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**The Lebanese Civil War, 1975-1990<sup>1</sup>**

Samir Makdisi and Richard Sadaka<sup>2</sup>



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2 American University of Beirut (AUB)

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**Samir Makdisi**

**Director, IFE**

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Samir Makdisi and Richard Sadaka  
American University of Beirut

### **Introduction**

The Lebanese civil war broke out in April 1975, twenty-nine years after the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon in 1946.<sup>1</sup> The civil war was finally settled in October 1989, under an accord of national reconciliation, negotiated by members of the Lebanese Parliament under Arab auspices in the town of Tai'f, Saudi Arabia. This agreement, known as the Tai'f Accord, was ratified the same month by the Lebanese Parliament. Actual fighting did not completely end, however, until a year later, in October 1990.

This study addresses basic questions relating to the Lebanese civil war with reference to the Collier-Hoeffler (CH) model (see table 2 and pp. 24-35). After explaining the pre-war conditions, the study examines the multiple parties to the conflict (a factor which makes the Lebanese conflict more complex than the CH model assumes) and differentiates three different phases of the war. It then evaluates the predictions of the CH model in analyzing the war's causes. It finds that religious, rather than ethnic, fractionalization is crucial to understanding the causes of the Lebanese civil war. External interventions are another significant factor in accounting for the causes of the war. Because economic explanations of the causes of the conflict are weak, the CH model, which gives great weight to economic fac-

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<sup>1</sup> Lebanon gained independence in 1943 but foreign troops did not withdraw until 1946. A minor civil conflict took place in 1958, lasting several months. See note 7.

tors, does a poor job of predicting the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war. Factors identified by Collier-Hoeffler which affect a civil war's duration, rather than its cause, are, however, helpful in explaining the relatively long length of Lebanon's civil war (16 years).

This study also briefly examines the goals and actual results of the Ta'if accords. It offers an assessment of the likely stability of this "sectarian" resolution to the conflict, taking into account continued Syrian military presence and strong political influence in the country.

## **The Pre-war Conditions**

### *Rapid Economic Growth*

The pre-war Lebanese economy grew rapidly during the years 1946 to 1975. The private sector, which was primarily trade- and services-oriented with no significant natural resource wealth, played the dominant role in economic development. Governmental policy was mostly non-interventionist and supportive of private sector initiatives. Domestically, a conservative fiscal policy was followed. Monetary policy began to play a role only towards the end of the pre-war period. Public sector management of economic enterprises was confined to a few public utilities. Externally, a free foreign exchange system had been maintained since the early 1950s, permitting the private sector to interact freely with the outside world. In sharp contrast, neighboring countries (and indeed many other developing countries at the time) maintained exchange controls and gave the public sector the leading role in economic development.

The Lebanese private sector has traditionally been enterprising. Under these favorable conditions for private sector initiatives, the national economy experienced a broad-based expansion in the pre-war period, while maintaining relative financial stability. Lebanon attracted foreign capital and enterprises supplemented by emigrant remittances from the Lebanese diaspora, especially from those living in the US and South America. The average annual rate of growth from 1950 to 1974 was estimated to be about seven percent. The annual rate of inflation was estimated to be about two to three percent until 1971; after that it tended to increase, averaging about eight percent in the three years prior to the outbreak of the civil war. Per capita income increased significantly, standing in 1974 at about \$1,200, one

of the highest levels for a developing country at that time.<sup>2</sup> Educational standards were also relatively advanced; for the same year gross school enrollment for the first and second levels stood at 74 percent. Again, this was a higher level than found in neighboring Arab countries, as well in many other developing countries.

Despite the robust economic growth, important socio-economic disparities existed. They were manifest in the strikingly uneven development among the various regions of the country, and in the limited progress made in narrowing the gap, in real terms, between the high income and low income groups. A study conducted in the mid-seventies indicates that for 1973-74 about 54 percent of the population could still be classified as poor or relatively poor, 25 percent as middle class and the remaining 21 percent as well to do and very rich.<sup>3</sup> This was an improvement over the situation prevailing in the early nineteen fifties. Compared to other developing countries, this inequality was also not overly pronounced.<sup>4</sup> However, it must be considered in the context of Lebanon's regional inequalities and their confessional dimensions. For example, the position of the middle class was much more salient in Beirut (dominated by Sunni Muslims and Christians) and the central mountain region (dominated by Christians) than in regions like the south, the Beqa'a, the northeast, and Akkar in the north (dominated by

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<sup>2</sup> For a review of pre-war economic and financial developments, see Albert Badre, "Economic Development of Lebanon," in *Economic Development and Population Growth in the Middle East*, eds. C.A. Cooper and S. A. Alexander, (American Elsvier, 1972); Samir Makdisi, "Flexible Exchange Rate Policy in an Open Economy, the Lebanese Experience, 1950-74," *World Development* 6, No. 7 (July 1978) and Samir Makdisi, *Financial Policy and Economic Growth, the Lebanese Experience*, (Columbia University Press, 1979).

<sup>3</sup> See Yves Schmeil, *Sociologie du Systèm Politique Libanais*, Grenoble, ed. Universitaire de Grenoble, 1976. This is referred to in B. Labaki and K. Abou Rjeily, *Bilan des Guerres du Liban, 1975-1990*, (Editions L'Harmattan, 1993), p.182.

<sup>4</sup> See Iliya Harik, "The Economic and Social Factors in the Lebanese Crisis," in *Arab Society, Social Science Perspectives*, eds. S. Ibrahim and N. Hopkins, (The American University in Cairo Press, 1985).

Shi'a and Sunni Muslims) where large land holdings and class distinctions were common.<sup>5</sup> This gave a clear confessional coloring to the question of inequity in income distribution, particularly in regard to the Shi'a community. As noted below, it is religious and not ethno-linguistic fractionalization that has had an important bearing on post-independence political developments.

### *Major Political and Military Tensions*

What is striking about the pre-war phase is that, robust economic growth and rising per capita income notwithstanding, the country faced major political tensions and confrontations. The underlying reasons are both domestic and regional. The domestic factor was directly related to the sectarian system for power sharing, principally among the three leading religious communities (the Maronites, the Sunnis and the Shi'a). This system has been in place since independence in 1943, although it was modified under the Tai'f Accord. While the constitution of the newly-independent state guaranteed equal rights to all citizens, Article 95 specified that, for a temporary but unspecified period, religious communities would be equitably represented in public employment and cabinet posts. The principle of equitable representation was not defined. However, an unwritten national accord reached among political leaders on the eve of independence specified that the post of president of the republic was to be held by a Maronite Christian, that of the speaker of the house by a Shi'ite Muslim, and the premiership by a Sunni

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<sup>5</sup> On prevailing pre-war conditions in the south see Farhan Salih, *Southern Lebanon, Its Reality and the Issues it Faces*, (Beirut: Dar Al Talia, 1973). - in Arabic.

Muslim. This arrangement was later incorporated in the Ta'if Accord. In practice, a sectarian formula was also applied to cabinet posts that, more often than not, were apportioned among the six largest religious communities in the country (and the Armenians who are considered a separate community). Other officially recognized religious communities were often excluded from cabinet representation. An overall balance between Christians and Muslims has been maintained in the cabinet to this day. Appointments to most, if not all, public administration positions have been subject to time-honored sectarian considerations, particularly higher positions that were to be equally apportioned between the two communities. Similarly, parliamentary seats were distributed among the various religious communities in accordance with an agreed sectarian formula which, on the whole, favored the Christian community. The Christian sects combined were entitled to 55 percent of the total number of seats.

The office of president carried with it substantial executive powers. For example, the president chaired the council of ministers and appointed the prime minister and cabinet members, albeit after due consultation with major political actors whose views could not be ignored. With such presidential (and other governmental) prerogatives, the Maronite community emerged as the single most influential religious community in the pre-1975 period. This was reinforced by the electoral law that assigned a small majority of parliamentary seats to the combined Christian communities led by the Maronite community. In practice, the powers enjoyed by the president's office translated into a comparative advantage in appointments for higher administrative positions.

Despite the presidential prerogatives, the need to preserve the delicate sectarian balance, particularly between the three major religious groups,

acted as a check on the powers of the presidency. When sharp disagreements arose between the president and the prime minister there were serious cabinet crises with sectarian overtones. More significantly, the sectarian balance implied that no one single political, religious, or politico-religious group (including the army) could impose its hegemony or ideology. This, as it turned out, had its positive aspect in that it tended to promote political liberalism, albeit in the context of the prevailing sectarian system. The pre-war years were characterized by periodic parliamentary elections (no matter how imperfectly conducted), religious freedom, relatively free expression and association, the peaceful change of presidents and cabinets, and the growth of sectarian and non-sectarian political parties. Nonetheless, the dictum of delicate sectarian balance led to the emergence of a weak state and, as a consequence, the inability to implement substantive administrative reforms. The prevailing political system tended to foster corruption, nepotism, clientism, and laxity in upholding the public interest when it came to conflicts with private interests.<sup>6</sup>

While the Lebanese political system was functional, it suffered from increasing domestic strains. Foremost were the constant domestic political calls by Muslim political leaders for a more equal power sharing between the Christian and Muslim communities. Such calls carried with them a potential shift of economic benefits in favor of the Muslims, arising from greater access to public sector employment as well as opportunities to participate in or control private economic enterprises that, to a large extent, were in the hands of the Christian community. The Maronite establishment tended to ignore such calls, fearing the political implications of even a limited loss of

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<sup>6</sup> See Elizabeth Picard, *Lebanon, A Shattered Country* (Holmes and Meier, 1996).

constitutional power.<sup>7</sup> Additional strains emanated from the uneven development among the various regions and wide disparities in income distribution that led to migration from rural to urban centers and to the unchecked and rapid growth of poor suburbs around the major cities (Beirut in particular). Indeed, in 1974 the religious leader of the Shi'a community, Imam Musa al Sadr, launched a political movement, "Amal," as a political and economic thrust intended to enhance the position of the Shi'a community in the Lebanese sectarian system, as well as to act as a countervailing force to the growing influence of Palestinian organizations in southern Lebanon. Amal presented itself as a "movement of the dispossessed," and its appeal was to a large extent based on the lagging socio-economic conditions of the Shi'a community in comparison with other communities in Lebanon.<sup>8</sup> It was to develop, especially after 1982, into one of the major warring factions in the Lebanese civil war.

External factors also placed increasing strains on the Lebanese political system. Principle among these factors was the rising military power of resident Palestinian organizations, particularly after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> A significant crisis occurred in 1958 triggered, among other things, by President Camille Cham'oun's move to weaken the position of his political opponents, and by fundamental disagreements between the government and its political allies, on the one hand, and opposition groups, on the other hand, over foreign policy issues and alliances. The possible amendment of the constitution, advocated by supporters of the president to enable him to run for a second term, was an additional factor of friction between the two groups. For several months, civil strife occurred between loyalist and opposition groups. The crisis had its external dimension, which was exacerbated by the creation of the United Arab Republic (comprising Egypt and Syria) in February 1958 and the overthrow of the Hashimite Kingdom in Iraq in July of the same year. This was followed immediately by the landing of US forces near Beirut. US and Egyptian intervention helped settle the conflict which, eventually, led to the election of the commander of the army as president of the republic and the formation of a four-man cabinet that represented the loyalist and opposition groups equally.

<sup>8</sup> This phenomenon should not obscure the fact that the wide cultural and professional gap between the Christian and Muslim communities at the beginning of independence, in favor of the former, was progressively reduced over the period under consideration. See, for example, B. Labaki and Abou Rjeily, *Bilans des Guerres du Liban*, p.185.

While their activity was ostensibly directed at keeping the Palestinian cause alive and continuing the struggle to reclaim Palestine, these organizations' presence in Lebanon became intricately linked to Lebanese domestic political affairs. The domestic and regional political agendas could hardly be separated. The prevailing weaknesses of the political system were exploited by Palestinian organizations to enhance their political and military positions. For this purpose, they forged alliances with disenchanting Lebanese sectarian (Muslim) and non-sectarian political parties, as well as with groups that regarded such an alliance as a means to pressure the Maronite establishment to accept political reforms. The nature of the desired reforms differed from one Lebanese political group to another. Leftist and other non-establishment groups wished to introduce fundamental changes to render the system less confessional. Traditional Muslim groups aimed at re-adjusting the sectarian formula to ensure a distribution of power more favorable to the Muslim community. For both groups, political reforms would have offered wider economic opportunities.

This combination of domestic and external factors eventually led to the inevitable outbreak of conflict on April 13, 1975 (see pp. 24-31).<sup>10</sup> On that day, armed clashes broke out in a Beirut suburb between members of the Maronite dominated Katae'b (Phalange) party and members of Palestinian organizations. The leader of the Katae'b was scheduled to participate in the dedication of a new church in the Beirut suburb of Ain al-Rammaneh. As a security measure, the area surrounding the church was closed to traffic. On the morning of that day an unidentified car attempted to break through a

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<sup>9</sup> The first Arab-Israeli war of 1948 resulted in a large inflow of Palestinian refugees to neighboring Arab countries, including Lebanon.

<sup>10</sup> In these pages the causes of civil war, according to the CH model, are discussed, with reference to Lebanon.

security checkpoint. The resulting gun battle left four people dead, including two Katae'b party members. Armed men from the Katae'b and National Liberal (Maronite dominated) parties took to the street. On the afternoon of that day a bus carrying thirty passengers (some armed) belonging to various Palestinian organizations passed through Ain al-Rammaneh. Shooting broke out, leaving 27 of the passengers dead.

Irrespective of the particular circumstances which led to these clashes, what matters is that the clouds of an impending widespread armed conflict between Christian political parties and Palestinian organizations had been gathering for a number of years, particularly after the expulsion of the PLO from Jordan in 1970. With this expulsion, southern Lebanon became in practice the only sanctuary for PLO operations against Israel, no matter what measures the Lebanese state undertook to control Palestinian military activity. Fuelled by mutual mistrust and opposing objectives, periodic armed clashes took place between the Palestinians and the Lebanese army and/or Christian parties.<sup>11</sup> All efforts, domestic and Arab, aimed at reconciling existing differences failed to produce more than a temporary reprieve. This was the prevailing atmosphere prior to the clash in the Beirut suburb which ignited the civil war.<sup>12</sup>

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11 Military confrontations took place between the Palestinian military organizations and the Lebanese Army in 1968 and 1969. One major cause of the confrontations was the Palestinians' wish to have freedom of action against Israel from Lebanon's southern borders while the Lebanese government (at least the faction which supported the president) was reluctant to grant them this freedom for fear of Israeli reprisals. The prime minister favored a policy of co-ordination with the Palestinian organizations which were supported by certain Lebanese political groups. With the help of Egyptian mediation, this matter was eventually settled under the so-called Cairo Agreement (November 1969) between the two parties. While nominally Lebanese sovereignty was to be respected by the PLO, in practice the agreement sanctioned a measure of freedom for Palestinian political and military action against Israel from Lebanese soil. With their expulsion from Jordan in 1970-71, the Palestinian military organizations became increasingly active in Lebanon.

## **The Combatants and Phases of the Civil War**

### *The Combatants*

While there were two main warring camps, the combatants in the civil war included both major and minor militias and parties. The main traditional Christian (Maronite oriented) political parties included the Katae'b and National Liberal parties. These parties were forcibly united in 1980 into one organization called the Lebanese Forces, whose combined fighting force was estimated to be 8,000-10,000 fighters.<sup>13</sup> Minor militias included the Marada Brigade (mainly Maronite, located in the northern town of Zogharta with 700-800 fighters) and the Guardians of the Cedars. The latter militia was mainly Maronite, with 500 fighters; it merged in 1980 with the Lebanese Forces. This camp favored the existing political system.

The opposing camp was more heterogeneous. Apart from the PLO, it included several Lebanese political parties and groups, notably Amal (Shi'a) and the Progressive Socialist Party (Druze). The Palestinian armed groups numbered close to 8,000 fighters prior to the Israeli invasion of 1982. They constituted the main fighting force in the early years of the conflict. As the war unfolded, the Lebanese armed groups became stronger, especially after the bulk of Palestinian forces had to withdraw from the country following the Israeli invasion. The Amal Movement fighters were estimated at about 3,500 and the Progressive Socialist Party fighters at over 5,000. The last

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12 For details about political and military developments in 1970-1975 see Farid El Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1975-1976*, (I.B.Tauris, 2000) and Kamal Salibi, *Cross Roads to Civil War*, (Caravan Books, 1976), pp. 54-98.

13 All figures quoted represent individuals directly involved in fighting. Some numbers are available for civilian members of militias, who were involved indirectly in various support roles.

few years of the war witnessed the growth of the Hizbullah Party (over 4,000 fighters), which focused primarily on resisting Israeli occupation and therefore operated mostly in southern Lebanon. Other members of this camp included the Syrian Nationalist Party (800-1,000 fighters, secular), the Communist Party (600-700 fighters, secular) and the Mourabitoun (at their peak 3,000, Sunni, mostly in West Beirut) (see Appendix Table I for figures and references).

The large militias developed into elaborate organizations; in support of their military action, they set up public relations, social services, and other administrative offices. Their fighters were organized into distinct ranks. It is reported that, on average, a regular soldier's salary was usually \$75 to \$150 per month, which was higher than the prevailing minimum wage. Low ranking officers were paid \$170 to \$200 per month, while higher ranking officers received between \$250 and \$400 a month.<sup>14</sup> It was quite common for militias' military personnel to earn an amount exceeding their regular salary from side activities, most of which were illegal. High wartime unemployment acted as an incentive for young men to join the militias. In addition to paying their fighters, militias bore other costs associated with military conflict; these included the cost of equipment, ammunition, transportation, training, food, and medical supplies. It is estimated that total military costs constituted 60% of the large militias' budgets.

The remaining 40% of the militias' expenditures were divided among two main activities. First, all militias had an "information office." Communicating

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<sup>14</sup> Tony Atallah, *The Organization of the Internal War: A Modern Conflict Strategy in a Diverse Society (The Lebanese Case, 1975- 1990)*, (unpublished doctoral dissertation, March 2001). - in Arabic. This source also provides the information cited in the next two paragraphs.

with the general public involved press releases and press conferences, newspapers (which civilians were frequently forced to buy), radio stations, and, in some cases, TV stations. Some militias also had representation abroad. It is estimated that such public relations activities constituted 20% of the large militias budgets. Second, militias became increasingly involved in providing social services, especially after the collapse of the Lebanese currency in the mid 1980s. They often provided scholarships for children's schooling, medical assistance (clinics and subsidized medicine) and food subsidies. These social services, which constituted about 20% of large militias budgets, helped to lessen the militias' unpopularity among the population in their areas of operation.

As noted below, the Lebanese, Syrian and Israeli armies were also directly involved in the conflict. Syria initially supported the Christian government camp with direct military intervention but subsequently shifted its support to the opposing camp. Israel invaded Lebanon more than once; the major invasion was in June 1982. It backed the groups opposed to the PLO and created, after 1982, the so-called South Lebanon Army (2,000-3,000 fighters, Shi'a and Christians) that controlled a southern strip of the country until April 2000. Throughout the war, other forms of external intervention took place, mainly via financial support.

The combatants in the civil war thus comprised a multitude of parties that could be divided into two main camps, one in support of the state and one opposed to it. Within each camp there occurred frequent intra-militia fighting. The conflict was thus not simply between the state, on the one hand, and a well defined rebel group, on the other hand. There was also consistent direct military intervention by neighboring countries in support

of one camp or the other.

### *The phases of the War*

The civil war period can be divided into three principal phases. Though not strictly distinct, they can be differentiated on the basis of specific developments which characterized each of them. The first phase is 1975-77, comprising two years of war followed by a year of relative peace. The main fighting was between traditional Christian parties that were allied with the government, and the PLO and a supporting coalition of Lebanese political parties. Beirut was divided. The PLO/Lebanese coalition had effective control of West Beirut. The Lebanese army and traditional Christian parties were in control of eastern Beirut. This period witnessed ferocious battles between the Katae'b party and Palestinian armed organizations in the outskirts of Beirut in areas that included Palestinian refugee camps. This fighting ended with the Katae'b in control of the refugee camps in the northeast suburbs of Beirut and the forced eviction of their residents. In parallel, Christian towns south of Beirut, notably Damour, were sacked by Palestinian and allied Lebanese militias. Atrocities were committed by both sides in the conflict.

In April 1976, Syrian forces entered Lebanon in support of the government and its political allies and clashed with the opposing PLO/Lebanese coalition (the so-called National and Islamic Forces). The objective of this intervention was to contain the expanding military dominance, and by extension political power, of the PLO and their Lebanese allies.<sup>15</sup> This was followed by an Arab summit meeting held in Riyadh in October 1976 that

called for a cease-fire which was to be supervised and enforced by an Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) consisting of troops from Syria, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. In practice, the Syrian forces that made up the bulk of the ADF were already in Lebanon.<sup>16</sup> The other Arab troops arrived in November and, with their arrival, Beirut was re-unified.

The second phase of the conflict is 1978-1982, which politically and militarily ended with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June 1982. This period witnessed an escalation in fighting between the main parties to the conflict in Beirut and elsewhere in the country. Both Israeli and Syrian troops became involved in factional fighting.<sup>17</sup> A significant development in July 1980 was the success of Bashir Gemeyel, leader of the Katae'b militia, in uniting by force all Christian militias into one organization named the Lebanese Forces. The country became effectively divided into regions that were militarily controlled by Syria, the Lebanese army and Lebanese forces, and the PLO and the Lebanese parties allied with it. Beirut was again divided into an eastern part, controlled by the Lebanese Forces and the Lebanese army and a western part, controlled by the PLO/Lebanese coalition.

The third phase, June 1982 to October 1990, witnessed the climax of outside intervention. This period began with the Israeli invasion of June 6, 1982 and concluded when the fighting ended a year after the acceptance of Tai'f Accord of October 1989. Shortly after moving into Lebanon, Israeli forces reached the outskirts of western Beirut and laid siege to it for almost two

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<sup>15</sup> A new president of the republic, Elias Sarkis, was elected by parliament in September 1976. He succeeded Sulayman Frangieh, whose six-year term had ended.

<sup>16</sup> The ADF force consisted of 30,000 men, of whom 27,000 were Syrians.

<sup>17</sup> For example, in March 1978, Israel invaded southern Lebanon. This military action resulted in 2,000 deaths and 250,000 displaced persons and ended with the deployment of UN troops on the Lebanese Israeli border. In 1980, Syria concentrated troops in the Beqa'a Valley and clashed with Katae'b militia entrenched in the city of Zahleh near the Beirut-Damascus highway.

months.<sup>18</sup> Fighting took place not only between the PLO and their Lebanese allies, on the one hand, and the Israeli army, on the other hand, but also between the Syrian and Israeli armies in the Beqa'a Valley.<sup>19</sup> Eventually, the US brokered an agreement in the summer of 1982 by which the PLO forces were forced to withdraw from western Beirut and Lebanon while Syrian troops withdrew from West Beirut.

Politically, Israel attempted to impose a friendly government with the election of Bashir Gemayel as president by the Lebanese parliament on September 14, 1982. However, Bashir was assassinated before taking office. This was followed by the entry of Israeli troops into West Beirut which they occupied for a very brief period.<sup>20</sup> Following the assassination of Bashir Gemayel, parliament again met on September 22 and elected Amin Gemayel (the older brother of Bashir) for a six-year term as president. In the meantime, four Western powers (the US, Britain, France and Italy) agreed to send troops to Lebanon, ostensibly on a peace keeping mission which had as one of its goals the protection of the refugee camps in the greater Beirut area following the withdrawal of the PLO. These forces departed in early 1984; their mission ended without accomplishing its main objectives.<sup>21</sup>

The newly-formed government of Amin Gemayel entered into negotiations with Israel for a peace treaty which, among other things, called for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon. There was strong opposition to this treaty from Syria as well as from political groups and militias allied with it that fought against the parties that supported the president.

They opposed it on the grounds that it would take Lebanon into the Israeli orbit, undermine Syrian-Lebanese relations, and weaken the Arab struggle for Palestinian rights. While the treaty was approved by parliament on May 17, 1983, it was not signed by the president and, hence, was never enforced.

This phase witnessed vicious fighting, particularly in the summer of 1983, between the Progressive Socialist Party (Druze dominated) and the Lebanese Forces in the Shouf mountains east and southeast of Beirut.<sup>22</sup> The end result was a mass exodus of Christian communities from the region, the destruction of many Druze and Christian towns, and the killing of hundreds of civilians. Similarly, until February 6, 1984 greater Beirut was under the control of the government. On that day, the Lebanese army was forced to withdraw from West Beirut, which again came under the control of militias and political organizations opposed to the government (primarily Amal and the Progressive Socialist Party). The civil strife between East and West Beirut was re-ignited, but it was not simply between the main Lebanese parties to the conflict. Intra militia fighting frequently took place in both parts of the city, especially in the more heterogeneous West Beirut.<sup>23</sup> At the request of authorities in West Beirut, Syrian forces re-entered this part of the city in February 1987 to maintain order and prevent intra-militia clashes.

The failure to elect a new president in September 1988 led to a unique

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18 The invasion brought economic havoc in its wake. Estimates of damage to physical property alone exceeded \$2 billion. See Council for Development and Reconstruction, *The Reconstruction Project* (April 1983), p. 15.

19 The Lebanese Forces, then allied with the Israelis, decided not to participate in ground attacks on West Beirut.

20 The well-publicized massacres that took place in the refugee camps of Sabra and Chatila on the outskirts of West Beirut occurred while the Israeli army was still in control of West Beirut.

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21 US and French army barracks were the target of suicidal attacks in October 1983 that resulted in high troop casualties. These incidents hastened their decision to withdraw. Prior to that, in April 1983, the US Embassy located in West Beirut was blown up. It was later relocated to the eastern suburbs of Beirut.

22 The fighting followed the sudden withdrawal of Israeli troops from the region, which some observers contend was a move intended to ignite the conflict between the two parties.

two-government situation. When the six-year term of President Amin Gemayel was about to end in September 1988 without agreement on a successor, he unilaterally appointed the commander of the army, General Michel Aoun, as president of a council of ministers composed of the six members of the army command. The three Muslim members of the appointed council refused to serve. The existing government at the time Gemayel's term had ended refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the council appointed by Gemayel and considered itself as the sole legitimate government of the country. Hence, two competing governments emerged.

The government of General Aoun refused to acknowledge the Tai'f Accord ratified by the Lebanese Parliament in October 1989. After a period of ferocious fighting, first between the army led by Aoun and Syrian army units, and then between pro-Tai'f Maronite forces (most notably the Lebanese Forces) and the army led by Aoun, the latter was forced by a joint Syrian-Lebanese military action to take refuge in the French Embassy. He was allowed to leave the country in October 1990, and his departure paved the way for the unification of the Lebanese government and public administration.<sup>24</sup>

Given the intensification of the war, it is not surprising that the 1982-1990 period witnessed rapidly deteriorating economic and social conditions accompanied by a worsening of the financial situation and accelerating emigration. After 1984, the Lebanese pound declined rapidly in nominal and

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<sup>23</sup> After the Israeli invasion, Hizbollah, supported by Iranian funding, began to grow in stature in the southern suburbs of Beirut and in Shi'a dominated regions of the country. During this period it frequently clashed with Amal in West Beirut for political control of the Shi'a community. Clashes also occurred between the Progressive Socialist Party and Amal. In the process of intra-militia warfare, the smaller Sunni militia, the Mourabitoun, was subdued and its leadership driven out of the country. Indeed, intra-militia fighting occurred throughout the war not only in Beirut but in other parts of the country as well.

real value. This was a period of increasing budgetary deficits and mounting inflation. The heavy human and economic toll mounted as the war raged.

To briefly recapitulate, the forced eviction of Palestinian camps from the eastern districts of suburban Beirut in the pre-1982 phase led to the creation of a central zone (including Beirut) that was effectively under the control of the Lebanese authorities (in contrast with their nominal control elsewhere in the country). In the wake of the Israeli invasion, there was a short lived and costly attempt by the Maronite dominated Lebanese Forces to expand to Druze strongholds in the mountain districts to the east of Beirut. Their failure led to an exodus of Christian communities towards regions controlled by the Lebanese government and Christian militias. Soon afterwards the civil war settled down to an equilibrium of zones largely (but not entirely) along sectarian lines. Throughout this phase there were occasional armed clashes between militias belonging to the same camp. This climaxed in the 1988-1990 armed conflict among parties in control of East Beirut and the surrounding eastern and northern suburbs.

This was a very costly civil war. Estimates put the cumulative loss of human lives at over 144,000<sup>25</sup> (5 percent of the resident population). The national economy suffered huge losses, including the destruction of factories, downtown Beirut, and many villages and towns. For the period of the war, indirect costs (forgone production) are estimated at anywhere between US

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<sup>24</sup> Since then Syrian troops (which had originally entered Lebanon in 1976, the second year of the civil war) have continued to be deployed in Lebanon; in principle this is to help the Lebanese armed forces maintain law and order and withstand Israeli pressures exerted on Lebanon. After its invasion of 1982 and subsequent withdrawal, Israel continued to occupy a strip of southern Lebanon with the help of its surrogate South Lebanon Army. Armed resistance to Israeli occupation mounted throughout the period of occupation. Finally, in May 2000 Israeli troops, along with their surrogate army, were forced to withdraw from the occupied areas.

\$80 to \$160 billion (at 1995 prices).<sup>26</sup>

## The Causes and Duration of the Civil War

### *The Causes of the Conflict*

The Collier-Hoeffler (CH) model relates the incidence of civil war<sup>27</sup> to a number of variables, including a social fractionalization index, an ethnic dominance dummy variable, income and economic growth, natural resource wealth, and population size.<sup>28</sup> How does the CH model perform with reference to the Lebanese case?

Religious fractionalization in Lebanon can be looked at in two ways: (1) the composition of the population into various Christian and Muslim sects (currently there are eighteen officially recognized religious communities,

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25 See report published in *Annahar* (March 5, 1992). The cited figure excludes the death toll in Palestinian camps resulting from Israeli aerial attacks on Palestinian refugee camps, fighting among Palestinian armed groups, as well as armed clashes between Amal and Palestinian organizations in and around the camps. The report cites a total of over 184,000 injured, over 17,000 who disappeared and over 13,000 who were maimed.

26 See Samir Makdisi, *The Lessons of Lebanon, the Economics of War and Development* (IB Tauris, 2004), Chap. 2.

27 It should be cautioned that different operational definitions of a civil war have been used. For example, Pat Regan defines a civil war as an armed conflict which has resulted in at least 200 related battle deaths. See his paper *Data on Third Party Interventions in Intrastate Conflicts* (Prepared for the Uppsala Conflict Data Project Workshop, June 8-10, 2001, unpublished). Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler define civil wars as domestic armed conflicts that result in at least 1,000 battle-related deaths per year and in which the stronger force sustained at least five percent of the number of fatalities suffered by the weaker forces. See their paper, "On Economic Causes of Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers*, 50 (1998). The Uppsala Conflict Data Project records 201 intrastate armed conflicts during 1946-1999 of which 21 witnessed external intervention. This total includes three types of conflicts, namely minor, intermediate, and large. See N. P. Gleditsch, H. Strand, M. Eriksson, M. Sollenberg and P. Wallenstein, "Armed Conflict 1946-99: A New Dataset" (Paper presented at the conference on Identifying Wars: Systematic Conflict Research and Its Utility in Conflict Resolution and Prevention, held at Uppsala University, June 8-9, 2001).

with the Maronite, Shi'a and Sunni communities taken together dominating with an estimated 70-80 percent of the population);<sup>29</sup> or (2) its broad division between the Christian and Muslim communities which at the time of the outbreak of the civil war was estimated to be in the neighborhood of 45-55 percent respectively.<sup>30</sup> In the evolving pre-1975 political environment, calls for more equitable sectarian political power sharing centered on increasing the political power of the Muslim community as a whole *vis-à-vis* the Maronite community. While the importance of increased participation of the Shi'a community in the formula for power sharing was recognized, this did not become explicit until the Tai'f Accord. For analytic purposes, it is more appropriate to consider that Lebanon's religious "map" as composed of two broad religious communities. This is primarily the way that Lebanon's religious fractionalization is treated by Collier and Hoeffler.

The Lebanese population is ethnically homogenous, thus ethnic fractionalization does not play a role. The small Armenian community (less than 7 percent of the population) is fully integrated into Lebanese political life while maintaining its cultural heritage.<sup>31</sup> The social fractionalization index is a combination of the indices of religious fractionalization and ethnic fractionalization. Since the latter is low, Lebanon's social fractionalization index is relatively low as well.<sup>32</sup>

According to the CH model, the risk of conflict rises with ethnic dominance. Ethnic dominance is defined as a case where the largest single group comprises between 45 and 90 percent of the population. Lebanon is

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28 See Appendix Table 2A for a more detailed description of the CH model.

29 Each of these communities probably constituted between 20 and 30 percent of the total population.

30 The last population census was conducted in 1932. Hence, no official estimates on the religious composition of the population have been available since.

not characterized by ethnic dominance. However, we may postulate that Lebanon's religious divisions are akin to ethnic-linguistic divisions in other countries that witnessed civil wars. To that extent, the fact that at least one of the two main religious communities in Lebanon made up more than 45 percent of the total was conducive to the onset of the civil war. However, this postulate needs to be further examined in cross-country studies before a final conclusion can be drawn. Additional research is needed to show whether a religious dominance dummy variable would play a similar role to that presently played by the ethnic dominance dummy variable.

The CH model also relates the incidence of war to income, economic growth, and natural resource wealth. At the time that the conflict broke out, Lebanon, with a resident population of less than three million, was enjoying one of the highest per capita income levels in the region and among developing countries generally.<sup>33</sup> As observed earlier (pp. 7-8), the national economy had been expanding in the pre-1975 period at a relatively fast rate. Growing work opportunities created by an expanding national economy

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31 It may be noted in this connection that some studies downplay the role that ethnic differences play in the incidence of civil conflict. It is often the case, they maintain, that ethnicity, and the importance attached to it, is shaped by conflict rather than simply shaping it (D. Keen, "Incentives and Disincentives for Violence," in *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* eds. M. Berdal, and D. M. Malone (Lynne Reinner Publishers, 2000). Other studies, however, have concluded that ethnicity does play a central role in certain conflicts. N. Sambanis, "Ethnic War: A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry into Its Causes," *DECRG World Bank paper* (2000) and M. Reynal-Querol, "Ethnicity, Political Systems and Civil Wars," (2001). Sambanis and Reynal-Querol advocate dividing civil wars into two categories, namely ethnic wars and revolutionary/ideological wars. According to their work, some indices of religious polarization which prove to be insignificant when all wars are considered have a positive and significant effect on the incidence of ethnic civil war. See also J. Mueller, "The Remnants of War: Thugs as Residual Combatants" (unpublished paper, 2001).

32 For values of the basic CH variables for Lebanon, see Appendix Table 2B. For elasticities of the probability of war with respect to the different CH variables, see Appendix Table 2C.

tended to lessen the danger of a conflict based on socio-economic factors in that it became less likely that these factors could be exploited along sectarian lines. Also, given the limited role played by purely leftist parties and the workers movement, class conflicts or economic grievance of the underprivileged *vis-à-vis* the privileged groups was not a particularly important element in inciting the civil war. Indeed, the underprivileged on both sides of the sectarian/political divide fought one another while various warlords (most of whom fought the war under "national" slogans) exploited sectarian feelings to prolong the conflict in order to achieve their own political/sectarian and economic ambitions.<sup>34</sup> Finally, abundance of natural resource wealth and, hence, a readily lootable tax base is not a significant feature of the Lebanese economy.<sup>35</sup>

Applying the CH model on the incidence of war to the Lebanese case suggests a low probability of conflict. On the basis of available data the model predicts, for 1970, a very small probability (2.6%) of a civil war breaking out in Lebanon. This is even less than the mean probability for countries that did not experience civil wars, which is 5.8%.<sup>36</sup> The probability on the eve of the war in 1974 cannot be calculated because the model uses data at five year intervals<sup>37</sup> and excludes war years. If the probability in 1974 could be calculated, it would not likely be significantly different from the 1970 probability, as the underlying conditions did not change significantly between the two years.<sup>38</sup> If anything, it was political tension that increased.

The prediction of a low probability of war by the CH model for Lebanon

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33 For 1973-74, the two years preceding the outbreak of the civil war, estimates of real per capita GDP range from the equivalent of \$1,000 to \$1,300 (with 1974 as base year).

34 Samir Makdisi, "Economic Aspects of the Lebanese Crisis," *The Lebanese Crisis* (A publication of the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Science, 1977) (in Arabic).

35 For 1973-74 primary exports constitute less than 3 percent of GDP.

is not surprising. The ethnic dominance dummy variable takes a value of zero. Other variables that point to a low incidence of war for Lebanon (in comparison with the countries that experienced civil wars) include a higher growth rate than the mean for those countries, a very low ratio of natural resource wealth to GDP,<sup>39</sup> a relatively small population, and a higher geographic dispersion. However, the social fractionalization index for Lebanon was higher and the time distance from a past recorded conflict (1958) was shorter. But the last two variables are non-economic. In other words, as observed earlier, the main causes of the civil war in Lebanon are related more to the political than the economic domain. Equally important, the CH model does not account for external intervention which for Lebanon, as well as many other countries, was an important factor in the onset and duration of civil war (see below).

Similarly, the calculation for 1995 also points to a relatively low probability of war breaking out (5.6%). The factors that account for the rise in this percentage in comparison with 1970 include a shorter time period from the end of last conflict (1990), a larger population, and lower real per capita GDP.<sup>40</sup> The effect of these variables more than compensated for the effect

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36 Figure obtained from Dr. Anke Hoeffler. Countries which did experience civil war had an average probability of 21.6%.

37 Calculating a probability of war for 1975 would be a misapplication of the CH model, which deals with the probability of a war starting in the subsequent five-year period starting from a situation of peace. Lebanon was already at war in 1975.

38 Real per capita GDP was roughly 20% higher in 1974 than it was in 1970, while the average per capita real GDP growth in 1970-74 was approximately 45% higher than it was in 1965-69. The population increased by about 10% from 1970 to 1974.

39 According to the CH model the incidence of civil war is likely to have a non-monotonic relationship with the level of natural resources. See P. Collier, "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and their Implications for Peace" (World Bank unpublished paper, June 15, 2000), and P. Collier and A. Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil Wars" (unpublished paper, October 2001).

of per capita real GDP growth, which was higher in 1990-1994 than it was in 1965-1969.

All the above estimates emerge from the GDP (or "alternative") version of the CH model. By comparison, the secondary school enrollment (or "core") version produces a probability of war for 1970 of 0.72% and a probability of war for 1995 of 0.3%. These very low numbers reflect the strong traditional emphasis on education in Lebanese society. Because of this emphasis, it may be that secondary school enrollment is not a good proxy for economic opportunity. The probabilities emerging from the GDP version seem more reasonable. If we gave weight to the results of the secondary school enrollment version, we would end up with extremely low probabilities of war. This would lend further support to the contention that the causes of the war in Lebanon are not well represented in the CH framework.

The CH model finds little correlation between oppression (as measured by various indices) and the incidence of war.<sup>41</sup> Most of the variables which Collier and Hoeffler use to represent grievance drop out of their baseline regression. With the incidence of civil war as the dependent variable, different indices measuring, for example, land ownership inequality, income inequality, and the level of democracy prove to be statistically insignificant as explanatory variables.

For Lebanon, economic variables such as income, economic growth, and natural resource wealth, tend, according to the CH model, to decrease the probability of civil conflict. Nevertheless, certain other socio-economic fac-

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40 These variables are listed in order of increasing strength. In other words, the variable which played the greatest role in making the probability of war higher in 1995 than in 1970 was per capita GDP, followed by population, and so on.

41 See Collier, Paul, and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War" (unpublished paper, 2001).

tors helped to create a crisis situation. The pre-1975 uneven development among Lebanon's regions and the accompanying sociosectarian divisions were factors which, given the appropriate circumstances, could be exploited to support violent political change via the unleashing of sectarian conflicts. In the early seventies rising inflationary pressures added to the "explosive" potential of these divisions.

The Lebanese confessional system did not lead to the oppression of one religious group by another, as may be the case in countries with major ethno-linguistic conflicts. Indeed, major attributes of liberal democracy, such as freedom of expression and openness to the outside, have been maintained. However, the sectarian formula for power sharing agreed to on the eve of independence came to be regarded by the Muslim community as unjust and a cause for political grievance. While not advocating the elimination of the confessional system, most of the Muslim leadership (allying itself in the early stages of the war with the PLO) pressed for a modified formula of power sharing that would give them a bigger role in running the affairs of the state. This implied a corresponding change in their involvement in public administration and their relative share of the public sector. Similarly, increasing political power meant increasing opportunities for the Muslim community to participate more widely in the national economy.<sup>42</sup> However, this picture should not obscure the fact that some of the actors involved in the conflict (individuals and political groups) genuinely embraced a secular viewpoint and were motivated by non-sectarian ideologies. To them, the conflict was either a means (or an event that provided an opportunity) to change the sectarian order towards a more secular and equitable system. This was not to materialize in the post-war era. If anything, the sectarian nature of

political behavior has become more pronounced.

The above analysis points to the conclusion that, of the different variables considered by the CH model to explain the incidence of civil wars, in the Lebanese case, religious (as opposed to ethno-linguistic) fractionalization is the one variable that stands out; the other domestic variables do not figure significantly. However, as indicated earlier (p. 13), it took a combination of internal and external factors to bring about the eventual outbreak of conflict. The external factor was the political, military stance of the PLO that clashed with that of the state and invited external interventions.<sup>43</sup> These interventions also influenced the duration of the war, the matter to which we now turn.

#### *The Duration of the Conflict*

The factors which affect a civil war's duration have also been explored by Collier and Hoeffler.<sup>44</sup> Factors which affect the incidence of war, according to these authors, do not necessarily explain its duration. In particular, the level of income affects duration but to a lesser extent than it does incidence. In addition, duration is found to have a non-monotonic relationship with ethno-linguistic and religious fractionalization. Also, the odds of peace decline radically after the first year of conflict. Other authors in examining the subject of duration, emphasize the emergence of war economies, which provide an economic incentive for wars to continue.<sup>45</sup> Finally, external intervention appears to play a significant role. The average length of a civil war

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<sup>42</sup> In the private sector, Christian dominance of economic and financial activities declined relatively over time as the Muslim communities grew in political and educational stature.

<sup>43</sup> The presence of the PLO itself should be regarded as a type of foreign intervention in Lebanon's political life.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and M. Soderbom, "On the Duration of Civil War" (unpublished paper, May 2001).

which has external interventions is nine years, while wars in which there was no external intervention had an average length of 1.5 years.<sup>46</sup>

The Lebanese civil war lasted for a relatively long time (16 years). This was much longer than the average duration for the civil wars that have taken place since the end of the World War II, namely two years.<sup>47</sup> The broad religious divisions within Lebanese society seem to fit the general pattern of fractionalization which helps to prolong conflicts. Two additional factors played a significant role: economic greed and external interventions.

Once the civil war broke out, economic greed associated with the benefits accruing to the warring parties and their leadership increasingly became a major factor in sustaining it. The militias sought to enhance their economic and financial position by various means: looting, confiscation of private property, imposing taxes in the regions under their control, cultivation and trading of drugs, trading in contraband, outright thievery (including in 1975-76, the pillaging of the port of Beirut and the downtown district), bank robberies, and fraudulent banking practices. Warring parties stood to gain a great deal financially from the ongoing war.<sup>48</sup>

There are no reliable and systematic data on the financial resources accruing to the militias during the civil conflict. Scattered estimates, however, are available. One source estimates that during the war the militias were able to amass \$15 billion from the above mentioned activities. This is in addition to outside financial assistance.<sup>49</sup> A comparable estimate of \$14.5 billion

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45 N. Richani, "The Political Economies of the War Systems in Lebanon and Colombia" (unpublished paper, June 2001), and D. Keen, "Incentives and Disincentives for Violence," in *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* (2000).

46 I. El-Badawi and N. Sambanis, "External Interventions and the Duration of Civil Wars" (Paper presented at the World Bank Conference on the Economics and Politics of Civil Conflicts, March 2000).

47 Figure calculated from information available at the Uppsala Conflict Data Set (web site).

(for the aggregate turnover of the so-called black or informal economy) was published in *Annahar* daily.<sup>50</sup> Added to the external financial assistance provided by intervening outside powers, the major militias had sufficient resources at their disposal to finance their costly military and civilian operations, permitting (or inducing) them to sustain the long lasting and profitable armed conflict. Substantial personal wealth was accumulated by the various militia leadership and their henchmen.<sup>51</sup>

External interventions, particularly those by Lebanon's two regional neighbors, were also a key element in sustaining the war. That the war was fought along largely sectarian lines facilitated their intervention in pursuit of their own vested interests.<sup>52</sup> Intervention included the provision of arms and substantial financing of the warring parties. One source holds that foreign financial assistance to the warring parties totaled twice the amount they raised locally, or about \$30 billion, if not more.<sup>53</sup> There were also several direct military interventions by Syria and Israel in support of one group or another, and at one point by Western powers in the form of a peace keeping mission that failed to achieve its objectives. As the direct intervention of Syrian and Israeli troops in the war served opposing objectives, a

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48 See Appendix Tables 3 and 4.

49 See G. Corm, "The War System: Militia Hegemony and the Reestablishment of the State in *Peace for Lebanon? From War to Reconstruction*, ed. D. Collings, (Lynne Reiner Publishers, 1994), pp. 216-218.

50 Issue of October 15, 1990. p.8. One source reports that PLO investments in Lebanon—largely financed by Arab countries—were estimated at about \$1.46 billion in the early eighties (See K. Hamdan, *Le Conflit Libanais*).

51 Estimates of the direct costs of the war vary. Fawaz Tarabulsi, *Identités et Solidarités Croisées dans les Conflits du Liban Contemporain* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Paris VIII, 1993) estimates the cost of a single day's fighting at anywhere from \$150,000 to \$500,000. E. Picard, "Liban: La Matrice Historique" in *Economie des Guerres Civiles*, ed. Jean Ruffin, (1996) puts the cost of the war at about \$150 million to \$ 1.5 billion a year. Assuming an annual average of \$800 million, this implies a total of a little less than \$13 billion for the whole war period.

*modus vivandi* came into existence that contributed to the prolongation of the war so long as the Lebanese parties concerned could not independently arrive at national reconciliation. Despite several attempts, this did not materialize.

The role of Lebanese and Palestinian diasporas in the civil war is not readily quantifiable. The warring parties attempted to secure assistance from their respective communities abroad. This support took the form of political lobbying and/or propaganda, as well as financial assistance. No estimates of the inflow of these financial resources are available but it is known, for example, that Palestinians working in Kuwait were subject to a tax on their earnings earmarked for the PLO. The impact of the Lebanese and Palestinian diasporas on the civil war was probably minor. Active support of the warring militias among the diaspora was in all likelihood confined to small groups.

The Lebanese case differs in a number of other respects from other civil war cases. The war did not simply pit the state against a defined rebel group, as the CH model seems to assume. There were multiple parties to the conflict that, at one point or another, fought among themselves. In prac-

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<sup>52</sup> Certain preliminary studies indicate that external intervention is less likely in ethnic wars, or in regions that are democratic, or where the state has a strong military. For a given level of ethnic polarization, external intervention will prolong the duration of the civil war. See I. E. El-Badawi and N. Sambanis "External Interventions and the Duration of Civil Wars," (paper presented at the World Bank/Princeton University conference on the Economics of and Politics of Civil Conflicts, Princeton University, March 18-19, 2000).

<sup>53</sup> See G. Corm, *op cit*, p. 218. Some estimates put Libyan financial assistance to the PLO and their Lebanese allies at about \$50 million a month, at least prior to 1982, which adds up to a total of \$ 4.8 billion from 1975 to 1982. For the whole war period, *Annahar* (*op cit* p. 8) estimates the total of political money and military resources at about \$10 billion. Another source quotes an estimate of \$300 million for the annual inflow of political money prior to 1982, for a total of \$ 2.7 billion. See Salim Nasr "The Political Economy of the Lebanese Conflict," eds. Shehadi and Harmy.

tice, while the state took sides against the Palestinians and their Lebanese allies, the government composition continued to reflect the sectarian formula for power sharing and to include members who were sympathetic to the side opposing the government. Equally, governmental institutions kept functioning in various parts of the country (to the extent they were allowed to do so) and paid the wages of their employees irrespective of their political loyalties and the areas in which they served. Furthermore, external intervention at times shifted support from one side to another. For example, the initial direct Syrian intervention in the early stages of the war was in support of traditional Maronite parties but later shifted to the opposing groups. Similarly, Israel, though initially in support of traditional Christian parties that opposed the Palestinians, played one side of the conflict against the other and created a surrogate army in the south that included both Christians and Muslims.

### **Resolving the Conflict: the Tai'f Accord and Beyond**

The settlement under the Tai'f Accord was based on the re-affirmation of the principle of sectarian power sharing, albeit with a modified formula. The Accord drew on earlier reform plans that, for various domestic and external reasons, could not be implemented. The most significant of these was the Syrian-sponsored 1985 Tripartite Agreement (between the Lebanese Forces, Amal and the Progressive Socialist Party militias) which proposed constitutional amendments, a number of which were similar to those subsequently adopted in the Tai'f Accord.<sup>54</sup>

Although the Lebanese parties to the conflict might, after 16 years of war, have become exhausted and ready to reach a settlement, it took exter-

nal pressure to conclude the war. This was largely prompted by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in July 1990. This event encouraged outside powers (both Arab and Western) involved or concerned with the Lebanese conflict to help settle it as a prelude to the launching of the Allied campaign led by the USA to liberate Kuwait at the beginning of 1991. Syria, a main actor in Lebanon's civil conflict, was one of the Arab countries that supported this campaign. As noted earlier, the ratification of the Tai'f Accord did not lead to the cessation of hostilities in Lebanon until the ouster of General Aoun in October 1990 through direct Syrian military action undertaken with tacit US approval.

The Accord created a more equitable sectarian formula for power sharing among the two main religious communities by enhancing the position of the prime minister (Sunni Muslim), as well as that of the speaker of the house (Shi'a Muslim), and curtailing some of the privileges that the president (Maronite) had enjoyed. For example, the new Tai'f constitution stipulates that the appointment of the prime minister is to be determined by binding consultation with members of parliament, which the president is required to conduct for this purpose. To that extent, the prime minister is no longer beholden to the president, as before, for his appointment. Also, the council of ministers, that collectively was given wide executive powers, is chaired by the prime minister unless the president chooses to attend its meetings, in which case the president chairs. In practice, with few exceptions, the president has, so far, chaired council meetings. As for the speaker of the house, his term of appointment was extended from one to four years; which effectively freed him from the pressures associated with one-year appoint-

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54 See J. Mailat, *The Document of National Understanding, A Commentary* (Center of Lebanese Studies, May, 1992).

ments. Furthermore, instead of the small advantage previously enjoyed by the Christian community in parliament, the Accord specified equal representation for the two communities. This same principle continued to apply to the council of ministers.

The essence of the political system, thus, remained unchanged. However, by readjusting the basis for sectarian power sharing, the Accord envisaged, in principle, a more collegial political governance among the major religious communities and, hence, a firmer basis for domestic political stability. One major manifestation of this anticipated collegiality is the enhanced power of the council of ministers, which is supposed to act as a collective governing body. In contrast with parliamentary decisions that are taken by majority vote, the new constitution specifies that decisions of the council of ministers are to be arrived at by consensus and only failing that by majority vote. For "fundamental" questions facing the country, failing consensus, a majority of two-thirds is required, subject to parliamentary approval.<sup>55</sup> Significantly, the Tai'f Accord allowed for a temporary stay of Syrian troops in Lebanon to help the Lebanese authorities establish law and order; the eventual withdrawal of these forces was to be subject to the mutual agreement of the Syrian and Lebanese governments. As would be expected, Syria has been exercising substantial political influence in post-war Lebanon.

The collegiate governance in the post-Tai'f period has not been a successful. In particular, the council of ministers has not come to assume the enhanced role assigned to it in the constitution. Instead, the phenomenon of "troika rule" (the troika comprising the president of the republic, the speaker of the house, and the prime minister) emerged and has tended to

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55 For a critical assessment of the Tai'f Accord, see J. Mailat, *The Document of National Understanding, A Commentary*, especially pp. 53-58.

dominate political life, particularly after 1992. Effectively, it undermined the privileges that the Tai'f Accord granted to the council of ministers as a collective governing body and diminished the role of individual cabinet members in decision making. Without going into the reasons that led to the troika rule, what is significant is that disagreements among council members, which sometimes took the form of public accusations, were not necessarily settled within the council of ministers or parliament, but outside these institutions through reliance on the *de facto* "troika" system. Failing such a resolution (which was not infrequent), resort to Syrian mediation became necessary in order to settle existing disputes. With Syria playing the role of an influential arbiter, domestic political flare-ups and dormant, unresolved or partially resolved political issues have not been permitted to disrupt the domestic political process, uneven as it sometimes is.<sup>56</sup>

This, in turn, raises a fundamental question concerning the long-term workability of the Tai'f Accord in the absence of an outside steadying hand. Does it constitute the ultimate political framework that will ensure stability in the long run? While the diffusion of political power among the main religious communities was intended to contribute to sectarian stability, the post-Tai'f political experience reveals the persistence of potential sectarian elements of instability (though in the Lebanese case, as amply demonstrated, domestic stability cannot be isolated from regional influences). The question remains whether in the absence of destabilizing external influences, the

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<sup>56</sup> Syria's substantial influence in Lebanon is publicly acknowledged and often referred to in the local press.

On August 18, 1998, *Annahar*, a leading daily newspaper, headlined its commentary on the local situation "Syria is no longer embarrassed in declaring its choice of the new president." In Lebanese diplomatic jargon, Syria's accepted role as an arbiter and dispenser of friendly advice to Lebanese politicians and officials is subsumed under close co-operation and co-ordination between the two countries, particularly when invoked in the context of Israeli plans to destabilize the Lebanese domestic situation.

post-Tai'f political system is sufficiently viable to withstand internal shocks without constant resort to outside intervention or assistance.

Since the end of the civil war, Syrian involvement has been a major factor in determining political outcomes. Hence, the workability of the Lebanese system under the condition of greatly diminished Syrian influence has yet to be tested. Even if it is correct, as some argue, that the lack of firm stability in the post-Tai'f era may, in large measure, be attributable to the dominating Syrian military and political presence, this would not negate the existence of elements of potential instability associated with the nature of the political system itself. For whatever its merits, the finely tuned sharing of political power among Lebanon's religious communities is inherently discriminatory. Conflicts among the various political and sectarian leaders have arisen, and can arise again in the future, over what they consider the rightful share of the religious community each represents in managing the affairs of the state. Sectarianism has continued to act as the mainstay of political behavior. The Tai'f settlement notwithstanding, there is no guarantee that, as in the past, sectarianism will not be a destabilizing influence.

The question of how to move from a discriminatory sectarian system to a more stable non-discriminatory political system or, alternatively, how to husband the present system to render it more stable, falls outside the purview of this paper. Nonetheless, we can postulate that the pre-war circumstances that led to the civil war do not operate with equal force in the post-civil war period. For one thing calls for more equitable power sharing among the major religious communities have been met; for another, the Palestinian factor is no longer significant in Lebanese domestic politics and the regional conflict no longer has the divisive domestic impact it had prior to the civil war. Whatever its domestic costs, the Syrian presence in Lebanon

in the post-civil war period has contributed to these results. Added to that is the changing regional environment whereby, since the 1990s, international efforts have been focused on settling the Arab-Israeli conflict and, until that objective is achieved, on preventing Arab-Israeli hostilities. In the absence of active destabilizing external influences, it is doubtful that the remaining potential elements of domestic instability mentioned above, most notably religious fractionalization would, on their own, lead to a renewal of civil conflict.

The external and religious factors aside, given Lebanon's open trade and services-oriented economy, the traditionally dominant private sector and the country's educational attainment, it is unlikely that the economic agendas of any given group will be a sufficient cause for re-igniting the civil conflict. Socio-economic problems and/or failing economic performance may lead to a change in government, but not to an open rebellion against the state on the part of any given political group.

## Conclusions

The portrayal of a civil conflict as a struggle between the state and a well-defined rebel group may be an oversimplification in so far as the Lebanese (and perhaps other) cases are concerned. There were multiple parties to the conflict (internal and external) of which the Lebanese state was one.

Religious (as opposed to ethnic) fractionalization, which appears to be a very important cause of civil conflict in the Lebanese case, has not been given the attention it deserves in cross country studies, at least relative to other indices of social fractionalization. It is not clear to what extent religious fractionalization would continue to be an important risk element were the Lebanese system non-sectarian or secular. Further cross-country research is needed to determine whether religious dominance plays the same role as ethnic dominance,<sup>57</sup> and to what extent this might depend on the level and quality of educational attainment.

External interventions played a major role in provoking, prolonging, and ending the civil war. In the post war period, the Syrian military presence, and hence influence, has been a crucial factor in determining domestic political outcomes including at times the settlement of potential conflicts. For Lebanon, the specific question that needs to be addressed is whether the post-Tai'f Accord political system is sufficiently viable to withstand internal shocks

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<sup>57</sup> In this connection it maybe noted that the Barro data set for religious divisions which are used in cross country studies may have some shortcomings. Muslims are combined in one category; but separate divisions for Sunnis and Shi'a may be more useful. Eastern Orthodox could be grouped with Catholics instead of with Protestants. And, for the case of India, it may be unrealistic to place Hindus and Sikhs in the same category. M. Reynal-Querol, "Ethnicity, Political Systems and Civil Wars" (Unpublished paper, 2001) maintains that Barro's data does not represent all religions with sufficient detail. Reynal-Querol also expresses concerns about excessive inertia in the figures for the growth rates of some religions. In addition, she points out that cases of multiple religious affiliations are not properly accounted for. .

without external assistance and, if need be, direct intervention. If not, what political reform should be envisaged and how can it be implemented?

The economic motivations underlying the onset of civil wars seem to have been weak in the Lebanese case. We can immediately discount the influence of natural resources. As the Lebanese economy was and remains heavily dependent on trade and services, the policy issue of diversification for the purpose of reducing the risk of potential conflict associated with natural resources does not arise. The rate of growth preceding the conflict pointed to lower, rather than a higher, risk of civil war. Nonetheless, economies such as Lebanon's are not necessarily less prone to civil conflict. We, therefore, need to consider both the grievance (political agenda) and greed (economic agenda) elements. Once the civil war broke out, economic factors played an important role in prolonging its duration.

Population density (as opposed to population size) has not been considered as a risk factor related to the incidence of civil war. While its population is small, Lebanon has a high population density in relation to cultivable land and, more generally, available economic resources. This small population is one of the leading factors which lowered Lebanon's 1970 war probability relative to other countries. It is not immediately clear why a small, densely populated country may not have the same risk, arising from population considerations, as a more populous one with a lower population density. Population growth might be regarded as a risk factor as well. This matter is deserving of further research in cross country studies.

Table 1: War Period Militias

Major Militias			
Name	Dominant Religious Affiliation	Strength	
		Fighters	Total Military and Civilian Personnel
Amal	Muslim Shia'	3,000-4,000 (1)	10,000 (3)
Hizbullah	Muslim Shia'	4,000-4,500 (1)	18,000 (3)
Lebanese Forces	Christian Maronite	8,000-10,000 (1)	20,000 (3)
Palestinian Militias		8,000 (2)	
Progressive Socialist Party	Druze	5,000-6,000 (1)	16,000 (3)
South Lebanon's Army	Christian and Muslim Shia'	2,000-2,500 (1)	
<b>Estimated Total</b>		<b>30,000-34,000</b>	<b>64,000</b>
Minor Militias			
Name	Dominant Religious Affiliation	Strength (number of fighters)	
The Marada Brigade	Christian Maronite	700-800 (1)	
Zghorta Liberation Army	Christian Maronite	700 (2)	
The Guardians of the Cedars	Christian Maronite	500 (4)	
National Liberal Party	Christian Maronite	2,000 (2)	
National Bloc	Christian Maronite	200 (2)	
Ba'th Party	Muslim	500 (1)	
National Syrian PPS	Secular	800-1,000 (1)	
Saiqa		500 (2)	
The Communist Action Organization	Secular	100-150 (1)	
Lebanese Communist Party	Secular	600-700 (1)	
Lebanese Arab Army (LAA)		2,000 (4)	
The Najjadah	Muslim Sunni	300 (4)	
The Murabitoon (The Sentinels)	Muslim Sunni	3,000 (4)	
Firqat an Nasr (Victory Division)		1,000 (4)	
Wa'd Party	Christian	600-700 (1)	
Tanzim Sha'bi Saida	Muslim Sunni	500 (1)	
Arab Democratic Party	Muslim Alawi	500 (1)	
The Order of Maronite Monks	Christian Maronite	200 (4)	
<b>Estimated Total</b>		<b>14,700-15,250</b>	

Sources:

- (1) Hamdan K.1997. *Le Conflit Libanais: Communautés Religieuses, Classes Sociales et Identité Nationale*, France: Garnet.
- (2) O'Ballance E. 1998. *Civil War in Lebanon, 1975 – 92*, Houndmills Basingstoke Hampshire: Macmillan.
- (3) Richani N. 2001. *The Political Economies of the War Systems in Lebanon and Columbia* (Unpublished paper presented at the World Bank Conference on the Economics of Civil Wars, Oslo, June 11-13, 2001.)
- (4) Library of the Congress. 1987. *Country Report: Lebanon* (Available online at: [www.memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/lebanon/lb\\_appnb.html](http://www.memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/lebanon/lb_appnb.html))

Table 2A: The CH Model Coefficients

The CH core model involves a logit regression which relates the onset of civil war to secondary school enrollment ratio for males (secm), the average annual growth rate of per capita income (gy1), the ratio of primary goods exports to GDP (sxp), the square of the ratio of primary goods exports to GDP (sxp2), a social fractionalization index (frac), a dummy variable denoting ethnic dominance (etdo), the number of months since the end of the previous civil war (peace), the log of the country's population (lnpop), and an index measuring the geographic dispersion of the population (geogia). The CH alternative model relates the onset of civil war to all the variables above except the secondary school enrollment ratio for males, which is replaced by the log of the real gross domestic product per capita (lngdp). The coefficients of the variables in each of the two regressions are as follows:

	secm	lngdp	gy1	sxp	sxp2	frac	etdo	peace	lnpop	geogia	constant
<b>Core</b>	-0.0316		-0.1152	18.937	-29.4432	-0.0002	0.6704	-0.0037	0.7677	-2.487	-13.0731
<b>Alternative</b>		-0.9504	-0.098	16.7734	-23.8005	-0.0002	0.4801	-0.0038	0.5105	-0.9919	-3.4375

Table 2B: Data on Lebanon

Year	secm	rgdpa	gy1	sxp	frac	etdo	peace	pop	geogia	psecm	pgdpa
1970	49	1,474.51	1.875	0.05	938	0	136	2,617,140	0.645	0.00720	0.02615
1995	77	626.65	6.750	0.044	938	0	50	4,005,000	0.644	0.00296	0.05590

rgdpa and pop are the real GDP per capita and population respectively, while psecm and pgdpa are the probabilities of war predicted by the core and alternative models respectively.

Table 2C: Elasticities of Alternative-Model Probability with Respect to the Explanatory Variables

	Elasticity in 1970	Elasticity in 1995
<b>rgdpa</b>	-0.9370	-0.9077
<b>gy1</b>	-0.1791	-0.6341
<b>sxp</b>	0.7043	0.6109
<b>frac</b>	-0.2270	-0.2200
<b>peace</b>	-0.5052	-0.1782
<b>pop</b>	0.4980	0.4828
<b>geogia</b>	-0.6235	-0.6035

The figures above were calculated by perturbing the value of the explanatory variables one by one, calculating elasticities for each of these changes, and averaging the results. This procedure could not be followed for the ethnic dominance dummy variable, which can only take a value of 0 or 1. Switching from 0 to 1 in 1970 would raise the probability of war occurring by 59.063% (relative to the initial value of the probability); the same type of change in 1995 would raise the probability of war by 56.244%.

Table 3: Estimates of Financial Resources Accruing to Militias during the Civil War

Militia	Amount	Description	Frequency and Time Frame
Lebanese Forces	\$ 75 million (1)	Annual budget of the Lebanese Forces	Annual
Lebanese Forces	\$ 40 million (1)	Share of the annual budget used to equip the Lebanese Forces militia troops and pay for their salaries (55%)	Annual
Lebanese Forces	\$ 25 million (2)	Israeli direct military help to the Lebanese Forces	Annual: 1976-82
Lebanese Forces	\$ 80,000 (3)	Earnings from controlling various ports including the fifth basin of Beirut port	Monthly
Lebanese Forces	\$ 100 million (1)	Total investment of the Lebanese Forces	
Lebanese Forces	\$ 60 million (1)	Total investment of the Lebanese Forces in real estate	
Lebanese Forces	\$ 5-6 million (4)	Total expenditures	Monthly: 1988
Lebanese Forces	\$ 20 million (4)	Occasional sales of arms in foreign markets	
Lebanese Forces	\$ 5 million (4)	Sale of weapons and ammunition to the Lebanese Army	
Lebanese Forces	\$ 65 (9)	Monthly salary of the fighters	Monthly
Lebanese Forces	\$ 150-200 million (4)	Estimated gross annual income	Annual: 1982-89
PSP	\$ 60,000 (3)	Earnings from controlling the ports of Jiyeh and Khaldeh	Monthly
PSP	\$ 75 (4)	Monthly salary for the fighters	Monthly
PSP	\$ 70-100 million (4)	Estimated gross annual income	Annual: 1982-89
PSP	\$ 70-100 million (4)	Income from the ports of Khaldeh and Jiyeh, importation of fuel, industrial projects in Shouf, taxation, and foreign aid	Annual
PSP	\$ 100 million (4)	Grant from the PLO	1987
PSP	\$ 40 million (4)	Grant from the PLO, of which the first installment was received	1987
PSP	\$ 35 million (4)	Grant from Libya	1987
Hizbullah	\$ 23 million (4)	Financial support from Iran	Monthly
Hizbullah	\$ 3 million (4)	Funding from Iran allocated for the recruitment of 25,000 fighters, who each will be paid \$ 100 per month	Monthly: 1987
Hizbullah	\$ 100 (4)	Monthly salary of the fighters	Monthly
Hizbullah	\$ 36-60 million (4)	Estimated gross annual income	Annual: 1982-89
Amal	\$ 75 (4)	Monthly salary of the fighters	Monthly

Sources:

(1) Le Commerce 26.05.89

(2) Picard, Elisabeth. 1996. "Liban: La Matrice Historique," in *Economie des Guerres Civiles*, ed. Jean Rufin, pp. 62-103

(3) *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*. Revue d'étude et de réflexion sur le Liban et le monde Arabe, deuxième trimestre 1988, no. 10, pp. 271-287.

(4) Richani N. 2001. *The Political Economies of the War Systems in Lebanon and Columbia* (Unpublished paper presented at the World Bank Conference on the Economics of Civil Wars, Oslo, June 11-13, 2001.)

Table 4: Estimates of Financial Resources Accruing to Militias during the Civil War

Source I								
Arms Trade	Looting	Exploitation <sup>1</sup>	Smuggling	Bribes and Extortion <sup>2</sup>	Ports	Drugs	Political Money and Military Resources	Total
Average \$400 million Minimum \$100 million Maximum \$800 million Annually 1975-90	Gross value of looted property \$2 billion of which \$500 million accrued to looters 1975-90	Profits \$50 million Annually 1975-90	Illegal exports of fuel \$40 million Total 1980-89	\$200 million Annually 1975-90	Loss of tariff revenues of legal ports <sup>3</sup> Minimum \$15.5 million Maximum \$19.5 million Annually 1975-90	Total exports <sup>5</sup> \$1.7 billion Total as of 1985	\$10 billion 1975-90	Turnover of the Black Economy \$14.5 billion 1975-90 \$900 million <sup>6</sup> Annually 1975-90
Earnings from arms trade exceeded \$150 million Annually 1975-90			Earnings from illegal exports of subsidized wheat \$20 million Total 1987-90		Average earnings from unloading, loading and transport in illegal ports \$2 million Annually 1980-89 and \$8 million Annually 1987-89			
					Illegal earnings <sup>4</sup> \$2.1 billion Total 1975-90			
Source II								
Pillaging <sup>7</sup>	Ransoms <sup>8</sup>	Embezzlement of Banks <sup>9</sup>	Drugs and Contraband	Confiscation of Army Arsenal	Total			
Minimum \$5 billion Maximum \$7 billion Total 1975-90	\$500 million Total 1975-90	\$250 million 1982-83 <sup>10</sup>	Earnings from trade in drugs Minimum \$700 million Maximum \$1 billion Annually 1975-90	Value Unknown <sup>11</sup>	Total earnings \$15 billion 1975-90			

Sources:

(1) *Annahar*, October 15, 1990, p. 8.

(2) Corm, George. 1994. "The War System: Militia Hegemony and Reestablishment of the State," in *Peace for Lebanon? From War to Reconstruction*, eds. Deirdre Collings. (Lynne Rienner Publishers, CO: Boulder), pp. 215-230.

Notes:

- Exploitation includes imports and sale of expired medical supplies, imitation of products and selling them as originals, bank notes forgeries (esp. US dollars), etc.
- Source (1) also reports that during 1975-1990, illegal commissions on governmental projects and purchases totaled \$ 600 million and accrued to 200 government officials.
- Due to the existence of illegal ports.
- Earnings created by avoiding the payment of port charges and custom fees, both of which had generated abnormal profits for industrialists, merchants and importers.
- Another source, Jean François Couvrat, and Nicolas Pless, 1993: *Das verborgene Gesicht der Weltwirtschaft*, Münste, estimates profits accruing from the drug business at \$ 2 billion for the period 1975-1990.
- Another source, N. Richani. 2001. *The Political Economies of the War Systems in Lebanon and Columbia* (Unpublished paper presented at the World Bank Conference on the Economics of Civil Wars, Oslo, June 11-13, 2001.) estimates the war economy's money circulated at \$900 million per year between 1978 and 1982, of which \$400 million was circulated by the PLO, \$300 million was donated by foreign sources to different militias and \$200 million was acquired by militias from internal Lebanese sources through various means, including extortion, drug trafficking and contraband.
- Includes pillaging of the Beirut Port (1976), looting of the downtown district (1975-76) and confiscation of property.
- Revenues from imposed tolls and taxes are not quantified.
- In April 1976, the British Bank of the Middle East was subject to armed robbery. Estimates of stolen cash range from \$20 million to \$50 million. See Fawaz N. Traboulsi. "De la Violence. Fonctions et Rituels," in *Stratégie II, Peuples Méditerranéens*, No. 64-65 (Juillet - Décembre 1993), pp. 57-86.
- This figure pertains to the reserves embezzlement from the First Phoenician Bank and Capital Trust Bank.
- Source (2) mentions that in the period 1982-83, the Lebanese army purchased about \$1 billion worth of arms from the United States, presumably as replacement for the confiscated arms and equipment.

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