal)/UNIFIL May 6- Nov 3 1983 File, Box UNIFIL, S-1066-0097-03, 23 June 1983, UNARMS, p.3 & Shai Feldman & Heda Rechnitz-Kijner, 'Deception, Consensus and War: Israel in Lebanon', *Jafee Center for Strategic Studies*, No. 27, 1984, p.3.

[44] George Ball, 'Error and Betrayal in Lebanon', (Washington: Foundation for Middle East Peace, 1984), pp.25-29.

[45] David Pollock, 'Israel since the Lebanon War' in Robert Freedman, ed., *The Middle East after the Israeli Invasion*, pp. 262-263.

[46] Kirsten Schulze, 'The Arab-Israeli conflict', (New York: Pearson Longman, 2008), p.58.

influence.[47] Jansen argues that Sharon's claims of defending Israel were merely superficial and that the Israeli Defense Minister was trying to bate the Palestinians into a provocation to justify the Operation which had been planned since February 1982.[48] In fact, Operation Peace for Galilee had been previously planned under another name, 'Pine Tree', 18 months before the operation but was readapted in January 1982, ready for the invasion.[49]

Although Sharon denied the accusations that he had long planned an attack in Lebanon as a means to creating strategic control for Israel the speed at which the IDF mobilized and entered Lebanon was evidence that Israel was already prepared to invade prior to Abu Nidal's assassination attempt on the Israeli Ambassador to the UK, Shlomo Argov.[50] Argov's attempted assassination was publicly tied to Abu Nidal (Sabri al-Banna) and his splinter organisation providing Sharon weak but sufficient justification to launch the offensive against the PLO. This is a contested issue because Abu Nidal had split from the PLO in 1974, and had been sentenced to death by it, in absentia, later that year. Hence, Abu Nidal did not represent the Palestinian movement or PLO in Lebanon.[51] Sharon coupled this with the recent PLO Kaytusha rockets fired

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[47] Brian Parkinson, 'Israel's Lebanon war: Ariel Sharon and 'Operation Peace for Galilee', *Journal of Third World Studies*, Vol. 24 No. 2, 2007, pp. 65-69.

[48] Michael Jansen, 'The Battle of Beirut', (Boston: South End, 1983), pp. 3-6.

[49] Richard Gabriel, 'Operation Peace for Galilee', (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), p.60.

[50] Linda Malone, 'The Kahan Report, Ariel Sharon and the Sabra-Shatilla Massacres in Lebanon: Responsibility Under International Law for Massacres of Civilian Populations', *Faculty Publications*, 1985, pp.375-378

[51] While Sabri al-Banna was widely-accepted as having masterminded the attack on Argov, the association between al-Banna and the PLO was falsified. Yossi Melan quotes Israeli General Rafael Etan as saying 'Abu Nidal, Abu Shmidal they're all the same', even though Sabri al-Banna was clearly independent of the PLO and, in fact, opposed Arafat's pro-Western diplomacy. The key opponents of Sharon's invasion of Lebanon saw Argov's assassination attempt as a convenient justification for the invasion. See: Yossi Melman, 'The Master Terrorist: the true story of Abu Nidal', (New Delhi: Adama Books, 1986); John Kifner, 'On the bloody trail of Sabri al-Banna', 14 September 1986, *New York Times*; 'Abu Nidal Organization (ANO), aka Fatah Revolutionary Council, the Arab Revolutionary Brigades, or the Revolutionary Organization of Socialist Muslims', 27 May 2009, *Council of Foreign Relations Committee*, Available [Online]: http://www.cfr.org/israel/abu-nidal-

into Israeli territory and rationalized the invasion as a 'defensive' IDF response.[52] The fact that Sharon had lied to the Israeli population and the Knesset about the Israeli invasion led to domestic outrage and criticism.[53]

International reaction to the Israeli aggression was unanimous, citing Sharon's violent incursion into Lebanon as counterproductive, unjustified and aggressive, especially given Lebanon's continuing instability.[54] Mitterand stated,

> *Tout fait redouter, dans les fleures qui viennent des combats tragiques qui, à Beyrouth même, viendraient s'ajouter aux souffrances déjà endurées par les populations du Liban.[55]*

The UN issued Security Council Resolution 508 on 5 June 1982, appealing to all parties involved in the violence in Lebanon to cease.[56] The UN directly condemned Israel in Security Council Resolution 509 and demanded the IDF's immediate withdrawal.[57] The Resolutions, approved unanimously, called for an immediate ceasefire between the IDF and PLO but this did little to curb the Israeli invasion or violence in Southern Lebanon.[58] Sharon showed little concern for the UN or UNIFIL

organization-ano-aka-fatah-revolutionary-council-arab-revolutionary-brigades-revolutionary-organization-socialist-muslims/p9153, Accessed 18 March 2014.

[52] Franci Cornu, 'Les Palestiniens ont bombardé la Galilée en riposte aux raids israéliens sur le Sud-Liban', *Le Monde*, 11 May 1982.

[53] Malone, 'The Kahan Report', pp.375-378 & Asher Kaufman, 'Forgetting the Lebanon War? On Silence, denial and the selective remembrance of the "First" Lebanon War', in Ben-Ze'ev, Ginio & Winter, eds., *Shadows of War: A Social History of Silence in the Twentieth Century',* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.197-205.

[54] Drouin Pierre, 'Un autre holocauste', *Le Monde*, 16 June 1982; 'Dix mille manifestants réclament le retrait du Liban des forces Israéliennes', *Le Monde*, 24 June 1982; Francis Cornu, 'La progression des Israéliens au Liban L'invasion du Liban par les forces israéliennes M. Mitterrand "condamne sans réserve l'agression" Le coup de bluff de M. Begin', *Le Monde*, 10 June 1982; Robert Fisk, Pit the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon', (New York: Thunders Mouth, 1990), pp. 199-236; Thomas Friedman, 'Sharon, Replying to Critics, Opens Lebanon War Scars', *NYT*, 13 August 1987 & Dan Fisher, 'Heckled over 1982 Lebanon Move: Sharon Defends Invasion Roles in Unusual Lecture', *Los Angeles Times*, 12 August 1987.

[55] 'L'assaut de beyrouth compromettrait l'avenir du liban et la paix dans la région', *Le Monde*, 26 June 1982.

[56] UNSC Res 508, [Israel-Lebanon], S/RES/508, 5 June 1982, UNARMS, p.1.

[57] *ibid.*

[58] UNSC Res 509, [Israel-Lebanon], S/RES/509, 6 June 1982, UNARMS, p.1.

arguing that UNIFIL had failed adequately to police the Palestinians' militarization in southern Lebanon.

Operation Peace for Galilee represented the most significant intervention by Israeli troops since the 1978 Operation Litani, when the IDF crossed the Lebanese border to create a buffer zone between Israel's northern border and the PLO fighters in southern Lebanon. However, Sharon had learnt lessons from Operation Litani, which saw the Palestinians eventually returning to southern Lebanon, and in greater strength. Sharon wanted to damage the PLO irreparably so that Arafat could not remobilise the forces once Israel withdrew.[59] Begin favoured invading Lebanon with the intention of destroying the PLO infrastructure while staying away from the SAF positions or SAMs. Begin also wanted to intervene to save the Lebanese Maronites from genocide. He viewed this war through a moralistic rather than strategic lens and wanted Israel to do what the world had failed to do during the Holocaust thereby showing Israel's moral superiority toward protecting the Christians and their support for Zionism. However, Sharon wanted to wage all-out war against the PLO *and* Syria at the same time. Hence Thomas and Gabriel argue that Sharon attempted on numerous occasions to provoke Syrian aggression in order to justify an IDF engagement with the SAF forces in southern Lebanon.[60]

As such, by 9 June 1982, the Israeli mission had been extended to attack Syria's positions in southern Lebanon, which included Soviet-sponsored SA-2, SA-3 and SA-6 SAMs. As the SAF realized that the Israeli focus was not simply directed toward the PLO, Asad sent thousands of troops into the Bekaa Valley to confront the IDF. As the IDF pushed through Southern Lebanon, it aggressively collided with the

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[59] Pollock, 'Israel since the Lebanon War', p. 264.

[60] Baylis Thomas, 'The Dark Side of Zionism: Israel's Quest for Security through Dominance', (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009), pp.112-114 & Gabriel, 'Operation Peace for Galilee', pp.65-70.

Syrian forces that had positioned Soviet-sponsored SAMs along the Beirut to Damascus road. Feldman and Rechnitz-Kijner state, 'Israel did not simply stumble into the Syrians in the Beqa'a. Nor did Israeli troops reach Beirut by accident.'[61] Conversely, the Syrians had attempted to avoid a confrontation with the Israelis to escape being forced to withdraw from Lebanon.[62] The Syrian and Israeli conflict did not last long and three days later, on 11 June, a ceasefire was negotiated by US Middle East Envoy Philip Habib. Sharon and Begin appealed to their ally in the Reagan Administration, Haig, for more time to execute the IDF mission, which was determined to reach Beirut. Sharon argued that the 1981 ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinians was now broken, adding that Israel could no longer wait for US support because Reagan would not give Israel the justified support it wanted to remove Palestinian 'terrorism' from Lebanon.[63]

The debate within the Knesset and throughout the Israeli public questioned Sharon's legitimacy and strategy in the initial invasion and the continuing Lebanese conflict. Although Begin authorized Sharon to use large-scale forces to remove the immediate PLO military infrastructure, the Palestinian and Lebanese civilian casualties that resulted from the mission's imprecise targeting provoked the Knesset to call for an end to the mission. There was division between Sharon and the Knesset with regard to the former's 'Big Plan' for Lebanon.[64] Sharon's destructive saturation bombing attempted to decimate the PLO leadership. Yet, the ten-week mission failed

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[61] Feldman & Rechnitz-Kijner, 'Deception, Consensus and War: Israel in Lebanon', p.21.
[62] Deeb, 'Syria's Terrorist War on Lebanon and the Peace Process', pp.71-73.
[63] Speech by Sharon, [Statement in the Knesset by Defense Minister Sharon], 8 September 1982, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Online: http://MNFa.gov.il/MNFA/ForeignPolicy/MNFADocuments/Yearbook6/Pages/74%20Statement%20in%20the%20Knesset%20by%20Defense%20Minister%20Sh.aspx, Accessed 20 March 2014.
[64] Feldman & Rechnitz-Kijner, pp.21-25.

to shatter the Palestinian forces although it had succeeded in establishing a strong Israeli military occupation throughout Southern Lebanon.[65]

As Sharon and the IDF pushed on with the offensive, it culminated in the Siege of Beirut, with Sharon intent on pressuring the PLO into full retreat.[66] Sharon was dissatisfied with the Palestinians' withdrawals and retreats in the south. Arafat had successfully dug the PLO underground and into caves throughout West Beirut, which Habib argued strategically meant that the PLO could withstand an attack for some time.[67] The Israeli Siege of Beirut began on 13 June, with a barricade drawn around Beirut cutting off food and water to the Palestinians and civilians in West Beirut. Israel's dropped large amounts of explosives, shells and cluster bombs into the blockaded West Beirut, causing extensive civilian casualties, while the PLO's response was limited and weak.[68] As such, Ball argues that the Siege of Beirut 'critically compromised Israel's standing as a humane nation.'[69]

On 18 June another unanimously-adopted Security Council resolution was passed, extending the UNIFIL deployment period and activities in an attempt to reduce the IDF-PLO conflict.[70] Moreover, the US pushed for a diplomatic solution to the conflict, again led by Habib. Following Washington and Reagan's vehement admonishment, Israel accepted US mediation for a ceasefire and PLO evacuation

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[65] Sharon and Begin were focused on assassinating PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat and his two aides, Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) and Salah Mesbah Kahalf (Abu Iyad).
[66] Note from Undersecretary-General Brian Urquhart to UN Secretary-General, [Confidential: Middle East], June 23 1982, in Israel/Lebanon Agreement (On Troop Withdrawal)/UNIFIL May 6- Nov 3 1983 File, Box UNIFIL, S-1066-0097-03, 23 June 1983, UNARMS, pp. 2-4.
[67] Tout en Affirmant que le temps presse: 'Israel Accorde un nouveau affaire a Habib' & 'Washington: "Les Risques D'echec demeurent"', 1 July 1982, *L'Orient Le Jour* (hereafter *L'OLJ*), p.1.
[68] Boykin, 'Cursed is the Peacemaker', pp.154-161 & Ball, 'Error and Betrayal in Lebanon', pp.47-48.
[69] Ball, p.44.
[70] UNSC Res 511, [UNIFIL- Extension], 18 June 1982, in UN Public Files, UNARMS, p.1

from West Beirut.[71] By August 1982, the IDF had ceased its seven-week bombardment of West Beirut although it was clear that a diplomatic solution to Lebanon's Israeli occupation was going to prove essentially ineffective. Neither Israel nor the PLO was heeding Reagan's calls for a long-term ceasefire, leading the US to question if any incentives existed for the sides to enter negotiations.[72]

The Israeli invasion and the Washington awakening

Although Israel, the Palestinians, the Lebanese and the Syrians had been in confrontation since the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War, there are three distinct differences between the political landscape from 1981 to early 1982 and the period signalled by Operation Peace for Galilee that changed how the Reagan Administration viewed the US' role in the conflict.

First, Israel's direct confrontation with the Palestinians and Syrians in Lebanon forced the US to concede that the conditions in Lebanon had become precarious enough at a regional level that they now critically threatened any possible Israeli-Palestinian peace process.[73] The heightened Palestinian-Israeli aggression under Operation Peace for Galilee and the Siege of Beirut was considered an internationally significant humanitarian concern and Reagan was not about to be the first US President to be seen to have failed so significantly to make progressive steps toward a peace process.[74]

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[71] Cable from Shultz to US Embassies Worldwide, [USG Efforts to Resolve Lebanese Crisis], 2:40am August 7 1982, Cable #220844, FOIA Released Document Collection (FOIA), Department of State Archives (hereafter DOSA), p.2.

[72] 'Habib rappelle "SA" Priorite: Le Retrait Palestinien', 2 July 1982, L'OLJ, p.1.

[73] 'L'invasion du Liban par les forces israéliennes', Le Monde, 9 June 1982.

[74] Laham, 'Crossing the Rubicon: Ronald Reagan and the US policy in the Middle East', pp. 143-158.

Second, by June 1982, with the Lebanese government's failure to extend the invitation to the ADF to stay in Lebanon, the Syrian occupation was viewed as little more than an effort to control Lebanon.[75] The collapse of an Arab-based solution to the conflict and the Israeli invasion also created a sense of US obligation to intervene, not least in order to counter the growing perception that the US, and specifically Haig, had tacitly supported the Israeli invasion. Previously, the US had been careful not to confront the ADF, not necessarily out of fear of upsetting Syria but rather to avoid alienating the US' Arab allies that had sanctioned the Arab peacekeeping mission.[76]

Finally, the existing regional peacekeeping missions' role suggested to the US that there was a way to intervene to create peace without relying on the UN. The implementation of the MFO on 20 March 1982 in Sinai demonstrated to the US a new way of undertaking active diplomacy in the region through engaging in collaborative international peacekeeping missions outside UN operations.[77] This precedent of not working through UNIFIL therefore opened up further opportunities for Reagan to illustrate his role as the primary 'peacemaker' in the region.[78] The MNFI was, in part, launched on this sense of success.

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[75] 'Liban Le président Gemayel dissout le commandement de la Force arabe de dissuasion', *Le Monde*, 2 April 1983.
[76] Rubin, 'The United States and the Middle East', pp. 72-75.
[77] Christiane Chombeu, 'Le R.P.R. et le P.C.F. n'approuvent pas la participation de la France à la force multinationale du Sinaï, *Le Monde*, 24 April 1982.
[78] Statement by Reagan, [Message to US Marine Forces Participating in the Multinational Force in Beirut, Lebanon], 25 August 1982, Public Papers, RRPL, p.1.

Reagan's watershed moment: 'outrage'[79] over the Israeli invasion

The Israeli media in the aftermath of the invasion stated that Israel would only accept a ceasefire if the PLO fully disarmed; there was constant monitoring by an international peacekeeping group and an international guarantee that worldwide acts of terror against Jewish or Israeli targets would cease.[80] The Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv* reported that Reagan was unaccommodating to the Israelis and was borderline anti-Israeli, given the US condemnation of the IDF's attack.[81] The Reagan Administration exhibited firm, unapologetic action in sanctioning limited economic and aid embargoes until an IDF withdrawal. Israel believed that, if negotiations with Habib did not produce a tenable ceasefire and withdrawal arrangement, Reagan would support anti-Israeli sanctions, such as the suspension of military equipment sales.[82] As the Israelis had believed, Reagan did consider blocking US aid to Israel in order to signal that the Administration thought Israel had crossed the political and military 'red line.'[83] Reagan was furious that Begin had authorised Operation Peace for Galilee, which the US President had been assured would not occur.[84]

Conversely, US press commentary illustrated that public consciousness of the tragic realities of the Lebanese conflict were high and disapproval of the Reagan Administration's hands-off approach was growing. Reagan told reporters, on 1

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[79] [Statement by Deputy Press Secretary Speakes on the Situation in Lebanon], 12 August 1982, Online: http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1982/81282b.htm, Accessed 20 March 2014.

[80] Cable from US Embassy Tel Aviv to Secretary of State, [Tel Aviv Media Action Collective], 11:07am 7 June 1982, Tel Aviv, Habib Mission- Reporting Cables File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat NSC: Cable Series, RRPL, pp.1-2.

[81] *ibid.* p.1.

[82] *ibid.* pp.2-3.

[83] Cable from Shultz to US Embassy Tel Aviv, Beirut & Damascus, [Media Commentary on Fighting in Lebanon], 7:58pm 7 June 1982, Washington, Habib Mission- Reporting Cables File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat NSC: Cable Series, RRPL, p.1.

[84] Cannon, 'President Reagan', pp.343-345.

August 1982, that 'the President says he's going to get tough.'[85] The media reported

the Israeli, Syrian and PLO conflict as exclusively the thrust of the current war in

Lebanon. It was perceived that the Israelis either wanted water, land or the PLO's

eradication, while the PLO and Syrians were preparing to fight Israel.[86]

However, while there were reports of possible US punitive action against

Israel, the situation in the UN told a very different story. Although Washington

predicted a Soviet veto at the UN Security Council,[87] it was in fact the US that

presented the veto vote on 8 June 1982 against the Security Council draft Resolution,

condemning Israel's violation of Resolution 508 and 509.[88] The US vetoed the draft

Resolution on the basis that it 'is not sufficiently balanced to accomplish the objective

of ending the cycle of violence and establishing the conditions for a just and lasting

peace in Lebanon.'[89] The US was as much to blame for the UN stalemate at this time

as the USSR. Sadeghi argues that Reagan hesitated to punish Israel because the

President was pursuing his own desire for a *pax Americana* regionally and needed

Israel as a bargaining chip, especially with the Soviets.[90] *Le Monde* reporter, Cornu

stated that

[85] Reagan's comments, [Exchange with Reporters on the Situation in Lebanon], 1 August 1982, Washington, Online:
http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1982/80182a.htm, Accessed 19 March 2014.
[86] [Media Commentary on Fighting in Lebanon], pp.1-4.
[87] Reagan Letter, [Letter to the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate Reporting on the Deployment and Mission of the United States Forces in the Multinational Force and Observers], March 19, 1982, Online:
http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1982/31982b.htm, Accessed 19 March 2014.
[88] UNSC Res 508 was unanimously adopted and regarded an immediate ceasefire between the PLO and Israel & UNSC Res 509 adopted unanimously on 6 June 1982 regarded returning Israel back to its 1978 and internationally regarded border.
[89] Cable from Shultz to US Embassies Worldwide, [U.S. Veto UNSC Resolution on Lebanon], 5:10am 9 June 1982, 'Lebanon (6/9/82 - 6/12/82) File, Box 42, Executive Secretariat NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.1.
[90] Ali Sadeghi, 'Lebanon and After: Whose Victory?', *Millennium- Journal of International Studies*, No. 13, 1984, pp.1-5 & Efraim Inbar, 'Great Power Mediation: The USE and the May 1983 Israeli- Lebanon Agreement', *Journal of Peace Research*, No.28, 1991, p.73.

> *Les Israéliens commencent à reconnaître qu'ils ont souvent exagéré par anticipation les risques de "punition" de la part des États-Unis. Pour éprouver la solidarité des relations israélo-américaines, le déclenchement de la guerre au Liban a été un test amplement positif.[91]*

Despite Reagan's posturing on sanctions, it was clear that the Administration would not actively embargo Israel.[92]

The communication between Brezhnev and Reagan on 9 June indicated that the Soviet Union would not involve itself in Lebanon but was watching 'with utmost concern of developments of the situation in this region which is located in the immediate proximity of our southern borders and where we have no shortage of friends.'[93] Reagan responded by issuing a warning to Brezhnev that 'your government bears no little responsibility for the current crisis in the Middle East by its failure to support the Camp David Accords and its readiness to furnish a steady supply of weapons to PLO forces in Lebanon.' [94] However, direct threats over Soviet interference in Lebanon were minimal, as evidenced by NSDD 32.[95] This directive shows that, while the Administration was focused on curbing Soviet influence internationally, Lebanon was left out of a detailed list of countries that the US saw as the Soviet-US policy confrontation frontline.

On 10 June 1982, the NSC and State Department sent a report to Reagan regarding the ongoing Israeli-Lebanese conflict. While the statements failed to indicate *how* the US would engage in Lebanon, it was clear that some form of

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[91] Francis Cornu, 'Les dirigeants israéliens sont divisés sur les limites que les États-Unis pourraient mettre à leur "compréhension"', *Le Monde*, 26 June 1982.

[92] 'Londres: Embargo sur les Armes a L'Etat Hebreu', 2 July 1982, *L'OLJ*.

[93] Letter from Brezhnev to Reagan, [Situation in Lebanon and Israel], 9 June 1982, U.S.S.R. General Secretary Brezhnev File, Box 38, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Records: Head of State Series, RRPL, p.2.

[94] Letter from Reagan to Brezhnev, [Situation in Lebanon and Israel], 10 June 1982, U.S.S.R. General Secretary Brezhnev File, Box 38, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Records: Head of State Series, RRPL, p.3.

[95] [NSDD 32], May 20 1982, NSDD 32 'US National Security Strategy' File, Box 8, Phillip Dur Series, RRPL, p.1.

peacekeeping force, led by the US, was imminent. On 29 June 1982, President Sarkis

issued an appeal to all the Heads of State requesting the countries 'to contribute to the

salvation of Beirut from imminent disaster threatening it.'[96] As such, the Marine

Amphibious Unit (MAU) naval fleet stationed just off the shore of Lebanon signalling

that the US was preparing to intervene.[97]

Changing of the Guard: Israel's greatest US ally resigns

Throughout June Haig had ordered Habib to negotiate an unconditional ceasefire on

three levels. These were the immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon

(Syrian, Palestinian and Israeli), a commitment to the Lebanese state's sovereignty,

integrity and security for Israel's northern border. Haig's tripartite policy laid the

foundations for the Reagan Administration's policy in Lebanon throughout the entire

MNFI deployment (as well as that of MNFII, as examined later).[98] The policy also

created unrealistic expectations as it did not fully comprehend the reasons for the

Syrian and Israeli interventions, as well as underestimating the contribution of the

various Lebanese factions to the conflict's continuation. As the French called it '*Les

incertitudes de la politique américaine et la crise du Liban*'[99] Thus Haig had

unwittingly tied the Reagan Administration to an unachievable commitment in

Lebanon. Because of this Reagan was furious with Haig for his flagrant disregard of

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[96] Official Request, [Appeal form H.E. Elias Sarkis, President of the Republic of Lebanon to all Heads of State], 29 June 1982, #1136/82, 'Lebanon- President Sarkis Cables' File, Box 21, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Head of State Series, RRPL, pp.1.

[97] Memorandum from Robert McFarlane to William Clark, [Updated Q's & A's on Lebanon], 10 June 1982, 'Lebanon (6/9/82 - 6/12/82) File, Box 42, Executive Secretariat NSC Country Series, RRPL, pp. 2-4.

[98] Ralph Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy', (New York: Praeger, 1991), pp.8-11.

[99] Lucien George & Dominque Pouchin, 'Les incertitudes de la politique américaine et la crise du Liban - Israël s'inquiète des conséquences de la démission de M. Alexander Haig -Washington s'oppose au projet français de neutralisation de Beyrouth Un État en pleine décomposition', *Le Monde*, 28 June 1982.

the President's wishes. Reagan had not decided whether to commit the US to the war in Lebanon and felt that Haig's policy gave added justification for Israel's pursuit of the PLO in Beirut.[100]

Haig's resignation on 25 June 1982 was important as the Lebanese conflict played a significant role in his decision. Haig's personal desire for a monopoly over US Middle East policy decisions became incompatible with the US Presidency's authority.[101] Haig's foreign policy vision for the Lebanese conflict was characterized by a deep trust of the Israelis, which undermined any objective analysis of the conflict. While he stated, 'I'd have kicked the shit out of Israel tomorrow if that was in the interest of this country', Boykin argues that Haig's dogged bias toward Israel led him directly to challenge Reagan himself.[102] As a result this bias raised issues of whether Haig had given Israel a green light for the invasion in June. Rubenberg claims, while Haig denied he had ever given direct approval for the invasion, his refusal to pressure Sharon to halt the attack plans was easily read as tacit support.[103] Haig's support for the Israeli northern border militarisation and the Secretary of State's insistence that the PLO must be removed from Lebanon gave Sharon an effective US endorsement for an Israeli attack. A meeting between Haig and Sharon on 25 May 1982 demonstrated this. Although Haig warned Sharon not to pre-emptively invade Lebanon without provocation from the PLO, Sharon informed Haig

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[100] Haig, 'Caveat: Realism, Reagan, and Foreign Policy', pp.317-352.

[101] Michael Hopkins, 'Ronald Reagan's and George H.W. Bush's Secretaries of State: Alexander Haig, George Shultz and James Baker', *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, Vol. 6, No.3, pp.230-232.

[102] Boykin, 'Cursed is the Peacemaker', p.54.

[103] Cheryl Rubenberg, 'Israel and the American National Interest: A Critical Examination', (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1986), p.270.

that Israel was preparing a large-scale attack. Even with this, the Secretary of State did not insist that Sharon back down.[104]

Haig's resignation also signalled a change not only in US policy but also in US decision-making. Secretary of State George Shultz, who was determined to avoid repeating Haig's mistakes, was careful to be seen to be working *for* the President. As Hopkins writes, 'at his first meeting with the president he declared, "I consider myself a part of the White House and of your team. I am working for you, Mr President."'[105] This is important because Reagan's trust in Shultz allowed Reagan's second Secretary of State to wield enormous power over foreign policy, ultimately becoming the MNFI and MNFII's 'architect.'[106] While Reagan continued to hold executive power, it was Shultz's ability to manoeuvre and guide him that had the main impact on the Administration's decision to enter Lebanon. Shultz was aware that there had been tensions between the State Department and the White House prior to his appointment and was determined to demonstrate the US diplomacy's collective strength in the Middle East.[107] Each time Weinberger confronted Reagan about Lebanon, arguing that the use of military force was misplaced, Shultz was able to convince Reagan that the Secretary of Defense was incorrect (see Chapter Six for a discussion of Weinberger and Shultz's policy disagreement over Lebanon). While Shultz confronted Weinberger openly, the Secretary of State managed his relationship with Reagan cautiously. Shultz inherited the Lebanon crisis and the commitments made

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[104] Schulze, 'The Arab-Israeli conflict', p.58.

[105] Hopkins, 'Ronald Reagan's and George H.W. Bush's Secretaries of State', p.234.

[106] George Shultz has been described an as 'architect' in reference to his role in the Reagan Administration's creation of policy in Lebanon. See: Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy' p. 89; Quandt, 'Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967', p.269 & Charlotte Saikowski, Reagan unscathed by Beirut failure', 29 February 1984, *Christian Science Monitor*, p.2.

[107] Hopkins, p.235.

under Haig but regarded the Lebanese landscape as an opportunity for both the President and himself.

The decision to intervene

On 6 July 1982, Reagan 'agreed in principle to contribute a small contingent' of US Marines to be sent to Lebanon, providing that Habib could negotiate a tenable ceasefire between the PLO and the Israelis.[108] The following day, Reagan received an emotive, cautionary letter from Soviet General-Secretary Brezhnev, stating:

> Today, perhaps, even leaders with stone hearts cannot turn a deaf ear to the appeals of those who everyday and every hour are dying in Beirut and Lebanon by the hand of the Israeli invaders…what is the reason for not using the U.N. military units which are already deployed on the Lebanese soil by a decision of the Security Council? We are aware of your statement that you are prepared in principle to send a contingent of American forces in Lebanon. I must warn you that if this actually takes place, the Soviet Union will conduct its policy taking this fact into account.[109]

Reagan responded to Brezhnev on 14 July in an attempt to curb Soviet fears of a long-term US intervention in Beirut by saying,

> If deployed in Beirut, U.S. forces would remain there only for a limited time necessary to accomplish the objectives I have described. These forces would then be withdrawn. This is not only morally sound policy; it is also a course dictated by prudence, for as experience shows, any attempt by outside powers to impose their military will on the people of the Middle East can only lead to such powers becoming bogged down in a bloody and humiliating quagmire.[110]

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[108] 'Reagan decide d'envoyer des troupes au Liban si Beyrouth en fait la demande pour retablir la paix et evacuer les fedayine', 7 July 1982, *L'OLJ*, p.1; Howell Raines, 'Reagan Agrees "In Principle" to Troops for P.L.O. Arafat Spurns "Protection"', 7 July 1982, *NYT*, p.1 & 'Account of Brezhnev's letter to Reagan on crisis in Lebanon', 9 July 11982, *NYT*, p.1.
[109] Letter from Brezhnev to Reagan, [Situation in Lebanon, Israeli invasion], 7 July 1982, U.S.S.R. General Secretary Brezhnev File, Box 38, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Records: Head of State Series, RRPL, pp.1-2.
[110] Response from Reagan to Brezhnev, [Situation in Lebanon, Israeli invasion], 14 July 1982, U.S.S.R. General Secretary Brezhnev File, Box 38, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Records: Head of State Series, RRPL, p.2.

In a rare display of unanimity, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 516[111] on 1 August 1982, calling for an immediate ceasefire 'within Lebanon and across the Israeli/Lebanese border.'[112] The Resolution was directed at the IDF's continued presence in Lebanon, although Israel defended its position on the basis that the PLO had committed numerous ceasefire violations by 31 July. While the Soviets, PLO, Lebanon and Egypt publicly condemned Israel's shelling of West Beirut the US remained silent.

On 2 August 1982, Reagan met with Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir to discuss Lebanon. The US President communicated that an immediate cessation of the conflict in West Beirut was essential to curb the rising violence in Lebanon. Ball argues that the relatively soft-handed approach that Reagan adopted toward the Israelis ultimately meant that Begin and Sharon could influence the imminent US peacekeeping mission. 'Never before in modern history had the aggressor been permitted to dictate the form and composition of the peacekeeping force its aggression had made necessary.'[113] Reagan still did not confirm or commit the US to the conflict although he did approve US humanitarian support such as food and medical supplies.[114]

The biggest conflict between Mitterand and Reagan was what the French called the '*coup de tonnerre*' or thunderclap in Beirut.[115] Mitterand believed that while Haig had been overwhelmingly pro-Israeli, the Secretary of State's firm actions

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[111] UNSC Res 516, [Ceasefire in Lebanon and Lebanese/Israeli Border], 1 August 1982, S/Res/516, UNARMS, p.1.
[112] Cable from USUN Mission to Haig, [Security Council Resolution 516 on Beirut Adopted August 1 1982], 7:35pm 1 August 1982, Memorandum of Conversations- President Reagan File, Box 50, Executive Secretariat Files: NSC Subject Files, RRPL, pp.1-2.
[113] Ball, 'Error and Betrayal in Lebanon', p.50.
[114] Statement, [White House Statement after the President's meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Shamir], 2 August 1982, Memorandum of Conversations- President Reagan File, Box 50, Executive Secretariat Files: NSC Subject Series, RRPL, p.1.
[115] 'Des Troupes Françaises pour evacuer les Fedayine', 11 July 1982, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

to neutralize the violence in Beirut had been resolute as opposed to Reagan's dithering and hesitance. Mitterand wanted to enter Lebanon but could not do so without the support of a multilateral partnership given the domestic opposition to French deployments.[116]

On 4 August 1982, President Sarkis issued a personal, direct plea to Reagan requesting direct 'intervention in the present situation in Beirut.'[117] As a result the National Security Council met on the same day with President Reagan, Vice President Bush, Weinberger and Shultz. The meeting began with concerns over the Israeli invasion and Israel's continued contravention of the ceasefire agreement.[118] Shultz, gauging the international outcry at the Israeli occupation, argued that Israel must be censured both by the Reagan Administration and the UN Security Council or the Administration would face further embarrassment. The Secretary of State advised that a letter should be sent to Prime Minister Begin 'that does not contain a threat' but clarifies that Israel's actions, if continued, would have serious implications for US-Israeli relations. However, the NSC continued to see the Lebanese conflict as an effective proxy of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict without further regard for the internal security issues or Syrian interference.[119] US Ambassador to the UN, Jeane Kirkpatrick, known for her deeply conservative approach, steered the meeting into more precarious territory, reminding the NSC that even though the Israelis were the

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[116] Robert Sole, 'La démission du secrétaire d'État américain, Israël s'inquiète des conséquences de la démission de M. Alexander Haig, Washington s'oppose au projet français de neutralisation de Beyrouth Un "coup de tonnerre"', 28 June 1982 & Lucien George and Dominique Pouchin, 'Les incertitudes de la politique américaine et la crise du Liban - Israël s'inquiète des conséquences de la démission de M. Alexander Haig, Washington s'oppose au projet français de neutralisation de Beyrouth Un État en pleine décomposition', *Le Monde,* 28 June 1982.

[117] Cable from Habib to Shultz, [Habib Mission: Presidential Message], 9:50am 4 August 1982, Cable #12356, Lebanon- President Sarkis Cables File, Box 21, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Head of State Series, RRPL, p.1.

[118] NSC Minutes, [Lebanon Situation], 9:10am 4 August 1982, NSC 0057 Lebanon Situation File, Box 91284, Executive Secretariat NSC Meeting Series, RRPL, p.1.

[119] *ibid.* pp.1-4.

first to fire the shots in the conflict, the PLO were international terrorists who were working against US interests and committing acts of violence throughout the world, supported by the Soviet Union.[120] This altered the tone of the entire meeting, not only reminding the NSC that the US regarded the PLO as 'terrorists' but also leading Reagan to shift his focus away from Israel toward the PLO in a clear statement to Arafat that 'their games must stop.'[121]

The Reagan Administration now believed that the only way to force the Israeli decision-makers to withdraw was to control the PLO. Reagan's letter to Prime Minister Begin was adamant but unthreatening and illustrated that the US could no longer remain quiet on the intervention issue.

> Last night we were making significant progress in the removal of the PLO from Beirut. That progress was once again frustrated by the actions taken by your forces. There must be an end to the unnecessary bloodshed particularly among innocent civilians. I insist that a cease-fire in place be reestablished and maintained until the PLO has left Beirut. The relationship between our two countries is at stake.[122]

While Habib's negotiations had led to a temporary ceasefire between PLO and IDF troops in Beirut, the US' Middle East envoy did not think this could last without US intervention. Even if Israel acquiesced to US demands for a short-term ceasefire, the ultimate responsibility was now held by the US to oversee Arafat and the PLO's removal, ensure sustainable peace, and monitor the IDF's withdrawal. Weinberger and the Joint Chiefs of Staff proposed to Reagan that a US intervention, beyond the limitations of diplomacy, into a highly-sensitive issue like the Palestinian-Israeli tensions, would expose the US to the regional Arab nations' potential retribution. Yet Reagan and Shultz believed that, without a force that could elicit Israeli acquiescence, warning and condemning Israel would prove ineffective.

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[120] *ibid.* p.2.
[121] *ibid.* p.3.
[122] *ibid.*

The Israeli invasion also provided a definitive moment for the Reagan Administration to prove regionally that it was prepared to take decisive steps to ensure peace. By August 1982, it was clear that the Reagan Administration still saw any peacekeeping mandate as more focussed on the Israel-Palestinian challenges than on the Lebanese conflict as a whole. In part, the Administration was now committed to overcoming its guilt over the controversial debate as to whether Haig had given Israel the green light in June.

A United Nations solution? Mistrust, UNIFIL and the MFO

UNIFIL had been operating in Southern Lebanon since 1978 in order to monitor the IDF withdrawal after Israel's first invasion. After the 1982 Israeli invasion, it became obvious that UNIFIL was unable to prevent large-scale military conflict on either side.[123] Skjelsbaek highlights that UNIFIL was limited, not only by its exclusive peacekeeping mandate, but also by the restriction on its use of military force.[124] It was only able to protect civilians by moving them away from the heat of the conflict rather than militarily engaging with it.[125] Having proposed UNIFIL in 1978, under Resolution 425, the US became frustrated by 1982 with the limitations under which the force was operating.[126] Breaking the regulations that prevented Security Council members from militarily participating in any UN peacekeeping force, France

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[123] Report to the Undersecretary General, [Future of UNIFIL], in Future of UNIFIL, Correspondence between Callaghan and Urquhart 26/11/1982 –14-09-1983 File, Box UNIFIL, S-1066-0094-05, UNARMS, pp.1-2.

[124] Kjell Skjelsbaek, 'United Nations Peacekeeping and the Facilitation of Withdrawals', *Security Dialogue*, No. 20, 1989, pp.254-255.

[125] Theirry Tardy, 'The UN and the Use of Force: A Marriage Against Nature", *Security Dialogue*, No.38 & Richard Nelson, 'Multinational Peacekeeping in the Middle East and the United Nations Model', in Anthony McDermott and Kjell Skjelsbaek, *The Multinational Force in Beirut 1982-1984*, (Miami: Florida International University Press: 1991), pp.3-37.

[126] UNSC Res 425, [Establishment of UNIFIL and withdrawal of Israeli forces], 19 March 1978, S/RES/425, UNARMS, p.1.

contributed the majority of the military resources to the UNIFIL.[127] Neither US diplomatic pressure nor the French military presence in southern Lebanon throughout 1981 could lessen the growing tensions or prevent Syria's build-up of SAMs in the Bekaa Valley.[128] Israel resented UNIFIL's presence largely because it felt that UNIFIL had allowed the PLO and SAF to stockpile arms and SAMs from 1980-82.[129]

The Security Council's working paper regarding the UNIFIL deployment stated that a decision to extend the mandated period of UN presence in Lebanon was contingent on the withdrawal of all Israeli and non-Lebanese military forces from Lebanon's borders.[130] This simply could not be executed by UNIFIL because of Israel's continued reticence to heed the UN Security Council's warnings or UNIFIL's commands.

The UN's McBride report later strongly condemned Israel's invasion (in June 1982) but Israel's relationship with UNIFIL was already damaged by the time Sharon launched Operation Peace for Galilee.[131] Previous events had illustrated to Israel that the UN force's inability to police the growing Syrian, Palestinian and internal Lebanese militias could pose a significant threat to Israel's northern border.[132] US support for any UN operation in Lebanon also diminished, largely due to Israel's

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[127] FCO Report, [United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon], 1 January 1980, Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Near East and North Africa, NF Series, FCO 93/2436, The UK National Archives, (hereafter UKNA), p.1.

[128] Maureen Boerma, 'The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, Peacekeeping in a Domestic Context', *Millennium- Journal of International Studies*, No. 8, 1979, pp. 54-58.

[129] 'Force multinationale: Accord de principe de Washington et Paris', 11 July 1982, *L'OLJ*, p.6.

[130] Security Council Working Paper, [Mandate of UNIFIL 1983], 16 Feb 1982- 12 Oct 1983, Secretary General Middle East & UNIFIL 1982-1983 File, UNIFIL Series, UNARMS, p.1.

[131] The McBride Report was a UN sponsored International Commission established 28 August to 29 November 1982 to investigate the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and reported violations of International Law. See: 'Israel in Lebanon: excerpts from the McBride Report', *Race Class*, No. 24, 1983.p.1-3 & Stephen Cimbala & Peter Forster, 'US, NATO and Military Burden-Sharing' in Anthony McDermott and Kjell Skjelsbaek, *The Multinational Force in Beirut,* pp.33-35.

[132] Kjell Skjelsbaek, 'United Nations Peacekeeping and the Facilitation of Withdrawals', p.259.

public contempt for UNIFIL's presence in southern Lebanon.[133] The UN Secretary General's report on 14 June 1982 stated that 'the United Nations had no capacity for direct observation or monitoring of the cease-fire', further diminishing the possibility of Israeli or US support for a UN solution.[134] The British also knew that the US was very suspicious of the UN but continued to show support for the UNIFIL commander.[135] The UN's failure to co-opt both the Israeli and Lebanese forces, UNIFIL's inability to provide adequate military resources and the fear of an almost certain Soviet veto meant that the US could not risk trying to strengthen the UN peacekeeping mandate in Lebanon.[136] Without the US administration, Israel or Lebanon's sanctioning, UNIFIL was powerless to define its mission clearly.[137]

Equally a working example of an effective non-UN peacekeeping force was the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) that Reagan signed in to law on 29 December 1981 and which became active on 20 March 1982.[138] The MFO was charged with monitoring the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt in the Sinai. The UN's failure to extend the term and scope of the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) during a Security Council meeting in 1981 illustrated the UN's weaknesses in

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[133] Memorandum from Clark to Howard Teicher and Geoffrey Kemp, [State Paper on Lebanon], October 7 1982, NSDD64 Next Steps in Lebanon File, Box 91286, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records Series, RRPL, p.1.
[134] Report from the Secretary-General, [United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon], 14 June 1982, S/15194/Add.2, UNARMS, p.1.
[135] Memorandum from A.D. Parsons to Mr Coles, [Lebanon], 14 December 1983, Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UKNA, p.1.
[136] Ramesh Thakur, 'UN Authority and U.S. Power', in Anthony McDermott and Kjell Skjelsbaek, *The Multinational Force in Beirut*, pp. 101-106.
[137] Letter from Undersecretary General Urquhart to Director General, Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs David Kimiche, [The IDF and UNIFIL], 1 August 1983Future of UNIFIL Correspondence between Callaghan and Urquhart 26/11/1982 – 14-09-1983 File, Box UNIFIL, S-1066-0094-05, UNARMS, p. 2.
[138] [Statement on Signing the Multinational Force and Observers Participation Resolution], 29 December 1981, Online: http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid, Accessed 20 March 2014 & H.J. RES349 [Creation of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) for the Sinai], 97th Congress, 21 & 28 July 1981, pp.1-4.

developing an effective observer force in Sinai.[139] The key reason for the UNEF's

failure was the USSR's opposition to the force, with Moscow siding instead with its

regional Arab neighbours (particularly Syria) who opposed the Israeli-Egyptian Camp

David Peace Accords. As a result, the US established the MFO in order to overcome

the necessity for international and UN Security Council sanctioning.[140] In a letter to

the Speaker of the House of Representatives with regard to Reagan's signing of the

MFO, the US President stated:

> In fact, it proved impossible to secure U.N. action. As a result, Egypt and
> Israel, with the participation of the United States, entered into negotiations for
> the creation of an alternative multinational force and observers…The Protocol
> established the MFO and provided in effect that the MFO would have the
> same functions and responsibilities as those provided in the 1979 Treaty for
> the planned U.N. force.[141]

While it seemed reasonable to the Reagan Administration that, given the MFO's

successes, the establishment of a similar supervisory multinational peacekeeping

force to oversee the PLO's withdrawal was the most rational option, an

internationally-sanctioned peace treaty had not been ratified between the Palestinians

and Israel.[142] Rather, all that was in place was a temporary ceasefire agreement

between the PLO and Israel. Although the MFO and the proposed MNFI in Lebanon

were defined by similar peacekeeping precepts, the Lebanese security context's

volatility was characteristically more factional than the situation in the Sinai. Thus,

the intended MNFI would not be charged with the monitoring of a unanimously-

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[139] Reagan Letter to Speaker of the House of Representatives, [Letter to the Speaker of the
House and the President of the Senate Reporting on the Deployment and Mission of the
United States Forces in the Multinational Force and Observers], 19 March 1982, Online:
http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1982/31982b.htm, Accessed 29 March,
2014.
[140] Nelson, 'Multinational Peacekeeping in the Middle East and the United Nations Model',
pp.24-29.
[141] [Mission of the United States Forces in the Multinational Force and Observers], p.1.
[142] 'Washington: Les negociations dans une phase critique: Weinberger: pas de paix durable
au P.O. sans une patrie pour les Palestiniens', 16 July 1982, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

endorsed national peace process because it did not have the approval of every factional leader in Lebanon.[143] Neither did the French, anti-Mitterand and Gaullist *Rassemblement pour la République* party nor the *Parti communiste français* want France to join either the MFO or the MNFI, believing in supporting an exclusively UN-led solution in southern Lebanon and the Sinai.[144]

As Ghali argues, the two tests for successful non-UN peacekeeping forces must be that the proposed force has the belligerent government and non-government forces in the host country's consensus and the force must be sponsored by a great power.[145] Houghton and Trinka set out a list of advantages and disadvantages in pursuing a non-UN peacekeeping mission. Amongst the former, they list the ease of establishment, financial stability, clearer mandates, management partners' greater commitment and flexibility in the force's selection as an independent multilateral force. The disadvantages include bypassing the UN, the slower start up time, the founding partners' expense, a superpower's involvement, a lack of prestige and US congressional reservations.[146] While the MNFI's backing by the French and US governments meant that it possessed all of the necessary financial and military resources, the MNFI partners only had the Lebanese government, the Palestinians in Lebanon and, reluctantly, Israel's consensus.[147] The missing link was the internal Lebanese factions' support. The PLO was not Israel's only opponent in the conflict

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[143] Nelson, 'The Multinational Force in Beirut', pp.95-97.

[144] Christiane Chombeu, 'Le R.P.R. et le P.C.F. n'approuvent pas la participation de la France à la force multinationale du Sinaï, *Le Monde*, 24 April 1982.

[145] Mona Ghali, 'Non-UN Peacekeeping Operations in the Middle East', *Occasional Paper* No.12, May 1993, The Henry L. Stimson Center, p.21.

[146] Robert Houghton & Frank Trinka, 'International Peacekeeping in the Middle East', (Washington: Foreign Service Institute, 1984), pp.79-81.

[147] Francis Cornu, 'Le gouvernement est divisé sur l'opportunité d'une intervention massive au Sud-Liban', *Le Monde*, 14 May 1982.

and the MNFI mandate failed to take into account the Syrian or *Shi'a* militia groups in southern Lebanon.[148]

Birth of the Orca: the MNFI

After the final details of the Israeli-PLO ceasefire agreement had been reached on 18 August 1982, the MNFI, a collaboration of US, French and Italian troops, was engaged to assist the LAF with the PLO fighters' safe removal from Lebanon.[149] Each national MNFI contingent was allowed autonomous command within each region, but was ultimately responsible to the LAF command. The MNFI was mandated with the sole purpose of performing a peacekeeping, monitoring role in Beirut.[150] On 25 August 1982, 800 US troops under the command of the 32nd MAU, along with 854 French and 570 Italian troops, landed on Lebanon's shores under the MNFI's mandate.[151] The French termed the MNFI mission, *Opération Épaulard I* (Operation Orca I).[152]

Reagan's address to the US Marines indicated the moral imperative that he was determined to portray,

> You are about to embark on a mission of great importance to our Nation and the free world. The conditions under which you carry out your vital assignment are, I know, demanding and potentially dangerous. You are tasked to be once again what Marines have been for more than 200 years --

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[148] 'Ryad et Damas demanderont aux U.S.A. un reglement global du probleme palestinien: Séoud al-Fayçal et Khaddam seront reçus lundi par Reagan', 16 July 1982, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

[149] 'Le Liban demandera aujord'hui; envoi de troupes multinationale', 31 July 1982, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

[150] 'Le gouvernement israélien a approuvé le plan d'évacuation: Le Liban demande aux États-Unis, à la France et à l'Italie de constituer la "force multinationale d'interposition"', *Le Monde, 20 August 1982.*

[151] UPI, 'Italians await order to sail to Lebanon naval official says', 17 August, 1982, *NYT*, p.1.

[152] 'Le premier ministre entend "affirmer la présence de la France au Liban"', *Le Monde*, 27 May 1982 & 'M. Mitterrand réaffirme la volonté de la France " d'être présente au Liban"', *Le Monde,* 27 May 1982.

peacemakers. Your role in the multi-national force -- along with that of your French and Italian counterparts -- is crucial to achieving the peace that is so desperately needed in this long-tortured city.[153]

The MNFI troops' arrival heralded a distinct period for US policy in the Middle East. The force's establishment proved the Reagan Administration's willingness to engage and participate in the Lebanese conflict, which it had previously refused to do. It also demonstrated the US' disposition to undermine the UN operations under UNIFIL. The terms of the agreement between Lebanese Foreign Minister Fouad Boutros and US Ambassador Robert Dillon determined that if:

> withdrawal of the Palestinian personnel referred to above does not take place in accord with the predetermined schedule, the mandate of the M.N.F. will terminate immediately and all M.N.F. personnel will leave Lebanon forthwith.[154]

Reagan's speech on 1 September 1982 continued the line that US involvement in Lebanon and the Middle East arose from a moral necessity and that the war in Lebanon would actually create more opportunities for Israeli-Palestinian peace than before.[155] That is, the Israeli invasion had created an environment for direct US participation and therefore the PLO's removal.

The Administration's naivety was twofold. First, it assumed that the Israeli invasion was wholly and exclusively directed at Arafat and the PLO and, second, that the PLO's physical removal from Lebanon to Tunisia would lead to a cessation of the conflict in Lebanon. This was far from the truth.[156] It is important to see the MNFI deployment in the light of the September 'Reagan Plan' which saw the MNFI

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[153] Statement by Reagan, [Message to US Marine Forces Participating in the Multinational Force in Beirut, Lebanon], 25 August 1982, Public Papers, RRPL, p.1.

[154] 'Letters on the Role of American Troops in the Multinational Force from Fouad Boutros to Robert S. Dilon', *NYT*, August 21 1982, p.1

[155] Speech, [Address to the Nation on United States Policy for Peace in the Middle East].

[156] Memorandum from Liz Attardo to Howard Teicher, [Key Points of President's Speech], 2 September 1982, Arab-Israel Peace Process: Memos Sept 1982 File, Box 90217, Geoffrey Kemp Series, RRPL, pp.1-2.

contribution as a vital first step in the Arab-Israeli peace process. While direct conflict between the *Fatah* and the IDF had been reduced by the ceasefire and withdrawal, this did not equate to a long-term Palestinian-Israeli agreement.

The MNFI troops' withdrawal on 10 September 1982 signalled the end of an internationally-sanctioned, successful peacekeeping collaboration. The MNFI's successful monitoring of Yasir Arafat and the Palestinian fighters led to the PLO's safe withdrawal to Tunisia, without escalating the internal Lebanese conflict.[157] Reagan and Shultz both believed that the PLO represented the greatest obstacle to a sustainable ceasefire in Lebanon. The MNFI's actions in the removal of the Palestinian fighters, they believed, would illustrate the US' commitment to mediating peace talks between Israel and Lebanon and ultimately lead to Israel's full withdrawal.

A complete success?

Reagan announced on 1 September 1982,

> today has been a day that should make all of us proud. It marked the end of the successful evacuation of the P.L.O. from Beirut, Lebanon…I am happy to announce that the U.S. Marine contingent helping to supervise the evacuation has accomplished its mission.[158]

The President followed up by stating that 'it seemed to me that with the agreement in Lebanon we had an opportunity for a more far-reaching peace effort in the region, and I was determined to seize that moment.'[159]

The MNFI was hailed as a victorious, unconditional triumph for US-led peacekeeping.[160] Yet an accurate evaluation of the MNFI's mission, which ended on

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[157] Cable from Department of State to US Embassy Belgrade, [Lebanon Situation], 8:24pm 17 July 1982, Cable #174081, FOIA, DOSA, p.2.
[158] [Address to the Nation on United States Policy for Peace in the Middle East].
[159] *ibid.*

10 September 1982 with the redeployment of the US contingent back to the MAU, depends on the criteria employed. The significant steps taken by Habib and Reagan to abate further conflict between the PLO and Israel garnered the Administration international acclaim. If judged on the initial mandate and mission objectives alone, the MNFI safely removed the PLO from Beirut. The success often attributed to the MNFI was accomplished because the force was limited in terms of both time and strategy. The deployment's use of military force was also restricted, in line with other international peacekeeping mandates, and the objectives were achievable. The MNFI's brief deployment was tightly-controlled and so able to achieve its specific goals.

If, however, the criteria for evaluating the Reagan Administration's success more broadly included Israel and Syria's withdrawal and the return of stability to Lebanon, the US and the MNFI failed. Houghton and Trinka view the MNFI's strategic outcomes as a 'complete success', although they argue that the MNFI and MNFII mission as a whole was a 'flawed holding operation.'[161] Had the Reagan Administration realized its own miscalculations about the wider political conflict in Lebanon, it could be argued that it would never have intervened in the first place.[162] The MNFI's perceived success created an unjustified sense of victory for the MNFI allies, especially the US.[163]

Shultz's first address as US Secretary of State was made to the United Jewish Appeal following the MNFI's mission's successful completion on 12 September

[160] Press Conference with Reagan and Habib, [Remarks to Reports on Lebanon and the Middle East], 8 September 1982, Online: http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1982/90882k.htm, Accessed 20 March 2014.
[161] Houghton & Trinka, 'International Peacekeeping in the Middle East', p.70.
[162] 'Le Plan Reagan reliance le debat sur la representation Palestinienne', 7 September, L'OLJ, p.4.
[163] Ennio Caretto, 'Reagan accetta la forza di pace Elogi al libano, silenzio su Begin', La Stampa, 21 August 1982, p.4.

1982. In a speech entitled 'The Quest for Peace,' Shultz referred to Alexander Haig's push for the MFO and in doing so 'helped make good on the historic Israeli move for peace.'[164] The speech also extravagantly self-praised Shultz and Reagan's policy under the MNFI, crediting the Administration with securing 'peace in the Middle East and security and success for Israel and her Arab neighbours.'[165] Shultz unwaveringly stated that the US would not support an independent Palestinian state in the existing Palestinian territories. Furthermore he maintained that any Palestinian state creation must be avoided to foster peace in the region.[166] Meanwhile, the reality of the situation in Lebanon did not reflect the successes that Shultz or Reagan announced. Israel had not withdrawn, and no tangible steps towards long-term security had been achieved in Lebanon. The influence of Syria and Israel had not been significantly reduced and the Lebanese conflict continued to grow, even without the Palestinian presence.

Conclusion

The US' decision not to intervene in Lebanon before August 1982 was not without reason. The regional issues' complexities were focused entirely on Lebanon, of which the Palestinian and Israeli conflict was only a part. While Haig had represented a clear pro-Israeli influence in the Reagan Administration, he also illustrated a degree of moderation in attempting to find a diplomatic solution to the challenges faced. Shultz's introduction into the political landscape engaged the Israeli invasion as a measure of credibility for the Reagan Administration, who by June 1982 could no

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[164] Speech by Shultz, [The Quest for Peace], Address to the United Jewish Appeal, 12 September 1982, Arab-Israel Peace Process: Memos Sept 1982 File
, Box 90217, Geoffrey Kemp Files, RRPL, p.2.
[165] *ibid.* p.3.
[166] *ibid.* p.4.

longer remain passive. The MNFI's establishment heralded an objective peacekeeping force that enabled the execution of a compromise between the PLO and the Israelis. The PLO's successful removal from Beirut felt more decisive for the Arab-Israeli peace process than many of the diplomatic talks that had occurred under previous Administrations. However, the MNFI's introduction also created a precedent for the Reagan Administration. As the MNFI militarily intervened in Lebanon it inadvertently committed the US to the Lebanese conflict.

While the MNFI's mandate was limited and clear, the force bound the Reagan Administration's credibility to a peaceful solution in Lebanon. The Reagan Administration legitimised a policy outside UN control, because both Reagan and Shultz believed that the UN lacked the appropriate mandate, vision and strategy to implement a long-term peace settlement. As Reagan became intertwined in the Lebanese conflict, he also tied his Administration to a complicated situation which the US was now committed to resolving.

The crisis in late September 1982 obliged the US to return under the MNFII in order to prove that its initial decision to intervene under the MNFI had been meaningful.[167] Without the decision to deploy the MNFI, it is questionable whether Reagan and Shultz would have seen the later crises as a US responsibility.

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[167] 'La forza multinazionale di pace è al complete: Le "Piume Nere" al vento de Beirut', *La Stampa,* 26 August 1982, p.4.

Chapter Four

Return of the Marines and the Multinational Force II
Multinational Force II, Phase One (29 September 1982 to 17 May 1983)

On 29 September 1982, some 1,200 American troops intervened for a second time in the Lebanese Civil War as part of the US-led Multinational Force in Lebanon. This deployment was in response to the assassination of Lebanese President-elect, Bachir Gemayel, on 14 September 1982, and the subsequent Sabra and Shatila massacres carried out by the Christian *Kata'eb* supporters of Bachir Gemayel from 16-18 September 1982.[1] The 3,500-strong Multinational Force II (MNFII) was mandated as an exclusive peacekeeping force at the invitation of Amin Gemayel, who succeeded his brother as president.

During the first 12 months of the MNFII's deployment, the peacekeeping mandate underwent several evolutions. The MNFII began as a peacekeeping force positioned between the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) and the Syrian Armed Force (SAF) but quickly found itself intertwined, militarily and diplomatically, in the complex Lebanese conflict. In contrast to the Multinational Force I (MNFI) the force lacked clear boundaries with regards to the deployment period and the use of military force. The MNFII's strategy was deliberately ambiguous allowing US President Ronald Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz greater flexibility in pursuing US opportunities in Lebanon.

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[1] There are many reports about the numbers of Palestinians murdered in Sabra and Shatila. Thomas Friedman ('Beirut massacre: the four days', Race Class, No. 24, 1983, p.431) states that there were 300 deaths, and the upper limits report figures of 2000-3,500. See 'Lebanon and the Palestinians: chronology, *Race Class*, No. 24, 1983, 'The 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon: the casualties', *Race Class*, No. 24, 1983 &, Dilip Hiro, 'Lebanon Fire and Embers' (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

This chapter examines the establishment of the MNFII, its initial deployment and the evolution of the force's mandate from 15 September 1982 to the signing of the US-backed May 17th Agreement in 1983. Discussing the central diplomatic and military objectives throughout this period, this chapter demonstrates that the key decision-makers within the Reagan Administration, namely Shultz and Reagan, did not actively choose Lebanon as a policy frontline in September 1982. Rather, US policy in Lebanon evolved from the MNFI's successes and the Reagan Administration's inability to prevent the MNFII from being drawn into the rapidly changing Lebanese conflict. The MNFII should thus be interpreted as Reagan's attempt to strengthen his status as the primary peace-broker in the region.[2] However, the US' inability to distance itself from the Lebanese crisis after the signing of the Israel-Lebanese Agreement on 17 May 1983 resulted in further changes to the rules of engagement and ultimately an intensification of US military policy in Lebanon. Reagan and Shultz's failure to predict the political quagmire created by the Administration's meddling led to the military escalation examined in Chapter Five.

The focus of the scholarly debate by Hallenbeck, Nelson, Norton, Thakur and Kemp has been on MNFII's mandate and mission, which they have regarded as a major failure of the Reagan Administration.[3] These scholars argue that by deploying the US Marines into Lebanon with unclear objectives, the US implicated itself deeply into the Lebanese conflict. Abou Diab agrees that while the inflexible nature of the

[2] David Brooks, 'Cutting Losses: Ending Limited Interventions', *Parameters,* Strategic Studies Institute*,* Vol.43, No.3, 2013, pp.102-104.
[3] Ralph Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy (New York: Praeger, 1991); Richard Nelson, 'The Multinational Force in Beirut', Augustus Norton, 'The Demise of the MNF'; Geoffrey Kemp, 'The American Peacekeeping Role in Lebanon', in Anthony McDermott and Kjell Skjelsbaek, *The Multinational Force in Beirut, 1982-1984* (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991) & Ramesh Thakur, 'International Peacekeeping in Lebanon: United Nations Authority and Multinational Force' (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987).

MNFI's strategy was in fact to the force's benefit, the MNFII was overly-ambitious and failed to provide a solution to the internal factional tensions that continued to plague Lebanon.[4] Similarly, Tarrabain argues that the MNFII mission failed because of its ambiguity as the strategy was neither truly interventionist nor truly peacekeeping.[5] The academic literature on the MNFII also highlights two key factors that led to the establishment of the force, namely, the possibility that the Reagan Administration was concerned with Soviet containment and Reagan's own pursuit of a *pax Americana* in the Middle East.[6] While fears of Soviet influence were indeed a factor in the MNFII's deployment, this argument is overly-simplistic. The Reagan Administration, as this chapter argues, was more concerned with the polarisation of the regional Arab neighbours and the emergence of a distinctly anti-American ideology than with direct superpower confrontation. This chapter further argues that the establishment of the MNFII was a result of the Reagan Administration's flawed perceptions of success in the removal of the PLO under the MNFI.

[4] Khattar Abou Diab, 'Le Role de la Force Multinationale au Liban de 1982 a 1984' (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984), pp.37-57.

[5] Ali Tarrabain, 'The four powers multinational force in Lebanon 1982-1984: Peacekeeping and intervention', University of Kent at Canterbury, 1990, pp.290-298.

[6] Walter Goldstein, 'Opportunity Costs of Acting as a Super Power: U.S. Military strategy in the 1980s', *Journal of Peace Research*, No. 18, 1981, p.241; Marianne Heiberg, 'Focus On: Lebanon and Premonitions of Battles to Come', *Journal of Peace Research*, No. 20, 1983, pp.295-297; Alexander George, 'US-Soviet Global Rivalry: Norms of Competition', *Journal of Peace Research*, No. 23, 1986, pp.252-255; Ali Sadeghi, 'Lebanon and After: Whose Victory?', *Journal of International Studies*, No. 13, 1984, pp.1-5; Ilan Pappe, 'Clusters of history: US involvement in the Palestine question', *Race and Class*, No. 48, 2007; Parker Hart, 'An American Policy Toward the Middle East', *AAPSS*, No.390, 1970, pp.111-112, Philip Stoddard, 'U.S. Policy and the Arab Israeli Conflict: Observations on the current scene', *AAPSS*, No. 482, 1985, p.21; Robert Freedman, 'Patterns of Soviet Policy toward the Middle East', *AAPSS*, No. 482, 1985, pp.52-54; Robert Pfaltzgraff, 'The Superpower Relationship and U.S. National Security Policy in the 1980s', *AAPSS,* No. 457, 1981, p.196; Robert Hanks, 'Maritime Doctrines and Capabilities: The United States and the Soviet Union, *AAPSS*, No. 457, 1981 pp.121-128; Thakur, 'International Peacekeeping in Lebanon: United Nations Authority and Multinational Force', pp.9-28 & Nelson, 'Multinational Peacekeeping in the Middle East and the United Nations Model', in *The Multinational Force in Beirut*, pp.5-33.

The killing of Bachir Gemayel and the Sabra and Shatila massacres

Former Lebanese Foreign Minister and advisor to the President-elect, Elie Salem, claimed that Bachir Gemayel was a young, pragmatic leader who had been elected president on 23 August 1982 because of his dogged persuasion and vision in embracing a stronger US presence in Lebanon. Israel, too, welcomed his election because 'Bashir had promised Israel the moon' in the run-up to the invasion.[7] However, once Israeli forces crossed into Lebanon and advanced on to Beirut, Bachir Gemayel first reneged on his promise to aggressively deal with West Beirut and then refused to sign a peace treaty with Israel.[8] Indeed he tried to keep both Israel and Syria at arms length and instead created internal dialogues with leaders in West Beirut in order to 'broaden and consolidate his power base.'[9]

On 14 September 1982, while President-elect Bachir Gemayel was addressing a meeting of *Kata'eb* officials in East Beirut, a bomb exploded, destroying the building and killing him instantly.[10] Bachir's assassination was thought to have been at the hands of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP), an anti-*Kata'eb* militia, that was seen as a rogue extension of Syrian intelligence and the Syrian government which resented Bachir Gemayel's seemingly intimate relationship with Israel.[11]

At news of Bachir's death, the IDF launched a troop offensive against West Beirut on 15 September 1982, calling for revenge. Israeli Minister of Defense, Ariel Sharon went as far as to claim that the IDF intervention was now clearly justified as it

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[7] Elie Salem, 'Violence and Diplomacy in Lebanon: The Troubled Years 1982-1988' (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995), pp.4-9.

[8] Amnon Kapeliouk, 'Sabra et Chatila: Enquête sur un Massacre' (Seuil: Paris. 1982), p.2.

[9] *ibid*.p.7.

[10] 'Retrouvailles nationales pour l'ultime adieu au Président martyr', 16 September 1982, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

[11] Hiro, 'Lebanon Fire and Embers', pp. 92-94 & Eric Roll, ' Un entretien avec M.Arafat, Le président de l'O.L.P. accuse les militaires israéliens d'avoir participé à la tuerie', *Le Monde,* 21 September 1982.

aimed to protect Lebanese Muslims and Palestinian civilians who were threatened by the *Kata'eb's* vengeance.[12] However, this was merely a pretext for Sharon's more covert strategic aims namely exerting influence over the post-Gemayel political order, as well as aggressively removing the remaining PLO stronghold in West Beirut.[13]

At the same time as the IDF moved into Beirut, armed Christian militiamen stormed the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps on the outskirts of Beirut on 16-18 September, killing many Palestinian civilians.[14] Led by radical *Kata'eb* militia commander Eli Hobeiqa, the Sabra and Shatila massacres were revenge for Gemayel's assassination and as a means to restore the Christian balance of power. Bayan Nuwayhed al-Hout, wife of Lebanese PLO leader Shafiq al-Hout, conducted research on the massacres at Sabra and Shatila through victim and witness testimony. She concluded that the invading gunmen all belonged to *al-Kata'eb, al-Quwat al-Lubnaniyeh* and *Quwat Sa'd Haddad*.[15] Given Hobeiqa and the commander of the Christian Southern Lebanon Army (SLA), Said Haddad's, known alliance with Israel, there was concern that Sharon had sanctioned the murders. Sharon admitted to only having 'coordinated' with the *Kata'eb* militiamen but significant concern arose that Sharon may have provided a green light for the massacres which would ultimately lead to further reprisals against IDF troops in Lebanon.[16] Sharon stated:

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[12] David Hirst, 'Beware of Small States: Lebanon, Battleground of the Middle East' (New York: Nation Books, 2010), p.152.

[13] Richard Gabriel, 'Operation Peace for Galilee' (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), pp. 215-218.

[14] 'Les Israeliens ont achevé d'investir la partie oust de la Capitale', 17 September 1982, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

[15] Bayan Nuwayhed al-Hout, 'Sabra and Shatila: September 1982' (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p.242.

[16] Michael Jansen, 'The Battle of Beirut', (Zed Press: London, 1982), pp. 91-107; Thomas Friedman, 'The Beirut Massacre', *NYT*, 26 September 1982 & [Cabinet communiqué on the massacre at the Sabra and Shatilla camps 19 September 1982], *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*hereafter *IMFA*), Vol.8, Article No.79, 19 September 1982.

When we agreed to the entrance of the Phalangists into the terrorist camps, they were expressly told by the I.D.F.'s senior commanders, and I quote, "that a military force will enter the Shatilla camp from the south and west and will comb out and mop up terrorists." It was emphasized in the coordinating meeting that "the action is against terrorists and that the civilian population should not be harmed, especially women, children and old persons."[17]

However, there had been no evidence that the PLO 'terrorists' were in the camps prior to the attack and even when the *Kata'eb* found no PLO fighters they continued to kill civilians.

Neither Sharon's plans in West Beirut nor the Christian actions in the refugee camps had produced their desired plans. The two attacks did not remove the PLO from West Beirut but rather reduced Israeli influence in the new Lebanese government. The situation prompted significant concern for the new Lebanese President, Amin Gemayel[18], who wished to protect the Christian population in Beirut whom he believed would suffer if the Palestinians sought reprisal for the massacres.[19] The urgency precipitated by the massacre justified Gemayel's call for international security and military aid in order to safeguard civilian populations.[20]

Furthermore, Sharon's involvement in the Palestinian massacre led to him loosing his Ministry of Defence portfolio after an Israeli inquiry, known as the Kahan Commission, found Sharon to have been accountable due to his conversations with the *Kata'eb* before the attack.[21]

After the Palestinian massacres, and as Sharon continued to deny responsibility or Israeli involvement, Washington reprimanded the Israeli Defence

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[17] [Statement in the Knesset by Defense Minister Sharon 22 September 1982], *IMFA*, Vol.8, Article No.83, 22 September 1982.

[18] From now on Amin Gemayel will be referred to as simply 'Gemayel.'

[19] Abie Weisfield, 'Sabra and Shatila', (Canada: Jerusalem International Publishing House, 1984).

[20] La situation au Liban après l'assassinat de Bechir Gemayel', *Le Monde*, 17 September 1982.

[21] [Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Events at the Refugee Camps in Beirut, 8 February 1983], *IMFA*, No.104, 8 February 1983.

Minister for the IDF's presence in West Beirut. The outbreak of violent conflict raised

major questions over the success of the MNFI and US credibility in the region more

broadly. Clearly, the MNFI's achievements in finding a sustainable peace had been

overstated.[22] Its failure to bring about long-term peace in Lebanon occurred because

US decision-makers overestimated the PLO's importance as the key to minimising

both Israel and Syria's military presence and the US failed to recognise the growing

internal tensions between the Lebanese domestic factional militias.[23] Reagan was

concerned about alienating his Arab allies and providing Syria with a justification to

strike out further in Lebanon.[24] National Security Affairs Special Assistant, Geoffrey

Kemp, argued that Reagan's response was

> an emotional and reactive response to a tragic event, influenced by the feeling
> that the United States had assumed responsibility for the safety of the
> Palestinians and that our friends, the Israelis, had allowed the worst to
> happen.[25]

The Administration also realized that, if Syria attacked Israel in the short-term then

the US would feel obliged to defend the IDF, something that it would wish to avoid

being observed to be doing. Sturkey, Mearsheimer and Walt argue that the Jewish

lobby and 'fundamentalist' Christian groups had a large influence in Washington

regarding US decisions relating to Israel. They claim that, even as Israel undertook

controversial actions in Lebanon, the historical relationship, strategic position and

Israel's aggressive position toward the Soviet Union meant that Washington would

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[22] 'Reagan, Mitterand et Jean-Paul II expriment leur horreur', 17 September 1982, *L'OLJ*, p.4.
[23] Interview with Dr Wassim Abu Fasha, Palestinian al-Fatah Movement, Bizeit University,
Ramallah, West Bank, 22 August 2010 & Norton, 'The Demise of the MNF', pp.81-89.
[24] Linda Malone, 'The Kahan Report, Ariel Sharon and the Sabra-Shatilla Massacres in
Lebanon: Responsibility Under International Law for Massacres of Civilian Populations',
Faculty Publications, 1985, pp.375-378 & Asher Kaufman, 'Forgetting the Lebanon War? On
Silence, denial and the selective remembrance of the "First" Lebanon War', in Ben-Ze'ev,
Ginio & Winter, eds., *Shadows of War: A Social History of Silence in the Twentieth Century'*,
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.197-205 & Yair Evron, 'War and
Intervention In Lebanon: The Israeli-Syrian Deterrence Dialogue', (London: Croom Helm,
1987), pp.155-160.
[25] Kemp, 'The American Peacekeeping Role', pp.131-132

always consider Israel as the US' most likely ally in the Middle East.[26] However, Israel's alleged involvement in the Sabra and Shatila massacres represented a crack in the Reagan Administration's relationship with Israel and a challenge to the previous, seemingly successful US campaign in Lebanon.[27]

Although, in the context of the thousands of civilians who had died in Lebanon, it is arguable that the massacre did not represent any greater humanitarian crisis than the rest of the war had already created, the weight of the responsibility felt in Washington and the public outcry internationally triggered the US back into action.[28] Had Reagan truly considered the opportunity costs of intervening in Lebanon, as Goldstein states, it is questionable whether he would have launched the MNFII.[29]

'Now is the time for action': Reconstituting the Multinational Force

With the troubling events from 14-18 September 1982, President Reagan decided to redeploy the US Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) to Lebanon's shores on 20 September under the MNFII.[30] Reagan stipulated that this second US-led intervention was to be determined by a number of key objectives. These were to aid all foreign forces' withdrawal from Lebanon (with specific reference to the IDF invasion in June 1982) and establish a stable, sovereign Lebanese Government under Gemayel. On one

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[26] Douglas Sturkey, 'The limits of American power', (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2007), pp.9-11& John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, 'The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy', (London: Allen Lane, 2007), pp.49-58.

[27] Renato Proni, 'La Cee: nuova forza multinazionale per bloccare le azioni israeliane', *La Stampa,* 21 September 1982, p.4.

[28] 'Effroyable massacres a Sabra et Chatila', 19 September 1982, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

[29] Walter Goldstein, 'Opportunity Costs of Acting as a Super Power: U.S. Military strategy in the 1980s', *Journal of Peace Research*, No. 18, 1981, p.241.

[30] 'Reagan, "horrifié", somme Israel de retirer ses troupes: Rome propose une nouvelle force de paix et Moscou reclame l'intervention des casques bleus', 19 September 1982, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

hand the Reagan Administration believed that 'US interests were well served by a moderate, pro-Western Lebanon.'[31] On the other hand, the National Security Council (NSC) identified US interests in Lebanon as a broader regional mission, in which Lebanese sovereignty and independence were neither considered nor valued. The NSC stated that Israel's imminent security, US strategic military and trade bases and oil security in the Gulf States were the Reagan Administration's primary motivations for a renewed intervention in Lebanon.[32]

By 20 September the conflict in Lebanon had changed significantly. The Syrian Army, which had previously suffered major military losses due to the Israeli bombing of its SAMs in June 1982, had rearmed with Soviet support. Similarly, even after the PLO's removal, the IDF had strengthened its military occupation in southern Lebanon. The continued IDF presence illustrated Sharon's broader agenda of controlling the conflict's outcome.[33] The political and security context in which the MNFII had to operate was even more complex than that in which the MNFI intervened.[34] The US explained Bachir Gemayel's assassination and the Palestinian massacres as key illustration of the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli war which, Reagan felt, had been resolved under the MNFI. The US fundamentally underestimated the emerging Syrian influence and the strengthened Lebanese factional presence in Lebanon that defined the war by September 1982. It could be easily argued that, had the US interpreted the worsening Lebanese domestic context as more than an IDF-PLO conflict, it would have recognised that the MNFII mandate was unrealistic for

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[31] Report from NSC, [Lebanon: Litmus Test for U.S. Credibility and Commitment], NSDD99-111 File, Box 8, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library (hereafter RRPL), p.1.
[32] *ibid.* p.2.
[33] Interview with Dr Shaul Shay, Senior Officer - Israeli Military Intelligence 1978-1982, Israeli Defense Force Force, Tel Aviv, 23 August 2009.
[34] Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, 'The meaning of Beirut, 1982' & 'American Arms in Israeli hands', *Race Class*, No. 24, 1983, pp. 346-348, 472-474.

delivering the force's objectives. Indeed, the events in the lead-up to 20 September were merely symptomatic of the growing uncertainty and tensions now characterizing the Lebanese conflict.[35] This uncertainly was ultimately reflected in the MNFII's mandate, as the key decision-makers attempted to adapt the force's operations to a context that they did not completely understand.[36]

Looking forward, the Reagan Administration continued to see an opportunity in the Lebanese conflict to strengthen its Middle East position and extend its identity as the sole bearer of international peacekeeping.[37] Reagan explicitly stated that the leading factor in the US decision-making should be to consider the Lebanon crisis an obligation of the US' 'vital role as a leader for world peace.'[38] The Reagan Administration naively assumed that this US/Gemayel collaboration also represented support from all other Lebanese parties whereas, in reality, no such consensus or support existed. This was a major mistake by the Reagan Administration. While the MNFII's deployment was vaguely linked to an objective peacekeeping mission, the US had clearly aligned itself to the threatened Gemayel government. Without the other Lebanese factions' recognition or consent, the MNFII was destined to become a prejudiced military force, bent on protecting Gemayel, rather than Lebanon's sovereignty.[39]

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[35] James Lebovic, 'National Interests and US Foreign Aid: The Carter and Reagan Years', *Journal of Peace Research*, No. 25, 1988, p.115.

[36] *ibid.* pp.347-348.

[37] Nathan Pelcovits, 'What Went Wrong?', in *The Multinational Force in Beirut*, pp.39-41.

[38] [Address to the Nation Announcing the Formation of the New Multinational Force in Lebanon], 20 September 1982, Public Papers, Online: http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1982/92082f.htm

[39] Speech by Reagan, [Address to the Nation on Lebanon], September 20 1982, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, p.1.

Contempt for UNIFIL and the US transnational police force

As Chapter Three highlighted, UNIFIL's establishment in 1978 set the precedent for the international community in Lebanon. Yet, Reagan's deployment of the MNFI had undermined whatever credibility UNIFIL had left in discussing peace between Israel and the Palestinians. UNIFIL was only regarded as a humanitarian force only once stability and adequate withdrawals had been achieved.[40] While the conflict raged UNIFIL was limited in its ability to convince any of the regional or internal parties in Lebanon to embark on ceasefire or withdrawal talks. Most importantly, Israel held significant contempt for the UN force which dated back to UNIFIL's inauguration and was cemented in Israel's challenge to the numerous Security Council condemnations of IDF and Israeli actions.[41]

The continued presence of the IDF throughout southern Lebanon and Beirut, as well as the violent tragedy of the Sabra and Shatila massacres, proved that UNIFIL was unable to handle the growing military aggression or prevent major humanitarian casualties.[42] Similarly, the Lebanese government rejected any suggestion that the UN could monitor the Palestinian civilians, instead calling on the US to provide an alternative.[43] It was inconceivable that Sharon or Gemayel would participate with the

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[40] UNSC, 2396th Meeting, [Resolution 521, The Palestinian civilians in Beirut], 19 September 1982, S/RES/521, United Nations Archives and Records Management Section (hereafter UNARMS), p.1.
[41] Skjelsbaek, 'United Nations Peacekeeping and the Facilitation of Withdrawals', pp.254-255; Boerma, 'The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, Peacekeeping in a Domestic Context', pp.54-58; Thierry Tardy, 'The UN and the Use of Force: A Marriage Against Nature', *Security Dialouge*, Vol.38, No. 1, 2007, pp.49-70 & Nelson, 'Multinational Peacekeeping in the Middle East and the United Nations Model', pp.3-37.
[42] Report to the Undersecretary General, [Future of UNIFIL], in Future of UNIFIL, Correspondence between Callaghan and Urquhart 26/11/1982 – 14-09-1983 File, Box UNIFIL, S-1066-0094-05, UNARMS , pp.1-2.
[43] Memorandum from Lieutenant Paul Bremer III to William Clark [NSC Memorandum on the Next Steps in Lebanon], 19 November 1982, NSDD64 File, Box 91286, Executive Secretariat, NSC Series, RRPL, p.2.

UN when the US, France and Italy had already demonstrated their propensity to rush to the rescue under the MNFI.[44]

The US/UN relationship suffered considerable setbacks, mainly because of UNIFIL and Lebanon. As Gregg argues, while the US/UN relationship had peaked and troughed throughout numerous US administrations, the Reagan Administration saw UNIFIL as a mission that had been deployed longer than necessary with few results. Gregg also argues that US frustration peaked because 'the UN is overextended and its peacekeeping missions ineffectual.'[45] That is, Reagan wished to avoid the ambiguity that he saw in the UNIFIL mandate. Murphy, however, argues that it was Reagan who undermined UNIFIL from the beginning by failing to support the UN force and thus UNIFIL became powerless. He further states that Israel's belief that the UN Security Council opposed them led to UNIFIL's inability to open up a PLO/IDF dialogue. [46] As Thakur states, the UN/US relationship during the Reagan Administration lay somewhere between these two arguments.[47] Reagan saw many pitfalls to the UNIFIL mandate and thereby prevented an international consensus for it to operate effectively. The force had been consistently unable to prevent conflict between the Lebanese factions or the escalation of regional dynamics. Working within a UN framework was clearly not an option for Reagan or Shultz, as returning to Lebanon was more of an issue of credibility for Reagan than about defending

[44] 'Aujourd'hui, les "Marines" et demain 'AIB', 29 September 1982, *L'OLJ*, p.1; 'Forza di pace italiana in Libano sì del governo ma a tre condizioni', *La Stampa,* 8 August 1982, p.4; Jacques Amalric, 'Les États-Unis, la France et l'Italie veulent contribuer à la restauration de la sécurité au Liban: M. Amine Gemayel est élu président de la République- PARIS : une volonté de dramatisation', *Le Monde,* 22 September 1982 &'les entretiens de m. Habib a Paris La France et les États-Unis sont totalement d'accord sur ce qui doit être fait au Liban déclare M. Cheysson', *Le Monde*, 23 September 1982.

[45] Robert Gregg, 'About face? The United States and the United Nations', (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993), p.165.

[46] Ray Murphy, 'UN Peacekeeping in Lebanon, Somalia and Kosovo', (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.37-43.

[47] Thakur, 'UN Authority and U.S. Power', pp.101-130.

civilian populations. The administration did not have faith that UNIFIL could 'fix' the recent outbreak of the conflict, although Reagan also had to overcome the same obstacles that UNIFIL had faced regarding the 'morass of Lebanese politics.'[48]

The MNFII's establishment also gave the Reagan Administration an opportunity to reaffirm its self-appointed role as the 'transnational police force.'[49] Reagan and Shultz's movements in creating a US-led international police force concerned the other MNFII participants, Italy and France, particularly because although Reagan promoted the MNFII's multilateral character, the force was not an internationally collaborative policy vehicle from the outset. France specifically saw a US-led command structure as impeding France's historical and cultural links with Lebanon.[50] Furthermore, the French troops, which had only recently been transferred from UNIFIL to join the MNFII, were still operating under UN command structures and UNIFIL's neutral leadership of commanders, Lieutenant-Generals Emmanuel Erskine and William O'Callaghan.[51]

Although Washington claimed to be entertaining collaborative decision-making with the other European partners, this process was superficial in its regard for French or Italian objectives.[52] Both French President François Mitterrand and Italian Prime Minister Giovanni Spadolini suspected that Gemayel saw the MNFII as a vehicle for pursuing his own political agenda within Lebanon rather than assisting to

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[48] *ibid &* Report from NSC [Lebanon: Litmus Test for U.S. Credibility and Commitment], NSDD99-111 File, Box 8, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records Series, RRPL, p.1.

[49] Johansen and Mendlovitz define the Transnational Police Force as an 'interpositional patrol along an armistice line' where war poses a threat. Robert Johansen & Saul Mendlovitz, 'International Order: A Proposal for a Transnational Police Force', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol.6,1980, p.308.

[50] Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy', p.33.

[51] William O'Callaghan was awarded the French Legion of Honour for his service to UNIFIL up until 1986.

[52] MEMCON of Gemayel and General Victor Khoury with US Contingent, 2 November 1982, Beirut Lebanon, NSDD64 File, Box 91286, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records Series, RRPL, pp.1-3.

bring about stability.[53] Italy's newly-elected Prime Minister, Amintore Fanfani, insisted that all MNFII partners must agree that they were entering Lebanon on a politically neutral basis.[54] The US' decision to support Gemayel was not agreed to by all MNFII partners. However, US arrangements with Gemayel illustrated that the MNFII was, in fact, politically biased in favour of the Gemayel government.[55] The MNFII partners' distrust of Gemayel and US monopoly over the force's command would ultimately result in overall ineffectiveness and the numerous operational revisions throughout the MNFII's deployment.

An ambiguous peacekeeping mandate

The terms of the memorandum of engagement agreed on 25 September 1982 outlined the working relationship between the Lebanese and US governments with respect to the US Marines' return.[56] Lebanese Foreign Minister Fouad Boutros noted that the MNFII's return was in line with UN Security Council Resolution 521.[57] This resolution, however, merely outlined UN Observers' free travel within Beirut and made no mention of any other military force deployment. The US/Lebanese memorandum did not specify an exit date nor did it claim that the MNFII was aimed at the restoration of the Lebanese government's 'sovereignty and authority.'[58] President Reagan twice promised a strictly-limited deployment period for the MNFII

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[53] Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy', pp.29-30.
[54] *ibid.* p.36.
[55] Memorandum of Understanding, [Foreign Minister Fouad Boutros to US Ambassador Robert Dillon], pp.1-2.
[56] *ibid.* p.1.
[57] UNSC Res 521[The Palestinian civilians in Beirut], 19 September 1982, S/RES/521; UNSC Res 512, [Civilian population in Beirut], 19 June 1982, S/RES/512 & UNSC Res 513, [Suffering of Civilian population in Southern Lebanon and West Beirut], 4 July 1982, S/RES/513, UNARMS.
[58] [Foreign Minister Fouad Boutros to US Ambassador Robert Dillon], p1.

although failed to refer to a specific date.[59] This was because the understanding between the US and Lebanon allowed for a flexible period to be agreed upon once Gemayel was satisfied with the foreign forces' removal, namely the IDF and SAF.[60]

The MNFI had previously stipulated a strict 30-day presence in Beirut, limiting the scope of the mission to an achievable time period. Had the MNFI failed to complete its mission within that time, it was instructed to withdraw. However, similar constraints were not placed on the MNFII, which opened it up to the possibility of recurrent extensions, ambiguous mission objectives and, indeed, mission creep. On 28 September 1982, Reagan stated:

> The marines are going in there, into a situation with a definite understanding as to what we're supposed to do. I believe that we are going to be successful in seeing the other foreign forces leave Lebanon. And then as such time as Lebanon says that they have the situation well in hand, why, we'll depart.[61]

Yet there was no 'definite understanding' of the situation, as Reagan stated, because there was no clear strategy for the foreign forces' removal. While the Reagan Administration saw Lebanon as an opportunity to further US interests regionally, Reagan's statement essentially tied the US to the successful removal of the IDF and SAF. [62]

The MNFII was initially conceptualized as an exclusive peacekeeping mission although it patently lacked the humanitarian capital or limitations on the use of military force that were characteristic of other regional peacekeeping forces (UNEF,

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[59] [Address to the Nation Announcing the Formation of the New Multinational Force in Lebanon].
[60] Dominique Pouchin, 'Le président Amine Gemayel a réaffirmé l'" arabité naturelle du Liban"', *Le Monde*, 25 September 1982.
[61] [The President's News Conference], 28 September 1982, Public Papers, Online: http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1982/92882c.htm, Accessed May 2014.
[62] Robert Solé, 'M. Reagan s'attend à une évacuation " rapide " des forces syriennes et israéliennes du Liban', *Le Monde*, 30 September 1982.

MNFO, UNFICYP, UNIFIL).[63] Primarily, the need to shape the mission as a necessary peacekeeping initiative came from a post-Vietnam legacy that resulted in the Reagan administration seeking 'how to increase security in the 1980s as a much broader task than to consider how to prevent war.'[64] Constantly challenging any post-Vietnam US President was the 'Vietnam Syndrome.'[65] The protests that followed the US' intervention in Vietnam led to domestic and international institutions exercising influence over an administration with regard to the issue of military intervention through the use of the War Powers Resolution. While the Administration did not consider Lebanon a questionable intervention, given the recently purported MNFI peacekeeping successes, it was forced to shape the second intervention as equally justifiable in a peacekeeping context. Reagan was therefore forced to recognise the Democratic Party's majority in the House of Representatives in 1982 and broad domestic criticism of the use of military force in any part of US foreign policy.

The MNFII was, from the outset, also more ambitious in its objectives than the MNFI.[66] Thakur states that the MNFII lacked a consistent, clear mandate from its inception, which ultimately led to the US becoming drawn into the conflict.[67] Skjelsbaek maintains that the MNFII's mandate was as limited as that of the UNIFIL.[68] Without the ability to trace and apprehend forces on either side, the MNFII was limited to retaliating only when fired upon in order to protect its position. The

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[63] [Address to the Nation Announcing the Formation of the New Multinational Force in Lebanon], 20 September 1982, Online:
http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1982/92082f.htm
[64] *ibid.* p.309.
[65] George Herring, 'American and Vietnam: The Unending War', *Foreign Affairs*, December 1991, pp.104-119.
[66] 'Letters on the Role of American Troops in the Multinational Force from Fouad Boutros to Robert S. Dilon'. *New York Times (*hereafter *NYT)*, 21 August 1982, pp.1-5.
[67] Thakur, 'International Peacekeeping in Lebanon', pp.96-105.
[68] Skjelsbaek, 'United Nations Peacekeeping and the Facilitation of Withdrawals', pp.254-255.

limited 'self-defence' mandate stipulated by the UN aimed at preventing an escalation on either side (between the PLO, Syria and the Israelis). The UN was not allowed to interfere with the domestic government's operational responsibilities, therefore limiting any military assistance to the Lebanese Army.[69] On the other hand, the agreement between the US and LAF included a considerable supply of arms and combat weapon training. The emergence of this hybrid military intervention and peacekeeping force heralded the French troops' withdrawal from UNIFIL in favor of the MNFII in September 1982. Even with Paris' concerns over US control of the force, the French saw the MNFII as a more flexible solution to the immediate conflict that would include the provisions of military assistance and training for the Lebanese government.[70]

If the Reagan Administration had accurately understood the political changes in Lebanon, between August and September 1982, the strategy and objectives underpinning the MNFII would have been vastly different. For example, a larger, more comprehensive military force could have been deployed, in line with Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger's recommendations. Weinberger's criticisms of the force were that there was no significant deterrence with the force's meagre size and also no clear sense of who were the targets to engage.[71]

Alternatively, Reagan could have decided to contain involvement in Lebanon to a purely diplomatic role, specifically an effort to mediate a realistic, successful Israeli-Lebanese peace agreement. Only after this was agreed could the US intervene

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[69] Boerma, 'The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon', p.61.
[70] Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy', pp.29-30.
[71] David Twining, 'The Weinberger doctrine and the use of force in the contemporary era', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, 1990, pp.97-117; Gail Yoshitani, 'National Power and Military Force: The Origins of the Weinberger Doctrine, 1980-1984', Duke University, 2008, pp.156-204 &'Interview with Caspar Weinberger', Frontline, PBS News, September 2001.

militarily, if there were clear, simple peacekeeping actions, such as under the PLO-Israeli agreement and MNFI in 1982. Additionally, the US could have strengthened UN involvement by bolstering UNIFIL's monitoring of the Palestinian Refugee camps and pressuring Israel into a dialogue with the UN for an eventual withdrawal.

However, none of these options were ever considered. Instead, the MNFII evolved from its preliminary stages of peacekeeping into a military interposition force and thereby found itself in the middle of the conflict between the IDF and SAF.

Defining Interposition

A month after the full deployment of the MNFII in Lebanon, the US realized that the initial monitoring and peacekeeping objectives were unrealistic. This section will outline how the Reagan Administration's push for a greater military role in Lebanon in fact led the MNFII to become *interposed* between the SAF and IDF.

President Gemayel strongly warned the US that it was unrealistic to expect persuasive peacekeeping alone to force both Syria and Israel's withdrawal, given that this patently conflicted with both countries' intentions, believing that only force would do.[72] Gemayel believed that the three foreign forces (PLO, SAF and IDF) formed a triangulated 'alliance' to promote continuing instability in Lebanon. He stated that there was a 60 per cent chance that the remaining PLO would leave Lebanon without any fighting if the US could guarantee Israeli and Syrian forces' withdrawal from the southern and northern parts of Lebanon respectively.[73] Israel strongly protested that it would only consider withdrawing its forces once it observed the SAF's withdrawal along with the remaining Palestinian forces' demilitarization.

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[72] Memcon. [Gemayel to General Victor Khoury with US Contingent], 2 November 1982, NSDD64 File, Box 91286, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records Series, RRPL, p.2.
[73] *ibid.* p.3

This political stalemate became the Reagan Administration's first major hurdle to achieving a successful conclusion to the MNFII's deployment.

The revamped MNFII continued to operate under a strict non-engagement policy with the internal militia and the administration believed that this alone would limit the possibility of retribution or offensive attacks.[74] However, National Security Advisor William Clark warned that, if the US were to escalate the force, the highest priority should be to prevent significant US casualties being caught in the SAF/IDF crossfire.[75]

As the US sought greater opportunities in Lebanon through a military rather than a diplomatic campaign, Reagan and Shultz saw potential opportunities with respect to the US' broader Middle East foreign policy.

> By taking the lead in obtaining the withdrawal of Israeli and other foreign forces from Lebanon and tangibly demonstrating our willingness to promote the security of that troubled country, we will earn the respect of the Arab world and show that US leadership can make a decisive difference in promoting peace and security in the Middle East.[76]

With this vision for creating a greater sense of US authority between Arab neighbours came the need for Reagan to show success in Lebanon in the short-term.

The Department of Defense believed that, as the US contingent of the MNFII continued its efforts in Lebanon with the structure of its initial September 1982 deployment, it was bound to become embroiled helplessly between the Israeli and Syrian forces.[77] Therefore, within a month of deployment, the Department of Defense

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[74] [NSDD 64], 28 October 1982 p.2; Report from NSA Clark to Shultz, [Next Steps in Lebanon], 8 November 1982, NSDD64 Next Steps in Lebanon File, Box 91286, Executive Secretariat, NSC Series, RRPL, p.4 & Lothar Brock, 'World Power Intervention and Conflict Potentials in the Third World', *Security Dialogue*, No.13, 1982, p.336.

[75] [Next Steps in Lebanon], pp.2-4.

[76] *ibid.* p.1.

[77] Talking Points for Robert McFarlane with Secretaries Carlucci and Dam [DOD/State Position], 16 October 1982, NSDD64 [Next Steps in Lebanon] File, Box 91286, Executive Secretariat, NSC Series, RRPL, pp.1-2.

and State Department called for increases in the numbers of US military troops. The Departments argued that significant increases in the military apparatus were required if the US were to implement its mission realistically.

Weinberger, while also pessimistic about a quick success for the MNFII, argued that no possible results would be seen for six months, thereby implying a withdrawal date in mid-1983. He also claimed that there would have to be realistically longer delays in achieving the objectives of PLO resettlement outside Lebanon.[78] More importantly, Weinberger's key recommendation was to rapidly increase the US contingent to the MNFII which was now described as a sluggish and ineffective 'interposition force between Israel and Syria.' Weinberger believed that swift, aggressive military force by a larger conventional force was required to pressure all parties to leave Lebanon and reduce the possibility of US casualties.[79]

By the end of October, the Administration realized that its initial mandate for the MNFII would remain unfulfilled by December 1982 and therefore sent special envoys, US Ambassadors Morris Draper and Philip Habib, to pressure the Israelis into considering a mediated agreement.[80] Habib, having been instrumental in the PLO-Israeli Agreement in August, presumed that both the Lebanese and Israeli leaders would readily accept the talks.[81] While a number of minor informal agreements were reached, Israel refused to formalize the negotiations until 28 December, following Reagan's direct intervention.

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[78] Memorandum from Geoffrey Kemp and Phil Dur to Robert McFarlane, [State/DOD Positions on Next Steps in Lebanon], 26 October 1982, NSDD64 Next Steps in Lebanon File, Box 91286, Executive Secretariat, NSC Series, RRPL, p.1.
[79] *ibid.*
[80] Efraim Inbar, 'Great Power Mediation: The USA and the May 1983 Israeli- Lebanon Agreement', *Journal of Peace Research*, No.28, 1991, p.75.
[81] Cable from Shultz to Middle East US posts, [Dec. 9 Press Briefing by Ambassadors Habib, Draper], 1:05am, 10 December 1982, Cable #343161, FOIA, DOSA, pp.1-2.

The Administration believed that Gemayel was an uncharismatic leader who had lost much of the support of the other factions and would require US support to renew his negotiation position at the talks. Sensing US pressure to reach an agreement, Gemayel stated that his government would not have required the MNFII's intervention if the US had simply assisted him with the challenges that faced his presidency.[82] This was Gemayel's way of requesting further military capital to solidify his own internal leadership position in the lead-up to any future Israeli-Lebanese negotiations.[83] The US entertained this request through an $80 million arms deal, thereby creating a precedent of biased support for the Lebanese President's ailing government. The deal also included an extensive military training program, aptly known as the 'crash effort with the LAF.'[84]

The US made these deals with Gemayel without any confidence that they would produce a tenable solution or ceasefire. Serious concerns were raised in a NSC meeting regarding this militarization of the Gemayel government and the public implications for US regional policy, specifically as to how it would be seen by Israel.[85] However, Reagan and Shultz felt that it would send a strong message that the US was not merely predisposed to support the Israelis in the upcoming negotiations. Reagan also argued that a reduction in support for Gemayel could lead to the possibility of a Syrian-dominated Lebanon.

> Our strategic interests today must be considered in light of prospects for eventual Syrian domination in Lebanon, which is now clearly the objective. Such domination is clearly inconsistent with U.S. vital interests.[86]

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[82] Memorandum from Robert Lilac to Clark, [Security Assistance for Lebanon], 3 November 1982, NSDD64 File, Box 91286, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records Series, RRPL, p.1.

[83] 'Libano chiede truppe per forza multinationale', *La Stampa*, 8 November 1982, p.10.

[84] [State/DOD Positions on Next Steps in Lebanon], p.1.

[85] [State Paper on Lebanon], p.1.

[86] Report from NSC [Lebanon: Litmus Test for U.S. Credibility and Commitment], NSDD99-111 File, Box 8, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records Series, RRPL, p.1.

However, the US Congress began to question how realistic the prospects were of removing Syria from Lebanon. By December 1982, it was clear that the US-led MNFII had failed to move either the IDF or SAF at all. Even though the Reagan Administration recognized the growing threat of becoming stuck in Lebanon, it disregarded the possibility that the MNFII could be exacerbating the conflict or in fact enhancing Asad's legitimacy in developing the Syrian positions in Lebanon.[87] Reagan and Shultz, in appeasing the US Congress, needed to seek further diplomatic measures by which to complement the US military presence in Lebanon.

The Reagan-Shultz duality: force or ceasefire?

The US State Department initially claimed that a full withdrawal of all foreign forces should occur by 22 November 1982: a six-week operation. However, Reagan recognised that the MNFII's short term presence in Lebanon was neither sufficient to establish internal security nor strong enough to prevent a long term Israeli/Syrian conflict. While still wanting to remain firm in his commitment to 'peace-making' in the Middle East, the issue of US military involvement and credibility was beginning to force Reagan to consider a defeat.[88] Shultz and Reagan therefore attempted to find a parallel, diplomatic solution to the Lebanese crisis that would illustrate US willingness to find a negotiated resolution to the conflict while in the meantime keeping the MNFII in Lebanon.[89]

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[87] David Cunningham, 'Blocking resolution: How external states can prolong civil wars', *Journal of Peace Research*, No. 47, 2010, pp. 115-118.
[88] Speech by Reagan, [Remarks of the President at Ceremony Honoring the Victims of the Beirut Bombing], 23 April, 1983, Andrews Air Force Base, White House Office and Staff File, RRPL, p.1.
[89] Bernardo Valli, 'Multinazionale al bivio', *La Stampa*, 26 November 1982, p.4.

This section examines the issues affecting US decision-making from October 1982 to May 1983 and the conflicting interests within the administration. The policy engaged by the US administration created a conflicting environment for the MNFII. It both extended and undermined its presence in Lebanon and led to the 18 April 1983 bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut as the US entangled itself both militarily and politically within the Lebanese crisis. It is important to examine US involvement in the May 17th Agreement, particularly Shultz' role in renewing US-Israeli relations.[90]

Three key issues affected US decision-making in Lebanon throughout this period. First, the Reagan Administration and Israel's growing tensions over the unconditional withdrawal had led to direct USMNF and IDF conflict.[91] Second, the Administration was concerned that a protracted mission in Lebanon would lead to congressional and public outcry without any guarantees that an extended mandate would produce Reagan's initial objectives. Finally, domestic, regional and international pressures on the US administration to withdraw the USMNF contingent would leave UNIFIL as the only force able to monitor a Syrian/Israeli ceasefire and withdrawal. The Reagan Administration could foresee that an MNFII withdrawal would negatively affect US standing as the military strongman in the Middle East. Realizing that the MNFII's mandate would not be implemented by the year-end, Reagan sought rapidly to increase the US marine contingent in the force. At the same time, yielding to the growing congressional disquiet regarding the deployment of US marines in Lebanon, Shultz continued pressuring the Israeli and Lebanese governments to begin negotiations for a sustainable ceasefire.[92]

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[90] Robert Solé, 'George Shultz, le secrétaire d'État trop tranquille', *Le Monde*, 31 January 1983.

[91] Geoffrey Kemp, 'The American Peacekeeping Role', pp.134-136.

[92] Cable from US Embassy Beirut to Shultz, [Draper Mission: Agreement Reached on Agenda for Negotiations], 1:23pm January 13 1983, Cable #00451, FOIA, DOSA, pp.1-2.

The use of military force

National Security Advisor William Clark heavily criticized the October 1982 'State Paper on Lebanon' which saw a full withdrawal of all foreign forces as realistic.[93] The paper recommended that a 90-day deployment period from 29 September could be reasonably enforced for the MNFII to execute its mission.[94] Clark argued that the MNFII had not yet provided any significant motivation for either Syria or Israel to comply with US pressure to withdraw from Lebanon and that it would require further time to establish these incentives. The Reagan Administration saw a near-term US withdrawal leading to a perceptible defeat, believing that, should the US abandon its objectives and interests in Lebanon, 'there will be a measured loss of US prestige internationally in as much as we will be seen as having been intimidated by a Soviet client.'[95] In response, Reagan was clear that, should any foreign forces remain in Lebanon, the MNFII would use aggressive military force to remove them.[96] The withdrawal of any foreign force from Lebanon would be followed by a secondary program of LAF capacity building and militarization. Reagan stated that US would only withdraw the MNFII if the IDF and SAF also successfully withdrew.[97] This policy was a highly contentious decision, as it bound the US and the other MNFII partners to a completely unrealistic condition. Furthermore, the MNFII was relatively small, certainly far smaller than the 14,000 troops that Eisenhower had launched in 1958. Bell argues that this indicated that the MNFII was merely a symbolic force to

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[93] [State Paper on Lebanon], p.2.
[94] Liban M. Shultz affirme que les États-Unis comptent obtenir le départ des troupes étrangères avant la fin de l'année', *Le Monde,* 27 October 1982.
[95] [Lebanon: Litmus Test for U.S. Credibility and Commitment], p.3.
[96] NSDD 92, [Accelerating the Withdrawal of Foreign Forces from Lebanon], 27 April 1983, NSDD84-95 File, Box 1, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records Series, RRPL, p.3.
[97] NSDD 64, [Next Steps in Lebanon], p.1.

signal the Reagan Administration's strength.[98] If the force was symbolic, then why did Reagan place so much faith in the completion of the MNFII's mission?

Added to this, Weinberger warned of the impending catastrophe as he challenged Shultz in a heated debate over the conditional use of military force, which he argued Shultz ardently applied without any guarantee of a positive outcome. Weinberger stated that there was no overwhelming evidence that the US mission could guarantee a victory in Lebanon with the current size of the force, convinced that the US would only incur great losses while retreating hastily.[99] The Department of Defense recommended instead that a transition should occur for the LAF to take control of Lebanese domestic security issues. However, Weinberger concurrently voiced his concerns that the LAF was incapable of doing so and would require significant resources and training if Lebanon were to remains stable in the long-term.[100]

While it was clear to the administration that the MNFII could not fulfil its obligations as outlined in National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 64 under its current structure, questions over Reagan's credibility were being voiced throughout Washington, especially within Congress. Persuading both the US public and Congress was challenging at the best of times. Expanding the USMNF's military capabilities began to raise concerns in Congress about another Vietnam War scenario.[101] The National Security Council report in November 1982 concluded that international views of the MNFII were 'mostly negative' and that contributors to the MNFII were

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[98] Coral Bell, 'The Reagan Paradox: American Foreign Policy in the 1980s', (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), p.88.
[99] Lou Cannon, 'President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime', (New York: Public Affairs, 2000), pp.353-355 & 'Interview with Caspar Weinberger', *Frontline*, PBS News, September 2001.
[100] [DOD/State Position], pp.1-2.
[101] Notes for Reagan, [Broad Actions for Presidential Decisions], 7 September 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records Series, RRPL, p.1.

limited.[102] Similarly, the USMNF strategy's direction and its proposed medium-sized escalation led to tension with the French Multinational Force (FRMNF) command. The French questioned US strategy in the MNFII, vehemently opposing an escalation of the conflict. The Reagan Administration conveniently interpreted this as a lack of French commitment to both US policy and sustainable peace in Lebanon. In response, the US strategically contacted local Arab neighbours, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, to take the lead on any future Lebanese redevelopment while removing French contractors from key construction and infrastructural projects.[103] This did little to alleviate the already strained relations between Paris and Washington.

On 1 November 1982, Shultz sent Reagan an urgent memorandum on Lebanon. It stipulated that international pressure was mounting for the US to block all military and economic aid to Israel. Should the US fail to find a tenable solution to the Lebanon crisis and, more specifically, the Israeli invasion, Reagan would need to handle the public fall out.[104] Clearly, the Administration, while it would continue to request Israeli withdrawal, would not place sanctions on Israel if it failed to comply.[105] To Shultz, Lebanon had become the key frontline of the Arab/Israeli conflict and he believed that the US should move forward militarily to illustrate that the Administration was searching for a solution to the conflict between Israel and her

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[102] Memorandum from Lieutenant Paul Bremer III to Clark [NSC Memorandum on the Next Steps in Lebanon],19 November 1982, NSDD64 File, Box 91286, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records Series, RRPL, p.3.

[103] *ibid.* p.4.

[104] Memorandum from Shultz to Reagan, [Our Strategy in Lebanon and the Middle East], October 13 1983, NSDD99-111 File, Box 8, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records Series, RRPL, pp.2-4.

[105] [State Paper on Lebanon], p.2.

neighbours.[106] Shultz was only superficially conscious of the public outcry regarding the initial Israeli invasion both in the US and Israel.[107] He believed that a negotiated Israel/Lebanon peace, an unconditional withdrawal and PLO resettlement in neighbouring Arab states would lead to a full Syrian withdrawal and the ultimate cessation of the conflict. However, Shultz's continued focus on the PLO, which had become marginalized since the MNFI, illustrated the administration's lack of understanding of the wider Lebanese conflict.

Seeming to yield, in part, to Congressional demands to withdraw US marines, Reagan outlined a timed strategy for foreign forces to withdraw throughout November 1982. This plan had not been devised to be implemented in actuality but rather to prove to Congress that the Administration *would* consider a withdrawal if necessary.

Instead of truly contemplating any such withdrawal, Reagan embarked on an escalated military program for the Gemayel government without consulting Congress.[108] Gemayel flew to Washington in November to secure US military aid beyond the Congressional limits that had been set at the MNFII's inception.[109] By 8 November Reagan had approved a $150 million military assistance program under its Foreign Military Sales (FMS) policy. As in the case of US military sponsorship in El Salvador, that began under President Carter, the use of the Military Assistance Program (MAP) and FMS enabled both the Reagan and Carter Administrations to

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[106] Marianne Heiberg, 'Focus On: Lebanon and Premonitions of Battles to Come', *Journal of Peace Research*, No. 20, 1983, pp.295-297.

[107] Paraschos & Rutherford, 'Network News Coverage of Invasion of Lebanon by Israel 1982', *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, No. 62, 1985, pp.457-464.

[108] Memorandum from Executive Secretary Lieutenant Paul Bremer III to Clark, [Diplomatic Strategy – Approximate Timetable], 4 November 1982, NSDD64 File, Box 91286, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records, RRPL, p.1-3.

[109] 'Gemayel chiede più uomini con «mansioni allargate» nella Forza multinazionale', *La Stampa,* 16 March 1983, p.4 & Hiro, 'Lebanon Fire and Embers', pp.94-95.

supply significant military assistance without congressional approval.[110] Carter had funded considerable military aid to the El Salvadorian government in its civil conflict against the Farabuno Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). By 1983, the Reagan Administration continued this policy, equipping and modernizing the national paramilitary squad, *Organización Democrática Nacionalista*.[111] The Reagan Administration used the 'Foreign Assistance Act, Section 506' to bypass the need for congressional approval of arms transfers.[112] This move to militarize the LAF rapidly, along with the plans for MNFII expansion, demonstrated that Reagan and Shultz were not committed to a US withdrawal after all.[113]

The MNFII's military objectives by December 1982 remained focussed on the Syrian and Israeli forces simultaneous departure from Lebanon. The Reagan Administration's decision-makers, specifically Shultz, Clark and Reagan, had foreseen a final cessation of the conflict with the foreign forces occurring by 31 December, with only a USMNF and UNIFIL contingent remaining to monitor the continued peace on both Lebanon's northern and southern borders.[114] This timeframe was both impractical and injudicious, as no credible steps had been taken to compel the SAF or IDF to comply with the MNFII goals.[115] While Reagan moved to extend the USMNF's military intervention in Lebanon, Shultz realized that the

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[110] Aid through MAP channels increased 16 times between the Carter and Reagan Administrations (from 1979 to 1983). See: Ball and Leitenberg, 'The Foreign Arms Sales Policy of the Carter Administration', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, No. 4, 1979, pp.530-534, James Lebovic, 'National Interests and US Foreign Aid: The Carter and Reagan Years', *Journal of Peace Research*, No. 25, 1988, p.120 & Alexander George, 'US-Soviet Global Rivalry: Norms of Competition', *Journal of Peace Research*, No.23, 1986.
[111] Michael McClintock, 'US military assistance to El Salvador: from indirect to direct intervention', *Race Class*, No.26, 1985, pp.78-81.
[112] *ibid.* p.67.
[113] Bearnard Guetta, 'Embourbé au Liban, empêtré au Salvador', *Le Monde*, 6 February 1984.
[114] [Next Steps in Lebanon], pp.2-3 & Robert Solé, 'Washington estime que le retrait des troupes étrangères du Liban devrait être achevé le 1er janvier', *Le Monde*, 21 October 1982.
[115] Emmanuel Jarry, 'M. Cheysson : un accord sur l'évacuation du Liban demeure prioritaire', *Le Monde*, 14 February 1983.

Administration had to maintain diplomatic pressure on the Israeli and Lebanese governments to begin negotiations. This was the only way for the Reagan Administration to sidestep the criticisms associated with the MNFII's failure to meet its deadlines and goals. The next phase of diplomatic negotiations around the May 17th Agreement would lead the US into an even more politically treacherous and entangled position throughout 1983.

The race for diplomatic credibility

The 18 April 1983 US Embassy bombing, which killed 57 people, including 17 US marines and diplomatic staff, was a direct result of the US becoming intimately tied to the Israeli-Lebanese peace agreement.[116] Whilst the US blamed Iran for sponsoring the attack, it recognized that there was growing resentment toward the US presence in Lebanon, spearheaded by Syria.[117] Prior to this attack, the USMNF command had become entangled in Shultz's peace negotiation attempts. The US administration found itself perceptibly split from its exclusive engagement with the MNFII in that it was creating policy within Lebanon without the other MNFII partners' approval (France, Italy and now Britain). Considering the Israeli government inflexible over the Syrian issue, Shultz stated to Reagan, 'our best posture is a vigorous defense of the agreement – and an image of Israel as difficult to budge.'[118] Indeed, the negotiations leading up to the May 17th Agreement were fraught with formalities and

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[116] 'De nouveau, la terreur: L'organisation "Jihad Islamique" revendique l'attaque, effectuee au moyen d'une camionnette piegee: Reagan determine a aller de l'avant', 19 April 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.
[117] 'Les quatre pays membres de la force multinationale condamnent l' "horrible attentat"', *Le Monde*, 20 April 1983.
[118] [Our Strategy in Lebanon and the Middle East], p.5.

'*éclaircissement*' on both sides, that reached an apogee in the lead up to the US

Embassy bombing in April 1983.[119]

Harbouring resentment toward both Sharon and Begin for tarnishing the

MNFII's 'peacekeeping mission,' Reagan pushed for sanctions to be taken against

Israel until Begin agreed to negotiations with Lebanon.[120] Tensions grew in December

1982 between the Reagan Administration and Israel. As a result, Reagan increased

Shultz' responsibility as spokesman in the conflict as he had historically been pro-

Israeli and could manage the Begin/Reagan tensions.[121] The president implemented

his proposed foreign policy reshuffle in order to 'make structural changes in the

foreign policy-making machinery so that the Secretary of State will be the President's

principal spokesman and adviser.'[122] Shultz, Habib and Draper worked to secure a

date for the commencement of the ceasefire negotiations, recognizing Israel's

strategic importance (particularly if Syria continued to dominate Lebanon) and

understanding Israel's stubbornness in withdrawing from Lebanon.[123] Habib stated

that 'the United States just doesn't have the authority to decide within deadlines; you

have to convince people, and that's what we're in the process of doing.'[124]

As a result, Shultz announced on 30 January 1983, that no tangible action

would be taken against Israel to pressure them to withdraw from Lebanon. It was

hoped that this would lead Israel into a less aggressive position and more positive

relations with the US. Conversely, it signified to the internal Lebanese factions, the

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[119] 'La valse des "eclaircissements" retarde l'accord avec Israel', 11 May 1983, L'OLJ, p.1.
[120] *ibid.* p.6 & Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy', p.156.
[121] Speech by Shultz, [The Quest for Peace], Address to the United Jewish Appeal, 12 September 1982, Arab-Israel Peace Process: Memos Sept 1982 File, Box 90217, Geoffrey Kemp Series, RRPL, p.3.
[122] Speech by Reagan [A Strategy for Peace in the '80s], October 19, 1980, Televised, California, Online: http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/Reference/10.19.80.html, Accessed March 2014.
[123] [Dec. 9 Press Briefing by Ambassadors Habib, Draper], p.1.
[124] *ibid.*

Gemayel government and Syria that the Reagan Administration evidently intended to defend Israeli objectives.[125] Shultz saw the peace talks as a possible easy victory for the MNFII and a way of lessening the growing debate over US marines' withdrawal domestically.[126]

Reagan issued a directive in April 1983 under increasing pressure to normalise the Lebanese/Israeli conflict, announcing US forces' extensive militarization in Lebanon and stressing the importance of this in renewing US-Israeli relations, as Begin questioned the MNFII's resolve in Lebanon.[127] The first British contingent's arrival to the MNFII of only 100 troops on 10 February did little to signify to the warring parties that the MNFII was intent on finding a diplomatic solution. The initial deployment was 'a symbolic British presence to demonstrate support for the Government and to attach other contributors to the MNF.'[128] The British plan mandated a limited three-month operation for the troops' withdrawal back to the UN Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).[129] None of this suggested to Begin that the MNFII was Israel's ally in Lebanon. As a result Shultz tried to improve US-Israeli relations ultimately at a cost of the US' relationships with other Arab neighbours.[130] Yasir Arafat strongly rejected Reagan's proposals for Arab-Israeli peace, referring only

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[125] Lucien George, 'Le président Assad dénonce violemment le " protectorat israélien " sur le Liban', *Le Monde*, 18 May 1983.

[126] 'M. Shultz affirme qu'il ne quittera pas le Proche-Orient avant d'avoir obtenu des résultats tangibles sur le retrait des forces étrangères du Liban', *Le Monde,* 27 April 1983 & Francis Cornu, 'M. Shultz a confirmé son désir de parvenir rapidement à un accord entre Israël et le Liban', *Le Monde*, 29 April 1983.

[127] NSDD 92, [Accelerating the Withdrawal of Foreign Forces from Lebanon], pp.3-4.

[128] Memorandum from Miles to Leahy, [British Contribution to MNF in Lebanon], 14 December 1983, in UNFICYP Troops for MNF File, Lebanon Folder, FCO9/3483, UNARMS, p.1.

[129] *ibid*.

[130] Emmanuel Jarry, 'M. Cheysson consacre la normalisation des rapports franco-syriens', *Le Monde,* 16 February 1983.

thereafter to the Fez Summit proposal which he believed recognized Palestinian demands.[131]

The May 17th Agreement

The May 17th Israeli-Lebanese Agreement was designed to bring about three tangible outcomes; namely, an Israel/Lebanon armistice, IDF withdrawal and therefore the subsequent handover to the LAF of Israeli-occupied territories and a joint LAF and IDF mission to prevent a PLO return. However, the chance of both sides reaching an agreement was fundamentally obstructed by a number of broader issues.

First, the US failed to acknowledge that the Israelis were concerned with the Gemayel government and the LAF's inability to curb the build-up of the anti-Israeli *Shi'a* militias in southern Lebanon and the rapid Syrian militarization along Israel's northern border. However, a ceasefire with the LAF and departure of SAF and PLO forces were exclusively conditional on an initial IDF withdrawal.[132] The US needed to break this deadlock and prove to Israel that an IDF withdrawal back to the Awali River would allow the LAF and the MNFII to secure Beirut. Without the May 17th Agreement, the US believed there was no other way to pressure Gemayel or Begin to agree to a sustainable ceasefire and thereby guarantee an IDF withdrawal. The negotiations and subsequent agreement illustrated that the US was desperate to find a solution to the current conflict.[133] Even with the IDF firing at USMNF positions on 14

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[131] UNSC, [The Situation in the Middle East Annex], 15 December 1982, A/37/696, UNARMS, p.1 & 'Reagan's Mideast Plan is Rejected by Arafat', *NYT*, 31 March 1983, p.2.
[132] Cable from Erskine to Urquhart, [IDF Partial Withdrawal], 8:03pm May 19 1983, Cable #UNTSO1430, Lebanon- Country File, Box UNRWA, S-0354-001-15, UNARMS, p.1 & Robert Solé, Selon Le Commandant des "Marines" a Beyrouth L'armée israélienne se livre à des "provocations continuelles" contre les militaires Américains au Liban', *Le Monde*, 19 March 1983.
[133] 'Le Secretaire D'Etat soumettra de "nouvelles idees" ce matin a Begin', 29 April 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

May 1983, the US would not aggressively or directly pressure Israel to withdraw from Lebanon.[134]

Second, while the negotiations seemingly strengthened US resolve as the 'leader for world peace,' the talks invariably made the agreement's successful implementation dependent upon continued US intervention.[135] Whilst Shultz's role in mediating the negotiations consolidated US influence in the region, the May 17th Agreement also tied the US to the agreement's successful implementation. The Reagan Administration's support for the May 17th Agreement led to numerous political crises throughout 1983, as the US refused to let Israel or Lebanon abrogate the agreement even when it proved an obstacle to peace. As Reagan sent Gemayel personal congratulations for the confirmation of the May 17th Agreement, its details were still being aggressively debated on both the Israeli and Lebanese side.[136]

Third, the agreement was informally recognized as the US-Israeli-Lebanese Agreement due to US interference and Shultz's pressure on Begin and Gemayel to sign.[137] Shultz described the agreement's importance to Reagan, stating that:

> The agreement represents not only a major commitment of US prestige; it represents the second moderate Arab country to negotiate with Israel under our auspices, and it is the only extant arrangement for ensuring both Israeli withdrawal and Israeli security.[138]

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[134] Letter from Urquhart to Director General, Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs David Kimiche, [The IDF and UNIFIL], in Future of UNIFIL, Correspondence between Callaghan and Urquhart 26/11/1982 – 14-09-1983 File, Box UNIFIL, S-1066-0094-05, 1 August 1983, UNARMS, pp. 1-2.

[135] [Address to the Nation Announcing the Formation of the New Multinational Force in Lebanon].

[136] Cable from White House to US Embassy Beirut, [Letter for President Gemayel from President Reagan], 2:50am 26 June 1983, Cable #1770259, Lebanon- President Sarkis Cables File, Box 21, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Head of State Series, RRPL, p.1.

[137] Cable from US Embassy Beirut to Department of State, [Draper Mission: Lebanese Media on Negotiations], 2:15pm 8 December 1982, Cable #09109, FOIA, DOSA, p.1.

[138] [Our Strategy in Lebanon and the Middle East], p.5.

While the US led the way in pushing Israel and Lebanon to sign the agreement, the perceived failures of a diplomatic solution in Lebanon became evident.[139] It is questionable that Shultz, as the key architect of the talks, was attempting to facilitate a successful consensus regarding the May 17th Agreement.[140] Shultz pressured both Israel and Lebanon to sign the agreement even though vital aspects regarding patrols and security remained unresolved.[141] The April Embassy Bombing forced Shultz to recognize Lebanon's volatile security environment and the central role the US had now inadvertently taken. The Secretary of State saw the signing of the agreement as imperative to quell US losses if the conflict were to escalate further. If the MNFII was forced to withdraw quickly, at least the Reagan Administration could publicly state that they had mediated the negotiations and signing of the agreement.[142]

Eventually, Begin agreed to an 8-12-week withdrawal back to the existing, internationally-recognized Israeli border (under the 1967 Lebanese Israeli Armistice),[143] only if full SAF withdrawal had also occurred within this timeframe.[144] The Israelis raised concerns over:

> Syria's flagrant and ongoing intervention in Lebanon's internal affairs - including its present effort to replace the elected government of President

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[139] Cable from Draper to Shultz, [Draper Mission: Supporting the Lebanese position on the Agenda], 3:55pm 13 January 1983, Cable #00567, FOIA, DOSA, p.2.

[140] Elie Salem, 'Violence & Diplomacy in Lebanon', pp.99-105; Lou Cannon & Carl Cannon, 'Reagan's Disciple: George W. Bush' Trouble Quest for Presidential Legacy', (New York: Public Affairs, 2008), p.145 & Kail Ellis, 'U.S. Policy toward Lebanon', in Kail Ellis, ed., *Lebanon's Second Republic: Prospects for the Twenty-first Century*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), p.97.

[141] Inbar, 'Great Power Mediation: The USA and the May 1983 Israeli- Lebanon Agreement', p.73.

[142] 'Washington souligne "l'urgence" d'une solution", 5 June 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

[143] Map, [Israel- Lebanon Armistice Line], Department of State, National Boundary Study, No.75, FOIA, DOSA, p.1.

[144] Cable from US Embassy Jidda to US Embassy Beirut, [Habib Mission: Meeting with Fahd], 9:19am, 18 December 1982, Cable #09462, FOIA, DOSA, p.2 & Briefing from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the UN Secretary General, [Israeli's Redeployment to the Awali River], In Israel/Lebanon Agreement (On Troop Withdrawal)/UNIFIL May 6- Nov 3 1983 File, Box UNIFIL, S-1066-0097-03, 23 June 1983, UNARMS, p.2.

Amin Jemayel with a group of pro-Syrian figureheads who can be expected to do Damascus's bidding.[145]

Sharon believed that Asad's focus in Lebanon was to escalate the conflict by 'keeping the Lebanese pot boiling, Damascus is also serving Moscow.'[146] Without making Syria party to the talks, the signing of the May 17th Agreement merely served to increase Syria's aggressive position. The Syrian Defence Minister stated:

> The Americans hate Arabs, their ultimate goal is to make all Arabs slaves under the Israelis…Syria wants to defend its freedom and that is why they will resist the Americans and what they stand for.[147]

Deputy National Security Advisor Vice Admiral John Poindexter wrote to Reagan, outlining the May 17th Agreement's conceptual faults, which he said represented an unrealistic attempt to mediate peace between the two parties whose agendas differed. The talks leading up to the agreement's signing had been emblematic of the final agreement; they were contrived, disingenuous on both sides and undertook to broker a rushed sense of peace between Israel and Lebanon, with each party discussing different issues and priorities. The agreement, in theory, promised greater coordination and cooperation between the historical enemies in order to establish security for both governments.[148] However, it completely disregarded the fact that the LAF was unable to manage the situation in greater Beirut, let alone control the south.[149] Israel would only agree to a withdrawal were Syria also to start withdrawing.

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[145] *ibid.*

[146] *ibid.*

[147] Cable from General Gustaf Stahl to Urquhart, [Visit to General Tlass Syrian Minister of Defence], 2:07pm 18 May 1983, Cable #UNDOF 595, Lebanon- Country File, Box UNRWA, S-0354-001-15, UNARMS, p.1.

[148] Memorandum from Deputy National Security Advisor John Poindexter to Reagan, [Informal Discussion Papers on Lebanon Strategy], 2 October 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: RRPL, p.3.

[149] Francis Cornu, 'Les Israéliens ont resserré leur contrôle sur l'ensemble du Sud-Liban', *Le Monde,* 16 March 1983.

However, given that Syria was not at the negotiation table nor allowed to participate in any of the agreement's details, their withdrawal was implausible.[150]

The May 17th Agreement also failed because it was predicated on Israeli demands of 'normalisation' of Israeli-Lebanese relations and so failed to recognize Syria as party to the negotiations.[151] This placed the US directly in the Syrian, Iranian and Palestinian leaders' line of fire, who saw the normalization of relations with Israel as ruinous.[152] The agreement also failed to garner *any* support from the other factional Lebanese leaders, resulting in even greater animosity toward the Gemayel government. Fundamentally, these challenges would block the possibility of Gemayel implementing any part of the agreement and hence Israel refused to leave.[153] Furthermore, the US blindly followed Gemayel's analysis of the Lebanese context that was ultimately unrepresentative of the internal Lebanese factions, which included the Christian and non-Christian marginal groups as well as the remaining Palestinian militia.[154] Syria used the major obstacles to the agreement's implementation to garner further support for having the agreement abrogated, while Asad bolstered the internal

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[150] 'Shultz: Le maintien des Syriens aboutira a la Partition du Liban', 27 May 1983, *L'OLJ,* p.1.

[151] Cable from Draper to Shultz, [Draper Mission: Termination of State of War], US Embassy Jerusalem, 7:43am 14 January 1983; Cable #00140, pp. 2-3; Cable from Habib to Shultz, [Habib/Draper Mission: Morning meeting with Foreign Minister Shmir, January 19], 2:10pm 19 January1983, Cable #00202, p.1; Cable from Habib to Shultz, [Habib/Draper Mission: Israel-Lebanon Negotiations – Next Moves], 5:14pm 19 January 1983, Cable #00212, pp.1-2; Cable from Shultz to Assistant Secretary Newell, [Draper Mission: Lebanese toughen public stance], 6:37am 25 January 1983, Cable #021683, FOIA, DOSA, pp.1-2; Cable from Beirut, UNIFIL to Urquhart, [Israeli opinions on Lebanon War], Lebanon-Country File, Box UNRWA, S-0354-001-15, 31 December 1982, UNARMS p.2 & Lucien George, 'Israël demande une " normalisation " de ses rapports avec le Liban avant le retrait de ses troupes Jérusalem et l'O.L.P. négocieraient un échange de prisonniers', *Le Monde*, 30 December 1982.

[152] Cable from US Embassy Tunis to US Embassy Beirut, [Draper Mission: Quraytim-Arafat Meeting Feb.4], 11:23am 5 February 1983, Cable #01022, FOIA, DOSA, pp.1-2.

[153] Cable from Department of State to US Embassy Jerusalem, [President's remarks on Lebanon to Washington Post], 8:40pm 18 December 1982, Cable #351871, FOIA, DOSA, pp.1-2.

[154] 'Salem Optimiste: La crise dans sa phase finale', 23 May 1983, *L'OLJ,* p.1.

Lebanese protests. The internal Islamic factions saw the negotiations as brazen US support for Israel and the Gemayel government. The growing anti-Gemayel militias, such as *Harakat Amal*, had become the nucleus for anti-American and anti-Israeli sentiment within Lebanon by July 1983.[155]

As UNIFIL's exit deadline neared its expiration on 19 July 1983, Israel insisted that UNIFIL was not an implementation partner to the agreement.[156] Israel's Permanent Representative to the UN, Yehuda Blum, outlined that Israel would not accept UNIFIL as a guarantor in ensuring the mitigation of 'the threat posed against Israeli's citizens by the continued presence of Syrian Forces and PLO Terrorists on Lebanese soil.'[157]

On 23 July, the National Salvation Front (NSF) was formed to unify all of the opponents to the May 17th Agreement. The agreement's failure to include all stakeholders in Lebanon led to a wave of anti-Americanism. The MNFII was now seen as supporting the Israeli and *Kata'eb* agendas without recognizing the Palestinian, *Druze* or *Shi'a* communities.[158] Iranian support for the *Shi'a* community in southern Lebanon increased to counter the growing Western presence,[159] based on

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[155] *Haraket Amal* emerged as the leading *Shi'a* militia in 1974 at the beginning of the Lebanese Civil War. Amal was supported by Syria and pitted against the PLO and *Sunni* factions in Lebanon in an interview with Mustapha el-Husseini, President of Shi'a Deputies Committee, Beirut, Lebanon, September 2, 2010 & Interview with Firas el-Husseini, Committee of Shi'a Deputies, Beirut, Lebanon, 2 September, 2010 & Dilip Hiro, 'Lebanon Fire and Embers', (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), pp.96-99.

[156] Note to the UN Secretary General, [Middle East], Israel/Lebanon Agreement (On Troop Withdrawal)/UNIFIL May 6- Nov 3 1983 File, Box UNIFIL, S-1066-0097-03, 23 June 1983, UNARMS, p.1.

[157] Briefing from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the UN Secretary General, [Israeli's Redeployment to the Awali River], Israel/Lebanon Agreement (On Troop Withdrawal)/UNIFIL May 6- Nov 3 1983 File, Box UNIFIL, S-1066-0097-03, 23 June 1983, p.2 & Letter from Lebanese UN Ambassador Rachid Fakhoury to Javier Perez de Cuellar, [Israeli determination at the Litani], in Lebanon- Country File, Box UNRWA, S-0354-001-15, May 24 1984, UNARMS, p.1.

[158] Augustus Norton, 'The Shiites and the MNF', in *The Multinational Force in Beirut*, pp. 226-235 & Dilip Hiro, 'Lebanon Fire and Embers', pp.99-101.

[159] Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy', pp.59-60.

the belief that the agreement was being formulated around Israeli objectives in Lebanon.[160]

Conclusion

The May 17th Agreement was a 'dead letter' before it was even signed.[161] Specifically, the Agreement was a failure for the US in terms of creating a 'face-saving formula' for its exit from the Lebanese crisis.[162] The US-led negotiations' failure to bring about any tenable ceasefire was evident both before and after it was signed, indicating to the US administration that mediated diplomacy alone would not lead to the conflict's cessation, unless it involved Syria.[163] As recognizing Syria in any negotiations was not an option for Begin or Gemayel, the possibility of reaching an agreed peaceful withdrawal of the foreign troops seemed remote.

Phase One of the MNFII on 29 September 1982 represented a reconstituted, significantly different force than that of its predecessor, the MNFI. Reagan had previously been hailed as a peacekeeping hero for his leadership of the PLO's removal from Beirut. However, if anything, the tragic events from 14-18 September 1982 should have indicated to the Reagan Administration that it had failed under the MNFI to create a sustainable ceasefire. Yasir Arafat and the PLO only made up a small part of the Lebanese conflict by the end of 1982. It is also important to note that

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[160] Cable from Habib/Draper to Shultz, [Habib/Draper Mission: Presentation of US Ideas to Israelis, January 18], pp. 2-3; Cable from Habib to Shultz, [Habib/Draper Mission: Text of U.S. Presentation], 5:30pm 18 January 1983, Cable #00193, FOIA , DOSA, pp.1-4 & Inbar, 'Great Power Mediation', p.73.

[161] [Informal Discussion Papers on Lebanon Strategy], p.3.

[162] Cable from Draper to Shultz, [Draper Mission: Israeli view of Negotiation Impasse], 9:56am 9 December 1982, Cable #09138, FOIA, DOSA, p.1.

[163] Minutes, [Meeting of Lebanese Foreign Minister with Countries contributing contingent], in Meetings- Secretary General with Permanent Representative of Lebanon-Notes 12/1/1979- 21/12/1985 File, Box Meetings, S-0356-0028-06, 10 June 1983, UNARMS, p.1.

the MNFI was only deployed *after* a political consensus had been reached between the PLO and the Israelis for a safe Palestinian withdrawal. Conversely, the MNFII was operating in a volatile context in which *no negotiations* for ceasefires, withdrawals or even talks had taken place.

The MNFII was completely unprepared for the constantly-changing environment in which it had to operate. The force was unable to engage the Lebanese factional militias, instead finding itself in the middle of a regional conflict between the SAF and IDF. Rather, the MNFII found itself helplessly *interposed* between Israel and Syria and with a profoundly ambiguous mandate that allowed it neither to engage in the conflict nor reprimand either side. The US' failure to create a limited mission with tangible and achievable goals meant that the Reagan Administration was forced to continually amend and restructure the force.

By December 1982, Reagan's vision of a victorious military peacekeeping force had proven obsolete, leading to Shultz's diplomatic intervention in spearheading the Israeli-Lebanese negotiations. The May 17th Agreement allowed the Reagan Administration to appear committed to the Lebanese crisis' peaceful resolution but at the same time ensured the MNFII's extended deployment. However, the Agreement was fundamentally deficient in encouraging the key parties to reach a ceasefire or providing guarantees from Begin or Gemayel of long-term security. The Reagan Administration's diplomatic attempts to resolve the situation were more focused on saving face than the altruistic pursuit of a sustainable ceasefire. If the US could not fulfil these promises to the Gemayel government, then there would be a perceptible loss of credibility regionally and the sense that the US was bowing to pressure from Syria.

Ultimately, it was the May 17th Agreement that created the greatest hurdle for peace in Lebanon.[164] Without engaging with Syria or the internal Lebanese factions, the negotiations and subsequent agreement were inherently useless. The 18 April US Embassy bombing and May 5 attack should have warned Washington that the administration's involvement in the agreement's creation was now directing the conflict toward the US, portraying the US no longer as merely a defensive peacekeeper but an active participant in the conflict.[165]

The MNFII was initially redeployed on the basis that it would provide the Reagan Administration with a clear public victory, demonstrating the US' prestige as the leading international peacemaker. However, the US intervention in Lebanon had already been condemned and eventually resulted in the force being caught up in offensive military escalation that will be examined in the subsequent chapters.

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[164] 'L'Accord est signé: Reste a lui donner vie', 17 May 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.
[165] Cable from Habib to Shultz, [Habib/Draper Mission: Meeting with Prime Minister Begin, 8:30am, Dec 19], 9:53am 19 December 1982, Cable #03843, pp. 2-4 & Cable from Habib to Shultz, [Habib/Draper Mission: Meeting with Begin after Israeli Cabinet Decision], 7:46pm 19 December 1982, Cable #03849, FOIA, DOSA, pp.1-3.

Chapter Five

The Soviet-Syrian alliance and the Battle of Souk el Gharb
Multinational Force II, Phase Two (18 May to 22 October 1983)

The failed May 17th Lebanese/Israeli Agreement, as well as the US Embassy bombing, represented two successive setbacks for the US' position in Lebanon. They left the Reagan Administration increasingly concerned about a 'perceptible erosion of U.S. credibility in the Middle East.'[1] The US deployed the Multinational Force II (MNFII) in order to solidify their role as the international peacemaker in the region. However, by May 1983, international approval of the US intervention in Lebanon was at an all-time low. In light of the US Embassy bombing and Israel's continuing pressure, Shultz turned his focus toward the forcible withdrawal of foreign forces to illustrate US commitment to removing 'terrorism' and instability from Lebanon.

The focus of this new policy direction was the growing Syrian influence in Lebanon, which was highlighted as the key factor that led to the May 17th Agreement's failure. The Administration was concerned with the reach of the Syrian Armed Forces (SAF) and whether or not the Syrian President Hafez Asad's growing interest also indicated growing Soviet Union influence. If so, the US needed to decide if the Soviet sponsorship of Syria was of such direct concern for the Administration that it would risk a confrontation with the USSR. Moreover, this posturing occurred at a time when US President Ronald Reagan's aggressive rhetoric toward the Soviets internationally was creating fear about the possibility of a superpower confrontation

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[1] Report from NSC [Lebanon: Litmus Test for U.S. Credibility and Commitment], NSDD99-111 File, Box 8, Executive Secretariat, NSC Series, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library (hereafter RRPL), p.1.

or nuclear war.[2] As Westad and Hiro argue, the first quarter of 1983 was characterized by a distinctive renewing of tensions between the US and Soviets, as exhibited by Reagan's 8 March 'Evil Empire' speech, the announcement of the Strategic Defense Initiative on 23 March and the CIA's sponsorship of the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan under Operation Cyclone.[3]

There are two disparate positions regarding US views on Soviet interests in the Middle East and, more specifically, Soviet influence in Lebanon. Kriesberg claims that, while the US had not considered Soviet interference in Lebanon as a primary concern up until May 1983, the international tensions between the two superpowers and the US' weakened position in Lebanon created the possibility of an aggressive confrontation between the US and USSR in Lebanon.[4] Taylor and Kolko also see the 1983 Soviet-US tensions as critical in shaping US policy in Lebanon.[5] Taylor defines Soviet involvement in the Middle East as 'a special endeavor to promote a Soviet-sponsored 'anti-imperialist' front against the United States and Israel.'[6]

Conversely, Westad discounts the possibility of a US/USSR confrontation in Lebanon, given that the war in Afghanistan had become a bloody stalemate and was draining significant military resources from Moscow.[7] Cox and Freedman also state that Soviet influence in Lebanon is often overplayed and loosely projects the broader international Cold War tensions onto the Lebanese conflict for the purpose of

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[2] 'Shultz presse Moscou de promouvoir un retrait Syrien', 11 May 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.
[3] Odd Arne Westad, 'The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of our Time', (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.331-363 & Dilip Hiro, 'Apocalyptic Realm: Jihadists in South Asia', (Cornwall: TJ International, 2012), pp.55-56.
[4] Louis Kriesberg, 'International Conflict Resolution: The U.S.-USSR and Middle East Cases', (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp.199-200.
[5] Gabriel Kolko, 'The Roots of American Foreign Policy', (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p.138 & Alan Taylor, 'The Superpowers and the Middle East', (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991).
[6] Taylor, p.137.
[7] Westad,, pp.356-357.

extending the superpower narrative in all corners of the world. Cox supports Westad's thesis, maintaining that, although Reagan's conservative stance toward the USSR had exacerbated the tensions between the two superpowers, the overall relationship had transformed such that, by mid-1983, the possibility of a direct conflict in the Middle East had disappeared.[8] Freedman also supports the view that the Soviets were disinclined to enter the Lebanese conflict directly, as they were preoccupied with the Iran/Iraq war and the war in Afghanistan. Dawisha argues that Moscow's *failure* to establish a resolute policy in Lebanon was actually a calculated move by the Soviet leadership, as Moscow believed this to be the best way to restore relations with the neighbouring Arab countries.[9] Finally, Khalidi argues that the US was less concerned with 'increasingly enfeebled Soviets, but rather by the savage realities of Lebanon' itself.[10]

Both schools of thought need to be tempered somewhat. While it is true that the idea of direct Soviet influence in Lebanon has been overplayed by certain researchers, the degree to which the Reagan Administration focussed its attention on Syria as a Soviet client illustrates that the US *did* regard Soviet indirect influence in the region as a potential threat. Therefore, the Cold War dynamic throughout the second half of 1983 cannot be completely discounted, although Khalidi correctly cautions about being 'blinded by preconceptions and ideology.'[11]

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[8] Michael Cox, 'From the Truman Doctrine to the Second Superpower Détente: The Rise and Fall of the Cold War', *Journal of Peace Research*, No. 27, 1990, pp. 33-36, Robert Freedman, 'Patterns of Soviet Policy toward the Middle East', *AAPSS*, Vol. 482, 1985, pp. 40-64 & Condoleezza Rice, 'U.S.- Soviet Relations', in Larry Berman, eds., *Looking Back on the Reagan Presidency*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1990), pp.71-89.

[9] Karen Dawisha, 'The U.S.S.R in the Middle East: Superpower in Eclipse?', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.61, No.2, pp.438-439.

[10] Rashid Khalidi, 'Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East', (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), pp.145-150.

[11] *ibid.* p.149.

This chapter examines the development of the anti-Syrian military and political program and the careful redefining of US policy. It also analyzes the evolution of US policy in Lebanon after the May 17th Agreement and how the Administration's blind pursuit of Syria resulted in the US' further entanglement in the complexities of the Lebanon conflict. Through outlining the MNFII's role and its relationship with the separately-established US military mission, the chapter will illustrate how the military escalation led to the continual policies vacillations and thus created operational ambiguity. Reagan and Shultz's miscalculations and the subsequent escalation of US military involvement up to and including the Battle of Souk el Gharb in September 1983 made the US a direct physical target for Syrian-sponsored *Druze* and *Shi'a* militias.

This chapter advances two arguments: First, it argues that, while the Reagan Administration continued to reference the Soviets in the Middle East as part of its broader international Cold War policy, the exponential increase in military capital, which was deployed by the US, was exclusively directed at Syria. The fact that Syria was a Soviet client and militarily supported by the USSR was an important but secondary factor. Second, it argues that, by mid-1983, the US diplomatic strategies in Lebanon had become untenable. The attempts to reach a sustained ceasefire had failed and the Reagan Administration had repositioned its policy toward Syria's occupation of Lebanon and the need for a forcible, US-led military intervention. This advances Seib's argument that the Reagan Administration hoped that militarization against Syria would establish the US as the key 'mover and shaker in the region,'[12] while the focus on Israel and the PLO conflict in Lebanon had reduced.[13]

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[12] Gerald F. Seib, 'Our Mideast Plan: What Next?', *Wall Street Journal*, 1 October 1982, p.30.
[13] [Lebanon: Litmus Test for U.S. Credibility and Commitment], p.2.

A Cold War in Lebanon?

When the MNFII was established there were few concerns in Washington about a Soviet intervention in Lebanon. However, the USSR's aggressive rhetoric stated that, should the Lebanese conflict spill over into Syria, the Soviets would be persuaded to intervene militarily.[14] This intervention never materialized and, as the war in Afghanistan drained Soviet resources, the likelihood that the USSR would send in a military unit diminished. This section will examine the background to US-Soviet tensions in Lebanon and thus the degree to which the Reagan Administration's policy in Lebanon was in fact aimed at the Soviets in the Middle East. The Soviet Union's influence in the 1983 Lebanese context is often overplayed but should not be ignored. This thesis argues that, while the Reagan Administration remained conscious of possible Soviet intention in the Levant region, US intervention was primarily focussed on weakening Syria's presence in Lebanon. This policy was driven by US fear that the pro-Western Arab leaders could become sympathetic to the Soviet's outreach in the Middle East.[15]

The death of Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev, on 10 November 1982, led to his replacement by Yuri Andropov.[16] Andropov stated that the Soviets would not be drawn into a superpower military conflict in Lebanon, which he regarded as an uncertain playground, as evidenced by US action in Lebanon and the MNFII's lack of authority over both the SAF and IDF.[17] Even British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher did not see the Soviets as a threat in Lebanon because she believed

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[14] 'Moscou serait determine a contrer, a tout prix, l'initiative U.S. au Liban', 19 April 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.5 & Dawisha, 'The U.S.S.R in the Middle East: Superpower in Eclipse?', pp. 438-439.

[15] Intelligence Estimate, [Andropov's Approach to Key US-Soviet Issues], 9 August 1983, NIE 11/9-83, CIA FOIA, pp.22-23.

[16] Jacques Amalric, 'Les cartes de M. Andropov', *Le Monde*, 5 January 1983.

[17] Freedman, 'Patterns of Soviet Policy toward the Middle East', p.53.

that Moscow was enjoying watching the US fail to control the conflict which was 'a gaping wound to the United States.'[18]

From the US perspective, it was clear that the Reagan Administration had no intention of drawing the Soviet Union into the conflict any further than had already occurred through Moscow's support of Syria with Soviet Surface to Air Missiles (SAMs). The Reagan Administration realized that, while it continued to pressure the Syrians to withdraw, the US needed to keep the Soviets in the background.[19] Shultz stated that the American policy had a 'broader objective of maintaining American dominance of Middle East diplomacy and reducing the Soviet role in the area.'[20] The Secretary of State thought that an increase in Soviet access by Arab leaders could lead to a greater anti-Western or rejectionist movement. 'To this end the Soviets will intensify efforts to forge a new consensus of Arab States, including Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt.'[21] The Administration perceived Soviet efforts as focused on obstructing US oil interests in the Gulf regions but believed that Moscow was not particularly concerned with the MNFII or US intervention in Lebanon. National intelligence reporting by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) centred on Soviet sponsorship of Syria's military capabilities in the region. The reports identified the Syrian regime as a proxy for the Soviet Union. The Reagan Administration believed that Moscow was pushing for a more influential role in the Middle East. The CIA believed that even the limited Soviet interest in the PLO was in order to undermine

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[18] Memorandum from Robin Butler to Brian Fall, [Thatcher/Mitterrand Meeting], 6 December 1983, Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UK National Archives (hereafter UKNA), pp.1-3.

[19] Robert Pfaltzgraff, 'The Superpower Relationship and U.S. National Security Policy in the 1980s', *AAPSS*, No. 457, 1981, p.196.

[20] Memorandum from Shultz to Reagan, [Our Strategy in Lebanon and the Middle East], 13 October 1983, folder NSDD99-111, Box 8, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD, RRPL, p.2.

[21] *ibid.* p.23 & Interagency Intelligence Assessment, [Soviet Policy toward Lebanon], Central Intelligence Agency, August 7 1984, NI IIA 84-10012, CIA FOIA Archives, p.1.

US peace proposals and expand its influence with neighbouring Arab countries.[22] However, the little tangible support that the Soviets demonstrated toward the Palestinian fighters in 1982, during the MNFI's deployment, moderated US fears of a strong Soviet-Palestinian alliance.[23]

The Soviet Union's presence in the Levant in 1983 was outlined by the National Security Council through a three-point threat analysis which saw the Soviets as being able to 'a) intimidate moderate Arab countries friendly to the U.S., b) threaten or complicate Western access to oil, and c) compromise Israel's security.'[24] Shultz viewed US-Soviet relations as a zero sum game in the Middle East, regarding any Soviet interests regionally as being aimed at weakening the Western positions.[25] As the two superpowers continued to identify the Palestinian/Israeli conflict as fundamental to the Lebanese conflict, particularly since the June 1982 Israeli invasion, the Soviet Union used this platform to draw in Arab allies.[26] Hanf argues that, without the Israeli/PLO conflict, the Cold War in Lebanon would have been of less relevance.[27] Furthermore, the growing Islamic radical movement in Lebanon saw US interference as proxy support for Israel.[28] Since the signing of the May 17th Agreement, relations between the US and Israel had been normalized, albeit with the direct cost of exacerbating US tensions with the USSR, Syria and the Lebanese *Druze* and *Shi'a* factions.

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[22] [Andropov's Approach to Key US-Soviet Issues], p.23.

[23] Dawisha, 'The U.S.S.R in the Middle East: Superpower in Eclipse?', p.441.

[24] [Lebanon: Litmus Test for U.S. Credibility and Commitment], p.1.

[25] Alexander George, 'US-Soviet Global Rivalry: Norms of Competition', *Journal of Peace Research*, No. 23, 1986, pp.252-255

[26] Freedman, 'Patterns of Soviet Policy toward the Middle East', pp.50-52.

[27] Theodor Hanf, 'Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation', (London: Centre for Lebanese Studies, I.B. Tauris & Co, 1993), pp.174-175.

[28] Nizar Hamzeh, 'Islamism in Lebanon: A guide to the Groups', *Middle East Quarterly*, September 1997, pp.47-53 & Memorandum from CIA Office to CIA Director, [Terrorist Threat to Western Interests in Lebanon], 30 November 1983, Lebanon 11/30/83 File, Box 43, Executive Secretariat NSC: Country Series, RRPL, pp.1-6.

The Reagan Administration saw a direct relationship between US oil supplies and the ongoing conflict in Lebanon. Shultz feared that increased Soviet influence in the Iran-Iraq war would lead to 'terrorist' attacks against US positions in Lebanon which in turn could directly affect US oil interests in Iraq.[29] Shultz saw any US disengagement, both militarily or politically, in the Middle East as a direct threat to both US oil supplies and US guarantees of Israeli security.[30]

CIA National Intelligence Council Director, Henry Rowen, advised the Senate Committee that a US-dominated Middle East was at the forefront of US foreign policy to ensure the safe access and transport of oil resources.[31] The CIA interagency report continued the anti-Soviet line that Lebanon was 'the most volatile area of US-Soviet regional interaction with the greatest potential for a direct confrontation between Moscow and Washington.'[32] The CIA argued that Lebanon could become the frontline for an international credibility battle between the two superpowers. It was assumed that having seen the overt US supply of arms to Israel, the surrounding Arab nations would turn to the USSR for assistance and closer relations.[33] Friedman argues that the oil producing states in the Gulf were keenly watching the US attempts to resolve the Lebanese crisis, and the Reagan Administration knew that the failure to protect US commitments in Lebanon could negatively affect the integrity of US relations with other Arab neighbours.[34]

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[29] [Our Strategy in Lebanon and the Middle East], p.9.
[30] *ibid.* p.2.
[31] Testimony by CIA National Intelligence Council Chairman Henry Rowen before the Senate Committee [Energy and Natural Resources], 18 February 1983, CIA FOIA, pp. 3-5.
[32] Intelligence Estimate, [The Soviet Challenge to US Security Interests], 10 August 1982, NIE 11/4-82, CIA FOIA, p.27.
[33] Zach Levey, 'United States Arms Policy toward Jordan', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.41, No.3, July 2006, pp.527-543.
[34] Thomas L. Freidman, 'Arab Inaction on Lebanon: News Analysis', *New York Times (*hereafter *NYT)*, June 21 1982, p.1.

Yet, the lack of White House policy documents on the Soviets in Lebanon suggests that a direct confrontation of the Soviets was not the Reagan Administration's key priority in Lebanon. Although the US was aware of the Soviet attempts to coax regional Arab nations into a Soviet alliance, Moscow had attempted this previously with little success aside from Syria. However, the failure of the May 17th Agreement left a vacuum of credibility for US policy in Lebanon and the Middle East. The US was concerned that this would leave space for possible further Soviet involvement in or sponsorship of Syria. Lebanon was a strategically-positioned regional US ally, threatened by growing Syrian military and political inference. To Shultz, the US intervention in Lebanon was critical in illustrating to the Arab neighbours that the US was a dominant, committed military force.[35] Soviet encroachment through military sponsorship was seen as a possible threat of polarizing the region but not a direct threat to US or Lebanese security.[36] US policy toward Syria was aimed at setting an example of US military strength regionally, with a secondary goal of minimizing Soviet advancement.

Hafiz Al-Asad: the Soviet Client

The May 17th Agreement achieved little apart from strengthening Syrian influence in Lebanon. The agreement's failure to satisfy the Lebanese *Druze* and *Shi'a* meant that they were easily drawn toward Syria through the promise of arms and support.[37] Despite the losses caused by the Israeli invasion in June 1982, the SAF underwent

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[35] *ibid.* p.9.

[36] Parker Hart, 'An American Policy Toward the Middle East', *AAPSS*, No.390, 1970, pp.111-112.

[37] Freedman, 'Patterns of Soviet Policy toward the Middle East', pp.52-54.

'the largest re-equipment effort in their history' sponsored by the Soviet Union.[38] The Syrian army had acquired T-72 tanks, MiG-23 and Sukhoi-22 aircraft as well as SS21 ground missiles by 1983 and the MNFII and IDF quickly became concerned that the SAF's military capabilities could overwhelm both forces.[39] Washington used this militarization to justify distancing itself from defensive peacemaking, preferring instead to develop a pre-emptive, aggressive defence policy. This section will argue that the Reagan Administration's concerns over Syria's military position in Lebanon led to a policy shift from peacekeeping to a pre-emptive defence strategy against Syria, which was driven by a need to hide the inescapable truth that US attempts to mediate the Lebanese situation diplomatically had failed.

Reagan's open criticism of détente raised the USSR's consciousness of the US efforts to counteract Soviet expansion in the Middle East.[40] While the Soviet-Syrian arms program was considered ineffective until September 1982, the period of relative quiet between September 1982 and May 1983 enabled Syria to catch up with the new military technology. By June 1983, the modernized SAF stirred US concerns over Syria's military and political domination in Lebanon. The Reagan Administration regarded Syrian influence in Lebanon as destabilizing US interests in the region. The fear of Soviet communism spreading throughout the Middle East was less a concern than the image that the US would have if a Soviet military client, Syria, were able to dominate a US ally, Lebanon. Removing the SAF was not merely about monitoring peace within Beirut's perimeters; the Administration needed to make significant changes to how the US military and USMNF would engage with Syria. These

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[38] Blair, Cohen & Gottfriend, 'Command in Crisis: A Middle East Scenario', *Security Dialogue*, No.17 1986, p.114.

[39] Cable from Beirut, UNIFIL to Urquhart, [Israeli opinions on Lebanon War], Lebanon-Country File, Box UNRWA, S-0354-001-15, 31 December 1982, United Nations Archives and Records Management Section (hereafter UNARMS), pp.1-2.

[40] [The Soviet Challenge to US Security Interests], p.2.

changes in the Administration's rules of engagement would ultimately lead to the US entering into direct military confrontation with Syria.

Israel's insistence that the SAF must make the first move in withdrawing its SAMs from southern Lebanon and the requirement that the LAF should control the *Shi'a* militias and remaining Palestinians in the Bekaa Valley meant that no side had yet made any movement toward the resolution outlined in the May 17th Agreement. The Reagan Administration was plagued with the issue of 'how to remove the figleaf which Syria uses to justify its continued occupation…simply put continued Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon.'[41] They conceded, however, that political incentives for Syria to agree to a withdrawal, given they were excluded from the Israeli-Lebanese talks, did not exist. The recent militarization (through the Soviet sponsored SAM-5s), in fact, illustrated that Syria was strengthening its position in Lebanon, a direct movement away from a peace initiative.[42]

In an attempt to curb SAF occupation, the Department of Defense advised that a clear message be delivered that the US would not withdraw under any circumstances while the Syrian occupation continued in Lebanon, and that Asad must be made aware that the US would continue to arm and finance Lebanese President Amin Gemayel's government until a level of political integrity was guaranteed.[43] The Reagan Administration believed that this stand would pressure the Syrian Government into a partial withdrawal on the basis that the US would defend Israel

[41] Memorandum from. Dur and Donald Fortier to John Poindexter, [Draft Paper on Next Steps in Lebanon], 6 October 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series, RRPL, p.1.

[42] Minutes, [Meeting of Lebanese Foreign Minister with Countries contributing contingent], Meetings- Secretary General with Permanent Representative of Lebanon-Notes 12/1/1979-21/12/1985 File, Box Meetings, S-0356-0028-06, 10 June 1983, UNARMS, pp.1-2.

[43] John McLaughlin, 'Escalation in Lebanon', *National Review*, 14 October 1983, No.35, Vol. 20, p.1259.

and Lebanon militarily.[44] The proposed plan argued that the MNFII should extend its operational capabilities to become a major military force and disengage the Syrians pre-emptively through a fast strike attack. However, the policy also relied on the expansion of the MNFII's troops, which was deemed unlikely due to Congress's continued reluctance to commit further resources to Lebanon.

The mounting domestic public and congressional discontent within the US over the MNFII's deployment led to a dialogue as to why the US should continue its involvement in Lebanon. The White House's Director of Near East and South Asia Affairs and Deputy Director of the Pentagon's Office of National Assessment, Dennis Ross, responded that, should the US withdraw from Lebanon, this would lead to an

> abrogation of the Lebanese-Israeli agreement, increasing Syrian, and indirectly Soviet stature and leverage in the region, moderate Arab reluctance to embrace us and to do anything the Syrians oppose.[45]

The fundamental problem now for Shultz and Reagan was how to balance the domestic pressures without losing US credibility, as premature withdrawal would entail. Ross proposed an unlikely scenario which included the possibility of Gemayel's pro-Western government adopting a more hostile anti-Western stance so that the US would be asked to leave the conflict. This was quickly discounted as it risked leaving Syria to control Lebanon and creating a culture whereby the Arab states would think 'don't identify with U.S. initiatives; don't expose yourself to risks on the peace process; and don't count on the U.S. guarantees, even if there is a formal agreement.'[46]

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[44] Cable from Erskine to Urquhart, [Importance of IDF withdrawal and Syria], 11:53am, 2 August 1983, Cable #1570, Lebanon- Country File, Box UNRWA, S-0354-001-15, UNARMS, p.1.

[45] Report from Dennis Ross to Department of Defense, [Recognizing our Alternatives in Lebanon], 6 October 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series, RRPL, p.1.

[46] *ibid.* p.2.

In order to convince Congress and create the necessary justification for the military escalation against Syria, Reagan ordered the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Department of Defense to revise the definition of 'self defense.'[47] There were two possible options. 'Option A' was the deployment of a separate, independently-commanded US military mission which, on the surface, would be classified as a 'support and protect' mission for the USMNF but which was ultimately a US-led force that would be unanswerable to the other MNFII participants.[48] By the time the US proposed this, the other MNFII partners, Britain and France, already felt that the US was leading the MNFII autonomously anyway.[49] 'Option B' outlined an extension of the USMNF in order to increase the military attacks against Syria but continuing under the pretext of protecting the LAF and Lebanese government.[50] Both options illustrated US willingness to become an active participant in the Lebanese conflict (aside from its contingent in the MNFII), listing the US' primary motivations as 'more active cover and support for MNFII contingents.'[51] However, the military strategy for both options included armed reconnaissance into Syrian-controlled regions, pre-emptive action against Syria and escalated ground artillery and naval bombardment, 'e.g. shoot back until silenced', against Syrian-sponsored groups, none of which was wholly aimed at the MNFII's protection.[52]

Further to the military escalation, both Vice Admiral John Poindexter, who was Deputy National Security Advisor and also National Security Council Chair, and Shultz recommended to Reagan that a build-up of the IDF would provide a deterrent

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[47] Report on NSDD, [Outline of NSDD- Lebanon], 12 September 1983, p.4 & Notes for Reagan, [Near Term Lebanon Strategy], 6 September 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series, RRPL, p.1.

[48] Option A, [Near Term Lebanon Strategy], p.2.

[49] Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of US Foreign Policy', pp.76-77.

[50] Option B, [Near Term Lebanon Strategy], p.3.

[51] [Near Term Lebanon Strategy], p.1.

[52] [Our Strategy in Lebanon and the Middle East], p.3.

to Syria. 'It has been our hope that Syria will respond to this collective political and military pressure and accede to the ceasefire.'[53] This involved a major increase in military programs, such as financing the Lavi aircraft fighter program, an increase in defence cooperation and procurement agreement and the supply of US military technology to Israel to prevent Syrian SAMs being used against Israel's northern border positions.[54] This policy saw a complete reversal of the pressures placed on Israel at the end of 1982. Shultz, an adamant supporter of the American Jewish Lobby, publicly announced that closer military cooperation with Israel would lead to greater stability in Lebanon, pressing for increased Israeli presence in southern Lebanon. The US' support for the IDF in southern Lebanon by July was in direct contradiction of the May 17th Agreement's principles that Shultz had mediated.[55] It was hoped that this gamble would appease Congressional protests and at the same time complement the US' escalated military strategy.

On 7 August both the French and Italian MNFII contingents increased their troops to 2200 personnel compared to the USMNF deployment of 1000. In contrast to the US' pro-Israeli policy, the FRMNF and ITMNF argued that the IDF's monitored withdrawal to the Awali River was the first step in motivating the SAF to withdraw in response.[56] The increase in the size of the FRMNF and ITMNF troops, however, was not an attempt to support the US' emerging militarization toward Syria. In fact,

[53] Cable from McFarlane to Clark, [McFarlane/Fairbanks Mission: Worst Case Strategy For Lebanon], 1:04am 9 September 1983, Cable #9947, NSC00088 10 Sep 1983 File, Box 91285, Executive Secretariat NSC Meeting Series, RRPL, p.2.

[54] Lt Col. James DeLoughry, 'The United States and the LAVI' *Airpower Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1990, pp.34-44 & Reagan Speech, [Remarks of the President and Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of Israel Following Their Meetings], 29 November, 1983, Online: http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1983/112983b.htm, Accessed, 29 April 2014.

[55] [Our Strategy in Lebanon and the Middle East], pp.5-7.

[56] Briefing from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the UN Secretary General, [Israeli's Redeployment to the Awali River], in Israel/Lebanon Agreement (On Troop Withdrawal)/UNIFIL May 6- Nov 3 1983 File, Box UNIFIL, S-1066-0097-03, 23 June 1983, UNARMS, pp.1-3.

France was leading the negotiations with Asad in Paris, still hoping that a diplomatic solution could be reached. The Reagan Administration argued against this. Reagan and Shultz believed that the only proposal for creating incentives for IDF withdrawal was a policy of greater military strength in southern Lebanon.[57] The French, British and Italian leaders were concerned that US strategy in Lebanon was now far-removed from the initial mandate they had all signed and that Reagan's rhetoric toward Syria would only lead to a further heating up of the Syria/MNFII tensions.[58]

Despite the MNFII partners' concerns, the US continued to develop its strategy against Syria. US policy in Lebanon now demonstrated none of the neutrality that the MNFII's mandate had suggested. The decision to establish military 'red-lines' was carried out by a USMNF-LAF collaboration of air and naval firepower, targeting key Syrian channels and transit points in order to distance Syria from its Lebanese clients, namely the *Druze* militia *Jayish al-Tahrir al-Sha'aby* (People's Liberation Army) led by Walid Jumblatt as well as the *Shi'a* militia *Harakat Amal* led by Nabih Berri.[59] *Harakat Amal* had become disgruntled with the US and LAF efforts to split the faction and its allies.[60] Berri called for the traditionally Christian positions of Commander of the LAF and intelligence agency to be transferred to a *Shi'a* leadership while threatening to continue receiving military and political support from Syria.[61] The Reagan Administration, therefore, demanded that Gemayel should make political

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[57] Intelligence Estimate, [Andropov's Approach to Key US-Soviet Issues], 9 August 1983, SC 0307883, CIA FOIA, p.23 & [Draft Paper on Next Steps in Lebanon], p.1.

[58] 'Arrive hier a Washington, le Chef de L'Etat a eu un premier contact avec Shultz', 20 July 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1 & Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of US Foreign Policy', pp.76-77.

[59] Cable from UNIFIL Beirut to UN New York, [Lebanese Unity Government], Lebanon-Country File, Box UNRWA, S-0354-001-15, 1 May 1984, UNARMS, p.1.

[60] Jean Gueyras, 'L'opposition libanaise dénonce le rôle prédominant des États-Unis, dans la force multinationale', *Le Monde,* 26 October 1983.

[61] Special Analysis, [Lebanon: Shia Discontent], 21 October 1983, TCS 2947/83, CIA FOIA, p.2.

concessions to the *Shi'a* and *Druze* leaders. Dennis Ross believed 'a deal with the Shias is likely to look as if a new National Pact has been negotiated.'[62] The attempted fracturing by Gemayel, however, had in fact strengthened the *Shi'a* leadership within the Lebanese system which directly became a threat to the US' pro-Israeli, anti-Syrian stance.

Escalation through an 'aggressive self-defense'

Throughout August and early September 1983, the Reagan Administration had hailed a period of relative quiet between the IDF and SAF as a major achievement of the MNFII.[63] US response to this, therefore, *should* have discouraged the use of military force in lieu of continued political negotiation. Yet, by mid-September, the USS New Jersey's deployment to Lebanese waters marked a turning point in the US Administration's strategy.[64] The decision to expand the USMNF's military capability, therefore, was deemed necessary in order to protect the US' now threatened integrity in Lebanon and the region more broadly. Shultz argued that 'success in one dimension strengthens our position generally. A set back in one area makes the achievement of our objectives elsewhere that much harder.'[65]

The deployment of the BB62 Naval Gunship just off the shores of Lebanon was claimed to have been to protect the USMNF units and other US military personnel operating in the country.[66] Ultimately, however, the New Jersey was

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[62] [Recognizing our Alternatives in Lebanon], p.5.

[63] 'McFarlane reaffirme les engagements des Etats-Unis a l'egard du Liban', 3 August 1983, p.1 & Cable from Urquhart to Erskine, [UNTSO, Syria and Israel], in Lebanon- Country File, Box UNRWA, S-0354-001-15, 29 September 1983, UNARMS, p.1.

[64] 'Washington n'exclut pas 'entrée de la F.M. dans la Montagne', 26 August 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

[65] [Our Strategy in Lebanon and the Middle East], p.2.

[66] *ibid.* p.1.

positioned to provide naval fire against Syrian-backed militias in the strategic village of Souk el Gharb located to the southwest of Beirut in the Chouf Mountains.[67]

The mission, which began on 12 September 1983 with the Battle of Souk el Gharb, changed the rules of engagement for US military involvement. The new rules of engagement allowed the US military to undertake vaguely defined 'security' missions.[68] The new strategy effectively detached the US from the MNFII mandate's limitations, which prohibited an escalation of the MNFII's military policy. The Reagan Administration believed that an escalation in the short-term would allow concentrated military targeting of SAF-sponsored factions, which would ultimately lead to a more expeditious withdrawal of US troops from Lebanon.[69] The US began distancing itself from the MNFII because, in part, Shultz believed that the other MNFII contributors were less strongly opposed to a Syrian-dominated Lebanon.[70] Indeed, Thatcher and the French President, Francois Mitterrand, did not trust the US over Lebanon, arguing that this was mainly because the European MNFII partners had insufficient contact with Reagan himself.[71] All parties felt that Shultz was now running the show.[72] Similarly, the emergence of US movement toward an escalated policy 'frustrated' UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, as UNIFIL 'found

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[67] Memorandum from Weinberger to Reagan, [Movement of the USS New Jersey (BB62) to Lebanon], 20 September 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series, RRPL, p.1.

[68] NSDD 103, [Strategy for Lebanon], 10 September 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series, RRPL, p.1.

[69] 'A Souk el-Gharb et sands la Banlieue-Sud: La troupe repousse ses assailants', 12 September 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

[70] Report from Clark to Shultz, [Next Steps in Lebanon], 8 November 1982, NSDD64 Next Steps in Lebanon File, Box 91286, p.1 & Memorandum from Hill to Clark, [Strategies for Lebanon if Current Concepts Proves Inadequate], 26 September 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series, RRPL, p.2.

[71] 'Mitterand reaffirmera aujourd'hui a New York "le role de la France au service de la paix", 28 September 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.6 & Lucien George, '"La France ne tient pas à être prise dans l'engrenage d'une guerre civile", déclare M. Mitterrand', *Le Monde*, 1 September 1983.

[72] Memorandum from Robin Butler to Brian Fall, [Thatcher/Mitterrand Meeting], 6 December 1983, Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UKNA, pp.1-3.

itself unable to contribute anything towards a solution of the Lebanese problem…'[73]

Perez de Cuellar saw the military offensive as counterproductive to peace in Lebanon and further limiting UNIFIL's humanitarian role.

On 9 September the Lebanese Ambassador to the UN, Rachid Fakhoury, warned the Security Council that the Gemayel government was facing potential collapse.[74] If Gemayel were assassinated or his government collapsed directly after the US had illustrated its resolute support of the president, this would suggest US inability to guarantee stability and peace in the Middle East. As a consequence, the Reagan Administration proposed an alternative strategy for handling the worsening situation in Lebanon.[75] This was laid out in the National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 103 issued by Reagan. NSDD103 continued to promulgate many of the same justifications for US intervention in Lebanon as NSDD64 and NSDD92.[76] US motivations for the continued deployment of the MNFII remained, publicly, the Lebanese sovereignty's restoration and foreign forces' withdrawal. However, an additional stated justification was US commitment to Israel's northern border's protection and security.[77] The other most significant difference in NSDD103 was the amendment regarding the US' operational rules of engagement in Lebanon. Reagan

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[73] Notes for UN Secretariat, [Press Conference by Lebanon], Lebanon- Country File, Box UNRWA, S-0354-001-15, 19 September 1983, UNARMS, p.1.

[74] Letter from Rachid Fakhoury to the UN Security Council, [Letter Dated 9 September 1983 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council], Document No. S/15974, Lebanon- Country File, Box UNRWA, S-0354-001-15, 9 September 1983, UNARMS, pp.1-2.

[75] [Strategies for Lebanon if Current Concepts Proves Inadequate], p.1.

[76] NSDD 64, [Next Steps in Lebanon], 28 October 1982, NSDD64 Next Steps in Lebanon File, Box 91286, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records, p.1 & NSDD 92, [Accelerating the Withdrawal of Foreign Forces from Lebanon], 27 April 1983, NSDD84-95 File, Box 1, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series, RRPL, p.1.

[77] NSDD 103, [Strategy for Lebanon], 10 September 1983, p.1 & White House Situation Room Cable from Poindexter to McFarlane, [NSDD on Lebanon], 10 September 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series RRPL, pp.1-2.

declared that 'the concept of operations for these [MNF] forces would be one of aggressive self defense against hostile or provocative acts from any quarter.'[78]

The White House had determined that pre-emptive offensives against potential future aggressors constituted 'active peacekeeping' and so constituted a legally-justified use of military force.[79] This strategy permitted active US targeting and combat against Syrian forces. The reasons behind this policy change were listed as the increased hostility between the internal confessional factions, Syrian determination to force the MNFII out and a concern that a domestic crisis in Israel would prevent the nation from adequately protecting itself.[80] Furthermore, the Joint Chiefs of Staff argued that Gemayel's possible resignation or assassination, direct military conflict with Syria and the need for the MNFII mandate's further expansion were all possible scenarios to be recognized and avoided.[81]

Shultz stipulated that the decisions to amend US objectives in regards to the use of military force in Lebanon was supported by three key arguments. First, that the appropriate use of hostile action, deemed proportionate, was covered by any international peacekeeping legal framework. Second, that the line between 'response'

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[78] Cable from Poindexter to McFarlane, [NSDD on Lebanon], 10 September 1983, p.1.

[79] Cable from Poindexter to McFarlane, [Addendum to NSDD on Lebanon September 10 1983], 10 September 1983, NSDD99-111 File, Box 8, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series, RRPL, pp.1-2.

[80] Ariel Sharon resigned as Defense Minister in February 1983 after the Kahan Commission found him personally responsible for the Sabra and Shatila Massacres through taking inadequate precautions to avoid possible bloodshed. Menachem Begin effectively retired from office in August 1983, although he was not succeeded until October 1983. The Israeli Bank Crisis of September 1983 also put a strain on the Israeli economy, with the Lebanese occupation being one of the leading drains. See: 'Alors que la crise économique s'aggrave Le directeur de la Banque d'Israël critique sévèrement la politique gouvernementale', *Le Monde*, 2 June 1983; Ze'ev Schiff & Ehud Ya'ari, Israel's Lebanon War, (London: Counterpoint, 1986), pp. 297-300 & Report on NSDD, [Outline of NSDD- Lebanon], 12 September 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series, RRPL, pp.1-2.

[81] Memorandum from Director, Joint Chiefs of Staff Lieutenant Jack N. Merritt to Poindexter, [Draft NSDD], 8 September 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series, RRPL, p.4 & John McLaughlin, 'Escalation in Lebanon', *National Review*, 14 October 1983, No.35, Vol.20, p.1259.

and 'offensive' was often unclear and that the use of military force could be seen as reactive, given Lebanon's military context. Third, that pre-emptive targeting would have to be an essential component of the MNFII strategy where there was a broader escalation of the Lebanese conflict.[82] However, US Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger continued to protest against Shultz's foreign policy doctrine, regarding the military escalation in Lebanon as being against US national interests and potentially setting the US up for failure, as the intervention was neither a guaranteed success nor conclusively expedient. Weinberger's reluctance regarding US military involvement in Lebanon was not due to pacifism but rather because he could not see the advantage of becoming further entwined in the military quagmire that the Lebanese conflict already represented.[83] Ultimately, Shultz continued to exercise most influence over Reagan and was able to overcome these internal protests, albeit the debate between Shultz and Weinberger continued until the end of the MNFII's mission.

The opportunity cost: military force and the Battle of Souk el Gharb

From 11 to 19 September fighting between the LAF and the *Druze*, Palestinian and Iranian-linked *Shi'a* forces peaked in intensity, so much so that Gemayel informed Ambassador McFarlane that the failure to overcome these forces at Souk el Gharb would prove the Gemayel government and LAF's death knell. Reagan and Shultz faced several issues over the US action at Souk el Gharb; namely, the Gemayel government's total dependence on US protection, Syria's removal and the security of

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[82] [Comments on Lebanon Draft NSDD], p.2.
[83] Caspar Weinberger stated, 'Beirut was an absolutely inevitable outcome of doing what we did', in 'Interview with Caspar Weinberger', Frontline, PBS News, September 2001, Available [Online]:
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/target/interviews/weinberger.html.

US personnel at Beirut International Airport. Souk el Gharb was deemed a strategic position for US troops based at Beirut International Airport, as the village overlooked the USMNF positions and the US and French Marine Barracks as well as the Lebanese presidential palace.

Reagan had shown unwavering public support for Gemayel and the LAF but by signing NSDD103, he also committed the US to remove any force that threatened Lebanese security, thereby directly tying the US to the Gemayel government's survival. NSDD103 also transformed the US intervention in Lebanon from a peacekeeping, international collaboration to a US-led navy gunship and marine-focussed war against the Syrian-backed militias. Reagan's decision to stand by the Lebanese government militarily meant that, as Souk el Gharb came under attack by *Druze* and Syrian-sponsored militias, the US split from the MNFII, instructing the USMAU commander to begin shelling the 'enemy.'[84]

By 12 September it was clear that the US had decided to begin its military escalation with the landing of the US Special Forces teams.[85] Similarly, US heavy artillery had been sent to Lebanon for use by the USMNF troops, including 34 tanks, 18 howitzers, 124 Armoured Personnel Carriers, 29 million rounds of small arms ammunition and 105mm/155mm artillery rounds.[86] This was matched by a similar weapons and ammunition supply to the LAF. Reagan's redefinition of the US rules of

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[84] Cable from McFarlane to Shultz, [McFarlane/Fairbanks Mission: Meeting with General Tannous, August 22, 1983], 11:52am, 23 August 1983, Cable #9266, Middle East Trip (McFarlane) Chron Cables File, Box 91407, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records Series, RRPL, p.2.

[85] Enclosure D, [Future Training Assistance Teams], 12 September 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series, RRPL, p.1.

[86] Memorandum for the Assistant to the President for NSA from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, [Response to 10 September 1983 NSDD, Strategy for Lebanon], 12 September 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series, RRPL, pp.1-2.

engagement allowed US marines and naval gunships to begin shelling Syrian strongholds and militias in Souk el Gharb.[87]

As the USS John Rogers and USS Virginia fired hundreds of artillery rounds at the *Druze* positions at Souk el Gharb, the US military policy's duality became evident. The USMNF commander led the US marines from Beirut International Airport while the US gunship offensive was controlled by the United States Marine Amphibious Unit (USMAU). Reagan clarified the distinction between the USMNF's two major military objectives: 1) the support for LAF and the Lebanese government; and 2) the wider escalation of US-led missions and 'aggressive self defense' in MNF-controlled regions.[88] The US' military response to the Battle of Souk el Gharb led to an exponential increase in the provision of direct US military and offensive combat.[89]

The militias fighting the LAF in Souk el Gharb were backed by extensive Syrian military artillery and the battle was seen as a Syria-sponsored attack on pro-Christian, pro-Western forces.[90] This made the decision to intervene easily justifiable. Shultz and McFarlane considered it essential if the US wished to uphold its credibility in the Lebanese conflict's wider diplomacy. However, the realities of the conflict were less straightforward than this. The intelligence provided by the LAF was vague and the US military command complained that little US sourced intelligence had been gathered to quantify which positions the US was engaging. As such, the Joint Chiefs

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[87] 'Le "New Jersey" une armada a lui tout suel', 25 September 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

[88] [Comments on Lebanon Draft NSDD], p.3.

[89] Enclosure A: [Weapons and Equipment Provided], Enclosure B: [Training Assistance Teams] & Enclosure C [Weapons, Equipment and Ammunition to be Shipped], 12 September 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series, RRPL, p.1.

[90] 'Libano / Sempre più ostili Assad, Gheddafi e Olp alla forza multinazionale!', *La Stampa*, 19 September 1983, p.4.

of Staff made the mistake of pre-emptively engaging unconfirmed targets. The fact was that the US did not know whom they were fighting.[91]

Hallenbeck argues that the US would not have entered if the opposition simply comprised *Druze* and Palestinian forces that would have been deemed internal factional groups. The US did not wish to be seen to be taking sides along internal factional lines but rather to be linking Syria to the offensive.[92] Weinberger believed that there would be no sense of US victory if it were impossible to quantify whether or not this was a decisive battle that would lead to Syria's removal from Lebanon (which he further argued was not a US national interest). However, yet again, Shultz overcame these protests, showing that the battle was in line with Reagan's NSDD103 and that Syria's domination of the region was a significant concern for the US.[93]

The key memorandum from the Senior Adviser to the Secretary of State, Charles Hill, to the National Security Advisor was aptly entitled 'Strategies for Lebanon if the current concept proves inadequate.'[94] It proposed that the US contingent in the MNFII should not escalate beyond the force's current policy of self-defence in order to pacify the other MNFII partners' complaints. Instead, Hill stated that the US would deploy a separate 'US Military' force.[95] While this separate intervention mission was beyond the MNFII's existing deployment guidelines, it also aimed to generate a quick, apparent military victory for the MNFII. The escalation of US military involvement was a provocative gamble without any guarantee that it could achieve lasting success for the MNFII or US.

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[91] Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of US Foreign Policy', pp.80-106.
[92] *ibid.*
[93] NSDD 103, [Strategy for Lebanon], p.1.
[94] [Strategies for Lebanon if Current Concepts Proves Inadequate], pp.1-4.
[95] *ibid.* p.2.

Regardless of the internal opposition, the USS Rogers, USS Jersey and USS Virginia unloaded over 380 rounds of heavy fire at the opposition positions along with very limited British, French and Italian air and ground support. The British, French and Italian MNFII contingent reluctantly followed the US into Souk el Gharb in an attempt to regain a sense of unity among the partners. It was clear that the British saw the US action and the launching of the US Naval Gunship mission as adequate justification now to consider transferring British troops back to UNIFIL. Thatcher's office argued that the security of the BRMNF troops was threatened 'every time the guns of the USS New Jersey open fire.'[96]

On 20 September the French MNFII had lost more than ten troops, issuing stern warnings to the Syrian-sponsored militias of FRMNF retaliation. These threats were merely rhetorical, and the French, Italian or British combat participation remained minimal.[97] However, the political fallout had begun between the US and the other MNFII contributors over Souk el Gharb, as Paris and Rome questioned Washington's objectives in the offensive.[98] French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson informed Shultz that any further incidents like Souk el-Gharb would precipitate the French and Italian forces' full, unconditional withdrawal. Indeed, Cheysson believed that Italian Foreign Minister Giulo Andreotti was *looking* for an incident as a pretext to leave.[99] This publicly drew the US mission in Lebanon into question both

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[96] Memorandum from A.D. Parson to Mr Coles, [Lebanon], 16 February 1983, Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UKNA, p.1.

[97] 'L'Ambassadeur Wibaux passé en revue les forces Françaises de la F.M.', 2 October 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.3.

[98] Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of US Foreign Policy', pp. 86-87.

[99] Telegram from Graham to FCO, [Lebanon/MNF], 1:30am, 9 December 1983, #354, Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UKNA, p.1 & 'Rome est à la recherche d'un biais pour retirer, à moyen terme son contingent du Liban'*, Le Monde*, 28 November 1983.

internationally and domestically.[100] Facing the MNFII partners' resentment and the US Congress' growing opposition to the evolving US military presence in Lebanon, the Administration was forced to 'maintain the multi-national character of our presence.'[101] Reagan could not afford to lose his non-Arab partners' further support in Lebanon, having already notably distanced himself from Paris and Rome.[102]

Fortunately for Reagan and Shultz, on 21 September, the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee granted the USMNF an 18-month extension to its mandate, in order to pressure both the *Druze* and Syria into an informal ceasefire. In doing so, the Senate had made a significant compromise in allowing Reagan ultimate control of the troops in Lebanon. Even with a partial ceasefire on 26 September 1983, the Reagan Administration believed that the possibility of the ceasefire breaking down was imminent and that a retreat at that time would constitute a failure of US policy in Lebanon.[103] Although the Senate Committee's extension provided some security, Shultz and Reagan faced the possibility of an extraordinary congressional order to withdraw US troops from Lebanon without the MNFII having fulfilled its mandate. Reagan and Shultz therefore planned that the USMNF presence should be sustained for a 12-month period in order to create an environment for withdrawal and ensure that the LAF had taken control of Beirut's security situation.[104]

The 'Multinational Force in Lebanon Resolution,' pushed through by Reagan, gave the Administration a generous extension, allowing time for the Lebanese

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[100] 'La Guerre au Liban La France, l'Italie et la Grande-Bretagne se concertent pour arrêter une action diplomatique commune', *Le Monde*, 22 September 1983.
[101] [Report on Strategies for Lebanon if Current Concepts Proves Inadequate], p.8.
[102] *ibid.* p.9 & Nelson, 'The Multinational Force in Beirut', pp.95-100.
[103] 'Reagan: Le Liban est d'une importance vitale pour la securite des U.S.A', 18 October 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.
[104] [Report on Strategies for Lebanon if Current Concepts Proves Inadequate], p.10.

government or the UN to assume the security and leadership role.[105] The resolution was passed on 12 October 1983, by a slim eight Senate vote majority, illustrating that Congressional approval over the US deployment was tightening. The resolution made four key changes to Reagan and Shultz's autonomy over decision-making. It outlined: that a UN force must be prepared and supported to take over from the MNFII at the end of this final extension; that Reagan had to report to Congress every three months; that the president's actions had to comply with the War Powers Act; and that the USMNF presence was conditional on US mediation of Israeli, Lebanese and Syrian withdrawal discussions. The difficulty was that any negotiations or talks with Syria would not only mean a full abrogation to the May 17th Agreement but also require the escalation policies to be revised, that had only been introduced in September. The resolution continued unrealistically to tie the US to foreign forces' successful removal from Lebanon.

While the resolution demanded constant reporting to Congress on the USMNF's participation in Lebanon, it proved a breakthrough for the Reagan Administration. The resolution's broad time extension and ambiguous deployment conditions meant that the US had plenty of political and military space in which to create what it saw as a victory for the Administration in the Middle East.[106] However, most damning for the Administration were that Weinberger's concerns regarding Souk el Gharb ultimately proved correct. This US involvement in the Battle of Souk el Gharb was unrecognizable in terms of the USMNF's initial peacemaking mandate

[105] Joint Resolution, [Multinational Force in Lebanon Resolution], 3 January 1983, CPPG Meeting 1/31/84 Lebanon File, p.5 &. S.J.RES.159, [Multinational Force in Lebanon Resolution], 12 October 1983, Senate Judiciary, Washington, Box 91834, William Burns Series, RRPL p.1.
[106] 'Shultz- la F.M. pourrait occupier des positions strategiques', 26 September 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

and ultimately led to the US becoming a direct target in the conflict.[107] Without clear military guidelines and objectives, the US had unwittingly walked into a political trap. While there appeared to be a battlefield victory for the US and LAF at Souk el Gharb, the ramifications of the US actions were soon felt, with the Marine Barracks Bombing on 23 October 1983.

Conclusion

The MNFII was considered an opportunity for the Reagan Administration to assert US strength in handling peacekeeping missions in the Middle East. However, Phase Two of the MNFII's deployment in Lebanon (from 18 May to 22 October 1983) was characterized by ambiguous military escalations and policy manoeuvring that contradicted the force's initial peacekeeping mandate. If the Reagan Administration had been waiting for an opportunity to enter the Lebanese conflict offensively, the US strategy from the beginning would have been clearer.

Reagan and Shultz, as the MNFII's architects, were incrementally reacting to a situation that was constantly changing. As such US policy in Lebanon should be described as one of reactive assertiveness. The strategy they employed to do this vacillated throughout the MNFII's deployment in 1983 without significant forethought. Lebanon's volatile situation merely hindered the US because the MNFII's ambiguous mandate failed accurately to outline its approach to finding a peaceful solution to the conflict. As Chapter Four illustrated, by January 1983, Reagan and Shultz saw US withdrawal from Lebanon as detrimental to US credibility

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[107] Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy, pp. 67-80 & Richard Nelson, 'The Multinational Force in Beirut', in Anthony McDermott and Kjell Skjelsbaek, *The Multinational Force in Beirut 1982-1984*, (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991), pp.98-100.

internationally. Identifying the US as the key mediator and 'peacemaker' regionally was contingent on the successful completion of the MNFII's objectives.[108]

While the Soviet sponsorship of military aid and arms to Syria concerned the US, it was not direct superpower conflict that heightened US anxiety. The US was more concerned that Syrian domination of Lebanon would provoke further Israeli engagement in the conflict, thereby creating an anti-American backlash among the Arab neighbours.

By September 1983, the US was involved with the Lebanese conflict and the Gemayel government to such a degree that a failure to protect it from Syrian domination would directly reflect on US power and prestige. As the US embarked on an aggressive 'self defense' policy, characterized by pre-emptive naval and air force strikes on Souk el Gharb, it became entangled further in the Lebanese conflict's military complexities. This marked the beginning of the US combat identity in Lebanon in which it spilt from the MNFII in order to pursue its own strategy and interests. The Battle of Souk el Gharb also illustrated that the US commitment to finding a peaceful solution in Lebanon had diminished. The conflict also highlighted the US focus on the use of military force. Whether this movement toward an aggressive military policy in September was unique to Lebanon must be questioned. On 25 October, two days after the Marine Barracks attack, Reagan launched the invasion of Grenada. US military actions in Souk el Gharb should also be seen as part of the broader US escalation of its foreign policy.[109]

Lebanon was not insufficiently strategically important for the US to become as heavily involved as it did, even though it was a key Middle Eastern ally. For reasons

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[108] 'I marines rimangono in Libano', *La Stampa*, 29 September 1983.

[109] Report from Ronald Cole to the Office of the Chairman of the JCS, [Operation Urgent Fury: Grenada], Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, 1997, pp.51-62.

of prestige, regional backing and international credibility, the Reagan Administration continued to support the Gemayel government throughout 1983.[110] The result of having escalated its own military policy in Lebanon was that the US was now a central target for militias and factions sponsored and supported by Syria, Iran and Libya. While the US had become aware of a growing Western rejectionist movement in Lebanon since the April Embassy bombing, it had not considered the degree to which US involvement in Lebanon could lead to a movement of anti-Americanism and the devastating attacks that occurred on 23 October 1983.[111]

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[110] 'En depit de la multiplication des attaques contre le contingent Americain: "les Marines resteront" reaffirme Washington', 18 October 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.
[111] [Report on Strategies for Lebanon if Current Concepts Proves Inadequate], p.7.

Chapter 6

The Marine Barracks Bombing and a 'vigorous self defense'
Multinational Force II, Phase Three (23 October to 28 December 1983)

At 6:22am on 23 October 1983, two trucks laden with explosives drove through US security at Beirut International Airport, which had housed the US and French Multinational Force troops (USMNF, FRMNF) stationed in Beirut since 29 September 1982. The first truck penetrated the Lebanese Armed Force's (LAF) outer perimeter and drove through the gates toward the US Barracks. As the suicide bomber approached the central Battalion Landing Team building, the driver detonated the 12,000-pound explosive, killing the 241 US military personnel sleeping inside. Moments later, another truck drove through to the French military barracks, killing 58 French personnel in a smaller explosion.[1]

The Marine Barracks bombing demonstrated the strength and intent of the emerging anti-American Islamist movement and its commitment to ensuring US withdrawal from Lebanon.[2] While no group officially claimed responsibility, the US believed that this event had been masterminded by Imad Mughniyeh, founder of *Harakat al-Jihad al-Islami*,[3] and *Hizbullah's* operational and Iranian strategist.[4]

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[1] Situation Report, [Explosion: Situation Report as of 0900 hours local], 8:22am October 23 1983, Cable #722799, Central Intelligence Agency Freedom of Information Archives (hereafter CIA FOIA), p.1.

[2] Caspar Weinberger stated, 'Beirut was an absolutely inevitable outcome of doing what we did', in 'Interview with Caspar Weinberger', Frontline, PBS News, September 2001, Available [Online]:
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/target/interviews/weinberger.html.

[3] *Harakat al-Jihad al-Islami* attracts much speculation. Academics link the organization directly to *Hizbullah* as a pseudonym for *Hizbullah's* operations in Lebanon. Robin Wright, 'Sacred Rage', (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985), p.73 & Marius Deeb, 'Militant Islamic Movements in Lebanon: Origins, Social Basis, and Ideology', *Occasional Paper Series*, Washington, Georgetown University, 1986, p.19. See also: Cable from UNTSO

The shockwaves of the bombing highlighted two key issues. First, it revealed the US' direct involvement in the factional landscape that characterized the Lebanese conflict. Second, it proved that Reagan and Shultz had failed to recognize the growing anti-Western (or, more specifically, anti-American) Islamist movement that was developing in the region. With hindsight, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger stated that 'there was something like 27 or 28 separate armed groups, all of which had only one thing in common: they opposed us and they opposed a multinational force coming in.'[5] Even with the considerable evidence provided by Israeli, US and Lebanese intelligence to suggest that an attack was imminent, the Reagan Administration failed to recognise this possibility, thereby demonstrating the lack of connection between Washington's decision-makers and the realities of the Lebanese conflict. It was clear throughout the USMNF deployment that the US had failed to prioritize the factional or Islamic extremist groups, such as *Harakat Amal*, *Hizbullah* or *al-Hizb al-Taqadummi al-Ishtiraki*.[6]

While the US was preoccupied with direct state-based diplomacy between Israel, Syria and the Lebanese Gemayel government, the Reagan Administration ignored the many religious militias. Moreover, the intrinsic nature of such an attack

Commander Emmanuel Erskine to Under-Secretary General Urquhart, [UNTSO Summary of Beirut Incidents Special SITREP, Explosion in front of French MNF HQ], 10:10pm 21 December 1983, in Multinational Force in Beirut File, United Nations Archives and Record Management Section (hereafter UNARMS), p.1 which illustrates that the UN also believed that *Jihad al-Islami* was an Iranian-funded, *Hizbullah* offshoot. A 2003 US Federal Court Decision legally ruled *Jihad al-Islami* to be a guerrilla wing of *Hizbullah*, that was ultimately responsible for the attacks on the USMNF Barracks.

[4] Report, [Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983], 20 December 1983, Folder 'Kelley Report', Box 4, Phillip Dur: Subject Files, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library (hereafter RRPL), pp.1-3; Matthew Levitt & David Schenker, 'Who was Imad Mughniyeh', 14 February 2008, *The Washington Institute*, Policy #1340, p.1, Glenn Kessler, 'Iran Must Pay $2.6 Billion for '83 Attack', 8 September 2007, *Washington Post*, p.2 & Ronald Reagan, 'The Ronald Reagan Diaries', (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), p.350.

[5] 'Interview with Caspar Weinberger'.

[6] Otherwise known as the Progressive Socialist Party headed by *Druze* leaders Kamal Jumblatt and, later, Walid Jumblatt.

was based on surprize, and the degree to which the US failed to acknowledge that it was now a primary target highlights the administration's naivety.

The 23 October bombing created a distinct turning-point in US engagement in Lebanon. It sounded the death knell for the Multinational Force II (MNFII) and was acknowledged as the leading reason for the USMNF's withdrawal in February 1984.[7] A nexus between the Vietnam War and the MNFII in Lebanon was born out of another failed US-led military intervention.[8] The Department of Defense's public and 'independent' inquiry into the bombings allowed the administration to distance itself from blame and, instead, develop an aggressive line on state-sponsored Islamic terrorism. However, Reagan's policy decisions immediately after the attacks illustrated that the bombings had created significant concern within his administration, specifically with regards to the MNFII's validity. Shultz and Reagan remained the MNFII's backbone of support in Washington and feared that this tone of critical inquiry might lead to the MNFII's perceived failure and thereby strike at the heart of the administration's credibility.[9]

This chapter will examine the impact of the Marine Barracks bombing on US policy in Lebanon and the US responses to the attack from 23 October to 28 December 1983. It will highlight the degree to which the US acknowledged that its strategy in Lebanon was responsible for creating the threat and subsequent attack. This chapter also focuses on whether the original MNFII mandate regarding the Lebanese government's protection and sovereignty and the Lebanese Armed Forces

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[7] Ralph Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy, (New York: Praeger, 1991), pp.107-133.

[8] Anthony Lewis, 'Quagmire, Here We Come', 21 September 1983, *New York Times* (hereafter *NYT)*, p. A31 & 'Excerpts from Administration Statements on U.S. Objectives in Lebanon', 25 October 1983, *NYT*, p. A12.

[9] 'Connexion Iranienne estime-t-on a Washington: Reagan "plus determine que jamais" a maintenir les Etats-Unis au P.O.', 24 October 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

(LAF) was factored into US policy from 23 October 1983 or whether these new policies were aimed exclusively at enabling the US to find a way to withdraw the USMNF without losing face.

Thakur, Korbani and Nelson were quick to label the contradictory US policies in Lebanon after the bombings as a product of poor decision-making.[10] Their arguments centre on the belief that the Reagan Administration made inadequate foreign policy decisions because they had insufficient understanding of the Lebanese landscape to be able to engage accurately with the right actors or parties. In contrast, Hallenbeck proposes that US policy in Lebanon was aimed exclusively at the pursuit of US self-interest, above all else.[11] The truth lies somewhere between these two views. As Chapters Four and Five illustrated, the administration had miscalculated the importance of the Lebanese conflict due to failing to understand its internal dynamics, hence leading the US to engage merely on a state-to-state basis. However, in the wake of the 23 October bombing, the US was forced to recognize that the Lebanese conflict was as much a product of the factional, community actors as of their foreign neighbours.

As a result, it is argued in this chapter that US responsibility for the 23 October bombing did not lie in the USMNF's inability to predict the threat of terrorism but, rather, that it was the Reagan Administration's failure to mitigate the origins of the threat arising out of US involvement in the Battle of Souk el Gharb and

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[10] Ramesh Thakur, 'International Peacekeeping, UN Authority and US Power',1987, p. 472; Agnes Korbani, 'U.S. Intervention in Lebanon, 1958 and 1982: Presidential Decisionmaking', (New York: Praeger Publishers), 1991, p.54, 99 & Richard Nelson, 'The Multinational Force in Beirut', in Anthony McDermott and Kjell Skjelsbaek, *The Multinational Force in Beirut 1982-1984*, (Miami: Florida International University Press: 1991), pp. 98-100.
[11] Ralph Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy, (New York: Praeger, 1991), pp. 67-80.

the USMNF's altered rules of engagement.[12] These two key actions, more than any other, shifted the US position from mediator and questionable peacemaker to the frontline of the conflict. Second, this chapter contends that the policy decisions taken in the three months after the attack were focused on protecting the Reagan Administration, specifically Shultz and Reagan, from the fallout of the bombing rather than US credibility more broadly. Public statements by Reagan in the wake of the attack indicated the administration's reticence to consider any possibility of US withdrawal, although the president's major policy addenda illustrated the opposite. It was through this duality between the public proclamations and the realities of Reagan's policy machine in Washington that the Administration illustrated its main objective of protecting its own integrity, over and above Lebanon and the ailing Gemayel government.

'The Worst of all Worlds': The Aftermath of the Marine Barracks Bombing

Reagan described the 23 October bombing as 'the saddest day of my presidency, perhaps the saddest day of my life' and the marine barracks bombing must be recognized as a turning point not only for the US in Lebanon but also for Reagan as US President more broadly.[13] This section will examine the immediate aftermath of the 23 October Marine Barracks bombing, first by outlining Reagan's public response on the one hand and his unwavering commitment to the MNFII's continued presence on the other and, second, by highlighting the Reagan administration's private

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[12] Report, [Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983], 20 December 1983, Kelley Report File, Box 4, Phillip Dur Series, RRPL, pp.3-10.
[13] Michael David Woodward, 'Ronald Reagan: A Biography', (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2012), p.140.

machinations as it scrambled to formulate an acceptable policy response. This two-part analysis will illustrate how Washington's public response to the crisis invariably created numerous conflicting policies and, behind closed doors, led to internal rifts and divisions. For example, while Reagan and Shultz vehemently believed in extending the MNFII's military strategy, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of Defence, Caspar Weinberger, petitioned Reagan to consider an immediate or near-term withdrawal, regardless of the cost to US credibility.[14]

Two days after the bombing, Reagan announced the US invasion of Grenada. Hence it is important to also recognize the impact that the US attack in Beirut had on the administration's legitimacy and credibility outside of Lebanon.

Terrorism and Reagan's response

USMNF Commander General Paul Kelley admitted that, from August-October 1983, the USMNF was 'virtually flooded with terrorist attack warnings.'[15] The bombing, which led to 241 US military personnel fatalities, was the largest, non-conventional military attack against the MNFII in Lebanon and, more broadly, against the US internationally at that time.[16] It was quickly branded a terrorist attack against international peacemakers. The smaller, less effective bomb, which exploded moments later on the French side of Beirut International Airport, was also unpredicted but, unlike US intelligence, General Cann, Commander of the French MNFII contingent, stated that French intelligence prior to the event had failed to detect any threat of an attack.[17]

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[14] 'Le veritable enjeu: La Presence occidentale', 24 October 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.
[15] [Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act], pp.1-3.
[16] *ibid.* pp.3-10.
[17] Statement, [Remarks by General P.X. Kelley, USMC], 31 October 1983, Senate Armed Services Committee, Kelley Report File, Box 4, Phillip Dur Series, RRPL, p.14.

The day after the attack, 300 US Marines were sent from Washington to replace the lost troops and assist with the substantially weakened US force. The French and Italians disappeared into their bunkers at the threat of further attacks and the British noted that the USMNF troops were 'invisible outside of their airport fortress.'[18]

On 24 October Reagan issued a number of responses to the bombings both within the White House and to the American people. These statements laid the foundation for a significant policy shift and a change in the rules of engagement of the USMNF in Lebanon.[19] Weinberger announced a full inquiry into the bombings on 29 October, firstly to assess the link between the attack and the MNFII's operational activities and, secondly, to examine the degree to which US decisions in Lebanon prior to October 1983 had created the environment that led to the attack. While Reagan continued publicly to insist that a US withdrawal from Lebanon was impossible, requests for an immediate exit, from within the administration, were spearheaded by Weinberger, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), and the JCS Chairman, General John William Vessey.[20] Furthermore, the US European Command (USEUCOM) argued that the current rules of engagement did not allow for military reprisals or retaliation and therefore the USMNF should withdraw from Lebanon's shores, as stipulated in the MNFII's original mandate.[21]

[18] Telegram from Palmer to FCO, [Lebanon], 10:00am, 29 December 1983, #746, in Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UK National Archives (hereafter UKNA), pp.1-2.

[19] NSDD 109, [Responding to the Lebanon Crisis], 23 October 1983, NSDD 109 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat NSC Series, pp.1-2; NSDD111, [Next Steps Toward Progress in Lebanon and the Middle East], 28 October 1983, NSDD 111 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat NSC Series, p.1 & Statement to Reagan, [Statement by the Principal Deputy Press Secretary to the President], 23 October 1983, Lebanon Bombings-October 1983 File, Box 5, Phillip Dur Series, RRPL, p.1.

[20] Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy, pp.162-163.

[21] *ibid*. p.163.

The possibility of the attack being connected to US involvement in the Battle of Souk el Gharb was initially hushed up by the administration. By the end of October Reagan ordered the USMNF to 'harden' militarily, which meant significant US troop reinforcements.[22] While the new troop deployment was justified exclusively as a means of ensuring MNFII personnel's safety in Lebanon, it also illustrated that the Reagan Administration finally recognised that it had placed the US at the centre of a dangerous conflict.

At a White House Press conference on 24 October 1983, Reagan declared that his administration would remain steadfast in its belief that the USMNF's near-term withdrawal was not an option, as this would negatively affect US credibility and lead to the MNFII mission's unnecessary failure. However, by October 1983, the possibility of the MNFII's mission objectives being completed had diminished. Reagan continued to argue that US 'actions in Lebanon are in the cause of world peace,' reminding the US Congress and public of the administration's commitment to Lebanon under the MNFII.[23]

> To get Syria, get Israel, get the PLO organization out of Lebanon and then to have a stabilizing force while a government be established in Lebanon and their military could then acquire the capability necessary to reinstitute their control over their borders. And this was why the multinational force went in-to provide that stability so that when the Lebanese forces move out, as the other forces, the Israelis and the Syrians left, there could be a maintenance of order behind them.[24]

Reagan's public refusal to remove the USMNF from Lebanon continued until the MNFII's final days, but this refusal must also be examined in the context of the administration's wider foreign policy goals at that time.

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[22] [NSDD 109 Responding to the Lebanon Crisis], pp.1-2.
[23] Presidential Remarks, [Regional Broadcasters Luncheon], 7:45pm 24 October 1983, Lebanon Bombings-October 1983 File, Box 5, Phillip Dur Series, RRPL, p.2.
[24] Press Minutes, [Remarks from the President in Q&A session with regional editors and broadcasters], 1:11pm 24 October 1983, Lebanon Bombings-October 1983 File, Box 5, Phillip Dur Series, RRPL, p.2.

Two days after the 23 October Barracks Bombing, US troops landed in Grenada under Operation Urgent Fury and Reagan needed to convince the American public that the intervention in Grenada was solely intended to protect US civilians and personnel.[25] The link between Lebanon and the US intervention in Grenada is important for understanding how the Reagan Administration perceived the threats emanating from the Lebanon crisis to other policy areas. Reagan grouped both intervention forces, the MNFII in Lebanon and Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada, together, as both demonstrated Reagan and Shultz's military force as foreign policy strategy.[26] Reagan wanted to reassure 'the public on the steadiness of the President's foreign policy in the Mideast and Caribbean,'[27] so cleverly referenced the threat to US positions internationally and the necessity of protecting US security abroad (evidenced by the US Barracks bombing) as an explanation of the Grenada intervention. Reagan barely cited the Beirut crisis on 23 October in his journal but rather focused on the plans for Grenada.[28] The Barracks bombing distracted the public and Congress from Operation Urgent Fury. However, it also meant that Reagan could not afford to back down from the Lebanese crisis and risk delegitimizing the Grenadian mission.[29]

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[25] Operation Urgent Fury was officially justified as the means to rescue and protect US civilians and non-combative personnel but was ultimately seen as a means to curb Cuban and Soviet influence in the Caribbean. Devised and directed by Shultz and Vessey, the military plans began on 20 October 1983, three days before the Beirut Barracks bombing. Ronald Cole, 'Operation Urgent Fury', Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1997, pp.9-19.

[26] Cable, from Shultz to US Diplomatic Posts, [ARA News Items of October 28 1983], 6:15am, 29 October 1983, Cable #309269, Department of State Archives Freedom of Information Archives (hereafter DOSA FOIA), pp. 1-3.

[27] *ibid.* p.2.

[28] Reagan, 'The Ronald Reagan Diaries', pp.350-351.

[29] *ibid*. p.352.

Operation Urgent Fury did not garner the same support from international leaders, however, specifically the MNFII's European partners, Britain and France.[30] Thatcher emotionally petitioned Reagan to reconsider the possibility of the US invasion of Grenada. Reagan stated simply: 'She's upset and doesn't think we should do it. I couldn't tell her it had started.'[31] While British and US relations were close, fused by Reagan and Thatcher's shared Cold War policies, the British MNFII contingent was the first to show signs of hesitation and a lack of commitment to what Thatcher saw as Reagan's international gun show. Similarly, the day after the bombing, as Mitterrand toured the bombed French and US Barracks in Beirut, the French questioned US priorities that saw the launching of the Grenadian operation over mourning the tragic loss of troops in Lebanon.[32] As a result Britain and France became further disconnected from US military strategy in Lebanon.[33]

Nevertheless, the administration's attempts to create a political opportunity out of the bombings continued. Reagan's address to the nation on 23 October 1983 illustrated his intention to lay blame on international terrorists and distract attention from the growing numbers of critics who directly tied the US losses to Reagan's policies in Lebanon:

> Those who sponsor these outrages believe that they can intimidate the Government of Lebanon, its people and their friends in the international community. They are wrong. We will not yield to international terrorism

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[30] 'Les Americains debarquent sur ''ile de Grenade', 26 October 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

[31] Reagan, 'The Ronald Reagan Diaries', p.352.

[32] 'La visite de Mitterand: Une reaffirmation spectaculaire de la presence Française', 25 October 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1 & Stephanie Pezard, 'Cutting Losses or Holding Tight? Foreign Interventions, Terrorist Acts and Military Withdrawal', *Graduate Institute of International Studies Geneva*, 28 February 2013, pp.7-10.

[33] Report for Prime Minister Thatcher, [Lebanon, International Situation; Multinational Force (MNF) in Lebanon; UK/Lebanese relations], 4 December 1983, PREM 19/1076, UKNA, pp.1-2; Robert Booth, 'National Archives: Reagan blindsided Thatcher over 1983 Grenada invasion', *The Guardian UK*, 1 August 2013, p.1 & Ronald Cole, 'Operation Urgent Fury', pp.2-12.

because we know that if we do, the civilised world will suffer and our values will be fair game for those who seek to destroy all we stand for.[34]

Although the President did not go as far as publicly naming *Hizbullah* or any other *Sh'ia* radicals for the 23 October attack, this was generally accepted by the Administration.[35] The Department of Defense Commission Report obliquely stated that an Iranian surrogate force in Lebanon had carried out the attack. Shultz also claimed that: 'The President will reiterate his commitment to keeping the marines in Beirut, announce new security precautions to prevent future incidents and link both Iran and Syria to the bombing of the Marine headquarters.'[36] This link was supported by French army intelligence that had been watching the Iranian Embassy in Beirut on the preceding day and also believed that the attack was an Iranian-Syrian collaboration.[37] National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 109, 'Responding to the Lebanon Crisis', issued on 23 October 1983, stressed the US Administration's position in pushing Gemayel to sever all diplomatic ties with Iran.[38]

Reagan also attempted to use the bombings as a public way to unite the other MNFII, particularly France, with the US' policy in Lebanon and its 'measures to strengthen the capabilities of our forces.'[39] In many ways, the US was fortunate that the second bomb targeted the French Barracks; otherwise, a definite case could have been made that the attacks were focused exclusively on the US presence in Lebanon. While there was little unity among the MNFII partners, the attack on both the French

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[34] [Statement by the Principal Deputy Press Secretary to the President], p.1.

[35] Reagan, 'The Ronald Reagan Diaries', p.350; Michael Getler, 'Iranians in Beirut may have had advances knowledge of attack', 25 October 1983, *The Washington Post*, p.13 & Bernard Gwertzman, 'U.S. said to think Iran had key role in Beirut attacks', 29 October 1983, *NYT,* p.1.

[36] [ARA News Items of October 28 1983], p.1.

[37] Report from Kelley to Reagan, [Visit to Beirut, 25-26 October 1983], 2 November 1983, Department of the Navy, Washington, NSDD 111 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat NSC: Records Series, RRPL, p.3.

[38] [NSDD 109 Responding to the Lebanon Crisis], pp.1-2.

[39] [Regional Broadcasters Luncheon], p.1.

and US positions allowed Reagan to blame the bombings on anti-Western ideology rather than simply constituting an anti-American attack. However, US Commander in Chief, European Command (USCINCEUR) General Kelley did recognize the growing anti-American sentiments in Lebanon, stating that 'Iranian operatives in Lebanon are in the business of killing Americans. They are in that business whether or not the USMNF trains the LAF or provides indirect fire support to the defenders of Souq-Al-Gharb.'[40] It was important for the US to illustrate that, no matter what policy the administration had adopted throughout 1983, the attacks were part of a wider part of '*la guerre mondiale*' against international terrorism and therefore unavoidable.[41]

The US made clear that the 23 October bombing was to be labelled, officially and publicly, an 'Act of Terrorism' rather than considered more broadly as part of the conventional conflict.[42] General Paul Kelley believed that there was:

> sufficient evidence to conclude that both incidents were not suicidal acts by some individual fanatic. They were instead, well planned and professionally executed acts of terrorism which appeared designed to drive out the US presence from Lebanon.[43]

This definitional distinction is important on two levels. If the bombing had been associated with a conventional combat environment, the USMNF deployment, mandate and operations would be open to direct criticism on the basis that the force had become too intertwined in the Lebanese conflict. However, labelling the bombings an 'Act of Terrorism' meant that the LAF's security protection of the

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[40] [Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act], p.60.

[41] 'Reagan: un conflit pouvait aller jusqu'a la guerre mondiale', 25 October 1983, L'OLJ, p.1.

[42] An Act of Terrorism is defined as "the lawful use or threatened use of force or violence by a revolutionary organisation against individuals or property with the intention of coercing or intimidating governments or societies, often for political or ideological purposes' – US Department of Defense Directive 2000.12.

[43] [Remarks by General P.X. Kelley], p.14.

MNFII could be blamed for the tragedy, rather than the MNFII's presence itself.[44] Second, if the attacks were considered random or fanatical, then the context within which the USMNF was deployed would be deemed too volatile and therefore an immediate withdrawal would follow, in line with the initial MNFII mandate.[45] However, as the attack was labelled a terrorist attack that was exclusively directed at driving out the MNFII, withdrawing from Lebanon would look like the US was giving in to terrorism. As a result, the tragedy was painted as an unfortunate consequence of global peace-making.[46]

Behind Reagan's public admonishment of the terrorists lay his need 'to reassert American leadership in the wide range of challenges we face in the Middle East.'[47] It was the challenge to his administration's credibility that Reagan most feared. While Reagan continued to propagate a response to the attacks that was characterized by nationalism and retaliation, it was clear that a bloc of decision makers within Washington were moving in an entirely different direction.

US opportunism: the makings of an impasse

Reagan privately reaffirmed the MNFII's objectives and goals in order to remind the administration that the force was 'bold, innovative and challenged long held assumptions about obstacles to resolving the Palestinian problem.'[48] This tied US policy in Lebanon throughout October 1983 to the original MNFI mandate that focused on PLO removal from Beirut. While the two force mandates differed vastly, it

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[44] The LAF protection of MNFII personnel had been guaranteed since September 1982. See: Memorandum of Understanding, Foreign Minister Fouad Boutros to US Ambassador Robert Dillon, September 15 1982, folder [SSG Meeting], pp.1-2.
[45] [Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act], p.41.
[46] [Remarks by General P.X. Kelley, USMC], pp.1-11.
[47] [NSDD 111 Next Steps Toward Progress in Lebanon and the Middle East], p.2.
[48] *ibid.*

was important for Reagan to return to his image as 'peacemaker' as had been the case when the mission was first established. Much of this was due to the US Presidential election the following year. While Reagan publicly denied that this had any bearing on the decisions related to Lebanon,[49] he also privately reminded the decision-makers that, given the impending election, the administration had to move to achieve success rather than failure if it were to curb growing domestic criticism.[50]

NSDD 109 had, through its ambiguity, enabled the administration to buy time, as it scrambled to outline a comprehensive response to the attack and fend off growing pressure from within Washington for MNFII withdrawal.[51] Reagan sent General Kelley to Beirut to review the US Marines' security arrangements and guarantee US personnel's protection over and above the objectives outlined in the MNFII's September 1982 mandate. After his visit to Beirut on 25 October 1983, Kelley stated, 'we must make every effort to have the multinational force both multinational and a force.'[52] Kelley believed that, while the US continued to publicize the MNFII's multinational structure, the Lebanese factions singled out US involvement as a separate entity.

As a result, Kelley recommended that the US should integrate its marines with the other MNFII partners, including multinational patrols and 'a truly combined command.'[53] National Security Affairs Special Assistant, Geoffrey Kemp, also supported this, seeing a US focus on renewed relations with Britain, France and Italy as imperative to assisting the US to find an agreeable, internationally-sanctioned

[49] Steven Weisman, 'Reagan predicts role till Beirut Stands or Falls', 15 December 1983, *NYT,* p.1.
[50] [NSDD 111 Next Steps Toward Progress in Lebanon and the Middle East], p.3.
[51] Joseph Nye, 'Soft Power and American Foreign Policy', *The Academy of Political Science*, Vol.119, No.2, 2004, pp.255-270.
[52] [Visit to Beirut, 25-26 October 1983], p.5.
[53] *ibid.*

diplomatic, rather than military, solution.[54] The other MNFII partners, however, were reluctant to participate in further US operations. The French specifically believed that significant changes to US strategy would affect their own force's security situation.[55] Similarly, Kelley argued that should the USMNF continue to be deployed at Beirut Airport, advanced security enhancement would be required by both the US and the LAF to counter another terrorist attack.[56] The Commander concluded, therefore, that US troops should be redeployed aboard US Navy ships and only brought ashore for short, targeted missions that could be limited and controlled.

Critics of the MNFII, both in the US and the Middle East, believed that it was the US' inability to engage unilaterally with the other Lebanese factions that led to the MNFII being seen as a non-neutral military force aiding President Gemayel's *Kata'eb* agenda. Reagan therefore used the attacks diplomatically to pressure the Lebanese leaders to agree to a framework for the national reconciliation conference. Reagan's support for the 30 October 1983 Geneva reconciliation talks, while demonstrating US willingness to support a diplomatic consensus, garnered superficial support from the factions within Lebanon. Many felt that US pressure for the talks was merely to create an excuse for MNFII withdrawal, and few Lebanese leaders held hopes that talks would change the Lebanese context.[57] Specifically, *Harakat Amal* leader Nabih Berri and *Druze* leader Walid Jumblatt believed that the talks were redundant, since the US refused to abrogate the May 17th Agreement and Syria was, yet again, not a party to

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[54] Memorandum from Kemp to McFarlane, [NSDD Lebanon and the Middle East], 25 October 1983, NSDD 111 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat NSC: Records Series, RRPL, p.2.
[55] [Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act], pp.95-99.
[56] [Visit to Beirut, 25-26 October 1983], p.4.
[57] Thomas Friedman, 'Lebanese Await Geneva Talks', 31 October 1983, *NYT*, p.1.

the negotiations.[58] President Gemayel, in a three hour meeting with Special Envoy Donald Rumsfeld and US Ambassador Reginald Bartholomew, stressed the difficulties that the US had created in Lebanon by binding the Lebanese President to promises he was unable to keep.[59] Gemayel believed that the Geneva Conference would do little to curb the growing Syrian presence in Lebanon. Gemayel stated that he only went along with Geneva as he realized it was politically necessary for the US to illustrate its commitment to the conflict's diplomatic rather than military resolution.[60]

While Rumsfeld continued to pressure Gemayel to remain steadfast on the May 17th Agreement, he also recognized that this was *the* sticking point in creating an acceptable security agreement. Consequently, the US continued to stand by the May 17th Agreement and simultaneously pressure Gemayel to act likewise at the Geneva reconciliation talks.[61] However, Gemayel knew that he could not begin a national reconciliation process with community leaders who were sponsored and aligned to Iran and Syria without abrogating the May17th Agreement or, in the words of former President Suleiman Frangieh, 'putting the Agreement on ice.'[62] Similarly, French President François Mitterrand and Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson argued against

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[58] '"Entre un Liban phalangiste et la Syrie, j'ai choisi la Syrie" déclare M. Walid Joumblatt', *Le Monde,* 3 October 1983.

[59] US Ambassador Reginald Bartholomew replaced Robert Dillon on 22 October 1983.

[60] Cable from Rumsfeld to Shultz, [Rumsfeld Mission. Meeting with President Gemayel November 13], 21:08pm, 14 November 1983, Cable #12671, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, pp.1-3.

[61] Pia Christina Wood, 'The Diplomacy of Peacekeeping: France and the Multinational Forces to Lebanon, 1982-84', *International Peacekeeping*, 1998, p.33.

[62] Suleiman Frangieh was President of Lebanon from 1970-1976. He was aligned with Syria and responsible for inviting the SAF into Lebanon under the 1976 Arab Deterrent Force. Frangieh believed that the Syrians would protect the Lebanese Christian community and enforce a ceasefire between the key Lebanese factions, the PLO and deter Israeli aggression. By the Geneva Conference, Frangieh had split from the mainstream Christian-backed Lebanese Front to establish the pro-Syrian National Salvation Front. The May 17th Agreement was therefore a major obstacle to him, as he recognized that it excluded Syria from participating in any negotiation talks.

the US, supporting a full revocation of the Israeli-Lebanese accords and pushing to include Syria in any future negotiations.[63] The May 17th Agreement was not only an obstacle for Gemayel in constructing a united government, but also drove a wedge between the MNFII partners.

Even though quietly the Administration recognized that no sustainable resolution could be found while the US continued its blind support for the May 17th Agreement, it allowed the US to buy time as it prepared to announce the NSDD111. The NSDD, outlined by Reagan on 28 October, focused specifically on the future of US policy in Lebanon.[64] The directive was based on recommendations drawn up on 17 October 1983, which had been considered premature and therefore were not implemented. The bombings created the urgency for the Reagan Administration to find a solution to the crisis and therefore the recommendations were rehashed for immediate execution. The earlier operational directive highlighted the need to consider the MNFII's withdrawal, the strengthening of Israeli-US relations, support for friendly Arab neighbours and a push for national reconciliation.[65] Importantly, this implies that the Administration was already considering a withdrawal and closer Israeli relations prior to the bombings. On 17 October, as if seeing into the near future, the paper stated that 'an American humiliation in Lebanon will weaken our position generally in the Middle East.'[66]

The key differences between the 17 October directive and Reagan's 28 October policy were that the US was no longer committed to a functioning Lebanese unity government, responsibility for non-MNFII personnel or, most importantly,

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[63] Wood, 'The Diplomacy of Peacekeeping', pp.33-34.

[64] [NSDD 111 Next Steps Toward Progress in Lebanon and the Middle East], pp.1-2.

[65] Operational Directive, [Our Strategy in Lebanon and the Middle East: Operational Issues], 17 October 1983, NSDD 111 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat NSC: Records NSDD Series, RRPL, p.1.

[66] *ibid.* p.2.

foreign forces' removal. The Marine Barracks bombing had fundamentally changed the USMNF mission in Lebanon with regards to its objectives, mandate and security obligations. The NSDD demonstrated US perceptions that a short-term political and military stalemate in Lebanon was more realistic than a long-term sustainable ceasefire. This impasse would therefore provide the required environment and time for a possible US withdrawal. The best-case scenario for the US would be a perceptible ceasefire that would last while the factions entered into negotiations and the US could consider withdrawing.[67]

In NSDD111, Reagan stated that the military rules of engagement, created during the Battle of Souk el Gharb, would be reinstated indefinitely. Specifically, this engagement would allow US missions inside Syrian-controlled territories.[68] Shultz adamantly supported targeted attacks on Syrian and Lebanese *Shi'a* positions in the Bekaa Valley as retaliation for the Barracks bombing. In support of Shultz's argument, the National Security Council (NSC) Director, Howard Teicher, issued a note to the president specifically stating that he felt that NSDD111 did not expand the rules of engagement sufficiently to engage appropriately with the issue of the 'terrorist infrastructure.'[69] Similarly, the NSC was conscious that the recent attacks on the US would lead to a forced MNFII withdrawal and wanted to expand the NSDD to include further measures and powers to continue the US' military presence. Such extensions would also mean that the NSC could use the 23 October attacks to operate a wider policy of counter-terrorism throughout the region, using Lebanon as the

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[67] Weisman, 'Reagan predicts role till Beirut Stands or Falls', p.1.

[68] 'Apres le raide des avions Americains sur les position Syriennes dans la Montagne: Reagan hausse le ton: Nous frapper son de nouveau si nous sommes attaqués', 5 December 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

[69] Howard Teicher was both the Director for the Near East and South Asia and Senior Director for Political Military Affairs on the NSC. Memorandum from Teicher to Reagan, [Draft NSDD on Lebanon and the Middle East], 26 October 1983, NSDD 111 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat NSC: Records Series, RRPL, p.1

pretext. Teicher singled out the CIA report on 'Syrian use of Terrorism as an Instrument of State Policy.' The CIA demonstrated that the 23 October attacks were both a clear warning to the US and an opportunity. By leveraging a strong anti-terrorism strategy, the US could further legitimize its extended military presence in Lebanon as 'self-defense.' Conversely, Weinberger again petitioned that, while US Marines remained in Lebanon, inciting further attacks by militant *Shi'a* factions in Lebanon was counterproductive to the proposed tightening of USMNF security arrangements.[70]

Weinberger was ultimately proved correct and the administration finally realized that it must acknowledge the risk associated with possible future attacks on US bases or personnel. However, Reagan's steadfast backing of Gemayel still did little more than defend the *Kata'eb* Christian agenda.[71] Therefore, the non-state actors within Lebanon used this to continue gaining momentum and support outside Lebanon. The previous US policies were patently unsustainable in the long-term but had allowed the US to demonstrate military resolve in Lebanon in such a way that it did not appear to be retreating. However, US decision-making was now exclusively focused on saving Reagan and Shultz's credibility and actively creating a moment which would allow the administration to claim a victory.[72]

What went wrong? The Department of Defense Commission Report

Following the Marine Barracks bombing, the Department of Defense established a commission to conduct an inquiry into the bombing and the wider Lebanese landscape with the aim of assessing US intervention's validity and future. A major

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[70] 'Interview with Caspar Weinberger', *Frontline*, PBS News, September 2001.
[71] Anthony Lewis, 'Quagmire, Here We Come', 21 September 1983, *NYT*, p. A31.
[72] 'Reagan: "Les jours de faiblesse sont revolus"', 13 December 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

failing of the Report, however, was that it conflated many of the smaller factors that led to the bombing while understating the broader, more important policy decisions that exacerbated Lebanon's security environment in the lead-up to the attacks. As such, much of the blame was wrongly attributed to micro factors, such as security policing and minor breaks in the chain of command. This section will examine how the Department of Defense Commission Report's (DOD Report) findings underestimated the Reagan Administration's contribution to Lebanon's instability, specifically the US military and MNFII's actions, and show how this arose from a culture of denial that would eventually backfire on the US and create the pretext for the 1984 MNFII and US withdrawal.

The Commission was composed exclusively of serving executive military personnel appointed by the Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger. In their report, they outlined four key conditions under which the decision-makers had inserted the USMNF. First, the force would operate in a relatively benign environment. Second, the Lebanese Armed Forces would provide security in the areas where the force was to operate. Third, the mission would be of limited duration. And, fourth, the force would be evacuated in the event of an attack.[73] None of these conditions were met throughout the MNFII deployment and, even following direct attacks on US personnel in the April Embassy bombing and the 23 October Marine Barracks bombing, the US had not pushed for an evacuation or withdrawal.

Lebanon could also not be considered a benign situation and the LAF was patently incapable of protecting its own positions let alone those of the MNFII.[74] The MNFII mission's mandated short duration, initially outlined as a flexible, 90-day

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[73] [Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983], p.41.
[74] Alain Brouillet, 'LA seconde force multinationale à Beyrouth (24 september 1982 – 31 mars 1984), *Annuaire Français de droit International*, Vol. 31, 1985, p.158.

deployment, was continually extended, such that, by the time of the Report, 18 months had lapsed since its initial deployment. Much of Shultz and Reagan's resistance to a US evacuation was pinned on their belief that such a withdrawal would damage US credibility in the region. However, due to the significant losses suffered by the US and both the LAF and USMNF's humiliation, the 23 October bombing ultimately represented a far greater setback for US credibility than a withdrawal.[75]

The Report outlined the failings of the decision-makers, without making specific reference to any member of the Reagan Administration:

> The commission concludes that US decision as regards Lebanon taken over the past fifteen months have been, to a large degree characterized by an emphasis on military options and the expansion of the US military role...The commission further concludes that these decisions may have been taken without clear recognition that these initial conditions had dramatically changed and that the expansion of our military involvement in Lebanon greatly increased the risk to the MNF.[76]

The Commission noted that, while the MNFII was initially and widely regarded as a peacekeeping mission, it was never explicitly mandated as such (a minor but relevant technicality). This ambiguity allowed the US both an opportunity to expand the force's military role if the administration wished and subsequently led to US involvement in the conflict.[77] General Kelley described how, from June to September 1983, increased shelling of US positions occurred and relations with Muslim factions deteriorated to the point where the US felt that the main perception of the US-LAF relationship was based on a pro-Christian alliance with an offensive rather than defensive operational strategy.[78] The issues regarding the MNFII's mandate (discussed in Chapter Four) were highlighted by the Commission, in the wake of the

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[75] Brian L Zimbler, 'Peacekeeping Without the UN: The Multinational Force in Lebanon and International Law', *Yale Journal of International Law*, 1984-1985, pp.244-245.
[76] [Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act,], p.8.
[77] i*bid.* p.38.
[78] [Remarks by General P.X. Kelley], p.11.

bombings, demonstrating that the MNFII was neither a peacekeeping body nor a military intervention unit, albeit limited by both structures.

The DOD Report quoted Senate assessment findings from 23 July 1982 during the MNFI & MNFII's conceptual development, outlining these concerns, which were not taken into account. As such, the objectives of the force overwhelmed its strategy. It stated:

> If a peacekeeping force is to avoid the problems of dividing the intentions of armed elements and avoiding entrapment in Lebanese internal conflicts, it will be essential for the question of extra-legal armed presence in the area to be settled before its deployment. If a multinational force is to be used, basic issues affecting its ability to accomplish its mission must be settled in advance. If these issues are not clarified and resolved during a pre-deployment phase no one should be surprised if the peacekeeping force encounters intractable political and military problems on the ground (as was the case with UNIFIL).[79]

As this states the US' focus should have been whether or not the US armed presence in Lebanon was a defensive peacekeeping mission or an offensive military intervention.[80] Rather, the DOD Report suggested that the confusion over the chain of command between US Central Command (CENTCOM), US European Command (USEUCOM/USCINCEUR) and the Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) made the US positions vulnerable.[81] It was ultimately because the operational definitions of the term 'presence' were so equivocal (hence allowing Washington greater flexibility for future escalation) that the military strategy chain of command at every level was similarly confused. As USCINCEUR Commander Kelley explained, in his statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee on 31 October 1983, 'first let me tell you that presence as a mission is not in any military dictionary. It is not a classic military

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[79] [Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act], p.59.
[80] *ibid.* p.7.
[81] *ibid.* p.37.

mission.'[82] This was interpreted by Kelley as meaning a visible, neutral, non-combative operational strategy.[83] While this non-combative strategy was adhered to under the MNFI, it was inaccurate for Kelley to link this to the realities of the MNFII operations from August to October 1983. The MNFII rules of engagement, announced in September 1983, had altered the US mission from 'presence' to an offensive military position, as illustrated by the Battle of Souk el-Gharb.[84] Kelley also incorrectly stated that the MNFII 'was basically a diplomatic/political mission, not a military one in the classic sense.'[85] While the MNFII was certainly not traditional or clearly mandated, it was, without doubt, a military force. This confusion led most people on the ground to believe that the Americans were no longer performing a 'presence role' but an 'assistance role'[86] and that they were 'less peacekeepers than supporters of the Maronite Christian faction of the Lebanese ethnic fabric.'[87] Similarly, FRMNF Brigadier General Albert Coullon argued that the MNFII had become a biased force for the US' political machinations:

> *Elle ne comprend pas de contingent militairement dominant; les contingents [of the MNFII] ne sont pas intégrés sous un commandement unique (à l'inverse de la FINUL); chaque contingent est utilisé non comme un instrument de combat mais comme un instrument de politique international sous la tutelle de son Ambassadeur.*[88]

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[82] [Remarks by General P.X. Kelley], p.1.

[83] Luigi Caligaris, 'Western peacekeeping in Lebanon: Lesson of the MNF', *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, Vol.26 No.6, p.267.

[84] NSDD103, [Strategy for Lebanon], 10 September 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series, RRPL. p.1.

[85] [Remarks by General P.X. Kelley], p.4.

[86] *ibid.* p.6.

[87] Memorandum to CIA Director, [Terrorist Threat to Western Interests in Lebanon], 30 November 1983, Lebanon 11/30/83 File, Box 43, Executive Secretariat NSC: Country Series, RRPL, p.4.

[88] Général Coullon, 'La force multilaterale d'interposition puis de sécuriteé á Beyrouth', *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, No.168, October 1992, p.105.

Naively, while the political context in which the MNFII was deployed was considered 'for the most part, not hostile,'[89] a September 1982 car bomb, the US embassy bombing in April 1983 and the 23 October 1983 Barracks bombing clearly illustrated that the US in fact 'was emerging as a prime target for those who either opposed or misinterpreted the role of the MNF in Lebanon.'[90] General Kelley had contacted the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 18 October 1983 to recommend a full, immediate withdrawal of US Military from Lebanon, citing imminent threats.[91] The next day, a car bomb exploded, directed at a US convoy, but this was dismissed as part of 'conventional military action', as well as 'clumsy, amateurish and a failure.'[92] Regardless of Kelley's warnings, the Department of Defense focused blindly on blaming Kelley's European Command, USCINCEUR, for the bombing, attributing it to a 'failure of the USCINEUR operational chain of command to inspect and supervise the defensive posture of the USMNF.'[93]

Although the Commission would not specify the exact cause and effect relationship nor identify any of the administration's key decision-makers as responsible, the report loosely linked the altered US rules of engagement at the Battle Souk el Gharb and the bombings. However, the consensus of the USMNF Officers in Beirut was that there was a strong and undeniable link between the increased US military aggression and the subsequent attack on the US Barracks. While US intelligence estimated that over 100 such car bombing warnings had been received from June to October 1983, the fact that none of these leads had been investigated illustrated the US' naivety in failing to perceive any real threat to US troops, even

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[89] [DOD Commission], p.39.
[90] [General P.X. Kelley], p.7.
[91] [DOD Commission], pp.52-53.
[92] [General P.X. Kelley], p.6.
[93] [DOD Commission], p.53.

after Souk el Gharb.[94] Kelley claimed that he took no heed of the potential threats, believing that they did not represent conventional combat.[95] It was a major failing of both Kelley in Beirut and the Administration in Washington not to recognize that the threats toward the US were fast becoming direct and targeted.[96]

The report also highlighted that the rules of engagement for the semi-independent US military force's offensive strategy and those applied to the USMNF differed. The USMNF's security rules of engagement only proposed to consider two key scenarios; namely, a 'hostile force' and a 'hostile act.' Without clear guidelines regarding what would determine a hostile force, the USMNF was left to operate under USEUCOM peacetime rules of engagement, which meant that any unauthorised unit or force that entered US-controlled territory was asked to leave and action was *only taken* if a hostile act resulted from this communication. Yet, the Administration had argued that those rules of engagement were, in fact, insufficient to protect US Marines in Lebanon given the April Barracks bombing and the SAF troops' growing presence near Beirut. By 26 October 1983, in the aftermath of the bombing, two further changes in the rules were made, allowing US forces to open fire on any civilian vehicle travelling toward them at high speed and stipulating that forceful action must be taken against unauthorised forces in USMNF-controlled territories.[97]

The DOD Report, as well as NSDD 109 and 111, demonstrated that the administration was searching for an immediate solution to US intervention in Lebanon. This needed to be found, without conditions being placed on the US, for a successful, sustainable resolution to the conflict. By evaluating the USMNF's security arrangements and military strategy, the Department of Defense Commission was

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[94] [DOD Commission], pp.62-66 & [General P.X. Kelley], p.11.
[95] [General P.X. Kelley], pp.5-6.
[96] *ibid.* p.12.
[97] [DOD Commission, 1983], p.45.

ordered to examine the Reagan Administration's decision regarding the MNFII's initial deployment. It also scrutinised the US military mission's expansion and the escalation of the force's rules of engagement. The report advised a reconsideration of the standing policies in favour of alternative strategies in Lebanon. Rather than employing the MNFII or Reagan's aggressive self-defence policy,[98] the report suggested phasing-out the US military and a more 'vigorous' pursuit of diplomacy.[99] It was abundantly clear that the US now needed to move away from Reagan and Shultz's proposed increases in military deployment. The Department of Defense findings demonstrate how the US had used the MNFII policy vehicle for its own interests in Lebanon. The autonomy in command that the US had leveraged throughout 1983, coupled with the lack of incentives for the other MNFII partner countries to join the US, meant that returning to, or rather initiating, a collaborative command would be impossible.

Kelley concluded by advising the Senate Committee that such attacks were imminent, arguing that they could not be countered by any imaginable security measures, reinforced or otherwise. Aside from minor security reinforcements, Kelley could not guarantee the Marines' safety if another such attack occurred. With the weight of this and the DOD findings bearing down on them, Reagan and Shultz began devising the final policy changes for the MNFII in 1983.[100]

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[98] NSDD 1117, [Lebanon], 5 December 1983, NSDD 111 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat NSC: Records NSDD Series, RRPL, p.1.

[99] [DOD Commission, 1983], p.8.

[100] [General P.X. Kelley, USMC], pp.12-13.

Looking outside: US Cooperation with Israel and Arab neighbours

Of the directives and reports that the administration issued immediately following the 23 October attacks, few identified direct, aggressive retaliation as best serving US interests.[101] The US realized that reshaping the MNFII's long-term objectives and military strategy required time, resources and a change in Lebanon's political landscape. While Reagan obstinately believed that the US could not withdraw from Lebanon without affecting US credibility significantly, the Administration urgently needed to shift its attention to the wider Middle East. Reagan believed that the US had to continue to be seen as the 'fair arbiter of justice' in the region. Shultz and Weinberger, however, realized that the stalemate between Israel, Lebanon and Syria would lead to the perception that the US-backed May 17th Agreement had failed and that the US would need to look outside Lebanon for its victories. Shultz stated: 'the window now exists in which perceived success in a broader peace process context may be more likely than in Lebanon itself.'[102]

Further, Shultz believed that 'Arabs increasingly perceive the MNF as a USG instrument to prop up an unrepresentative regime and help kill Muslim opponents.'[103] Zimbler argues that the USMNF had, in fact, alienated the regional allies, who were well-placed to undermine US efforts in Lebanon. Zimbler states that this was due to the MNFII becoming a 'pawn in the struggle for control of the Middle East.'[104] To ensure that it would not lose Israel and the friendly Arab nations' support, the US

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[101] Memorandum from McFarlane to Shultz and Weinberger, [Countering Terrorist Attacks Against U.S. Forces and Facilities in Lebanon], 22 November 1983, NSDD 109 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat NSC: Records NSDD Series, RRPL, p.1.

[102] Cable from Shultz to Rumsfeld, [Short term strategy for Lebanon], 3:21pm 28 December 1983, Cable #366307, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol. 1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.3.

[103] Cable from Shultz to Rumsfeld, [US Interests in the Middle East. Lebanon], Department of State, Washington, 3:16pm 28 December 1983, Cable #366305, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol. 1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.5.

[104] Zimbler, 'Peacekeeping Without the UN', pp.244.

embarked on a substantial campaign to minimize the damage caused to US military prestige by the 23 October bombings. This section will examine the US outreach to their Middle Eastern allies as a result of the 23 October attacks.

The moderate decision-makers within the administration, such as Weinberger and Vessey, pushed for an outreach policy for aid and military sales to the Arab neighbours, for two key reasons. First, the Reagan Administration realized that the substantial investment and ties forged with the Gemayel government (and therefore the LAF) had failed to achieve the US goal of securing its position within Lebanon. Gemayel criticised the May 17th Agreement as the only factor leading to his government's decline that 'had begun steadily and rapidly to deteriorate, starting with his signing of the May 17th Agreement. The Lebanese President stated that it took 'rock-hard' resolve in this situation to 'maintain faith in the US.'[105] Through this statement, Gemayel showed that, while he was dependent upon the US, he also resented their interference. Gemayel blamed Shultz and Reagan for the political quagmire in which he found himself. Placing total responsibility on the US for Gemayel's decline was unfair. Former Lebanese President-elect Bachir Gemayel's brief courtship with the Israelis did not transfer to his brother, Amin Gemayel and thus his relations with Israel had always been strained. Indeed, Gemayel believed the Israeli's would 'eat me like a mouthful of bread.'[106] Thus Gemayel argued that future negotiations between Lebanon and Israel would have to be mediated by the US

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[105] Cable from Rumsfeld to Shultz, [Rumsfeld Mission. Meeting with President Gemayel November 13], 21:08pm 14 November 1983, Cable #12671, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol. 1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.4.
[106] *ibid.* p.7.

Administration because it was the US that forced the dialogue between the two states in the first place.[107]

Reagan had hoped that, through his close support for the Gemayel government, the US would demonstrate tacit backing for moderate pro-Western states in the Middle East. However, support for Gemayel's *Kata'eb* agenda and the perception of an unbreakable US-Israeli alliance portrayed the US as uninterested in the surrounding Muslim majority nations, especially the Gulf States. US Ambassador Bartholomew claimed that:

> conversations here in Beirut indicate a high level of dependency and expectations *vis-à-vis* the US which, whatever its consistency with Lebanese history and its possible advantages for the US, also has some very troubling dimensions we will want to talk about.[108]

Weinberger also recognized Lebanon as a failed US policy frontline and regarded a strong, non-US military intervention as key to attaining a long-term, sustainable security arrangement in the region.[109] Due to the established links between the LAF and the MNFII, the US turned to promoting the rapid modernisation of the LAF and approved considerable increases in military aid.[110] However, the US remained cautious about becoming dependent on Lieutenant General Ibrahim Tannous, Commander of the LAF, whose assassination or removal they believed was imminent.[111] Similarly, the concern was that the LAF had proven too weak and

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[107] Eric Roll, 'La négociation de Genève achoppe à l'accord entre Israël et le Liban M. Gemayel refuse d'envisager l'abrogation exigée par l'opposition du texte signé le 17 mai par Jérusalem et Beyrouth', *Le Monde*, 3 November 1983.

[108] *ibid.* p.8.

[109] Michael Malone, William Miller and Joseph Robben, 'From presence to American intervention', *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, Vol.28, No.5, pp.428-430.

[110] On October 20 the US shipped 68 M-48 Tanks to Lebanon as a part of its capacity-building and modernization program with the LAF.

[111] Cable from Rumsfeld to McFarlane, [Possible Levers on Syria], 4:26pm 21 December 1983, Cable #27569, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol. 1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.3.

disorganized to protect US troops in Lebanon.[112] The Barracks bombing illustrated that the LAF was unable to protect the USMNF positions in Lebanon and also that Gemayel now represented a fruitless investment.[113]

The aftermath of the barracks attack was characterised by the Administration's push to secure military aid agreements with regional neighbours and thereby reduce the perception that the US was being chased out of the region. The US began to focus on military aid missions supporting Israel and friendly Arab States, such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, plus quietly 'leaning' towards Iraq. This policy was focused on further isolating Syria regionally. By linking Syria to Iran in the Iran/Iraq conflict, the US wished to reduce any financial cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Syria.[114] However, King Hussein continued to 'despair' over the US' support of Israel and the IDF's occupation of Lebanon, and 'was contemplating telling President Reagan that he should forget his Middle East Peace Initiative' if it relied on collaborating with Arab neighbors.[115] Similarly, US attempts to direct Saudi Arabia to apply financial pressure on Syria to withdraw from Lebanon had strained US/Saudi relations, eventually leading Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz publicly to denounce US control, stating that 'Saudi Arabia is not a tool.'[116]

Because the Reagan Administration continued to regard Syria as an obstacle to stability in Lebanon it, in turn, saw Asad as a threat to US interests in the region. Even though the US was resigned to accepting Syrian influence, Reagan stated: 'in the case of Syria, while accepting its legitimate interests [in Lebanon], we must try to

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[112] Drummond Ayres, 'U.S. Resupplies Lebanese Army as Truce Holds', *NYT*, 21 October 1983, p.1.
[113] [Memorandum, Boutros to Dillon]. pp.1-2.
[114] [MEA Brief], pp.1-2.
[115] Telegram from Urwick to FCO, [US Middle East Policy], 4:05pm, 7 December 1983, #570, in Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UKNA, p.1.
[116] 'Saudis 'Not a Tool', *NYT*, 12 May 1983, p.A5.

lessen its control through surrogates, over the reconciliation process and generate international pressure against its continued occupation of Lebanon.'[117] While the US quietly acquiesced in accepting Syrian influence, the Reagan Administration also realized that Syrian sponsorship of militias in Lebanon would have a long-term, negative impact on US interests while the MNFII remained on Lebanese soil.

The Administration's failure to engage with the factional groups, specifically the *Druze* and *Sh'ia* communities, meant that political manoeuvring by October 1983 was face-saving rather than a genuine attempt at reconciliation.[118] The Reagan Administration did not show any intention of bridging the gap between the USMNF mission and the Lebanese *Sh'ia* community, whom the US broadly saw as responsible for the Barracks attack. While the US had rejected the possibility of retaliation, the administration did not wish to seem weak in extending a hand to the religious groups it had labelled 'terrorists.'[119]

As such, US Intelligence proposed that Iraq offered the best opportunity for the US to engage with both *Sunni* and *Sh'ia* groups in order to strike a balance that would disenfranchise fundamentalists and terrorists. The US believed that the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, 'ruthlessly suppresses those individuals or groups that are a threat to his regime.'[120] As Hussein continued to confront Khomeini's radical *Sh'ia* Islamism, it was in US interests to support Iraq in providing a buffer against the spread of the Iranian revolution.[121] Gemayel could neither afford to confront the

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[117] [NSDD 111 Next Steps Toward Progress in Lebanon and the Middle East], p.1.
[118] Memorandum from CIA Office to CIA Director, [Terrorist Threat to Western Interests in Lebanon], 30 November 1983, Folder 'Lebanon 11/30/83', Box 43, Executive Secretariat NSC: Country Files, RRPL, p.6 & Thomas Friedman, 'Lebanese Await Geneva Talks', *NYT*, 31 October 1983, p.1.
[119] Report, [Iraq: Social and Political Factors Deter Religious Revival], NESA 83-10310, November 1983, Central Intelligence Agency, CIA FOIA, pp.1-15.
[120] *ibid.* p.3.
[121] *ibid*. p.iii.

Islamic radical groups nor had the political clout to co-opt them within his government. The US saw Hussein as a charismatic, non-prophetic leader, who, unlike Gemayel, was able both to appease and repress the religious revivalist movement.[122] The US recognized that Moscow and Washington shared their support for the Iraqi leader and, as Soviet-Iranian relations deteriorated, the USSR supported Hussein through significant arms sales. Similarly, the US directed aid toward Baghdad in an attempt to isolate Iran.[123] US Intelligence highlighted that Iraq was now the policy frontline for the US in the region, rather than Lebanon, and that Iran would not attack the US directly unless Tehran came under direct provocation. The CIA also saw the Iran/Iraq war as the administration's leading concern by November 1983. The Agency linked the war to a disruption in the Gulf Oil exports to the US, which was far more important to US national interests than the ailing Gemayel Government's sovereignty. If tacit, discreet US support occurred, the US would soon be pressured to intervene militarily in Iraq in order to defend Hussein's regime against Khomeini. While US Marines remained deployed in Lebanon, the CIA believed that Tehran would continue to expand Iranian sponsorship of US-directed terrorist attacks.[124]

By December 1983, Israeli domestic opposition to the IDF's continued presence and involvement in the conflict had reached a climax. Yair Evron supports the view that, while the Israeli government did not want to consider the invasion a failure, the diplomatic context created by the US meant there was little room for an

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[122] Cable from US Embassy Baghdad to Rumsfeld, [Talking Points for Amb Rumsfeld's Meeting with Tariq Aziz and Saddam Hussein], 10:22am 14 December 1983, Cable #262630, DOSA, pp.1-3.

[123] Report, [Moscow's Tilt Toward Baghdad: The USSR and the War between Iran and Iraq], 26 August 1983, CIASOV83-10145EX, CIA FOIA, pp.4-6,17.

[124] Intelligence Estimate, [Iran-Iraq War: Increased Threat to Persian Gulf Oil Exports], 13 October 1983, SNIE 34/36.2-83, CIA FOIA Archives, pp.2-11.

Israeli victory.[125] Reagan believed that widening and enhancing Israeli military support was in US interests.[126] This occurred partly through the realization that a US withdrawal would place greater pressure on Israel to protect itself and partly because the attempts to make US actions in Lebanon seem even-handed had already failed. Further support of Israel was, if countered by the support of other Arab states, not going to further harm perceptions of the US/Israeli alliance.[127]

The most notable shift in US policy throughout the MNFII's deployment was that NSDD111 mandated support for Israel in order for the US to use the IDF as a proxy military unit against anti-American groups in Lebanon.[128] The US wanted to use Israel to pressure the Syrian-sponsored Palestinian and pro-Iranian Muslim groups in Lebanon. The administration believed that Israeli rather than US pressure on the radical groups in Lebanon would not lead to further direct targeting of US positions. This also meant that the Reagan Administration was giving tacit support for Israel to stay in Lebanon, even though the IDF occupation had been one of the primary focuses of and justifications for the MNFII's initial deployment. The Reagan Administration also publicly, but cursorily, requested Israel to agree to withdraw if national reconciliation occurred and a unity government was formed.[129]

Reagan went further, defending the US mission in Lebanon as exclusively focused on Israel's protection in light of the Syrian and Palestinian aggression directed at its northern border. Given the strained US/Israeli relations over the May

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[125] Yair Evron, 'War and Intervention in Lebanon: The Israeli-Syrian deterrence dialogue', (Kent: Croom Helm, 1987), pp.160-163.

[126] Bernard Guetta', 'Le déploiement de forces américain au large des côtes libanaises s'accompagne d'un net rapprochement avec Israël', *Le Monde*, 8 November 1983.

[127][NSDD 111 Next Steps Toward Progress in Lebanon and the Middle East], p.3.

[128]*ibid.* pp.1-2.

[129] Flora Lewis, 'US-Israeli Reversal', 1 November 1983, *NYT*, p.27 & Noam Chomsky, 'Middle East terrorism and the American ideological system', *Race & Class*, Vol.1. 1986, pp.XXVIII- XXV.

17th Agreement, Reagan's manoeuvring back towards a pro-Israeli stance was an active strategy, because he and Shultz now believed that Israel represented the only and most reliable ally in the region.[130] US Senator Howard Baker, however, protested that Shultz's 'newfound interest in cooperation with Israel is a way in which we are going to end up committing troops to the defence of Israel.'[131] The political gamble was whether or not the US could afford to be publicly seen to be supporting Israel and whether that support in Lebanon would include a broader defence of Israel in other areas; specifically, the Arab-Israeli conflict. While Saudi Arabian King Faisal requested that Reagan should diplomatically embrace Syria in order to begin negotiations for a SAF withdrawal, the president retorted that 'I'm afraid his [King Faisal] plan involves us separating ourselves from Israel. No can do.'[132] However, the National Security Planning Group stated that 'close cooperation with Israel damages our interest in the Arab world and we seldom get anything in return for our help from Israel,' but further concluded that 'Strategic cooperation with Israel is clearly in our interest; after all if the balloon ever went up in the Middle East, who else can really fight!'[133]

National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane recognized the urgency with which decisions needed to be executed, viewing US policy in the Middle East as governed by the Lebanese conflict, US-Israeli relations, the Arab/Israeli peace

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[130] NSDD 115, [Visit of Prime Minister Shamir], 26 November 1983, Online: http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/reference/Scanned%20NSDDS/NSDD115.pdf, p.1.
[131] Dictated Notes of Shultz, [Wednesday November 30 1983], 30 November 1983, Doc #C05182966, DOSA FOIA, p.2.
[132] 'The Ronald Reagan Diaries', p.404.
[133] Reagan Report, [Issues for Discussion/Decision at NSPG], 3 January 1984, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol. 1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.1

process and US engagement in the Iran/Iraq War.[134] The Marine Barracks bombing clearly startled the Reagan Administration, leading Shultz, Weinberger and Reagan to reflect over whether they believed that the US could garner any further credibility or influence from the Lebanese conflict. Reluctantly, the US was forced to admit that the May 17th Agreement was actually hindering a reconciliation between Israel and Syria and the administration had to look to the region to ensure that the MNFII and US military failures in Lebanon would not taint US influence elsewhere.[135]

'Somewhat leaning forward' with a 'vigorous self-defense'

While the US' manoeuvring regarding other regional neighbours meant that it reaffirmed its relationship with Israel and the Gulf states, it also indicated to Gemayel that the US' resolve in Lebanon was weakening. In a meeting with Gemayel, Rumsfeld and Bartholomew sensed that the US was now being blamed for the Lebanese President's failed political security.[136] Furthermore, the Reagan Administration was concerned that it would be made to feel obliged to remain in Lebanon until the conflict's resolution. The danger was being publicly tied to the Gemayel government's seemingly improbable success. Kemp concluded that US goal in creating a secure, stable Lebanon, free of foreign forces, was now evidently unachievable. The initial MNFII objectives were conditional on a unilateral ceasefire arrangement and the possibility of national reconciliation talks, neither of which

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[134] Memorandum from McFarlane to Reagan, [NSDD: Lebanon and the Middle East], 28 October 1983, NSDD 111 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat NSC: Records NSDD Series, RRPL, p.1
[135] [Short term strategy for Lebanon], p.4.
[136] [Rumsfeld Mission. Meeting with President Gemayel November 13], p.4.

appeared feasible by the end of 1983.[137] Reagan, led by Shultz, continued to pursue an ideological campaign to renew perceptions of the Administration's strength and credibility. However, key military decision-makers, such as the JCS and the Department of Defense, continued to lobby for a near-term withdrawal. This section will examine the period from mid-November to the end of December 1983, which was characterized by significant divisions between the various political blocs within the Reagan Administration.

Shultz believed that the US must take what it could from Lebanon and that meant creating the perception that the Reagan Administration was unwavering in terms of its military strength and power. Throughout the protracted Israeli/Lebanese talks, Shultz had been the key US decision-maker, mediating between both sides to reach the impulsive May 17th Agreement. All too late, he now believed that this diplomatic solution was unrealistic and could not represent all of the external and internal parties involved in the Lebanese crisis. Shultz preferred decisive military action as the key policy vehicle for US foreign policy even in the face of considerable criticism.[138] In November, the JCS and Secretary of Defense Weinberger once again petitioned against Reagan's policy for renewed aggressive defence, proposed under NSDD111. They believed that it was not in US interests to increase the MNFII's military capabilities, as this meant increased US obligation to participate in Lebanon's security situation.[139] These protests were matched on 10 and 15 November 1983 by

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[137] Memorandum from Kemp to McFarlane, [NSDD Lebanon and the Middle East], 25 October 1983, NSDD 111 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat NSC: Records NSDD Series, RRPL, p.2.

[138] Leslie Gelb, 'Shultz backs military force, now key voice', *NYT*, 8 November 1983, p.1.

[139] Memorandum from John Wickham Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Weinberger, [NSDD-111 on Lebanon and the Middle East], 4 November 1983, p.1 & Memorandum from Weinberger to Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, [NSDD-111 on Lebanon and the Middle East], 7 November 1983, NSDD 111 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat NSC: Records NSDD Series, RRPL, p.1.

the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that sat with the sole purpose of reviewing US policy in Lebanon.[140] The hearings resulted in Senate Joint Resolutions 187, 190 and 253, which sought to repeal the Multinational Force Resolution, enforce a Congressional review of the MNFII's strategy and seek a replacement for the MNFII immediately. By 15 November the MNF Resolution was repealed and congressional support withdrawn. The 18-month deployment extension, granted in October 1983, was reduced to a mere 90 days.[141] Any further extensions of the MNFII would therefore have to be submitted by Reagan with 30 days' notice to be approved by Congress and would amount to no more than a 90-day extension at any one time. Resolutions 248 and 253 were directed toward enhancing security measures for the MNFII, conditional on a near-term withdrawal. The Foreign Relations Committee's resolutions were created to force Reagan into an immediate withdrawal.[142]

On November 16-17, Israeli and French forces launched two retaliatory attacks: one against the Palestinians in southern Lebanon and the other against Iranian-sponsored Islamic groups at Baalbek in the Bekaa Valley. The FRMNF were targeting the *Jihad al-Islami* suspects of the 23 October Bombing, while the IDF was targeting PLO positions, that it believed was responsible for Israeli Embassy bombing in Sidon on 4 November 1983.[143] While these two attacks represented entirely different agendas, they were undertaken to hold 'terrorist' forces accountable for attacks on Israeli and French positions. However, the shelling of Iranian and *Shi'a*

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[140] United States Senate, [Authorization for US Marines in Lebanon], Committee on Foreign Relations, 98th Congress,, S.HRG 98-528, US Congressional Library, pp.1- 44.
[141] *ibid.* pp.3-5.
[142] 'Il governo accetta la proposta Reagan di un vertice della «multinazionale»: Italiani laggiù soltano per la pace', *La Stampa*, 25 October 1983.
[143] Cable from Erskine to Urquhart, [UNTSO Summary of Beirut Incidents Special SITREP, Explosion in front of French MNF HQ], 10:10pm, 21 December 1983, Multinational Force in Beirut File, UNARMS, pp.1-2.

positions did not result in a meaningful victory for the FRMNF.[144] While the losses

were heavy, the *Shi'a* militia's high-powered retaliation signalled to the French that

Hizbullah and the other factions' military power was greater than expected. The two-

day operation to weaken and destroy the Islamic militants failed, showing the US that

the increasing Iranian support for Lebanese internal factions could quickly overwhelm

the MNFII with its current size, mandate and structure. Facing further humiliation,

French President François Mitterrand claimed that the French had initiated the attack

between 16-19 November solely due to US insistence. By the time they contacted the

US to ask when the joint mission would proceed, the US stated that the French should

go ahead alone. National Security Advisor McFarlane communicated to Weinberger

and Shultz that all plans that had been prepared for further strikes in support of the

French MNFII contingent should be abandoned for fear of further provoking attacks

against the US in Beirut.[145] The French President felt betrayed.[146]

Owing to Weinberger's clear distrust of Shultz and the Department of

Defense's refusal to sanction NSDD111, the USMNF did not perceptibly alter its

rules of engagement or increase its visibility in Lebanon. Reagan, Shultz and the NSC

were spearheading a stronger, more forceful military resolve while the Department of

Defense was attempting to minimise further US military participation and thereby

limit the possibility of future attacks against the US.[147] Weinberger adamantly argued

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[144] War Powers Report from Reagan to US Congress, [Lebanon Report], 14 December 1983, War Powers/Report to Congress File, Box CF1176, White House: Records Series, RRPL, pp.1-2.

[145] Memorandum from McFarlane to Shultz & Weinberger, [Countering Terrorist Attacks Against U.S. Forces and Facilities in Lebanon], 22 November 1983, NSDD 109 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat NSC: Records NSDD Series, RRPL, p.1.

[146] Memorandum from Butler to Fall, [Thatcher/Mitterrand Meeting], 6 December 1983, Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UKNA, pp.1-3.

[147] Memorandum from McFarlane to Weinberger, [Security in Lebanon], 20 November 1983, The White House, Washington, Folder NSDD 111, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat NSC: Records NSDD, RRPL, p.1.

that an aggressive military policy would increase the MNFII personnel's vulnerability. The Department of Defense ordered the USMNF to retreat to the Beirut Airport perimeters on the basis that it did not want to be seen to be supporting the LAF. By December 1983, Gemayel controlled only a miniscule ten per cent of Lebanese territory.[148] Weinberger also did not regard the LAF as nationally representative and felt a closer alliance with General Tannous and the LAF would further challenge the alleged US neutrality. Weinberger was unwilling to draw further fire or increase the targeting of US troops, for which he felt he and his Department would be blamed.[149]

However, on 25 November 1983, the NSC argued against Weinberger's refusal to escalate the MNFII, believing that the force should be militarily aligned with the LAF to strengthen the US position. The NSC thought that only by deploying the USMNF troops in 'fixed positions adjacent to the southern suburbs which are increasingly infiltrated by radical elements (supported by Syria and Iran)' could the US guarantee its security in Lebanon.[150] Weinberger and the Department of Defense's refusal to execute Reagan's policy demonstrated fundamental cracks in the administration.[151] Yet, it was not the use of military force *per se* that Weinberger or Vessey questioned, but the further extension of the MNFII's mandate to include offensive military missions which they believed would increase the threat to the US.

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[148] Telegram from Miers to FCO, [Lebanon: President Gemayel's Visit], 1:50pm, 12 December 1983, #713, Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UKNA, p.1.

[149] Memorandum from Dur to McFarlane, [Security in Lebanon], 25 November 1983, NSDD 111 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat NSC: Records NSDD Series, RRPL, pp.1-2.

[150] *ibid.* p.3.

[151] Weinberger and Shultz's division over the use of military force ultimately led to the Weinberger Doctrine, announced by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger on 28 November 1984, which outlined a six-test system to be used in formulating US foreign policy on the use of military force. Specifically, the Weinberger Doctrine stated that the use of force should only be implemented when there is an overwhelming probability of victory, significant national interest and a clearly-defined mandate. For details on the Shultz-Weinberger relationship, see: Cannon, 'President Reagan', pp.353-355.

Indeed, Yoshitani challenges the widely-held belief that the Weinberger Doctrine aimed at limiting the use of force to a last resort. Instead she argues that it aimed at *legitimising* the use of force as a method of statecraft.[152] Weinberger was not a pacifist; he supported the use of force and 'that when you use it, you have to use it at overwhelming strength, and win your objective and get out.'[153] Reagan unsuccessfully attempted to coax the Secretary of Defense and JCS away from this position on the basis that 'we must respond to future attacks which endanger our forces, with more than illumination rounds.'[154]

Fears within the Reagan Administration were fuelled by the possibility of an official inquiry to establish whether or not the JCS had advised Reagan against MNFII deployment in Lebanon. The JCS claimed that they had advised Reagan and Shultz that the MNFII's political objectives in Lebanon were *not* within reasonable range of the US.[155] In response, the NSC argued that neither the Battle of Souk el Gharb nor the October 23 Marine Barracks bombing had 'substantively changed the conditions bearing on our mission in Beirut.'[156] The fact was that, while neither incident had drastically changed the Lebanese conflict's topography, the events had dramatically affected the US position within it.

After the US Marine Barracks bombing, the threat to USMNF troops increased exponentially. On 30 November 1983, CIA Director William Casey received

[152] David Twining, 'The Weinberger doctrine and the use of force in the contemporary era', , *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, 1990, pp.97-117 & Gail Yoshitani, 'National Power and Military Force: The Origins of the Weinberger Doctrine, 1980-1984', Duke University, 2008, pp.156-204.

[153] 'Interview with Caspar Weinberger', Frontline, PBS News, September 2001.

[154] Memorandum from McFarlane to Reagan, [Draft NSDD on Lebanon], 3 December 1983, NSDD 111 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat NSC: Records NSDD Series, RRPL, p.2.

[155] Dictated notes from Shultz, [Wednesday 21 December 1983], 21 December 1983, Washington, Doc #C05182977, DOSA FOIA, p.1.

[156] Memorandum from Dur to McFarlane, [Security in Lebanon], 25 November 1983, NSDD 111 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat NSC: Records NSDD Series, RRPL, p.3.

intelligence regarding increased terrorist threats to US troops stationed in Lebanon, due to the growing numbers of Palestinian and *Sh'a* factions in Beirut.[157] The US believed that the rise of an anti-American ideology within the Palestinian groups in Lebanon was also intended to punish the US for its alliance with Israel. The CIA stated that 'the Shia in particular are prepared- even anxious- to sacrifice themselves as martyrs in terrorist operations.'[158] The intelligence report named five key groups as responsible for the continuing anti-American threat; namely, *Harakat Amal*, *Hizbullah*, *Hizb al Da'wa al-Islamiyya*, the Huseini Suicide Squads and the Islamic Students Union. The report stated that British and Italian troops were less likely to be targeted because London and Rome had been more even-handed in their relations with the peripheral Lebanese factions. Further, Italy 'sought to ingratiate themselves with local Muslims by establishing personal links.'[159] While the French positions were also seen as targets, as they had been in October, the threat was characterized by an overwhelmingly anti-American ideology.

Therefore, the Reagan Administration believed that any attempt to normalize the security situation in Beirut would prove futile. The US positions in Lebanon would continue to face on-going, increased violent threats as long as the US remained in Lebanon. Iranian President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani continued publicly to support the anti-American *jihad* in order 'to expel the aggressive forces of the United States and the other so-called multinational forces including the Zionists.'[160] Similarly, Syrian Foreign Minister Abdul Halim Khaddam stated that 'Andropov and Reagan were his

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[157] Memorandum from CIA Office to CIA Director, [Terrorist Threat to Western Interests in Lebanon], 30 November 1983, Lebanon 11/30/83 File, Box 43, Executive Secretariat NSC: Country Series, RRPL, p.1.
[158] *ibid.* p.2.
[159] *ibid.* p.6
[160] 'Iranian Bids Lebanese Recruit Suicide Squads', *NYT,* 31 January 1984, p.1.

two best friends: Reagan supplied the circumstances and Andropov the ammunition.'[161]

In response to the worsening security situation, on 1 December 1983, the NSPG extended US policy to include a 'vigorous self-defense.'[162] The NSDD117 on 5 December 1983 crucially outlined the guidance measures that defined the US' new 'vigorous self-defense' policy.[163] The rules of engagement under this policy ordered US troops to destroy any position that was deemed to present a hostile threat or could lead to an attack, proposing the pre-emptive 'total destruction' of targets or threats including a militia's support network.[164] Should the potential civilian or collateral damage be deemed too high to allow shelling (either by tactical air force or naval surface fire), then destructive fire by ground troops was recommended. The strategy merely added further confusion to the numerous self-defense policies that the Reagan Administration had announced regarding Lebanon.

By December 1983, US policy in Lebanon no longer resembled the proposed MNFII's security arrangements on October 25. The new, vigorous self-defence policy allowed the US to seek out targets more actively, specifically Syrian positions. The first example of the implementation of this came as the US flew F14 Fighter jets over Syrian-controlled territories on 3 December 1983. The fighter flight missions were presented as essential reconnaissance on the positioning of SAM and SAF positions in Lebanon which electronic intelligence had previously spotted. The F14s came under fire from Syrian anti-aircraft defences which, in turn, resulted in an immediate US counterattack on SAF positions in East Beirut on 4 December. Drew Middleton argues that these reconnaissance flights were purposefully directed at drawing Syrian

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[161] [Lebanon/MNF], p.4.
[162] [Draft NSDD on Lebanon], p.2.
[163] [NSDD 117, Lebanon], p.1.
[164] *ibid. &* [Our Strategy in Lebanon and the Middle East], p.3.

fire on US aircraft to create a legitimate self-defence pretext for the planned US strike on 4 December.[165] The Tactical Airborne Reconnaissance Pod (TARP) missions continued throughout December 1983, resulting in the USMNF troops remaining on high alert, 'anticipating a possible bombardment from Syrian backed militiamen because of the over flights.'[166]

The US attempts to provoke Syria into an offensive had negative consequences for the other MNFII partners. British Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe believed that there was no longer a relationship or link between the MNFII partners.[167] Khaddam told Ivor Lucas, British Ambassador to Syria, that, due to the US provocation, the MNFII's full withdrawal was now a primary condition if Syria were to consider the SAF's withdrawal.[168]

Rumsfeld's meeting with the three other MNFII participants on 9 December produced a number of clear outcomes. The European partners believed that

> the gap between the US posture in Lebanon and that of the three European MNFII contributors has widened. The US have shown that they are prepared to interpret their right to self-defense more widely and more vigorously than we believe to be justified.[169]

The French and Italians wanted to leave Lebanon and the British believed that this would be more likely if the French 'decoupled' their contingent from the Americans

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[165] Drew Middleton, 'U.S. Flights over Lebanon: Their Value Called into Question', *NYT,* 10 December 1983, p.1.

[166] Cable from Erskine to Urquhart, [UNTSO Summary of Beirut Incidents Special SITREP, Explosion in front of French MNF HQ], 10:10pm 21 December 1983, Multinational Force in Beirut File, UNARMS, p.2.

[167] [Lebanon/MNF], p. 4.

[168] Telegram from Lucas to FCO, [Syria/MNF], 9:50am 10 December 1983, #406, Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UKNA, p.1.

[169] Memorandum from Rickett to Coles, [Lebanon: the Multi-National Force], 9 December 1983, FCO Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UKNA, p.1.

and made the Italians and British choose between the two sides.[170] As a result, Cheysson proposed that individual contracts for each MNF contingent should be agreed with Gemayel instead of considering the MNFII as united.[171]

Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad wrote to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher noting the seriousness of the US military escalation where Asad called the TARP provocations US 'air raids.' Asad claimed that, while the US had entered Lebanon under the pretext of peace, 'what we fear is that the region has come to be on the brink of another Vietnam.'[172] On 12 December the bombing of the US Embassy in Kuwait was linked directly to US involvement in the Iran/Iraq war. The Iraqi *Shi'a Ḥizb al-Dawa al-Islamiyya* was suspected of the attacks and, while this event was not directly related to the Lebanon conflict, it was directly relevant to the administration's broader regional foreign policy. Similarly, as Farber argues, the Reagan Administration inherited a US-Iranian context characterised by Carter's soft handed and ineffective 'dickering.'[173] Carter had not been strong in his handling of the Iranian hostage crisis which signalled a growing Iranian-sponsored anti-American Islamic opposition. However by December 1983 the Reagan Administration maintained that they did not want to be caught out as Carter had been and began to realize the emergent threat of non-State Islamic militants, particularly those supported by Iran. While too late to avoid the Marine Barracks Bombing, the Administration finally

[170] *ibid.* pp.1-2.
[171] Telegram from Graham to FCO, [MNF Foreign Ministers Meeting], 12:50pm, 8 December 1983, #344, Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UKNA, p.1.
[172] Letter from Asad to Thatcher, [Lebanon], 5 December 1983, in Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UKNA, pp.1-2.
[173] David Farber, 'Taken Hostage: The Iran Hostage Crisis and America's First Encounter with Radical Islam', (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp.165-170.

understood that future attacks on the US could only be avoided with an expeditious ending to the Lebanon intervention.[174]

In order to appear resolute in the face of these threats, Rumsfeld proposed 'a strategy of 'leaning somewhat forward.'[175] Thus, by 14 December, the administration resumed its military campaign against Syria, which allowed the US to appear to be moving forward rather than retreating. This strategy was more about developing the image of the US' continued backing of a sustainable ceasefire than was the reality under the Reagan Administration. Carefully-orchestrated public visits by US Generals, CENTCOM Commanders and increased public training cooperation between the LAF and US Military was all geared at forcing Syria to enter into negotiations out of fear of a near-term offensive or direct conflict with the US.[176]

Yet again, this policy failed to win support from Weinberger and Vessey, who loudly voiced their objections to the provocative move. They believed that the continual changes in military rules of engagement now obliged the US to pursue military missions even though the ambiguity of the self-defence polices and broken chain of command ultimately led to US personnel losses. Weinberger believed that further addenda to the rules of engagement would lead to the US being ambiguously placed again on the frontline of the Syrian/Lebanese factional militias. He stated:

> Beirut was an absolutely inevitable outcome of doing what we did, of putting troops in with no mission that could be carried out. There was no agreement on either side of the pullback. You didn't need a buffer force. There's nothing more dangerous than in the middle of a furious prize-fight, inserting a referee in range of both the fighters, both the contestants. That's what we did.[177]

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[174] James Harper, 'The Middle East, Oil and the Third World', in John Carroll & George Herring, eds., *Modern American Diplomacy,* (Oxford: SR Books, 2004), p.259.

[175] Cable from Rumsfeld to McFarlane, [Illustrative initiatives which could get the attention of Syria, as an aid in the negotiation process], 10:25am 14 December 1983, Cable #270331, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol. 1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.2.

[176] *ibid.* pp.2-4.

[177] 'Interview with Caspar Weinberger', Frontline, PBS News, September 2001.

While recognizing the opposition within the Administration, Shultz, Casey and US Ambassador to the UN Jeanne Kirkpatrick sponsored the NSDD117, which was duly signed and issued by Reagan. It is less clear what direct role Reagan played in this policy directive, although it is apparent that Shultz's influence over the president in the lead-up to NSDD117 and Reagan's reference to 'contentious staff' (Weinberger and Vessey) led to a victory for the Shultz bloc.[178] Weinberger believed that the MNFII was too weak to overpower the Syrians or *Shi'a* militias and that, through the continual US provocation, they had been turned into the MNFII's key enemies. He argued that taking sides was not part of the US mission and that the vigorous self-defence would not have been required if the US presence in Lebanon had been defined, limited and withdrawn.[179]

A letter from Robert Byrd, President *pro tempore* of the US Senate, ordered Reagan to prepare an accountability report on the MNFII, as stipulated by Joint Senate Resolution 190. Byrd stressed concerns that the US contingent was still costing more than the other MNFII partners. While France and Italy had secured long-term loans and credit arrangements with Lebanon, the US was continuing to send over $150 million in economic aid to Gemayel, which was not expected to be repaid. Reagan's first accountability report was submitted on 14 December 1983 and failed to convince the US Congress that the MNFII could achieve any of its original objectives. Shultz argued that, as Israel and Lebanon requested the continued MNFII presence, it was vital to prove to the US Congress that significant milestones and accomplishments could be reached within a month (and then request a further 90-day extension). It was important to avoid an order for immediate withdrawal until both

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[178] Reagan, 'The Ronald Reagan Diaries', pp.400-410.
[179] Yoshitani, 'National Power and Military Force', pp.165-173.

Reagan and Shultz had maximized the remaining opportunities of the situation in Lebanon.[180] Shultz saw these opportunities as:

> i. Security of Israel and moderate Arab States, ii. Balance of regional power in factor of those advocating resolution of core issues and continued perception that Washington is only address for the objective, iii. Economic access of US and allies especially to oil and gas, iv. containment of Soviet influence and prevention of further penetration.[181]

Shultz therefore stressed that the 'factors to exploit'[182] in relation to US success included:

> A Lebanese army of growing strength, US-Israeli-Lebanese cooperation, Syria now in direct dialogue with GOL and wants to maintain dialogue with US, Gradual coalescence of a moderate Arab bloc with US backing.[183]

Reagan presented the case to congress that the MNFII and US training had strengthened the LAF and that the US had ultimately protected the Gemayel government. However, Reagan's Congressional report did little to underline how the US could extricate itself from the Lebanese crisis other than to state that the decision to evacuate US troops should only be made once all foreign forces had been withdrawn and a consensus had been reached between all of the Lebanese leaders.

The seeds of dissent: the European partners question Washington

Allegedly, USCINCEUR General Paul Kelley leaked that a US withdrawal was imminent and full MNFII withdrawal would occur within the first few months of 1984. General Kelley denied that he made these claims or that any member of his

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[180] Cable from Shultz to Rumsfeld, [Lebanon. Milestones], 3:19pm 28 December 1983, Cable #366306, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.2.
[181] *ibid.* pp.1-2.
[182] Cable from Shultz to Rumsfeld, [Short term strategy for Lebanon], 3:21pm 28 December 1983, Cable #366307, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.3.
[183] *ibid.*

team had leaked the details to the New York Times. Rumsfeld believed that any public leaks would lead to the regional leaders and MNFII partners thinking that the US was '"leaning backward" rather than "forward."'[184] Rumsfeld stressed to the National Security Council that 'regional and MNF leaders remain convinced of US steadfastness in Beirut.'[185]

However, Italian Defense Minister Giovanni Spadolini announced, on 21 December 1983, that Italy's intention was to reduce and ultimately withdraw its troops from Lebanon.[186] On the same day, *Jihad al-Islami* struck again with a 700kg explosive car bomb at the *Kata'eb* Offices in Beirut, next to the French MNFII Headquarters. While the explosion did not incur great French losses and was not seen as a direct attack on the FRMNF, the guerrilla attack did little to comfort the French or Italian MNFII contingents.[187] Recognizing the divergence in the MNFII partners' positions, Rumsfeld advised that a unified statement be communicated, stressing that the security agreement was being obstructed exclusively by Syrian aggression and Iranian/Syrian terrorism. The demarche would reiterate a public statement of commitment and unity between the MNFII partners while allowing all parties to 'talk seriously about the future of the MNF in private.'[188]

On 21 December 1983, Rumsfeld advised NSC Secretary McFarlane that pressure should be placed on the French to adopt a more 'aggressive defense.'

[184] Cable from Rumsfeld to McFarlane, [General Kelley's Optimism], 9:22pm 10 December 1983, Cable #3442135, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.1
[185] *ibid.* p.2.
[186] Cable from UNIFIL HQ, Naqoura to Urquhart, [Selected Media Reports for UNIFIL Contingents Wed 21 Dec], 1:03pm 21 December 1983, Multinational Force in Beirut File, UNARMS, p.1.
[187] Cable from Erskine to Urquhart, [UNTSO Summary of Beirut Incidents Special SITREP, Explosion in front of French MNF HQ], 10:10pm 21 December 1983, Multinational Force in Beirut File, UNARMS, pp.1-2.
[188] Cable from Rumsfeld to US Embassy Worldwide, [Rumsfeld Mission. Approach to MNF Capitals], 7:40am 13 January 1984, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.3.

Rumsfeld, predicting British disinterest and 'skittishness' in regards to the MNFII, saw an immediate handover to the UN as the only facing-saving strategy available.[189] British Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe warned the US that their attempts to mask the US military operations as "robust self-defense" had not fooled anyone.[190] The whole of the British Parliament opposed the US policy and this unified dissent was openly communicated to Shultz.[191]

Mitterrand, meanwhile, believed that an MNFII handover to UNIFIL and thereby a strengthening of UNIFIL's military capabilities was the only way to shape the MNFII's withdrawal as a 'departure' rather than a 'defeat.'[192] UNIFIL, however, was seeking to reduce the size of its force significantly in the aftermath of the Barracks bombings. If the MNFII were to hand over to the UN peacekeeping force, then it would require Israel's agreement. Considering the historic strain between the IDF and UNIFIL, it was 'inconceivable' that Israel would accept UNIFIL monitoring.[193]

UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) Officer Rune Wrangdahl appealed to Under-Secretary General Urquhart on 12 December 1983, indicating that Lebanon's political situation was regarded as impossible while the US continued to

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[189] Cable from Rumsfeld to McFarlane, [Possible Levers on Syria], 4:26pm 21 December 1983, Cable #27569, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.4.
[190] Letter from Reagan to Thatcher, [Lebanon], 6 February 1984, pp.1-2.
[190] Report from British Foreign Secretary Howe, [Lebanon: The Next Steps], 2 February 1984, p.4.
[191] Letter from Secretary of State FCO to Shultz, [Disquiet in Britain/MNF], 5 December 1983, pp.1-2 & Letter from Tim Flesher to Mr Coles, [Lebanon/ House of Commons], 5 December 1983, Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UKNA, p.1.
[192] Wood, 'The Diplomacy of Peacekeeping', p.33.
[193] JP Lagellier, 'Israël juge "inconcevable" que l'ONU facilite l'évacuation des "terroristes"', *Le Monde,* 10 December 1983 & Cable from Under-Secretary General Urquhart to Commander Callaghan, UNIFIL, [UNIFIL Reduction], 25 October 1983, Cable #2450, Military-proposed reduction in strength of UNIFIL File, UNIFIL, S-0356-0037-07, UNARMS, p.1 & Evron, 'War and Intervention in Lebanon', pp.160-163.

block a UN transition.[194] Shultz was reluctant to support an immediate MNFII to UN handover and therefore advised that the MNFII partners should 'hang in there for a while longer' providing time for the US Administration to work out the details of its exit strategy.[195] The British and French were prepared to go against the Americans, arguing that their 'divergence from the Americans' was a result of not wanting to be 'involved in some anti-Syrian action or hopeless efforts to extend the authority of a government that is rapidly becoming a purely Christian faction.'[196]

During a meeting with Mitterrand, Thatcher stated that she felt that the MNFII mission had transformed from one of establishing reconciliation into a US/Israeli war against Syria. Mitterrand agreed, and believed that the humanitarian mission under the MNFI was now a distant memory; it now looked like an anti-Arab, pro-Christian mission. The French President's main concern was how to leave with 'dignity.' Thatcher believed that the MNFII mission was an outright failure. While neither European leader wanted Syria to remain, they felt it was the lesser of two evils than having the current war raging between the US and Syria.[197] Both leaders were concerned that their relations with the Arabs were being diminished by the US.[198] In an angry letter from Asad to Thatcher, the Syrian President attacked the US mission in Lebanon for being exclusively anti-Syrian. To minimize the UK's ties to US activities in Lebanon, Thatcher stated that she was pleased that the disagreements between Syria and the US could now have a channel for discussions through the

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[194] Cable from Wrangdahl to Urquhart, [Restrictions of movements by US Forces], 2:37pm 12 December 1983, Cable #UNTSO2918, Multinational Force in Beirut file, UNARMS, pp.1-2.
[195] [Short-term strategy for Lebanon], p.5.
[196] Memorandum from Percy Cradock to Mr Coles, [Lebanon], 9 February 1984, Relations/Internal Situation File, Lebanon Folder, PREM19/1077, UKNA, p.1.
[197] 'Le rapprochement avec Damas commence a se concretiser', 17 December 1983, *L'OLJ*, p.1.
[198] Memorandum from Butler to Fall, [Thatcher/Mitterrand Meeting], 6 December 1983, Relations/Internal Situation File, Lebanon Folder, PREM19/1077, UKNA, pp.1-3.

upcoming Rumsfeld talks in early 1984. However, she added that it was not the UK's intention or policy to become involved in Lebanon's internal affairs, including Syria's occupation or claims.[199] In a meeting between the British Ambassador to the European Community, Sir Michael Butler, and French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson, the French stated that they were going to return over a quarter of their MNFII troops to UNIFIL as they felt it was now time to 'start reshuffling.' Cheysson was also adamant that he did not 'wish to be seen to be too close to the US' especially if further attacks against MNFII positions were being planned.[200]

On 17 December 1983, the Italian Chief of Defence Staff, Lamberto Bartolucci, wrote to Sir Edwin Bramall, stating that the Italian MNF contingent would be reduced significantly by January 1984 and that, while this was not to be announced to the US yet, the Italians felt that the US' lack of cooperation amounted to a breakdown in the MNFII's efficacy, and so they viewed 'the refusal of the US Ambassador in Syria to say anything to his MNF colleagues increased the argument for maintaining direct contact with the American protagonists.'[201] Similarly, in a meeting on 14 December 1983 at No. 10 Downing St, Gemayel informed Thatcher that the May 17th Agreement was unworkable and that he would require Syrian input for any solution if Walid Jumblatt, Rashid Karame and former President Suleiman Franjieh were to participate in any Gemayel-led talks.[202]

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[199] Letter from Thatcher to Asad, [Lebanon], 19 December 1983, Relations/Internal Situation File, Lebanon Folder, PREM19/1077, UKNA, pp.1-2.

[200] Telegram from Butler to FCO, [Discussions with Cheysson on the Lebanon/MNF], 2:40pm 19 December 1983, #4543, Relations/Internal Situation File, Lebanon Folder, PREM19/1077, UKNA, pp.1-2.

[201] Telegram from Bridges to FCO, [Italy/Lebanon], 11:10am 17 December 1983, #688, Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UKNA, p.1.

[202] Memorandum [Thatcher and Gemayel at No. 10 Downing Street], 12:15pm 14 December 1983, Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UKNA, pp.1-4.

Creating an environment to leave

Shultz's policy proposals, namely the 'National Program' and 'National Reconciliation' were, arguably, the first tangible evidence that Reagan's inner circle had accepted that the MNFII's near-term withdrawal was inevitable.[203] The documents' terms were careless and unrealistic but, if implemented, provided a possible channel for withdrawal. Shultz's proposed program was dependant on the LAF's rapid modernization and also demanded that Israel should publicly state their support for a full withdrawal. Most radically, Shultz advised that Gemayel should appoint a Syrian-backed Prime Minister, while urging Israel to take the lead in Lebanon 'in exploring new formulas.' The policies also stated that a full cancellation of the May 17th Agreement would be supported if targeted bombing of Syrian positions in Lebanon was undertaken immediately, as 'this would confirm to Syrians that the US will not be pushed around.'[204]

While further aggression against Syria was considered a face-saving strategy, it would almost certainly harm any remaining congressional support for the USMNF. Shultz stated that the US would put the MNFII occupied territories into the hands of the LAF rather than UNIFIL, whether or not the LAF was prepared to expand further outside Beirut. The political negotiations were to be handed over to Jordan and Saudi Arabia. As Prince Saud al-Faisal called on Gemayel to construct a unity government for national reconciliation, including anti-Gemayel factions, the Saudi Arabian delegation began to develop an eight-point security plan for Lebanon.[205]

Overall, Shultz's plan was based on two major changes; namely, the abrogation of the May 17th Agreement in order to appease Syria and the MNFII's

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[203] [Lebanon Milestones], pp.2-6.

[204] *ibid.* p.6.

[205] Thomas Friedman, 'Gemayel notifies foes he will end pact with Israel', *NYT*, 17 February 1984, p.1.

removal. Cancelling the May 17ᵗʰ Agreement provided key evidence that Shultz saw the US mission in Lebanon as futile. Furthermore, the Reagan Administration was aware, by 28 December 1983, that allowing Saudi Arabia to spearhead the negotiations between Israel, Syria, the Gemayel government and the Lebanese factions would mean a full reversal of US policy during the previous 18 months. Irrespective of this, the US had little option but to allow the handover to take place.[206]

By the end of December 1983, the Reagan Administration was pursuing numerous conflicting policies that appeared to solidify US military commitment in Lebanon but, at the same time, prepare the diplomatic platform for a near-term withdrawal.[207] It is also clear that, by 28 December 1983, the Administration had little medium- or long-term vision for US intervention in Lebanon.[208] This loss of vision was as much due to the divisions that had developed within the US administration as to the pressure from the US Congress for Reagan to be held accountable for US losses. While no official statement was made by the administration to confirm USMNF withdrawal in 1983, the possibility that the US would remain in Lebanon had faded. Without unconditional funding for the USMNF and with the growing domestic pressure to withdraw, there was little room for the MNFII to continue its mission.

Conclusion

The US recognized that 'by the end of September 1983, the situation in Lebanon had changed to the extent that not one of the initial conditions upon which the mission

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[206] 'Weinberger: 15 Paesi hanno rifiutato di entrare nella forza multinazionale', *La Stampa,* 23 December 1983, p.4.
[207] 'M. Weinberger a exposé à M. Hernu la politique militaire des États-Unis au Liban', *Le Monde*, 6 December 1983.
[208] [Lebanon Milestones], p.8.

statement was premised was still valid.'[209] In contrast, it has been argued here that the true political landscape, on which these initial conditions were premised, was never accurately gauged. The US became involved in a volatile context, which it could not control and the MNFII as a result was pushed further into the depths of the conflict without regard for the internal sectarian or factional complexities that characterized Lebanon. However tragic, the Marine Barracks bombing was an inevitable product of this naivety. The Reagan Administration's inability to assess the constantly-changing conditions impacted on the US presence, as well as the significant shifts in US engagement, ultimately led to the Marine Barracks bombing on 23 October 1983.[210]

For Washington's decision-makers, the Marine Barracks bombing had a far greater impact than the loss of the 241 US lives. The attack represented two key, closely-interconnected issues. First, it underlined US vulnerability to acts of terrorism whereby the bombings represented the largest assault on US military personnel since World War Two, and certainly the largest ever terrorist attack against the US at that time. This highlighted not only the US' military susceptibility to unpredictable, extremist attacks but also its failure to acknowledge the potential threat of the rising anti-American Islamic movement in the Middle East's strength and intent. As was the case with the Carter Administration, the US demonstrated that it still did not have a handle on how to deal with the radical Islamic opposition sponsored by Iran. By October 1983, Lebanon represented the frontline of this crusade against the US and the USMNF was the most accessible and exposed target. While the US believed that the attack was spiritually and financially sponsored by Iran and Syria, the guerrilla strategy employed by the militants meant that it could not retaliate with a conventional response. The implication of this for the Reagan Administration meant

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[209] [DOD Commission], p.39.
[210] *ibid.* pp.38-40.

that the US was unable to guarantee its own security in the region and there was a high probability of further attacks if the MNFII and US troops remained in Lebanon.

Second, the Beirut bombing demonstrated how the anti-US hostility was deepened by the administration's aggressive military actions at the Battle of Souk el Gharb and misreading of the internal Lebanese militias. The US rules of engagement and the 'aggressive self defense' employed during September 1983 remained largely unrestricted in the hands of Shultz and Reagan. While quiet stirrings in Washington throughout 1983 challenged Shultz's use of military force, US Congress showed tacit support for the MNFII through sanctioning the force's extended deployment and rules of engagement. The Department of Defense Commission Report and the Senate Armed Services Committee inquiry both acknowledged the MNFII's operations' ambiguity in Lebanon. The US military policy's escalation was criticized, and illustrated the disconnection between the White House and the MNFII's initial mission.

The 23 October attack struck at the heart of US credibility, forcing the US to face up to the realities of the Lebanese conflict and the future MNFII deployment. However, Reagan and Shultz remained fervent supporters of the MNFII (as well as the US intervention more broadly) and were not likely to admit that the October 23 bombing represented a failure for the US in Lebanon. As such, by the end of October 1983, US policy decisions in Lebanon can best be seen as falling under a neoclassical realist interpretation rather than the neo-conservatism that is often attributed to Reagan's Cold War foreign policy.[211] That is, the policies drawn up by the Shultz bloc

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[211] Gideon Rose defines neoclassical realism as where the 'scope and ambition of a country's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by its place in the international system and specifically by its relative material power capabilities…relative material power establishes the basic parameters of a country's foreign policy…it is their [political leaders] perceptions of relative power that matter not simply relative quantities of physical resources or forces in

in the White House focused on protecting the Regan Administration's credibility internationally.

While Shultz's belief in the 'use of military force' drew the US into the invasion of Grenada, a victorious MNFII was needed to support the argument that military force was the most appropriate vehicle for the Reagan Administration's foreign policy.

However, as the administration extended support for Israel and the friendly Arab states, it represented cracks in the US' commitment to the Gemayel government. While NSDD111 and NSDD117 implied a renewed US military resolve, the directives also demonstrated the Reagan Administration's desire to appear resilient while concurrently searching for a face-saving exit. The question was not whether or not the MNFII would be leaving the shores of Lebanon but how the withdrawal would be structured in order to minimize the potential fall-out for the Reagan Administration. Summing up the sentiments of all MNFII partners, British Diplomat Sir Andrew Palmer stated, 'there will be no "Feux de Joie" here to usher in 1984.'[212]

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being.' Gideon Rose, 'Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy', *World Politics*, Vol. 51, No.1, 1998, pp.145-147; Colin Dueck, 'Neoclassical realism and the national interest: presidents, domestic politics and major military interventions', Steven Lobell, Norrin Ripsman & Jeffery Taliaferro, eds., *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign policy*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.139-150.

[212] Telegram from Palmer to FCO, [Lebanon], 10:00am, 29 December 1983, #746, in Relations/Internal Situation 4 Dec 1983- 30 Dec 1983 File, Lebanon Folder, PREM 19/1077, UKNA, p.2.

Chapter 7

Leaving through the back door: The final days of the US intervention in Lebanon
Multinational Force II, Phase Four (27 December 1983 to 21 March 1984)

The enduring public memory of the Marine Barracks bombing and the Department of Defense's subsequent damning report threatened the MNFII's deployment and left the US mission in Lebanon in doubt. Unsurprisingly, the US public and congressional opponents expected that the MNFII's withdrawal would be announced, by President Reagan, by the end of 1983. Instead, on 27 December, the president announced that he would take personal blame for all of the faults listed in the report and any failures of the US intervention in Lebanon.

> I do not believe, therefore, that the local commanders on the ground, men who have already suffered quite enough, should be punished for not fully comprehending the nature of today's terrorist threat. If there is to be blame, it properly rests here in this Office and with this President. And I accept responsibility for the bad as well as the good.[1]

Reagan himself had not given up hope of US success in Lebanon and further instructed the USMNF contingent actively to defend their position in Beirut militarily, giving no sign that the Reagan Administration's resolve to remain in Lebanon was weakening.[2] There was a dichotomy between the administration's public façade and the ongoing internal machinations that were quietly working to salvage some remaining credibility from the Lebanese situation. Phase Four of the MNFII, from 27

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[1] Speech, [Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with Reporters on the Pentagon Report on the security of US Marines in Lebanon', 27 December 1983, Private Papers Online: http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1983/122783a.htm, Accessed December 2013.
[2] Bernard Guetta, 'Le risque inhérent à l'engagement américain au Liban constitue la seule menace pour la réélection de M. Reagan', *Le Monde*, 26 January 1984.

December 1983 to 21 March 1984, was characterized by backroom dealings and negotiations between the Reagan Administration, Lebanese President Amin Gemayel and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad with the purpose of reaching a diplomatic compromise that would allow the US to exit quietly from the Lebanese conflict. Although a withdrawal had been considered many times throughout the MNFII's deployment, it was now recognised that Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz's goal of achieving political credibility through perseverance, by keeping US troops in Lebanon was no longer possible.[3] Abou Diab argues that four factors led to the MNFII withdrawal: namely, the Lebanese system's total collapse after 6 February 1984; the ambiguity of US policy; the spilt between the Europeans and Americans; and the increased Syrian influence over the decision to abrogate the May 17th Agreement.[4]

The credibility that had been so preciously sought by Reagan to demonstrate his strength as a peacemaker was now instead being pursued through a negotiated withdrawal. The threat of fatal attacks against the US had increased since September 1983 and Reagan could not afford another catastrophic loss of American lives, particularly as the presidential elections loomed in November 1984. The US position had fallen into an unsustainable defensive spiral, and imminent withdrawal was now firmly the administration's goal.[5] The Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) 'Strategy

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[3] Cable from US Ambassador Lebanon Reginald Bartholomew to Shultz, [My meetings with Jumblatt and the Shaykh Aklat Ba'Daran January 9], 3:11pm 10 January 1984, Cable #101514, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol. 1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, p.3 & Working Group Situation Report No. 21, [Situation as of 1700 EST 19 February 1984.], 5:00pm 19 February 1984, Department of State Operations Centre, Lebanon File, Box 8, Crisis Management Center: NSC Records Series, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library (hereafter RRPL), p.1.
[4] Khattar Abou Diab, 'Le Role de la Force Multinationale au Liban de 1982 a 1984', (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984), p.99.
[5] Bernardo Valli, 'Libano strangolato', *La Stampa,* 1 February 1984, p.2.

for US Actions in Lebanon' outlined the US situation in Lebanon, exemplifying the key factors influencing US decision-making in this final phase:

> i. No player willing to move away from military actions or options, ii. only player we want to influence is Syria, iii. Syria is a political fact of life - must be treated with respect and not disdain, iv. US must at least talk with the Syrians, v. Lebanon is impotent, vi. Israel is down South and does not want to be involved, vii. Soviet problem is the potential of a greater Syria, viii. US must respond to terrorist attacks by covert or overt means regardless of other arrangements with Syria.[6]

Facing the possibility of further congressional petitions and the increased threat of attacks on US Marines in Lebanon, internal discussions in the Reagan Administration conceded that USMNF withdrawal was inevitable. However, Reagan and Shultz remained determined to lessen the withdrawal's impact on the Administration's credibility by once again focusing on Syria. This time, the US was not simply intent on curbing Syrian military aggression but also on finding a working solution to minimizing Syrian participation. Reagan subsequently sent Middle East Envoy Donald Rumsfeld to discuss Lebanon with the Syrian leadership in an attempt to reduce the perception that the US was being chased out by Asad.[7]

This chapter examines the dramatic reversal in US policy from January to March 1984, which was undertaken to establish the foundations for a military and political environment that would be conducive for a US withdrawal. While the US refused to show its weakening hand to Gemayel and Asad, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and Shultz were working to create an opportunity for an expeditious withdrawal. The reluctant but pervading culture of acceptance within the Reagan Administration meant that the momentum toward

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[6] Combined Maritime Forces Strategy Paper, [Strategy for US Actions in Lebanon], 4 January 1984, Lebanon Documents Rumsfeld Cables File, Box 90929, Crisis Management Center, NSC: Records Series, RRPL, pp.1-3.

[7] 'Libano, il "ritiro" Usa si trasforma in una prova di forza con la Siria', *La Stampa,* 11 February 1984, p.5.

withdrawal was unstoppable. This chapter argues that, by January 1984, even though there was no public announcement, the Reagan Administration had already decided that it would withdraw the USMNF within three months. It further argues that the US was no longer concerned with Lebanese stability, which it saw as facing insurmountable political and military challenges. US policy's initial peacekeeping vision of ensuring the Lebanese government's sovereignty and foreign forces' removal had been replaced with an acceptance of a Syrian-dominated Lebanon throughout the MNFII's final days.

The curtain call

The 30 December 1983 Memorandum entitled 'Next Steps on Lebanon' from Weinberger to Reagan illustrates that the key decision-making factions within the Reagan Administration were resigned to the fact that the MNFII would be dissolved by February 1984.[8] Taking into account the DOD Report's recommendations and the conflict in Lebanon's critical nature, Weinberger advised Reagan that an immediate, month-long withdrawal and redeployment of all US troops aboard the Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) would mitigate any further risk to American lives and still allow the Naval gunships to be integrally involved in the specific targeting of enemy positions:

> Placing our forces offshore would allow us to fulfill our commitment and support our basic objectives, and at the same time maintain public and congressional support for the job we are doing in Lebanon.[9]

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[8] Memorandum from Weinberger to Reagan, [Next Steps in Lebanon (U)], 30 December 1983, Secretary of Defense, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p. 1.
[9] *ibid.*

Weinberger also highlighted that Syria had restrained from attacking the US Tactical Air Reconnaissance Pod (TARPS) and MNFII positions because Asad and Syria's Foreign Affairs Minister, Abdul Halim Khaddam, believed that the Reagan Administration was merely bluffing and would soon leave Lebanon.[10] It was therefore argued that any attempt to illustrate US military resolve was a waste of time.

Furthermore, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) reported to Shultz that the other MNFII partners were going to reduce their force size, which would leave the US with the largest contingent by February 1984. To counter this, Shultz requested that French and Italian Commanders should continue their military presence throughout February and March, arguing that it would demonstrate consensus between the partners if the three Western nations decided to withdraw simultaneously.[11] However, the first step required for this withdrawal to occur was to convince Gemayel to agree that the MNFII was no longer needed in Lebanon. There were two aspects to this. First, by December 1983 Gemayel realized that the US was in fact actively provoking Syria through the TARP missions rather than monitoring the SAF, as claimed. Second, he believed that it was vital to detach himself from Washington if he were to convince the other factions to attend the National Reconciliation Talks in Lausanne in March.[12]

While it was inconceivable that Gemayel would have accepted the US withdrawal throughout 1983, the conditions by January 1984 were such that the president realized that he had to find a more viable way to keep his government together. Having been seen as Washington's puppet throughout 1983, Gemayel

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[10] Abdul Halim Khaddam was Syria's Foreign Affairs Minister until March 1984 when he was promoted to Vice President which he remained for two decades, acting as the interim president briefly during the transfer of power from Hafiz al-Asad to Bashar al-Asad in 2000.

[11] Memorandum from the JCS to Shultz, [Next Steps in Lebanon], Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, pp.1-3.

[12] Thomas Friedman, 'New Lebanon Talks: Forced Optimism and Crumbs of Hope', *NYT,* 12 March 1984.

acknowledged that the full abrogation of the May 17th Agreement was the only way for his government to begin unity talks.[13] The agreement could not be cancelled while the US was deployed in Lebanon, as such a move would humiliate the US who had sponsored and mediated the agreement.[14] The JCS offered Gemayel a $1 billion modernization program by equipping 10 LAF brigades with US tanks and armored personnel carriers. As such, the JCS recommended to Shultz that a complete handover should take place by the end of February and that the USMNF should be removed from Lebanon now that the LAF had been strengthened.[15] With both Weinberger and JCS Chairman John Vessey's strong advice weighing down on Reagan and Shultz, the MNFII's final days were imminent.

While it is clear that Reagan had accepted the USMNF's eventual withdrawal from Lebanon, he was furious that this had been forced upon him. During a National Security Planning Group (NSPG) meeting, he commented:

> I have to say I am pretty mad about the way we have backed into a situation so that we are reduced to considering the redeployment of our forces in Lebanon in response to the public debate stimulated by leaks from within our government.[16]

The documents that Reagan referred to included the DOD Report and General John Kelley's response to it, which were leaked to the media before being seen by the president. Regardless of the leak, Reagan could not have controlled the report's eventual release and the subsequent effects that its findings had on the Administration's approval ratings. It was clear that Reagan still supported the

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[13] Thomas Friedman, 'Gemayel, Opening Talks, Urges and End to "9 Years of Insane War"', *NYT,* 13 March 1984.

[14] Cable from Rumsfeld to US Embassies Worldwide, [Demarche to MNF Governments], 3:55am, 15 January 1984, Cable #150500, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.4.

[15] [Next Steps in Lebanon], p.3.

[16] Talking Points for NSPG meeting January 3 1984 for President Reagan, [Talking Points], 3 January 1984, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.1.

MNFII's continued commitment to Lebanon, hoping for the successful completion of the force's mission.[17] The Maritime Forces report believed that Reagan's view on Lebanon was 'tied to the specific regime of Gemayel and wants to see the regime, not necessarily the nation, survive.'[18] The toughest obstacle to freeing up the US position in Lebanon was Reagan's personal belief in the Gemayel Presidency and the hope that there was some way to continue US support.

However, Gemayel had also been leading the US on with his promises of an impending security agreement. This demonstrated that the US had learnt nothing from Israel's handling of Gemayel during the May 17th Agreement. When Lebanese Ambassador to the US Abdullah Bouhabib met with the State Department on 6 January, the conversation focused entirely on the upcoming security arrangement proposed by Gemayel and the necessity for MNFII participation to secure and stabilize the areas which were not under LAF control.[19] The security plan, which was not announced until 16 February 1984, was intended to commit the Gemayel government to a national unity government and an internal security arrangement with the numerous militias. Regan did not see how, without considerable MNFII presence, this would be possible while the LAF was struggling to maintain the key strategic areas around Beirut. As a result, the president drafted a number of possible scenarios that would support a continued USMNF mission, including moving the US bases to the Christian stronghold of Damour (south of Beirut), ignoring the May 17th

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[17] Speech, [Address before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union], 25 January 1984, Public Papers, Online:
http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1984/12584e.htm, Accessed 30 March 2014;
'Text of Reagan Letter on Policy in Lebanon', *NYT,* 24 January 1984; 'Wednesday January 4, International', *NYT,* 4 January 1984 & Speech, [Statement on the Situation in Lebanon], 3 January 1984, Public Papers, Online:
http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1984/10384c.htm, Accessed 30 March 2014.
[18] [Strategy for US Actions in Lebanon], p.1.
[19] Cable form McFarlane to Rumsfeld, [Information support cable for January 7 1984], 11:24pm 7 January 1984, Cable #72158, Lebanon Documents (Rumsfeld Cables) File, Box 90929, Crisis Management Center, NSC: Records Series, RRPL, p.2.

Agreement, mobilizing the Turkish military to continue pressure on Syria and returning UNIFIL to lead and manage the Palestinian refugee camps.[20] None of these options, apart from strengthening the UNIFIL, were considered by congress or the other MNFII partners.

When, on 3 January 1984, Gemayel requested that the MNFII should take up position where the LAF was weakest, namely Beirut and Mt Lebanon, it illustrated that both Gemayel and the LAF lacked the political or military strength to control the Lebanese-held territories. The Reagan Administration now conceded that Gemayel was using the MNFII as a buffer to tilt the internal security situation in his favor and hence controlling the opposing Lebanese factions. If Gemayel were unwilling to engage these communal groups, then there could be no long-term resolution to the conflict.[21]

On 4 January British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher wrote to the UN Secretary General stating that the British government was resolute about resuming a more coordinated relationship with the UN. This action signaled the beginning of the two-month disagreement between the US and the other MNFII partners, who were now deciding when, rather than if, to withdraw from Lebanon. On 7 January, the French Deputy Director of the Quai D'Orsay and former French Ambassador to the US, Ernest Lucet, stated that he was pleased that Britain had 'nailed its colours to this mast' over finding a UN rather than US-led solution.[22] While French, British and

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[20] Report, [Issues for Discussion/Decision at NSPG], 3 January 1984, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.1.
[21] Cable from White House to Rumsfeld, [CMF Support Cable for 4 January 1984], 3:44am 4 January 1984, Cable #0040011, Lebanon Documents (Rumsfeld Cables) File, Box 90929, Crisis Management Center, NSC: Records Series, RRPL, p.1.
[22] Letter from Thatcher to UN Secretary General, [Lebanon], 9:00am 4 January 1984, #4 & Telegram from Fretwell to FCO [Lebanon], 10:45am 7 January 1984, #12, pp.1-2 Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979- January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, p.1.

Italian movement back toward the UN was not a sign of imminent withdrawal, it did place pressure on the US to further develop their own plans for a partial or comprehensive withdrawal.[23]

On 4 January 1984, the International Public Policy Research Corporation (IPPRC) advised the NSC that only two viable options now existed in relation to the US position in Lebanon. The first recommended a full withdrawal within 90 days without the establishment of a replacement UN or international peacekeeping force, on the basis that 'prospects for national reconciliation and the formation of a government of national unity are nonexistent and that indefinite de facto partition of Lebanon is inevitable.'[24] The second option, deemed a 'non-starter', included a partial withdrawal from Lebanon and the creation of another independent international peacekeeping force. The argument made for the first option stated that the positive effect that a withdrawal would have on public and congressional opinion far outweighed the loss of credibility due to an apparent admission of failure in Lebanon.[25] 'The short-term consequences in Lebanon, of course, are likely to be negative, but the longer-term outcome will hardly be catastrophic.'[26]

Moreover, an alert issued by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) on 'The Terrorist Threat to US Personnel in Beirut' on 12 January outlined the extreme threat faced by US marines and MNFII positions in Lebanon. It listed 1,000 possible *Shi'a* Lebanese radicals and groups that were continuing to threaten US security in order to replace 'the Christian-dominated Lebanese Government with an Iran-style Islamic

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[23] 'Explosion à proximité de l'ambassade de France: pas de victimes', 12 January 1984, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

[24] Security Report, [Lebanon: a 90-day withdrawal scenario], 4 January 1984, International Public Policy Research Corporation, Lebanon Documents (4 Jan 1984) (Rumsfeld Cables) File, Box 90929, Crisis Management Center, NSC: Records Series, RRPL Library, p.1.

[25] *ibid.* p.2.

[26] *ibid.* p.3.

republic.'[27] The CIA believed that the Marine Barracks bombing had further motivated certain groups to target the US and that only a full withdrawal could mitigate further critical security threats.

The conditions now surrounding the US troops in Lebanon were not conducive to Reagan's attempts to remain resilient. The Reagan Administration knew that congressional approval of further funding even for a US-sponsored UN peacekeeping force would prove difficult, given that the MNFII had lost its neutrality. National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane advised the president that, as Congress would reassemble on 23 January 1984, decisions regarding MNFII redeployment needed immediate action because the US intervention was tabled as Congress's first priority.[28] McFarlane believed that the sponsor of the MNF in Lebanon Resolution, Speaker of the House of Representatives Tip O'Neil, was reconsidering his support for the 18-month extension granted to the USMNF. This would result in the Resolution collapsing and an immediate forced withdrawal of US troops.[29]

The Rumsfeld Mission Part One: Conversations with Asad

On 13 January 1984, in a meeting with Middle East Envoy Donald Rumsfeld, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad stated that Syria had not become a proxy regime for its 'friends and brothers,' the Soviet Union, in order to dispel any possible US concerns that Lebanon would be vulnerable to full Soviet interference without the MNFII's

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[27] Intelligence Report, [The Terrorist Threat to US Personnel in Beirut], 12 January 1984, Directorate of Intelligence, #56234, CIA FOIA, pp.1-4.
[28] Bernard Guetta, 'L'opposition grandit au Congrès contre le maintien des troupes américaines au Liban', *Le Monde*, 2 January 1983.
[29] Memorandum from McFarlane to Reagan, [NSPG Meeting on Next Steps in Lebanon], 3 January 1983, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.1.

presence.[30] However, by 1984, the US was unconcerned about Soviet involvement in Lebanon, accepting that Soviet sponsorship of the Syrian Armed Forces (SAF) had dissipated due to the Soviet belief that Syria had been overactive in its involvement in the war. The NSC 'Non-Paper: Next Steps on Lebanon' stated that 'the Soviets are urging caution on Syria.'[31]

> We sometimes underestimate the fears that the Soviet Union must have because of the very large U.S. military buildup in the Eastern Mediterranean and their own vulnerabilities in the context of a Syrian war.[32]

Intelligence on 4 January from Lebanese Foreign Minister Salem's meeting with Soviet Ambassador Soldatov about the growing instability showed that the Soviets favored a 'substantially scaled-down Syrian presence in Lebanon' and that Moscow now believed that an MNFII withdrawal would lead to further destabilization.[33] The Soviets also made it clear that they would not oppose an enlarged UN force beyond the current UNIFIL-mandated territories, which constituted a complete policy reversal compared with Moscow's initial protests.[34]

Salem added that, should the US-backed May 17th Agreement not be imminently successful in removing the foreign forces, then the Lebanese government would seek other arrangements in order to meet this goal. Salem requested the Soviet government's assistance with the foreign forces' removal and the implementation of

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[30] Cable from Rumsfeld to Shultz, [Rumsfeld Mission. Highlights of Asad Meeting January 13], 3:34am 14 January 1984, Cable #140348, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, pp.3-4.

[31] Report from the NSC, [Non-Paper: Next Steps in Lebanon], 3 January 1984, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.3.

[32] *ibid.* pp.3-4

[33] Cable from the White House to Rumsfeld, [Information support cable for January 4 1984], 12:16am 5 January 1984, Cable #0060025, Lebanon Documents (Rumsfeld Cables) File, Box 90929, Crisis Management Center, NSC: Records Series, RRPL, p.2

[34] *ibid.* p.2.

further security arrangements.[35] However, Soldatov responded that 'his country's ability to influence the course of events in Lebanon was limited outside the framework of stressing his country's support for peaceful solution and political means to solve all problems.'[36] This clearly illustrated to the US that the Soviets had limited intentions of controlling or influencing Lebanon especially given Moscow's awkwardness over Syria's involvement and Andropov's inability to influence his client's decisions. Asad claimed that Syria's main influence in Lebanon was now to prevent the dominance of the *Kata'eb* radicals, supported by Gemayel.[37]

The May 17th Agreement was the primary point of discussion between Asad and Rumsfeld, representing a key US policy concern. Rumsfeld felt that 'the argument that the May 17th Agreement is the main obstacle to a negotiated solution is illusory', but Asad's insistence on the agreement's abrogation weighed on Washington. The Reagan Administration could not afford to have the agreement cancelled while still operating in Lebanon.[38] Asad contested that, given the US pressure on Israel and Lebanon to sign the May 17th Agreement, Reagan and Shultz would have to accept responsibility for what the Syrian President saw as the key obstacle to peace between the three countries (Syria, Israel and Lebanon). Asad believed that only through a total abrogation of the principles on which the agreement was founded could sustainable peace in Lebanon be realistic, with specific reference

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[35] *ibid.*

[36] *ibid.* p.6.

[37] Cable from Rumsfeld to Shultz, [Rumsfeld Mission. Highlights of Asad Meeting January 13], 3:34am 14 January 1984, Cable #140348, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, pp.3-4.

[38] Cable from Rumsfeld to US Embassies Worldwide, [Demarche to MNF Governments], American Consulate, Jerusalem, 3:55am 15 January 1984, Cable #150500, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.4.

to Syria's inclusion in any future negotiations.[39] Rumsfeld retorted that the US was not a party to the agreement and that Gemayel could cancel it at any time. While obviously brushing over the considerable US role in the negotiations, Rumsfeld's statement clearly indicated that the US had moved toward accepting the May 17th Agreement's ultimate abrogation by Gemayel.

Asad continued to question Rumsfeld about US interests in Lebanon, as 'Lebanon had no economic, military or strategic importance for the United States.'[40] Asad saw the US intervention as merely an excuse to support Israeli objectives in the region and further 'the influence of the Zionist lobby.'[41] Determined to condemn Israel's occupation of Lebanon, he noted that the Lebanese could not realistically choose a political solution while the IDF occupation continued.[42] He saw the US role as either to align with Israel, which meant allowing Israel's continued occupation, or to join Lebanon and Syria in revoking the May 17th Agreement, thereby forcing Israel to exit. Foreign Minister Khaddam was adamant that, regarding Israeli or Lebanese targets, Syria would not make any promises of a ceasefire.[43] Rumsfeld conveyed strong requests from Washington for the Syrians to remove their forces beyond the MNFII's range, as the US continued to monitor and control northern Lebanese airspace.[44] Khaddam aggressively stated: 'By virtue of the US-Israeli relationship,

[39] Cable from Rumsfeld to Shultz, [Rumsfeld referred several times to risks of present situation], 3:34am 14 January 1984, Cable #140350, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, pp.2-3.
[40] [Rumsfeld Mission. Highlights of Asad Meeting January 13], p.2.
[41] *ibid.*
[42] '"La présence syrienne au Liban constitue un atout stratégique pour Israël" déclare le chef d'état-major de l'armée israélienne', *Le Monde*, 9 January 1984.
[43] Cable from Rumsfeld to Shultz, [Rumsfeld Mission. Discussions with the Syrians on TARPS Missions], 2:09pm 15 January 1984, Cable #151515, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, pp.3-4.
[44] *ibid.* p.3.

particularly after the Shamir Visit to Washington, the US and Israel might attack Syria,'[45] further adding:

> Lebanon was an Arab country and the Lebanese people were part of the Arab nation. There was a joint defence pact between Syria and Lebanon...Syrian forces were in Lebanon before the arrival of the US troops. How could Arab Troops be asked to withdraw from Arab territory without making the same request of foreign troops. The MNF troops would be safe if they returned to their ships.[46]

Rumsfeld noted that these words were 'adamant and somewhat ominous…awakening fears in the Administration that Syria was planning an attack on Israeli positions in southern Lebanon.'[47] What was particularly ominous about the Asad meetings was that the Syrian President was wielding power knowing that the US would ultimately leave Lebanon. The US response to these meetings with Asad and Khaddam showed that it was not prepared to negotiate its military presence in Lebanon or its military pressure on Syria until the time came to withdraw. Khaddam protested that the US Air Force's increased TARP Missions over northern Lebanon and in Syrian airspace illustrated US unwillingness to reach a diplomatic or military compromise. Rumsfeld responded that these missions were intended to ensure the USMNF forces' safety in Lebanon, police the infiltration and resupply of enemy forces with equipment and ammunition, both through Syria and in areas outside Syrian control.[48] However, while Rumsfeld argued that the US was taking its military decision exclusively in order to protect USMNF positions, by 1984, he had failed to convey to Asad or Khaddam the MNFII's purpose.[49] Unsurprisingly, Khaddam told Rumsfeld on 16 January that all that Syria could promise was non-engagement with any US or MNFII troops,

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[45] *ibid.* pp.1-2.
[46] *ibid.* pp.3-4.
[47] [Rumsfeld Mission. Highlights of Asad Meeting January 13], p.3.
[48] [Rumsfeld Mission- Follow up message for Syrians on TARPS], pp.2-3.
[49] 'La mission Rumsfeld purement exploratorie', 29 January 1984, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

provided that the TARP missions ceased and the US withdrew from Syrian-controlled territories.[50]

The Syrian meetings with the US in January reached a stalemate, with Asad and Khaddam remaining inflexible on the US TARP missions or a ceasefire with Israel. Rumsfeld insisted that the JCS should proceed with US reconnaissance of the Syrian positions as a measure to test Syrian reactions, advising that, once he had left Syria, the US should fly TARP missions over Syrian territories to push Syria's resolve to defend itself 'even though they [Syria] rejected this approach'[51] and 'if Syria fires at the aircraft or as a consequence against the MNF, US be fully prepared for vigorous response according to the rules of engagement.'[52] Rumsfeld believed that baiting the Syrians would test their dogmatic, anti-US rhetoric, ultimately proving to Washington whether or not Syria posed the degree of threat predicted. Accordingly, British Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe stated that he distrusted Rumsfeld's statements in February, arguing that 'Rumsfeld has not been as explicit with the Syrians as his remarks to us suggest.'[53] Reagan stated that these anti-Syrian actions were taken because 'I have a deep distrust of the Syrians in all this business.'[54] Meanwhile as the provocation continued, Khaddam was quoted as telling Lebanese Foreign Minister Salem that 'the US was "packing and leaving" and therefore Syria would simply "freeze" the situation in Lebanon.'[55]

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[50] [Rumsfeld Mission- Follow up message for Syrians on TARPS], pp.3-4.

[51] *ibid.* p.3.

[52] *ibid.*

[53] Telegram from Howe to Private Secretary Ricketts, [Message to President Reagan], 12:50pm 14 February 1984, #177, Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979- January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, p.1.

[54] Letter from Reagan to Thatcher, [Lebanon], 8 February 1984, Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979- January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, p.1

[55] [Demarche to MNF Governments], p.3.

Even though Israel recognized that the US was 'short of breath', Israeli Defense Minister Arens and Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir were adamant that they would have the financial and military support of Washington to remain in Lebanon while Asad pushed for control in Beirut. Moreover, Israel recognized that the possible withdrawal of the US and MNFII and Gemayel's abrogation of the ineffective May 17th Agreement would, in fact, provide direct justification for the IDF's continued and indefinitely defined presence in southern Lebanon.

Rumsfeld also stated that 'any hint of a willingness to consider replacing MNF with UN forces would be seen as weakness and would increase Syrian intransigence on basic settlement.'[56] Furthermore Arens stated:

> I think it's important to realize that the ambitions of the Syrian dictator Hafez El Assad are really unlimited - it's not a question of having certain grievances or plans which, once satisfied, will put him to rest.[57]

And:

> In light of the fact that, in this situation, Lebanon is incapable of fulfilling her international obligations and of preventing south Lebanon once again being turned into a terrorist base, Israel itself will determine the best ways to ensure its security.[58]

Rumsfeld Mission Part Two: The European partners

On 15 January Rumsfeld met with Howe to discuss the British short-term position on the MNFII, as well as the rumors circulating about Britain's possible return to a UN solution.[59] The British had never officially signed the initial MNFI or MNFII mandates and reluctantly joined with a limited force in 1983. The British had

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[56] Cable from Rumsfeld to Shultz, [Rumsfeld Mission. British Options for expanded UN role in Lebanon], 2:55am 15 January 1984, Cable #150259, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.2.

[57] [Interview with Defense Minister Arens on ABC Television], *Israel Ministry of Defense Archives*, Vol. 8: 1982-1984, #155, 19 February 1984.

[58] [Statement by the Prime Minister's bureau on the Israel-Lebanon Agreement], *Israel Ministry of Defense Archives*, Vol. 8: 1982-1984, #157, 5 March 1984.

[59] [Rumsfeld Mission. British Options for expanded UN role in Lebanon], p.2.

experienced many of the MNFII obstacles and failures that had characterized the 1983 operations, noting the aggressive military strategy's limited success. The Reagan Administration believed that British withdrawal from the MNFII in favor of the UN solution would strike a blow at the remaining tripartite MNFII partners' credibility. Rumsfeld warned Howe that 'present behavior is the worst of all worlds.'[60] As a last minute concession to Rumsfeld, Howe recommended that the UK would continue to state that the force *could* be recalled to the MNFII after being redeployed in the UNIFIL if deemed necessary and in order to extend the remaining MNFII participants' credibility.[61]

The US also wished to avoid being caught off-guard by the European MNFII partner which could potentially undermine the US's image as leader of the peacekeeping mission.[62] Only with a prearranged timeline and MNFII consensus on the UN solution would the US be happy to allow the other partners to retreat. This openness to considering the European force's eventual withdrawal was also countered by US wariness that the regional Arab neighbors regarded MNFII's 'wavering' as a sign of political and military impotence. In a handwritten letter from Walid Jumblatt and Sheikh Akl (Mohamed Abou Chacra), the *Druze* leaders pleaded that, while the internal *Druze* and Muslim factions continued to be 'attacked by the *Kata'eb* militia, shelled by the Lebanese Army, bombarded by the American Forces', they would continue to pursue an aggressive defence policy to fight for their survival. The two

[60] *ibid.*
[61] Letter from Howe to Thatcher, [Lebanon], 16 February 1984, PM/84/29, p.1.
[62] 'M. Mitterrand : je n'exposerai pas au-delà de la nécessité la vie de nos soldats au Liban', *Le Monde,* 14 February 1984 &'Reagan: Donnons une change a la paix au Liban', 27 January 1984, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

men pleaded for European intervention to remove the Gemayel-Reagan alliance that they saw overpowering the other parties and factions in Lebanon.[63]

The US, however, was reluctant to appear to have been forced to leave by its MNFII partners. By mid-January, MNFII participants France and Italy, as well as the regional Arab States, saw US withdrawal as imminent.[64] In response, the US issued a statement to London, Paris and Rome, insisting that 'it is especially important now, more than ever, that the MNF contributors stand together.'[65] Washington adamantly argued for extended support for Gemayel, albeit recognizing the hesitant attitude from Paris and Rome. The US argued that Gemayel was the most pragmatic choice of leader in Lebanon, especially given his aim of establishing a unity government and guiding the LAF against internal and external military opponents. Rumsfeld added that Gemayel's leadership ability would depend on 'external considerations' with specific reference to Syria and, further, that the MNFII partners must show their commitment to intervening in the future if Syria attempted to overthrow Gemayel.[66]

The tense negotiations and warnings arising from the talks signaled a fundamental breakdown between the US and the other MNFII participants. While US casualties and Lebanon's untenable situation remained the ultimate motivator for considering USMNF withdrawal, the split between the European and US partners in the MNFII was also undoubtedly placing considerable pressure on the Reagan

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[63] Letter from Jumblatt and Chacra to Thatcher, 1 January 1984, pp.1-2.

[64] Cable from Rumsfeld to US Embassies Worldwide, [Demarche to MNF Governments], 3:55am 15 January 1984, Cable #150500, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, pp.2-3.

[65] *ibid.* p.3.

[66] *ibid.*

Administration to such an extent that the US decided it now had to take all diplomatic or military decisions alone.[67]

Washington's final bluff: Syria and the eight-point security plan

Rumsfeld's attempts to warn the MNFII partners and Syria of the US resolve to protect the Gemayel government met with limited success. While Shultz's long, discursive cables to regional US embassies underlined the US desperation to find an appropriate opportunity to withdraw, Reagan and Shultz continued to oppose US withdrawal from Lebanon. Shultz stated: 'the problem in Lebanon is Syria. All of the evidence points to Damascus.'[68] Khaddam's aggressive rhetoric and insistence on standing up to US actions, specifically the TARP missions concerned Shultz, who believed that Syrian obstinacy would not allow a 'MNF withdrawal without damage to the credibility of our commitment to moderation and negotiation in the Middle East.'[69] The US continued to regard Syria as the key obstacle to a successful Israeli/Lebanese ceasefire and therefore as obstructing any possibility of Israeli withdrawal as well.[70] Shultz now felt that an immediate withdrawal or the Gemayel government's collapse could strike at the heart of the US' failed peace mediations, thereby leading to the MNFII's mandate's public failure. Shultz's determination that the US must not appear to be pushed out of Lebanon was bolstered by conversations with regional leaders 'in strictest confidence', declaring:

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[67] Avigdor Livni, 'L' Italia si ritira ma non abbandona i campi dei profughi', *La Repubblica,* 9 Febuary 1984 & 'M. Mitterrand rappelle que la France n'est pas au service de l'un ou de l'autre parti dominant au Liban', *Le Monde*, 9 February 1984.
[68] Cable from Shultz to US Embassies Middle East, [Secretary of State Communication], 3:55am 15 January 1984, Cable #150501, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.2.
[69] *ibid.* p.3.
[70] *ibid.* p.6.

President Mubarak, King Hussein and King Fahd have all privately told us in the recent days that any precipitous or pressured withdrawal from Lebanon would be disastrous. Not only for Lebanon but for the Middle East as a whole. They have urged us to stand fast. Gulf leaders have privately told us that Lebanon is a test case of western resolve in the face of aggression. Gulf confidence in the west would be seriously undermined by any withdrawal perceived as an admission of failure or weakness.'[71]

Shultz wanted to make Asad believe that the MNFII would stay indefinitely in an attempt to curb Syrian domination, or at least long enough for a staged withdrawal to occur that would allow the Reagan Administration to buy more time to ensure that the LAF and US allies in the region were prepared to handle Syrian aggression in Lebanon. As such, Reagan determined that the USMNF rules of engagement in January were based on a deterrence strategy to 'silence the sources of hostile fire' and 'destroy units in Syrian controlled territory firing into territory controlled by the Government of Lebanon.'[72]

To curb Syrian conviction about a US near-term exit, the JCS devised a plan which maintained the appearance of US military presence in Lebanon while secretly providing the blueprint for a quick withdrawal. The US increased its shelling of targets in Syrian-controlled territory in Lebanon through both naval gunfire and air support and simultaneously increased the public training programs with the LAF. This included increasing the counter-battery firing capabilities and accelerating and increasing military ammunition and weapon supplies to the LAF.[73] The US wanted to continue pressure on the Syrian forces while it arranged its timely withdrawal. The US shelling of Syrian targets and increased support for the LAF continued as the JCS

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[71] *ibid.* p.5.

[72] *ibid.* p.6 & Hallenbeck, 'Military Force as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy', p.170.

[73] Joint Chiefs of Staff Report, [Next Steps in Lebanon], 26 January 1984, CPPG Meeting 1/31/84 Lebanon File, Box 91834, William Burns Series, RRPL, pp.1-2.

and Weinberger were developing a timetable and strategy for a 'phase down of US military personnel ashore and a plan for continuing US military presence offshore.'[74]

Despite the aggressive veneer that Shultz put on US policy in Lebanon, the lack of US commitment to this strategy was illustrated by the Aley Ridge issue.[75] Gemayel, wishing to defeat the strengthening *Druze* and Syrian militias to the west of Beirut, began coordinating an LAF offensive in the region. Gemayel realized that the LAF was both too thinly spread and suffering from massive *Shi'a* troop defection, and therefore requested US offensive support. The US response differed significantly compared with Gemayel's previous request for US military support for the LAF during the Battle of Souk el Gharb.[76] This time, the Administration advised Gemayel to decide on a course of action without a commitment of MNFII or US support. It was a test of both the US' commitment to its recently-announced surge against the Syrian positions and of Gemayel's strength in controlling the LAF. If the US demonstrated its support through naval gunfire and air support, Gemayel would certainly proceed with the offensive, possibly drawing Syria further into Lebanon. The US believed that there was little chance of Gemayel surviving the SAF and pro-Syrian factions on his own in the long-term. This would lead to a war of attrition and the Reagan Administration was reluctant to become embroiled any further in the Lebanese conflict while it was considering a withdrawal:[77]

> If the US becomes actively involved there is a high probability that the MNF will suffer casualties and create further pressure in the US to withdraw. There is a high probability that direct US involvement will precipitate a pull-out of

[74] *ibid.* p.2.

[75] Cable from Howe to Rumsfeld, [Preliminary Thinking on LAF Operation], 30 January 1984, Cable #29778, CPPG Meeting 1/31/84 Lebanon File, Box 91834, William Burns Series, RRPL, pp.1-4.

[76] NSDD 103, [Strategy for Lebanon], 10 September 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat, NSC Records: NSDD Series, RRPL, p.1.

[77] [Preliminary Thinking on LAF Operation], p.6.

the MNF by the UK, at least. Failure would have potential for disintegration of LAF and possibly collapse of Gemayel.[78]

The Administration's bluff was finally called when the US failed to provide military support for Gemayel in the Aley Ridge Battle. The Administration's posturing illustrated vulnerability and sent clear signs to Damascus and the other MNFII partners that US troops would be withdrawn shortly.[79] Reagan, Shultz, Rumsfeld and the Administration knew that the MNFII partners were no longer aligned with the US and to stay ahead of the Europeans, on 15 January 1984, Shultz instructed all of the US Ambassadors in the MNFII partner countries to report on leaders' attitudes in an attempt to predict when Rome, Paris and London would announce their withdrawal.[80]

On 26 January 1984, the National Security Council met to decide the 'Next Steps in Lebanon' – that would turn out to be the penultimate NSDD mandate concerning US troops in the Lebanese Civil War. NSDD 123 directed, almost exclusively, that the US intervention's final push was to be focused on three key points; namely, improved LAF counter-battery capability, Lebanese control and training for counter-terrorism operations and increasing US supplies of munitions and heavy artillery.[81] These were then matched with US political maneuvers and a sanctioned strategy for the phasing out of the MNF in Lebanon. Shultz, Weinberger and the JCS were left with the task of determining when, if ever, it would be necessary to redeploy the USMNF back to Lebanon or if the US troops would be indefinitely redeployed in the MAU. While the program would require substantial

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[78] *ibid.* p.5.

[79] Bernard Guetta, 'M. Reagan nie que les États-Unis soient en train de "prendre la tangente"', *Le Monde*, 24 February 1984.

[80] Cable from Shultz to US Embassies Middle East, [Secretary of State Communication Part II], 3:55am 15 January 1984, Cable #150501, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, pp.8-9.

[81] NSDD123, [Next Steps in Lebanon], 1 February 1984, NSDD123 Next Steps in Lebanon File, Executive Secretariat NSC: Records NSDD Series, RRPL, p.1.

funding, it was noted that this would be easier to get through Congress on the basis that it represented a near-term phase out and eventual withdrawal of direct US involvement.[82] While the Reagan Administration believed that such a plan would suit Washington's objectives, it recognized that replacing actual US personnel with additional training for the LAF would not necessarily suit Gemayel. For the plan to succeed, Rumsfeld was advised to have Gemayel formally request the MNFII withdraw so that Shultz and Weinberger could develop the legislation for approval by Congress. Despite the optimism that the Congress would approve the personnel withdrawal, the increase in funding for the LAF and government of Lebanon was less certain. If the Administration could not manage this, Shultz feared that Gemayel would reject the MNFII's withdrawal and the US would have to face certain embarrassment or the perception of having failed in Lebanon.

US desperation about 'solving US problems in Lebanon and throughout the region' was clearly illustrated by Wat Cluverius, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.[83] Cluverius recommended that the US should exert active pressure on Saudi Arabia, given that Saudi Prince Saud al-Faisal and Lebanese Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Rafik Hariri, had devised the new security plan. On 6 February, a day after Lebanese Prime Minister Shafik al-Wazzan's resignation, Gemayel announced his unconfirmed support for the eight-point plan for national reconciliation and unity talks among factional leaders.[84] As part of this Saudi Arabian-sponsored security agreement,

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[82] *ibid.* p.2.
[83] Cable from Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department of State Wat Cluverius to Shultz, [Rumsfeld mission. Regional support for initiatives in Lebanon], 8:04am 14 January 1984, Cable #140812, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, pp.1-2.
[84] 'Gemayel souscrit aux huit points de l'arrangement seoudien', 17 February 1984, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

Gemayel acknowledged the MNFII's withdrawal and replacement by a UN-sponsored peacekeeping force.[85] If the eight-point security plan were to be adopted, it would mean abrogating the May 17th Agreement and pushing for all foreign forces, including the MNFII, to withdraw within a 3-month timeline. The US was hesitant about supporting the plan because it directly undermined US efforts in 1983 to broker the Israel/Lebanese Agreement and possibly threatened Israel until another security deal was secured. The French and British felt that the US had made considerable mistakes regarding the May 17th Agreement, not least because it gave Israel a strong position for rejecting any further proposals.[86]

If Asad signed up to the agreement, however, this could also mean a reduction in Syrian forces in Lebanon which was a key obstacle to US withdrawal, as outlined by Reagan and Shultz. Shultz's hesitance about supporting the security plan was illustrated in his communication to US Ambassadors of the MNFII partner countries, divulging that the Reagan Administration had evidence of Iranian and Syrian collusion to 'scuttle the security agreement' that was being prepared to handle the Lebanese context's factional divisiveness.[87] The French and British were shocked by the Syrian attempts to destabilize the negotiations around the Saudi peace plan, having believed that Asad would embrace the opportunity to abrogate the May 17th Agreement. British Ambassador to Syria, Ivor Lucas, hoped that this new plan would

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[85] Marius Deeb, 'Syria's Terrorist War on Lebanon and the Peace Process', (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003(, pp.94-100 & [Palestine Chronology December 1983- February 1984], *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol.13, No.3, 1984, p.235.

[86] Telegram from British Ambassador Israel Morberly to Thatcher, 2:10pm 13 February 1984, #35, in Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979- January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, pp.1-2.

[87] Cable from Shultz to US Embassy Middle East, [Secretary of State Communication], Department of State, Washington, 3:55am 15 January 1984, Cable #150501, Folder Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol. 1, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country File, RRPL, p.2.

offer Britain a way out of Lebanon.[88] Similarly, the French believed that all of the MNFII partners and other foreign forces should leave Lebanon and that another solution must be sought which included Walid Jumblatt and Asad.[89]

The realities of the Lebanese conflict and possibility of finding no other solution meant that 'the US wants to withdraw from Lebanon and the agreement provides the means to do so.'[90] Shultz argued that the security agreement could allow him to still be seen to have achieved success in 'political reconciliation, strengthening of the LAF and other GOL institutions and withdrawal of all foreign forces.'[91] US Ambassador to Lebanon, Reginald Bartholemew, on the other hand, illustrated the political deadlock between Jumblatt and Gemayel that neither the US nor the security agreement was able to break. While Jumblatt, speaking on behalf of the *Druze* and pro-Syrian *Al-Harakat al-Wataniyya al-Lubnaniyya* or Lebanese National Movement, signified that they were ready to adopt the proposed security plan, he would not do so under Gemayel's leadership.[92] As US support for Gemayel was absolute (due to the administration's desperate attempts to resolve the political stalemate and withdraw), the peripheral Lebanese factions, such as the *Druze*, supported by Syria, were even further alienated in the lead-up to reconciliation talks.[93]

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[88] Telegram from British Ambassador to Syria to FCO, [Lebanon], 11:20am, 18 February 1984, #93, p.1 & Telegram from British Ambassador to US to FCO, [Lebanon], 7:25pm, 18 February 1984, #587, Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979-January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, p.1.

[89] Report from British Foreign Secretary Howe, [Lebanon: The Next Steps], 2 February 1984, Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979-January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, pp.1-3.

[90] *ibid.*

[91] *ibid.*

[92] Joe Stork, 'The War of the Camps, the War of the Hostages', *Middle East Research Report,* MER133, Vol.15, June 1985, pp.3-22 & Cable from US Ambassador Lebanon Reginald Bartholomew to Shultz, [My meetings with Jumblatt and the Shaykh Aklat Ba'Daran January 9], 3:11pm 10 January 1984, Cable #101514, Folder Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, p.3.

[93] *ibid.* pp.2-6.

The MNF's final days

On 2 February Admiral John Poindexter met with the Crisis Pre-Planning Group (CPPG) to develop a resolution to the US/MNF and the Lebanese conflict, which proposed to put pressure on all factions regarding the issue of national reconciliation and deemed that the US must:

> (2) following full consultation with other countries present and participating in the Multinational Force, re-orient the United States contingent of the MNF so as to better demonstrate United States commitment to a unified and independent Lebanon which aids in reducing their exposure to hostilities, and (3) seeking the establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping force in the Beirut area.[94]

The Memorandum from McFarlane to Shultz, Weinberger, CIA Director William Casey and JCS Chair, John Vessey, on 9 February, mandated that the US Marines' withdrawal and redeployment would occur within 30 days. McFarlane noted that the analysis identifying potential obstructions to a smooth US withdrawal included: a widespread, anti-US terrorist campaign, a *Druze* assault on the Marines at Beirut International Airport, a dramatic increase in Israeli or Syrian forces in Lebanon, a full-scale civil war breaking out prior to the Marines' redeployment or Gemayel's resignation. Deputy Under-Secretary of State at the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Patrick Wright, believed that, while the US would continue to support Gemayel, 'it seemed unlikely in practice that he could survive as President.'[95]

Situation Reports from throughout February 1984 illustrated Lebanon's deteriorating military and political situation. US intelligence predicted a massive attack on the LAF 4th Brigade south of Beirut. West Beirut was reportedly controlled

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[94] CPPG Meeting, [Lebanon], 5pm 2 February 1984, White House Situation Room, Washington, Folder 'CPPG Meeting Thursday February 2 1984', Box 91834, William Burns Files, RRPL, p.4.

[95] Telegram from Wright to FCO, [Lebanon and the Middle East Peace Process], 12:49am, 24 February 1984, #628, in Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979- January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, p.2,

by Muslim militias who, under *Harakat Amal* leader Nabih Berri, were attempting to force Gemayel to leave office within six months.[96] The British Prime Minister wrote to Reagan, stating that she felt that his position was now 'difficult' and that it had been clear from the outset that 'any force used by our countries in the Lebanon should be clearly limited to the needs of self-defence.'[97] Thatcher did not feel this had been so. Jumblatt informed Washington that he could no longer guarantee that Western forces would remain safe in Lebanon, as it was unclear whether the MNFNII was a peacekeeping force or a pro-Gemayel force.[98]

The US troops' swift withdrawal was necessary to avoid becoming further entangled in the brewing conflict and, on 10 February, all non-military US personnel were evacuated under the Phase III evacuation.[99] The MNFII partners were furious that Reagan had not consulted them but was 'rather informing us of his decision.'[100] Similarly, US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lawrence Eagleburger, stated that it was now clear that 'the reputation of the US as an ally had suffered seriously in the region, particularly in Jordan and the Gulf States.'[101]

Thatcher wrote to Reagan with sage advice, stating that 'US involvement in the Lebanon is much greater than ours and I am the last person to indulge in back-seat

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[96] Situation Report, [Lebanon: Situation Report as of 110500Z Feb 84.], 5:00am, 11 February 1984, Lebanon File, Box 8, Crisis Management Center: NSC Records Series, RRPL, pp.1-2.
[97] Letter from Thatcher to Reagan, [Lebanon], 9 February 1984, Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979-January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, pp.1-2.
[98] [My meetings with Jumblatt and the Shaykh Aklat Ba'Daran January 9], p.3.
[99] Memorandum for Record from Brigadier General David Goodrich to Weinberger, [Beirut Update], 10 February 1984, & Situation Report, [Lebanon: Situation Report as of 0400EST 10 Feb 84.], 4:00am, 10 February 1984, Lebanon File, Box 8, Crisis Management Center: NSC Records Series, RRPL, pp.1-2.
[100] Letter from Private Secretary Ricketts to Thatcher, [Lebanon: MNF], 7 February 1984, pp.1-2 & Letter from Thatcher to Reagan, [Lebanon], 9 February 1984, Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979-January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, pp.1-2
[101] [Lebanon and the Middle East Peace Process], p.2.

driving.'[102] While congratulating Shultz on his work on the agreement, she stated that it was no longer relevant or useful for sustainable reconciliation and so should be removed from any discussions on Lebanon. Specifically, Thatcher stated that the time had come to include Syria in any future proposal, telling Reagan, 'I hope you will see your way to doing this.'[103]

While Gemayel saw the May 17th Agreement as imperative to US support in Lebanon, by 10 February, with the US' impending withdrawal, he began to maneuver closer to Syria in order to protect his government. On 11 February 1984, the US received intelligence of a Syrian order to a group of leftist Palestinian militias to attack a US ship stationed outside Beirut. US intelligence also showed that the Soviets had withdrawn their ships from the area that day.[104] While concerns regarding the Soviet influence were limited, US intelligence noted that two Soviet Military Assistance Groups in Damascus were relocating to the Bekaa Valley.[105] Khaddam continued to discuss Syria's 'categoric objection to the May 17th Agreement.'[106] The Syrian Foreign Minister called for the LAF to be disbanded and a grassroots 'Arab' army to be established with the assistance of Syria, the remaining pro-Syrian Lebanese Arab nationalists, such as the *Sunni* Nasserist militia, a*l-Mourabitun*, and

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[102] Letter from Thatcher to Reagan, [Lebanon] 16 February 1984, Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979- January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, p.1.
[103] *ibid.* p.2.
[104] Situation Report, [Lebanon: Situation Report as of 120500Z Feb 84.], 5:00am, 12 February, Lebanon File, Box 8, Crisis Management Center: NSC Records Series, RRPL p.2.
[105] *ibid.* p.1; [Lebanon: Situation Report as of 0400EST 10 Feb 84.], p.1 & [Lebanon: Situation Report as of 110500Z Feb 84.], pp.1-2.
[106] Working Group Situation Report No. 10, [Situation as of 1700 EST 13 February 1984.], 5:00pm, 12 February 1984, Department of State Operations Centre, Lebanon File, Box 8, Crisis Management Center: NSC Records Series, RRPL, pp.1-2.

the LNM.[107] A unified anti-*Kata'eb*/anti-Christian army would directly threaten Gemayel.

The Lebanese President knew that he could not withstand a military attack on the already-weakened LAF. Gemayel accepted the Saudi Arabian eight-point plan on 16 February, hoping to avert an SAF attack, thereby signaling his awareness that he no longer had the US or MNFII military force's unconditional backing. This acceptance of the security arrangement indicated Gemayel's decision to abrogate the May 17th Agreement thereby, similarly convincing the Syrian, *Druze* and *Shi'a* leaders of his commitment to begin negotiations for national reconciliation. While the eight-point plan was insufficient to guarantee that the Lebanese militias in West Beirut would cease their aggression toward Gemayel, Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal, was now able to garner sufficient support from Syria for a temporary ceasefire. This also indicated to Washington, Paris, Rome and London that the MNFII's mandate was no longer welcomed and was, in fact, extraneous to the Lebanese political conflict.[108] Withdrawal was not only imminent but the start of the US withdrawal from Lebanon was planned for 19 February, with all USMNF troops fully redeployed on the MAU by 15 March 1984.[109]

France submitted draft resolution 16351 for the establishment of a UN Force in Lebanon on 17 February, recommending that another UN-led force be founded, separate from UNIFIL.[110] The French tabled the resolution in the UN for foreign

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[107] *ibid.* pp.1-2.

[108] 'In Libano Reagan sbaglia', *La Stampa*, 20 February 1987.

[109] Telegram from British Foreign Secretary to British Ambassador Lebanon, [Lebanon MNF], 12:30pm, 19 February 1984, #94, Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979-January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, p.1.

[110] S/16351, Rev.1 became S/16351, Rev.2 on the 28 February 1984, proposing the removal of all foreign forces and the authorizing of UNIFIL to re-establish security in Beirut and the Palestinian refugee camps. Draft Resolution by French, General Assembly, [UNIFIL and Lebanese Situation], 28 February 1984, S/16351, Rev.2, UNARMS, pp.1-2.

forces' withdrawal, including themselves, to be replaced by an internationally-supported national reconciliation dialogue.

As UK Permanent Representative to the UN, John Thomson, claimed, it was clear that both French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson and President François Mitterrand wanted to remove France's 'military action' from Lebanon by 27 February 1984.[111] Cheysson argued that neither UNIFIL nor the monitoring force should be seen to be 'intervening in the internal affairs of Lebanon.'[112] The French consulted the Soviets over the proposed UN resolution. While the response was not wholly negative, the French were told that the Soviets 'would have preferred the French not go ahead' with the plan.[113] Rather, the USSR claimed that it would only consider the draft proposal in Lebanon if: first, the MNFII withdrew immediately and unconditionally; second, all MNFII Naval positions were removed out of Lebanon and Syria's range; and, third, no MNFII participant country interfered in Lebanon from that moment onwards.[114] While the British claimed adamantly to support a return to both UN monitoring and UNIFIL, the French grew suspicious.[115] A France/Britain divide developed as Paris saw the other MNFII partners underestimating the situation's gravity. The French wanted full British support for championing the UN

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[111] Telegram from Thomson to FCO [Lebanon: UN Options], 1:15am, 28 February 1984, #204, Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979-January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, pp.1-2.

[112] Telegram from Thomson to FCO [Lebanon: UN Options, French Draft Resolution], 1:35am, 28 February 1984, #205, Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979-January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, pp.1-2.

[113] Telegram from British Ambassador to UN to FCO, [Lebanon Options], 10:15pm, 17 February 1984, #177, Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979-January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, p.1.

[114] Telegram from Margeston to FCO, [Lebanon: French Initiative], 1:00am, 13 February 1984, #152, Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979-January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, p.2.

[115] Telegram from British Ambassador Miers to FCO, [UN Force for Lebanon], 12:10pm, 21 February 1984, #143, Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979-January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, pp.1-2.

Security Council resolution.[116] Conversely, the British perspective differed on this, and 'the Prime Minister expressed concern about the impression which may have been created in public that France…was taking credit for the idea of a UN force to replace the MNF.'[117] Nabih Berri met with Syrian-backed National Salvation Front leaders, Rashid Karami and Suleiman Franjiyeh, to discuss the situation and their attitudes toward the proposed new UN force. While these conversations were positive, all of the factional leaders demanded to know the details of the security agreement and the UN force's working relationship.[118]

Meanwhile, the Italian MNFII was entirely concerned with its own position and its eagerness to withdraw, whether or not the UN force remained.[119] The Italians began to withdraw their military equipment from Lebanon, while leaving their ground troops to protect personnel during their preparations for a comprehensive 20 February withdrawal.[120]

[116] Telegram from Howe to British Ambassador to the UN, [Lebanon Options: French Views], 6:13pm, 17 February 1984, Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979-January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, p.1.

[117] [Lebanon], pp.1-2.

[118] Situation Report No. 24, [Situation as of 1700 EST 20 February 1984.], 5:00pm, 20 February 1984, Lebanon File, Box 8, Crisis Management Center: NSC Records Series, RRPL, p.1.

[119] Gaetano Scardocchia, 'I cocci del Libano le ferite di Reagan', *La Repubblica,* 21 February 1984 & 'Les "Bersaglieri" et les "Marines" en instance de depart', 19 February 1984, *L'OLJ*, p.1.

[120] Situation Report No. 19, [Situation as of 1700 EST 18 February 1984.], 5:00pm 18 February 1984, p.1; Working Group Situation Report No. 21, [Situation as of 1700 EST 19 February 1984.], 5:00pm 19 February 1984, Department of State Operations Centre, Folder Lebanon, Box 8, Crisis Management Center: NSC Records, RRPL, p.1 & FCO Restricted, [Lebanon: SITREP at 0900Z], 22 February 1984, in Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979- January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, p.1.

Abrogation and Withdrawal

NSDD128 stated that 'the situation in Lebanon is fluid', directly referencing Gemayel's decision to abrogate the May 17th Agreement.[121] While the US felt unable to support this decision, the Reagan Administration's permissiveness meant that the US wished to be party neither to the Lebanese government's wider decisions nor the Syrian/Israeli conflict. The NSDD confirmed the US withdrawal's completion on the same day. The US' hands-off policy in effect meant that it would provide non-interventionist support, as it had the period prior to the MNFI or MNFII interventions. That is, the US would continue to sell arms to the LAF and Gemayel's government only if the government remained a strong US ally. The US would only consider support in the form of a possible humanitarian mission if a civilian massacre were to happen again. US military presence would only be provided to supply naval or air force support for an attack that endangered the US Embassy in Beirut or the US Ambassador's residence. No commitment was made to any further military intervention.

While the red line of 'large-scale killing of civilians' was referenced, the guidance was that the US would need to consider any claim's veracity and reserved the right to respond appropriately or not at all if it deemed it to be part of the internal factional conflict.[122] NSDD128 stated that all US Military training teams (of which there were 77 by 1984) would remain in Lebanon even after MNFII redeployment. It also mandated that the US would allow a Syrian-controlled Lebanese government if Gemayel agreed to it on the basis of promoting internal reconciliation. However, the

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[121] NSDD128, [Lebanon], 26 February 1984, NSDD128 Lebanon File, Executive Secretariat NSC: Records NSDD Series, RRPL, p.2
[122] *ibid.* p.1

caveat to this agreement was that the US would now hold Syria directly responsible for the Lebanese conflict's outcome or future.

Clearly, the Reagan Administration conceded to a Syrian-dominated Lebanon, illustrating a major policy reversal compared with Shultz and Reagan's aggressive anti-Syrian strategy that had characterized 1983.[123] While it was unusual for this to be outlined in the same policy document that gave tacit support for Syria in Lebanon (given the US belief that Syria had colluded in the US Barracks Bombing in October 1983) it importantly highlights the administration's pragmatic approach in renewing its credibility worldwide and moving on from the failures of the US intervention in Lebanon.[124] The NSDD concluded that the key US concern in the region was now re-oriented toward the regional credibility of state-sponsored terrorism:

> In view of the serious developments in Lebanon and the perceived erosion of U.S. credibility… We have lost credibility in the wake of state sponsored terrorism and we need to review on an urgent basis steps we can take to effectively counter state sponsored terrorism and bolster confidence in US commitments to Israel and our Arab friends.[125]

Israel's response to the change in security was less supportive. Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, stated that the signing of the eight-point plan and subsequent abrogation of the 17th Agreement was 'a blow to Lebanon's own sovereignty, to its people and to their chances of freeing themselves from the Syrian grip.'[126] US support for the abrogation did not surprise Shamir who had been contacted in January and February by the US to gauge Israeli response. While Israel would not publicly support

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[123] Memorandum from McFarlane to Shultz, [Draft NSDD on Lebanon], 24 February 1984, NSC Meeting February 24 1984 File, Box 91834, William Burns Series, RRPL, pp.2-3.

[124] 'Adoptant un ton tres dur a l'egard du regime d'assad: Reagan- Damas veut que le Liban devienne la Syrie', 4 February 1984, L'OLJ, p.1.

[125] *ibid.* p.3.

[126] David Shipler, 'Israel asserts it won't renounce security accord with Lebanese', *NYT*, 17 February, 1984, p.1.

the abrogation, Shamir and Arens had predicted Gemayel would crumble to Syrian pressure as soon as he knew he had lost US support.[127]

As a result Shamir's comments also implied that the Israelis would continue to occupy Lebanon, fearing that 'as long as there is no central Government capable of preserving South Lebanon and the security of northern Israel', the Israelis could not consider an unconditional withdrawal.[128] The security plan offered no limited long-term safety measures for the Israelis nor any proposition about the Palestinians and *Shi'a* factions' demilitarization in southern Lebanon.

Intelligence, much of it garnered from Israel, continued to indicate that there was an overwhelming radical Palestinian build-up in Beirut by 20 February.[129] While Gemayel's gamble to support the security plan had led to more constructive discussions than the May 17th Agreement could ever have hoped for among the internal leaders and Syria, this excluded anti-Arafat Palestinian fighters, such as *Al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li-Tahrir Filastin* (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - PFLP) and *Al-Jabha al-Dimuqratiya Li-Tahrir Filastin* (Democratic Front for the Freedom of Palestine - PDFLP), who returned from northern Lebanon. This renewed Palestinian presence unsettled the Israelis and Berri's *Harakat Amal*, leading to 'orders to kill any Palestinians they [*Amal*] encountered.'[130]

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[127] [Statement by the Prime Minister's bureau on the Israel-Lebanon Agreement], 5 March 1984.

[128] Statement by Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens in David Shipler, 'Israel asserts it won't renounce security accord with Lebanese', *NYT*, 17 February, 1984, p.1.

[129] Telegram from British Ambassador to Lebanon to FCO, [Lebanon], 9:30am 20 February 1984, #138, in Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979- January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, p.1.

[130] Situation Report No. 18, [Situation as of 1700 EST 17 February 1984.], 5:00pm 17 February 1984, Department of State Operations Centre, Folder Lebanon, Box 8, Crisis Management Center: NSC Records, RRPL, p.1.

At a meeting with Cheysson, Shamir stated that, if Gemayel abrogated the May 17th Agreement following MNFII withdrawal, Israel would consider all of the conditions placed on them by the MNFII partners, specifically the US, obsolete and that Israel would ensure its security with military means.[131] Curiously, Israel accepted Cheysson's proposal for a UN force to replace the withdrawing MNFII and that UNIFIL (in which Israel had little trust) would be moved to supervise the green line which separated Christians and Muslims in Beirut.[132] However, Shamir was unyieldingly in considering UNIFIL's control of any Beirut territory, instead wanting the IDF to continue controlling key military and strategic positions.[133]

The NSC meeting on 24 February 1984 outlined three final, critical issues that needed to be resolved. First, what position would the US take if Saudi Arabia adopted a more integrated approach with Asad in mediating the conflict? The NSC was concerned that security plan could lead to further Syrian political domination and ultimately control over Gemayel. Second, if Asad conditioned the plan's success on the May 17th Agreement's abrogation, would there be Christian support for Gemayel or the plan? It was clear throughout February that Gemayel was considering resigning in face of pressure from the Christian and *Kata'eb* leaders. The US needed to prepare a program in case the long-term pro-Western Lebanese President were removed from office and decide whether the US would continue the significant aid package to a new, pro-Syrian government. Finally, what would the US response be to the

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[131] Situation Report No. 25, [Situation as of 1700 EST 21 February 1984.], 5:00pm, 21 February 1984, Lebanon File, Box 8, Crisis Management Center: NSC Records Series, RRPL, p.1.

[132] *ibid.*

[133] Telegram from Thomson to FCO, [Lebanon: UN Options], 1:34am, 25 February 1984, #202, Internal Situation Israeli/Lebanese Hostilities File, UK-Lebanese Relations July 1979-January 1984 Folder, PREM 19/1297, UKNA, p.1.

possibility of a non-Christian, Muslim or *Druze* attack across the green line on Gemayel and the Christians in East Beirut?[134]

Ultimately, the US realized that the Lebanese situation was far too complicated to be able to predict the outcome in the coming months or years and the Reagan Administration decided that there needed to be significant distance to prevent the assumption of any further US obligations in Lebanon. Two days after the NSC meeting, on 26 February 1984, the US completed its withdrawal from Lebanon. Shultz summed up the US position on Lebanon, stating:

> I can't resist using that old image that the light you see at the end of the tunnel may be the train coming towards you. The situation in Lebanon is marked by violence, and is in no way satisfactory and is not at all what we have been trying to help bring about. It would be rash to say anything particularly optimistic at this point in time. The twists and turns in Lebanon are such that it is very difficult to predict. Just as you work on things and they seem about to jell, then your hopes are dashed… At this unpleasant juncture, something positive may develop, if people just get fed up enough with the conditions under which they exist.[135]

It was hoped that the Lausanne conference on 18 March 1984 would bring about renewed optimism amongst the Lebanese factional leaders and lead to a long-term sustained ceasefire and the construction of a unity government based on the 16 February security plan principles. However, as with previous talks between Lebanon's 'godfathers', few tangible solutions were secured. Indeed, as with the May 17th Agreement, the negotiations still failed to be truly representative of all of the factions involved in the Lebanese Civil War. Syria's conspicuous presence was the key difference to the negotiations as many, if not most, of the leaders at Lausanne saw the Syrian solution as serving their most immediate needs. Khaddam stated at the talks:

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[134] Minutes, [NSC Meeting on the Middle East], 24 February 1984, NSC Meeting February 24 1984 File, Box 91834, William Burns Series, RRPL, p.1.
[135] George Shultz's comments on Lebanon (Boston) in Bernard Gwertzman, 'Washington Frustration', *NYT*, 17 February 1984, p.1.

I think the Syrians believe that if they can succeed in bringing order to Lebanon, the world will look to them to be kingmakers for the whole region. The Syrians have always wanted to have Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians under their wing. After this, they will be one-third there.

While the Lausanne conference ultimately failed to bring about long-term peace, it somewhat put into perspective the Reagan Administration's failed attempts to broker peace in Lebanon.[136] The talks illustrated to the US that the factional Lebanese leaders were not ready for reconciliation, that many of the communities wished to make inter-communal arrangements without foreign influence and that Syria was now firmly in control.[137]

Conclusion

By 23 March 1984, McFarlane and Rumsfeld's public communications had met with moderate success in making US involvement in the Lebanese conflict appear a component of the Administration's wider Middle Eastern tensions and the complicated Arab-Israeli conflict. However, within the White House, alongside growing concerns over the Iraq-Iran conflict and the war's impact on US oil pipelines, the Lebanon intervention was seen as a failure of the Reagan Administration. As the US Administration had removed itself from direct military involvement in Lebanon, Gemayel had also illustrated his pragmatic approach to saving his presidency by moving closer to Asad.[138] US attempts to curb Syrian influence in Lebanon had patently diminished and Gemayel was no longer under US pressure. The Reagan Administration moved its focus to supporting Jordanian King Hussein's pursuit of a

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[136] Giorgio Signorini, 'L' Egitto rientra in scena. Reagan, quanti errori in Libano', *La Repubblica*, 24 March 1984.
[137] Cable from McFarlane to Rumsfeld, [Information Support Cable for March 23 1984], 12:20am, 23 March 1984, Cable #0822353, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, RRPL, pp.1-3.
[138] 'Vertice tra Assad e Gemayel oggi a Damasco', *La Repubblica,* 19 April 1984.

wider Arab-Israeli peace settlement in order to provide a measure of credibility for US policy in the Middle East.[139] It was no longer because the US believed that Lebanon was a mere extension of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but rather that it was easier to remain 'strong' on the issue of a peace settlement that included Lebanon as only a small but volatile component.[140]

The MNFII's final phase, which began on 27 December 1983 with the Reagan Administration's internal discussions, was characterized by an inherent policy discontinuity and an unstoppable momentum toward complete withdrawal. While Shultz and Reagan belligerently resented being forced to withdraw US Marines from Lebanon, both the President and Secretary of State accepted this decision's inevitability. Reagan, in particular, had borne the weight of the Long Commission Report's condemnation of the operations and decisions made under the MNFII, which the US had almost autonomously led. Despite the reluctant acceptance that the MNFII would be disbanded, Reagan and Shultz wanted to prepare the political and military environment in order to minimize the damage done to the US' image by withdrawing. It was an inescapable reality that the US would have to moderate its views on Syrian influence as Gemayel moved slowly toward Asad and the Saudi Arabian-proposed security initiative.

By February 1984, US decision-making lacked all of the assertiveness that it represented under the MNFI and the MNFII throughout 1983, due to the overwhelming war weariness and growing protests from the US public and congressional limitations, a combination that eventually led the Reagan Administration finally to recognize that the US' military role in Lebanon and the

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[139] Andrea Robilant, 'Hussein e Mubarak da Reagan. I marines resteranno', *La Repubblica*, 15 February 1984.
[140] [Information Support Cable for March 23 1984], pp.1-3.

MNFII mission were both at an end. It was no longer seen as worth enduring future security threats against US Marines and personnel in Beirut once Shultz and Reagan realized that the situation was untenable. The Lebanese conflict had proven too complicated and dangerous for any future victories and the US now had to consider its credibility throughout the Middle East and internationally. The US Marines' final withdrawal and the MNFII's disbandment by the other MNFII partners drew to a close a questionable mission in international peacekeeping.

In Reagan's candid, emotive hand-written note on 9 April 1984, he summed up the MNFII intervention in what he called 'that troubled place' where 'centuries of hatred was too much for all of us.'[141]

> Put very simply we and our allies, the French, Italians and the British agreed to help maintain order and stability in Beirut while the new government established itself. We provided, in addition to the Marines, an army training unit to help Lebanon have a capable military force…It is almost impossible for us to imagine the savagery to which the people of Beirut had been subjected and what a change was made by our presence…The Lebanese government which would not exist had we not been there, cancelled the agreement with Israel under pressure from Syria. It is now meeting with and seeking a consensus with the dissident factions. We are willing to help diplomatically if we can but the purpose served by our military presence no longer exists…No, we didn't reach our goal we sought in Lebanon but at least they are talking to each other for whatever reason it's worth and even that would not be taking place if we hadn't been there. Yes, our Marines are coming home—but only because they did all that could be done.[142]

Finally, the Reagan Administration was forced to wonder whether the US had made any real difference in Lebanon's political or military context through its intervention. The attempts to shape and structure Lebanon's landscape throughout January and February 1984 merely proved that this was not so. Israel's northern border's security was still threatened, the factional violence between Lebanese religious groups

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[141] Memorandum from White House Chief of Staff Jim Baker to Assistant to the President Dick Darman, [Ronald Reagan's Handwritten Notes], 9 April 1984, Box 91834, Jim Baker Series, RRPL, p.1.
[142] *ibid.* pp.4-7.

continued and Syrian domination of Lebanon was inevitable. The MNFII arrived in Lebanon in September 1982, finding a volatile, complex context and left behind an equally divided one.

Conclusion

On 1 September 1982, between two Multinational Force interventions in Lebanon (MNFI & MNFII), President Ronald Reagan declared to the US public his administration's commitments to the Middle East peace process. In announcing the unwavering obligation he felt toward Lebanon, the US president quoted Romans 14:19, stating that he would 'follow after the things which make for peace';[1] yet seeking peace in Lebanon was a pledge that would thrust Reagan into the most difficult days of his presidency.[2]

This thesis has advanced the existing, limited histories surrounding the US-led MNF and the policies surrounding the force's operations in Lebanon by illustrating how the executive White House decision-makers failed to understand the complicated Lebanese context. As a result, the Reagan Administration never correctly engaged with the internal Lebanese conflict, rather seeing it as a by-product of the regional Arab-Israeli tensions. This thesis maintains that the MNF was ill-suited for Lebanon's volatile civil war, where the internal sectarian violence was supported by regional interests and agendas. The Lebanese Civil War was, from the beginning, an unpredictable conflict and US intervention demonstrated equal measures of uncertainty. Had Reagan and Secretary of State, George Shultz, foreseen the mission's humiliating demise, these two leading decision-makers would never have

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[1] Reagan Speech, [Address to the Nation on United States Policy for Peace in the Middle East], 1 September 1982, Public Papers, Online: http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1982/90182d.htm, Accessed 20 March 2014.
[2] Michael David Woodward, 'Ronald Reagan: A Biography', (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2012), p.140.

established the MNF. The self-styled libertarian socialist, Noam Chomsky, made a speech in Beirut in 2010 about US Foreign Policy in the Middle East. He stated:

> Now when the United States vetoes a resolution, it's a double veto. First of all, it doesn't happen, and secondly, it's vetoed from history… That's one of the prerogatives of an imperial power. You can control history as long as you have a submissive intellectual class, which the West does have.

Extraordinarily, Chomsky's critique of US decision making in the Middle East failed to even make a passing mention of the MNF or US intervention in Lebanon. Seemingly this statement holds true if even the greatest critics of US policy has fallen victim to forgetting the MNF's impact in Lebanon. Could this mean that one of the Reagan Administration's most significant foreign policy blunders has also been vetoed from Chomsky's history? Chomsky continued:

> You see it every day in the newspapers. The United States is an honest broker and neutral arbiter trying to bring together two sides which are irrational and violent. They won't agree and the United States is trying to settle the conflict between them.

Indeed, if the Lebanon intervention has taught the world anything, it is that this image must be created with caution. The US entered a highly volatile conflict and in its ambiguity and naivety the intervention exacerbated the instability. Therefore why did Reagan and Shultz risk US casualties for Lebanon? If Reagan or Shultz had foreseen the negative impact that the intervention would have on the Administration, it would not have risked US domestic and Congressional disapproval as it did.

To this, and given that Lebanon was not of vast strategic importance as a US ally, the first research question asked why Reagan risked a long-term, high casualty conflict. The Vietnam War legacy had impeded the US President's sense of absolute power through the obligatory congressional approval process under the War Powers Act. Vietnam also warned any subsequent presidents that, if they did launch a military

intervention, there was a significant risk of becoming entangled in a protracted and possibly humiliating war. Lebanon in the 1980s was one of the most, if not *the* most, volatile and complicated contexts, which offered absolutely no guarantee of success to any international mission, peacekeeping or otherwise. Therefore, why did Reagan seek to prove himself and the US administration in Lebanon? The answer to this is twofold. First, Reagan wanted to leave his indelible mark on the Arab-Israeli peace process, just as his predecessor, President Jimmy Carter, had done with regard to the Israeli-Egyptian peace process in 1979. The Arab-Israeli conflict provides a rite of passage for every US President in making progress on the Middle East's regional issues. While Carter had pursued a non-interventionist, diplomatic policy in bringing Israeli Prime Minister, Menachem Begin and Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat to the negotiation table, this diplomacy was incongruous with Reagan and his administration's policy style. Rather, direct confrontation and a neoconservative view of foreign policy, through the abundant use of military force, characterized the Reagan years. Second, Carter's legacy and its influence on the Reagan Administration should not be overlooked. The Camp David Accords' successful completion and the Multinational Force and Observers' (MFO) subsequent establishment during Reagan's first months as president set a high moral precedent in respect to US-Middle East policy, one which Reagan needed to work hard to achieve. Reagan thought that if Israel and Egypt could reach a peace negotiation under Carter, so too could he broker peace with Israel's other Arab neighbors, Syria, Lebanon and, more importantly, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).

The second research question focused on the primary drivers of White House decision-making and queried whether or not the public justifications of the MNF's deployment accorded with the Reagan Administration's underlying motivations. This

thesis argues that Reagan did not initially see Lebanon as a foreign policy frontline and therefore further questions why the US stayed in Lebanon as long as it did, even when the results proved catastrophic. To answer this, it is important to divide the deployment into the two policy periods, defined by the MNFI and MNFII.

The MNFI was mandated to oversee Yasir Arafat and the PLO's safe removal from Lebanon, which had been agreed under US Envoy Philip Habib's ceasefire mediation in August, 1982. This policy's key driver was exclusively based around making headway on the Israeli-PLO relationship. The MNFI was a restricted peacekeeping and monitoring force with a defined purpose and a limited deployment strategy and period. With the seemingly successful MNFI mission, Reagan was self-congratulatory about his administration's attempts to secure sustainable measures regarding the peace process. Reagan saw the successful removal of the PLO from Beirut as an important step toward broader Arab-Israeli peace talks.

The MNFII was far more complicated. Firstly, the Sabra and Shatila massacre of the Palestinians and the assassination of pro-Israeli Lebanese President-elect, Bachir Gemayel, threatened not only the possibility of peace talks regionally but also the Reagan Administration's credibility as the leading peacemaker globally. If the events from 14-18 September 1982 escalated the Lebanese conflict and further ignited an Israeli-Syrian confrontation, then all of the MNFI's purported successes would be discredited. Reagan felt, 'there is no alternative to their [US Marines] returning to Lebanon.'[3] The policy driver was therefore not about Lebanon's stability but what the opportunity costs were if Reagan either failed to intervene or attempted to withdraw.

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[3] [Address to the Nation Announcing the Formation of the New Multinational Force in Lebanon], 20 September 1982, Public Papers, Online: http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1982/92082f.htm, Accessed 20 April, 2014.

Second, the MNFII's mandate was ambiguously created to provide the US with greater flexibility with regard to time and strategy compared with the exclusive monitoring and mediation role by which a traditional peacekeeping force is limited. The numerous incremental policy addenda were driven by the need to protect US credibility in the face of growing opposition and the MNFII's failure to control any part of the conflict. Credibility was an essential part of this because Lebanon represented a highly publicized, visible conflict in which US intervention was being judged and challenged by the international community. Reagan and Shultz, as the architects of US policy in Lebanon, continually entangled themselves and the administration's credibility in the conflict, both militarily and diplomatically. This fused the two key decision-makers to the integrity of the US mission and also to the successful fulfilment of its objectives. Failing on one policy front would lead to a failure across other areas, both regionally and internationally.

The third research question asked whether or not the use of military force led to the failure of the MNFII and the Reagan Administration's policies in Lebanon. This thesis concluded that the MNFII mandate was purposefully established in respect to its ambiguity to allow the US Administration flexibility regarding the methods for solving the Lebanese crisis. While Washington continued to justify the incremental escalations and adjustments to the USMNF's military strategy on the grounds that US troops needed to respond proportionately to the threat that they encountered, this policy bonded the US to Lebanon. The constant military escalations that characterized US policy in Lebanon in 1983 allowed the Reagan Administration to engage more directly in 'aggressive self-defense', 'vigorous self-defense' and 'somewhat leaning

forward.'[4] Driven by the need to implement the MNFII's initial mandate, and the broader US desire to demonstrate its commitment to Arab-Israeli peace, the US military strategy escalated beyond any peacekeeping or peacemaking mission. The ultimate consequence of this was that the USMNF transformed itself into an active participant in the Lebanese Civil War. No longer was political or military neutrality the foundation of US policy but, rather, the USMNF and US military took aim at the Syrian Armed Forces (SAF) and Lebanese *Shi'a* groups that Washington linked to both Syria and Iran. The research demonstrated that the use of military force in Lebanon was a clumsy decision that invariably led to a protracted mission that aggravated internal tensions within the country, arguing that the Reagan Administration failed to understand adequately the Lebanese Civil War's internal sectarian dynamics or the role that Lebanon's unique confessional system played in the conflict's continuation. That is, the MNFII's failure and subsequent withdrawal in February 1984 was less due to the force's daily operational ability than the fact that the broader military strategy failed to recognise the Lebanese system's internal elements.

The final catalyst that led to US withdrawal from Lebanon was the 23 October, 1983 Marine Barracks bombing - an attack that was an inevitable outcome of Washington's aggressive interventionist policy. Even though Reagan symbolically took the blame for the US casualties in Lebanon on 27 October, 1983, the Department of Defense Report on Lebanon ultimately found the US Commander in Chief, European Command, General Kelley, responsible for a failure to implement an accurate chain of command and for not recognizing the emergent threat of anti-US

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[4] Cable from Shultz to Rumsfeld, [Short term strategy for Lebanon], 3:21pm, 28 December 1983, Cable #366307, Rumsfeld Middle East Mission Vol.1 File, Box 45, p.4 & [NSDD 103 Strategy for Lebanon], 10 September 1983, NSDD103 File, Box 91291, Executive Secretariat Records: NSC Country Series, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library (hereafter RRPL), p.1.

'terrorist' attacks. This thesis contends that it was far from being the commander's fault alone. There should have been a continued awareness of the civil war's internal and volatile dynamics, such that any decision made in Washington took into account the possible consequences of military escalations and bias against certain actors or parties in Lebanon. Furthermore, as had occurred during the final years of Carter's presidency, the Reagan Administration failed to accurately gauge the threat coming from the growing anti-American Islamic movement sponsored by Iran. Instead, the Reagan Administration constructed aggressive military policies without taking any measures to ascertain if these were, in fact, making the Lebanese situation or the anti-American context more stable or merely aggravating matters, until it was too late.

As this thesis is ultimately a critique of the Reagan Administration's executive level decision-making in Lebanon and the MNF's subsequent establishment, it is important to consider the commonly-employed judgment criteria. Most of the key academic works relating directly to the MNF, regard the force as an abject failure for US policy because critics see the Reagan Administration's attempts in Lebanon as careless, ambiguous and ignorant.[5] This thesis does not entirely disagree with these assumptions but does illustrate the need to qualify such broad generalizations. If, for example, the MNFII's initial mandate in September, 1982 was compared to the outcomes that the force had produced by February 1984, then this would most certainly lead to a broad judgment of failure.

However, because the two forces' operational strategy underwent numerous phases, considerable policy addenda and constant changes, the MNFI and MNFII

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[5] Richard Nelson, 'The Multinational Force in Beirut', Augustus Norton, 'The Demise of the MNF', Geoffrey Kemp, 'The American Peacekeeping Role in Lebanon', in Anthony McDermott and Kjell Skjelsbaek, *The Multinational Force in Beirut, 1982-1984*, (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991).& Ramesh Thakur, 'International Peacekeeping in Lebanon: United Nations Authority and Multinational Force', (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987), pp.11-121.

must be assessed in more detail. For example, the MNFI's establishment led, in simple terms, to significant progress on the Israeli-PLO frontline. The following MNFII Phase One set out to achieve peacemaking objectives with merely the *threat* of military retaliation and thereby ended up becoming a helpless interposition force between the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) and SAF. The judgment of Phase Two should be based on different grounds; namely, the failure of Shultz' policy duality in the use of force while trying diplomatically to negotiate the May 17th Agreement. Phase Three set out pre-emptively to target Syrian positions and justify a US offensive or 'aggressive self-defense' mission. From the USMNF commander's perspective, this escalation was successful, yet whether or not it served US interests is another matter entirely. The MNFII and US's failure was that they were drawn into the Lebanese conflict too easily.

It is also important to note the differences between theory and practice between legislative and executive decision making in the US during Reagan's years in office. Reagan was often comically portrayed as belligerent cowboy who preferred confrontation over diplomacy but this image is oversimplified and does not take into account the influence of the Shultz who played the key role in shaping US foreign policy, particularly in regards to the Middle East. The Carter Administration's seemingly soft-handed approach to the Iranian hostage crisis left Carter looking politically impotent and internationally weak. Reagan was determined that his Presidency would not to be plagued by the image of hesitance but rather one of international power and prestige. Shultz, therefore, was Reagan's ideal deputy. Not only was he the leading architect in the use of military force but also resolute in his confrontation with the Administration's opposition internally and internationally. Shultz, far more than Haig, shaped and guided Reagan's policy decision making so

much so that he ultimately alienated Secretary of Defense Weinberger from the President's inner circle and persuaded the Joint Chiefs of Staff to continue the military escalations in Lebanon against Weinberger's advice. This is important when examining the Lebanese case study through a bureaucratic approach as Shultz's internal manipulation of the executive decision makers, and Reagan specifically, not only led to the US pursuing a disproportionately aggressive military policy in Lebanon but also pushed the Reagan Administration back to a pro-Israeli Middle East policy.

Overall, the US' initial objectives to reassert itself as the leading peacemaker in the Middle East could have been achieved if the policy-makers had foreseen the events of the second half of 1983 and withdrawn earlier. Reagan and Shultz should have learned this lesson from President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Operation Blue Bat. Had the US accepted that Syria would not readily withdraw from Lebanon, and then altered their objectives accordingly, they could have withdrawn before the 23 October, 1983's tragic events, perhaps with the same glory that the Reagan Administration experienced following the MNFI's withdrawal. Rather, the situation led to a short-sighted policy that was aggressive and reactionary rather than aimed at creating a sustainable peace.

The conceptual implications of this short-sightedness directly contributed to the incremental decision-making and prospect theory approaches rather than simply applying a neo-conservative theoretical model that is often attributed to the Reagan Administration's international foreign policy. This research recognizes that Lebanon, as a policy context, was neither about Reagan's international democratic revolution, nor from the onset, particularly linked to a confrontation with the Soviets, rather, US

foreign policy in Lebanon evolved as a cumulative program of smaller, incremental policy phases and addenda.

An examination of US-Lebanese relations in the early 1980s was undertaken, with the research arguing that, while Lebanon was initially seen by Washington as a an extension of the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Lebanese intervention as a policy in itself became a thorn in the side for the Reagan Administration. On becoming president, Reagan inherited an already present and worsening context in Lebanon. In spite of the events of 1981, including the Battle of Zahleh and the Israeli-PLO conflict in Southern Lebanon, there had been no determination for Reagan to enter the civil war. This thesis argues that Reagan did not see Lebanon, in itself, as a leading policy concern until the Israeli invasion under Operation Peace for Galilee. Lebanon was a policy afterthought, which only presented itself to the Reagan Administration because of the Israeli invasion. The administration fundamentally saw Lebanon as a sandpit in the Arab-Israeli playground. The Israeli operation presented a potential opportunity to create a path for the Reagan Administration to become more actively involved in the Arab-Israeli peace process. The Reagan Plan, which was announced on 1 September 1982, explains much of the US' policy vision in Lebanon in terms of both the US' intervention under the MNFI and the subsequent MNFII.

> So, in May I called for specific measures and a timetable for consultations with the Governments of Egypt and Israel on the next steps in the peace process. However, before this effort could be launched, the conflict in Lebanon pre-empted our efforts.[6]

Nowhere in the Reagan Plan did the US President discuss the Lebanese conflict as an entity in itself which, even though aggravated by the regional proxy wars, was also driven by internal sectarian divisions that were independent of the wider Arab-Israeli

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[6] [Address to the Nation on United States Policy for Peace in the Middle East].

issues. As the US pursued this broader opportunism, Lebanon evolved into the policy frontline for US foreign policy regionally.

With this opportunism came the undeniable threat that the unstable, uncertain Lebanese context might not be the best place to base the Administration's Middle East foreign policy goals. The impact of ignoring the internal dynamics would ultimately realize this threat, thereby greatly impairing the administration's attempts at peace. The divisive consociational and sectarian political context would lead to the US becoming entangled in the domestic Lebanese politics and the Christian Lebanese President Amin Gemayel's political survival. Instead of exclusively focussing on the foreign forces' removal as a measure for assisting Lebanon's sovereignty, the policy ultimately became about reducing Syrian domination and removing the justifications for radical Arab hatred of Israel that the IDF presence legitimized. Upholding Lebanese sovereignty fundamentally meant unwavering US support for Gemayel, even after the Lebanese president revealed his inability to unify the Lebanese factional leaders or resist the regional interference.

Reagan and Shultz had intentionally ignored the UN framework and the presence of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) as they launched their military 'peacemaking' intervention force. This research on the MNF is an important part of the broader UN histories as Lebanon represented a conflict with an existing UN operational force attempting to mediate a peace that was directly undermined by a US-led military intervention. The MNFII's deployment fundamentally undermined UNIFIL which Reagan believed was patently unable to convince Israel to withdraw.

While the Reagan Administration argued that the Soviets would not pursue a UN solution to the conflict, it was Reagan and Shultz who had overlooked this option before it had even been proposed. Israel felt a deep mistrust toward the UN, especially

since the 1978 Operation Litani and the numerous UN Security Council Resolutions that reprimanded Israel's interference and incursions in Lebanon. Begin and Sharon argued that UNIFIL was allowing the PLO to continue rearming and preventing the IDF from removing the rockets that the Palestinians had positioned in South Lebanon. While UNIFIL had been President Carter's contribution to peace in Lebanon, Reagan and Shultz were committed to a non-UN solution, not because they succumbed to Israeli or Soviet pressure but rather to maximize the Reagan Administration's opportunity as the more effective, primary international peacemaker. In order to overcome the traditional peacekeeping operational limitations and launch the MNF, Reagan had to argue that UNIFL was impotent. This ultimately weakened the UN approach that tried to reach an international consensus in the conflict.

While acknowledging the broad ideological links that must be taken into account during the Cold War, this thesis tempers the degree to which this narrative is projected onto US decisions to intervene in Lebanon. This thesis shows that there were no tangible concerns over the threat of superpower confrontation in Lebanon. Although Syria represented the strongest Soviet ally in the region, SAF presence in Lebanon was a concern for the US less because it was a Soviet client than the threat that Syrian domination posed to Israel and the pro-American Lebanese government. Chapters Six and Seven illustrated that the initial, limited fears of Moscow's support for Syria subsided when the US realized that even its superpower opponent had little control over Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's strategy in Lebanon. Once this had been recognized, the Soviet dynamic diminished and the US adopted a more resigned policy of accepting Syrian domination. This supports both Westad and Khalidi's arguments that, by the 1980s, drawing crude ideological links between US-Soviet

actions and conflicts in the 'Third World' is inaccurate.[7] This research illustrated that there was a Soviet component to the Lebanese conflict, defined by the military support for Syria, but that this, in itself, would never have represented a primary reason for US intervention.

Undeniably, the Lebanese intervention occurred during the Cold War and during a particularly violent phase of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Both have created global policy frontlines for the US since the 1950s. However this thesis has clearly argued that Lebanon was not a strategic Cold War conflict. Given the US did play a role in worsening the tensions in Lebanon it should be questioned whether Lebanon was an anomaly in US policy or whether there is much to be garnered from using Lebanon as a lens to reexamine key historical events such as the Cold War, Arab Israeli conflict and particularly US influence internationally. To this, Hadar correctly argues that 'the boundaries between local, national, regional and international issues are blurred' particularly in a traditional Cold War reading of US policy in the Middle East.[8] Because of the regional and sectarian complexities that characterised Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s forcing a traditional 'Third World' Cold War reading of the context does not comprehensively outline the regional agendas that led to the US decision to intervene in Lebanon. This thesis adds to the caution of the emerging revisionist narratives argued by New Cold War historians such as Khalidi and Westad.[9] While Westad does not discuss the Lebanon case study specifically, this

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[7] Odd Arne Westad, 'The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of our Time', (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.331-363 & Rashid Khalidi, 'Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East', (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), pp.145-150.

[8] Leon Hadar, 'Sandstorm: Policy Failure in the Middle East', (New York: St Martin's Press, 2015), p.13.

[9] Odd Arne Westad, 'The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the making of our time', (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.331-363; Rashid Khalidi, 'Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East', (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), pp.145-150.

thesis supports his decentralization and regionalization of the Cold War methodology. This research argues that US foreign policy in Lebanon was incrementally shaped around the regional and later, as the US became tied to the success of Gemayel and the MNF's unrealistic goals, the local Lebanese context. The archival analysis proves that rather than simply being driven by confrontation with the Soviets in the Middle East, US policy in Lebanon was reactionary. This therefore provides a case study in the ways that other conflicts or engagements in the Middle East during Cold War should also be reexamined.

The research offers a unique primary archival study of US decision-making in Lebanon. A number of limitations must be noted. Given the lack of access to French, Italian and Arabic archival material, the thesis cannot claim to provide a comprehensive analysis of all of the MNF partners' policies in Lebanon. Also, unlike many other Lebanese Civil War narratives, this thesis does not attempt to cover comprehensively Lebanon's political and military landscape's complex inter-communal or internal sectarian dynamics.

However, the broad academic lessons from Lebanon are two fold. First, and most significantly, the Lebanon case study proves that US policy in the Middle East must be brought into the regional historical narratives of the region and not simply as a part of the often-argued pursuit for US global hegemony. The US intervention in Lebanon tempers the traditional Cold War analysis associated with the Reagan Administration. Second, the intervention in Lebanon demonstrates that the US' use of military force in the Middle East is not only an inefficient way of engaging with the inherent sectarian or regional complexities - that ultimately tied the US into the local conflict - but also that military policy is not always a frontline strategy. Academic opponents to US policy in the Middle East often conspiratorially argue that

Washington actively and militarily intervenes in the region to achieve broad ideological or resource goals. The incremental and reactionary escalations that occurred in Lebanon under the MNF demonstrate that there is not always a grand strategy in the use of force and that the strategic objectives of such military missions can be dangerously ambiguous, where the results are a surprise to even the highest level decision makers.

Though difficult to prove, Pintak directly links US policy in Lebanon in the 1980s to the growth of the anti-Western jihad movement throughout the 1990s and 2000s, both in the Levant and internationally. This thesis does not project such responsibility onto the Reagan Administration or MNF's failings in Lebanon but does, however, draw links between Reagan and Shultz's military policies and the targeting of US troops by radical Lebanese or regional groups positioned in Lebanon from 1983-1984. [10] As Reagan and Shultz moved forward in developing the interventionist policy, they did so without considering how blundering into a political landscape as fragile as that of Lebanon could lead to a direct US confrontation. However it is true that the contemporary US interventions and policy in the Middle East suggest that the practical lessons were not learnt from Lebanon. The more recent US interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan have been a greater learning curve for the US in relation to the Middle East than Lebanon served.

While critics of the MNF abound, they fail to argue whether or not another intervention force could have engaged with the divisive context any more effectively.[11] Certainly, UNIFIL had suffered from the same challenges, especially

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[10] Lawrence Pintak, 'Seeds of Hate: How America's Flawed Middle East Policy Ignited the Jihad', (London: Pluto Press, 2003), pp.196-206.
[11] Richard Nelson, 'The Multinational Force in Beirut', Augustus Norton, 'The Demise of the MNF', Geoffrey Kemp, 'The American Peacekeeping Role in Lebanon', in Anthony McDermott and Kjell Skjelsbaek, *The Multinational Force in Beirut, 1982-1984*, (Miami:

regarding the decisions about how to engage the various internal and regional actors without the use of force. This reflection is not made as a way of justifying the Reagan Administration's policy under the MNF, especially given that this thesis argues that little progress had been made in Lebanon when the US withdrew from an equally violent context in 1984. Rather, this thesis argues that a more detailed framework is required to analyze the MNF's peaks and troughs in the same way as the many Lebanese Civil War narratives divide the internal Lebanese and regional Arab and Israeli actors' phases, battles and policies. In a post 9/11, Arab Spring context, the findings of this thesis resonate with the dialogues of whether or not the international community, led by the US, should intervene in politically-divided, unpredictable contexts.

This research challenges the degree to which such policies would be morally right for either the nation in which the intervention is made or the 'peacekeepers' who intervene. Beyond the MNF, this thesis challenges whether 'peacemaking' is a viable proposition in a highly divided state. If so, it must further be asked whether the use of a military intervention is effective in delivering sustainable peace in the Middle East. As the Reagan Administration's forays into Lebanon and the MNF's use of military force in peacekeeping demonstrated, the inherent dangers present in such military interventions would intimate that it is not.

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