Research Report

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Forum: *General Assembly Fourth Committee*
Issue: *Stability in and sovereignty of Lebanon*

Position: *Chair*

Introduction

For Lebanon's first three decades ~~or so~~ of independence, the outstanding feature of its foreign policy was its amicable relations with numerous countries. In the early 1970s, about eighty diplomatic representatives were accredited to Beirut. Now Lebanon is said to be one of the 'most democratic countries' in the Arabic world and its political system (the consensus democracy) is supposed to enhance the political, social and economic equality between the religious and ethnic groups living in the country. Unfortunately, especially during the last decade, the political system itself is blocking reforms and is creating tension in society and between ethical and religious groups, ~~it~~ thus it works exclusively rather than inclusively and fails to implement its basic ideology. The civil war in Lebanon, which lasted from 1975 until the early 1990s, was also a representative war between regional players like Israel, Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Both Israel and Syria have invaded Lebanon in the past. Syria withdrew its troops following the Cedar Revolution in 2005, whereas Israeli troops withdrew from the 'security zone' in the south of the country in 2000. The withdrawal of the Syrian troops followed the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Opposition groups accused Syria of killing him. The UN has since demanded the dismantling of all armed groups, especially the military wing of Hezbollah. [1]

Definition of Key Terms

Stability: the quality or state of something that is not easily changed or likely to change; the quality, state, or degree of being stable as the strength to stand or endure**;** the property of a body that causes it when disturbed from a condition of equilibrium or steady motion to develop forces or moments that restore the original condition;[2]

[1] http://canvasopedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/lebanon-analysis.pdf
[2] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stability

Sovereignty: is understood as the full right and power of a governing body to govern itself without any interference from outside sources or bodies. In political theory, sovereignty is a substantive term designating supreme authority over some polity.[3]

Hezbollah: an organization of militant Shi'ite Muslims based in Lebanon, engaged in guerrilla warfare against Israel.

General Overview

The issue of Lebanese identity has been challenged since 2005, and is now taking a very dramatic turn in light of the current Syrian and Arab revolutions. The Arab Spring has brought back to the table the question of minorities, self-definition, identity, Arab nationalism, and the place of Islam in society – issues which have been frozen in the Arab world for several decades. This raises extraordinary challenges for Lebanese identity – the construction of internal consensus, of cohesion, peace and coexistence and the socio-political arrangements between communities are very difficult issues to address. With all communities under stress and political parties struggling for survival it is difficult to envisage the construction of trans-sectarian links and alliances.
The problem with the Lebanese army is also an urgent one. After the war, and especially since 2005, the independence of the Lebanese Army has been constrained by three key factors. Firstly, the army is not more powerful than other political or armed forces in the country, but is dependent on a consensus amongst them. When there is no consensus, the army is either paralyzed or threatened with implosion, as happened several times during the war. Secondly, even after the Syrian withdrawal in 2005 the army is still tied to the Syrian military leadership as a result of various treaties and agreements, through personal links between some senior officers, and because of the role of the security services. Thirdly, the army is reliant on links with Western donors, such as the US and France, through funding, equipment and training.
In May 2008, for instance, when pro-Syrian militias and Hezbollah stormed West Beirut, the army was neither willing nor able to react, as any response would have exposed internal splits, individual units would most likely have aligned factionally, and the overall military leadership would have been stripped of authority.
The army cannot take action to prevent incidents from occurring. It can repair damage in certain situations, if permitted by the political forces. If the political forces disagree fundamentally, the army will come under severe stress again. The army effectively acts as a peacekeeping force. Except in isolated cases, these constraints have prevented the army from operating like other Arab militaries with a clear political appetite.[4]

Following the February 2005 car bomb attack that killed former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and 22 others, the Lebanese government requested that the United Nations establish an international tribunal to prosecute suspects connected to the bombing. The United Nations Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) was formally established in May 2007 by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1757, which created the tribunal under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter. Since then, the tribunal, which is based in The Hague and funded jointly by the international community and the Lebanese government, has proceeded with preparations for the trial. While

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereignty
[4] http://www.c-r.org/accord-article/armed-groups-and-sovereignty-joseph-bahout

suspicions initially centered on elements connected to the Syrian regime, the investigation more recently has focused on Hezbollah.[5]

The chain of demonstrations that took place in Lebanon, called The Cedar Revolution, is of great importance when it comes to Lebanon's fight for independence. They were triggered by the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Haririr. The main goal was to put an end to the Syrian military occupation of Lebanon, which had lasted about 30 years (since 1976). Additional goals of the revolution were uniting all Lebanese in their fight for freedom and independence, ousting Karami's Pro-Syrian government, unmasking the killers of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and holding free and democratic parliament elections in the spring of 2005, free from Syrian interference.[6]
The 2005 Lebanese General Elections were the second elections in thirty years without a Syrian military or intelligence presence in Lebanon. These elections were the first in Lebanese history to be won outright by a single electoral block and were also the first to be monitored by the United Nations.
Summing up the future of Lebanon is highly dependent on the situation in Syria and the regional Iranian- Saudi power struggles. The current humanitarian and socio-economic situation will not be improved as long as the Syrian civil war is proceeding.

Major Parties Involved

Hezbollah

Syria and Israel

United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL): is a peacekeeping department of UN that monitors cessation of hostilities and helps ensuring humanitarian access to civilian population

Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL): it coordinates the work of UN in Lebanon; UNSCOL confers on a regular basis with different political parties, with Lebanese civil society and with the diplomatic community.

Timeline of Events

13 April 1975 – 13 October 1990	Lebanese Civil War
1976 -26 April 2005	Syrian occupation of Lebanon
14 February 2005	Assassination of Rafic Hariri
14 February — 27 April 2005	Cedar Revolution

[5] http://www.usip.org/publications/the-issues-lebanon-0
[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cedar_Revolution

12 July – 14 August 2006	2006 Lebanon or Israel-Hezbollah War
2011	Government collapses after Hezbollah and allied ministers resign.

Previous Attempts to solve the issue

For many years the United Nations has been assisting ~~and helping~~ Lebanon ~~with~~ in tackling various issues inside the country. Multiple resolutions (425, 426, 520, 1553, 1559) have been made that strive to make Lebanon stable and sovereign. Overall the Lebanese situation has been – and still is – very unstable, thus it was challenging to find any solutions that will not be only temporary. There have been peace negotiations between various countries, however so far the results are insufficient.

Possible Solutions

Demarcation of the border between the two countries and the formalization of Lebanese-Syrian relations through the establishment of normal diplomatic relations is essential. Otherwise, Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial unity and integrity, and political independence could be undermined or violated.
Also comprehensively addressing all the issues of Resolution 1559 would offer to the Lebanese government and the international community the~~ir~~ best chance of guaranteeing Lebanon's absolute sovereignty and political independence. Not only are the issues involved inseparably interwoven, they are also connected to wider regional policies and issues.[7]
The cooperation of the international community is also crucial. In particular, it must follow through on its pledge to provide a UN force and give serious training and technical and material support to the Lebanese armed forces and security services. Foreign governments and multilateral institutions should also strongly encourage reinvestment in Lebanon. Political unity is the key to stability, and pushing the country too far will sharpen internal divisions and ultimately prove to be counterproductive.
The final article of Resolution 1701 stresses "the importance of, and the need to achieve, a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East." Indeed, if the international community does not move forward to consolidate the resolution with further attempts at making peace in the region, it will eventually disintegrate in the face of an escalating regional conflict. A stable and peaceful Lebanon could contribute to a stable and peaceful region, but an explosive region would sooner or later end up destroying Lebanon. This latest war was only a symptom of wider and deeper conflicts. But by successfully treating the symptom the region and the international community could be encouraged to begin treating the underlying malady as well.[8]

Useful documents

http://canvasopedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/lebanon-analysis.pdf

[7] http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/reinforcing-lebanons-sovereignty
[8] http://carnegieendowment.org/files/PaulSalemArticle.pdf

http://www.exploringgeopolitics.org/publication_efferink_van_leonhardt_lebanon_hezbollah_military_social_political_rise_roles_shias_islamic_rule_iranian_revolution_syrian_influence_israel_amal_musa_al_sadr/

http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2016-05/lebanon_17.php

http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12454.doc.htm

http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12287.doc.htm

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_1559

https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/1636.pdf

https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/lebanon