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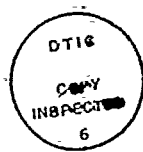
**Security Perspectives and Policies:
Lebanon, Syria, Israel,
and the Palestinians**

Defense Academic Research Support Program

May 1991

Security Perspectives and Policies: Lebanon, Syria, Israel, and the Palestinians

Conference Papers



Editors: Steven R. Dorr
LT Neysa M. Slater, USN

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Preface

These papers were prepared for the conference entitled "Security Perspectives and Policies: Lebanon, Syria, Israel, and the Palestinians," sponsored by the Defense Academic Research Support Program (DARSP). The conference discussed political and military trends in the region the Middle East (Lebanon, Syria, and Israel) which falls within the direct area of responsibility of the United States European Command (USEUCOM). The sessions were held at USEUCOM Headquarters, Stuttgart, Germany, April 24-25, 1990.

Our objective was to bring together scholars and analysts to share ideas and perspectives on this critical region of the Middle East. The result was two days of intensive discussions which placed the problems of the Middle East in a new light. The conference identified key sub-national actors and analyzed their viewpoints on regional security issues. Inevitably, the discussion went far beyond the confines of these papers. Many presentations were not linked to written presentations at all. Nevertheless, the papers included here capture important perspectives on the Middle East security

of key Middle East actors. As the world begins to look beyond the Gulf after Desert Storm, and diplomatic efforts to bring peace and stability to the Middle East are resumed, the tangled interrelationships between these states and the views of their political leadership will be even more significant.

The views contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as necessarily representing the official policy, either expressed or implied, of the Defense Intelligence College, the Department of Defense, or the US Government.

The Defense Academic Research Support Program (DARSP), initiated in 1982, provides a vehicle for direct contact and scholarly exchange between defense analysts and noted experts on the Third World. DARSP is managed by the Research Center of the Defense Intelligence College, a professional, accredited, degree-granting institution. DARSP concentrates exclusively on the Third World and supports only unclassified research.

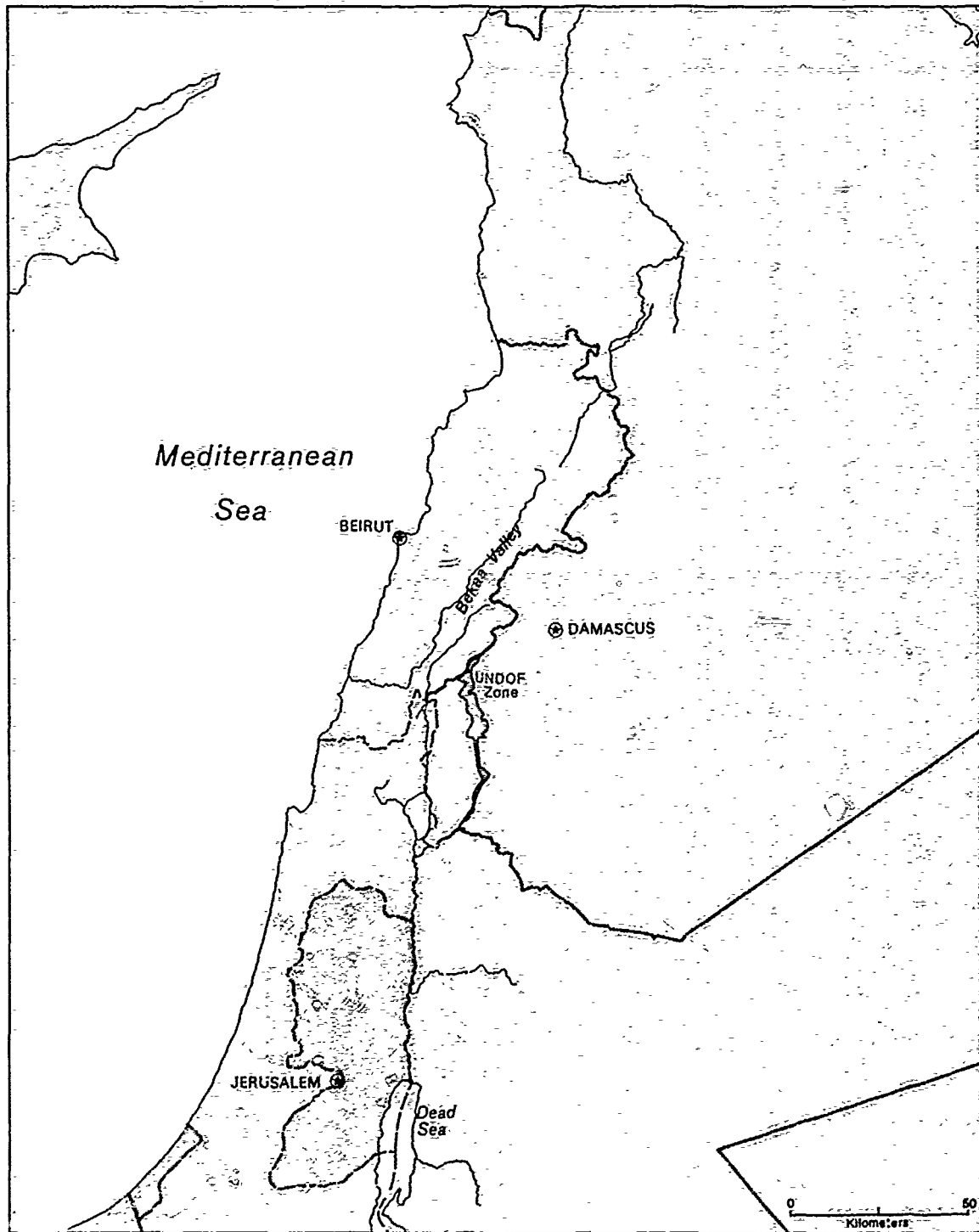
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The Labor Party in Israeli Politics

Asher Arian

Graduate Center, City University of New York and Haifa University

Policy reflects politics; ideology informs policy, but ideology is not the only determinant of policy. In the case of Israel, security and foreign policies stem from many sources. The ideology of the party in power may delimit power but it does not determine it. The political constellation, the history and personalities of the leaders, and perceived opportunities and risks may also be very important.

The positions of the Israeli Labor party on foreign policy and security matters must be analyzed in the context of the Israeli political system. That system is party-dominated, centralized, and hierarchical. Internal party structures and coalition calculations, not only the behavior of the electorate, are important in determining which leader shall emerge, whether the support of the party will be forthcoming for the leader, and the degree of policy flexibility possible.

The leader must be able to deliver the party, but the party is delivered into the hands of the governing coalition. To rule, a majority is needed; to fashion that majority, compromise is often required. To predict policy, then, we must know much more than ideology; we must also know about the structural constraints, and the identity (including the personality), of the leader.

Parties and Politics

The key to Israeli politics is in its political parties. A parliamentary form of government with a proportional system of representation, Israel holds elections for the 120 seat Knesset at least once every four years. Twenty-seven parties competed in 1988; 15 of them won more than the one percent needed for representation.

The system is complex, but some clarity is

achieved if one focusses on three major blocks of parties: (1) left-of-center, led by Labor; (2) right-of-center, led by Likud; and (3) the Jewish orthodox religious parties. Since no party has ever won a majority in Israel's 12 elections since 1948, coalitions have always been necessary. These coalitions have been headed by Labor or Likud, with some or all of the religious parties as junior partners.

Israeli politics must be thought of on three levels: (1) electoral politics; (2) coalition politics; and (3) bureaucratic politics. All three levels are associated with the political party. The politician must be concerned with the way actions are perceived (if noticed and remembered) by the electorate, how much leverage the party has compared with the strength of other parties for purposes of coalition formation, and whether the individual politician is doing what is needed within the party to retain a job, an office, or power. After considering these, then and only then is it appropriate to consider ideology.

Labor was the party of the founders of Israel. It dominated most aspects of Israeli life since the early waves of immigration of Jews during the first decades of this century until 1977. Labor was the party of independence, of the Six Day War, of unified Jerusalem, of David Ben Gurion, of Golda Meir, and of Moshe Dayan. It was the where the action was; ambitious politicians gravitated to it.

Its 1977 loss of power to the Likud was a turning-point, but it was also part of an on-going process. There is absolutely no doubt of the long-term decline of Labor. From almost 50 percent of the vote in the 1960s, Labor sank to 30 percent in 1988. Likud came out one Knesset seat stronger than Labor in the 1988 elections, but Likud's 20 year record was much better than was Labor's. The number of people who voted in Israel increased between 1969 and 1988 by almost 900,000. The difference between the Labor vote of 1988 (685,363) and the Alignment (Labor and Mapam) vote of 1969 (632,035) was only slightly more than

50,000 votes. (In 1988, Mapam ran alone and won 56,345 votes). The Likud, on the other hand, added more than 370,000 votes, growing from 338,948 in 1969 to 709,305 in 1988.

The list of reasons why Labor did not regain its earlier dominance is long: it included Labor's estrangement from the growing Sephardi (mainly Jews from Moslem countries) electorate, the bitter internal fights between Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin, and the leadership's inability or lack of desire to recruit a younger generation of leaders.

Israel is an ideological country, but ideology is a servant of the party system, and not its master. We must be aware of stated policy positions, but we must also be cognizant of the enormous ideological flexibility of which politicians are capable. An attempt to characterize Labor in purely ideological or policy terms would probably have low predictive value; coupled with information about the leader and the composition of the party and the Knesset, then the likely outcome can be assessed. Only in the heat of the political battle will it become clear what Labor is willing or not willing to undertake. One's stand, indeed, may depend on where one sits.

Three different analyses are important to understand Labor's positions: (1) the party's ideology; (2) the factions within the party and their relative strengths; and (3) organizational and structural changes which have recently occurred within the party.

Labor's Platform

The election platform is a compromise among the factions of a party. A wise political adage has it that party platforms are like train platforms: something to get in on, not to stand on. But the platform is a good, if not perfect, indication of future developments.

Table 1-1 presents the positions on the Arab-Israeli conflict for the parties represented in the Knesset elected in 1988, as expressed in their platforms. Two points (at least) are worth noting: (1) Labor and the Likud share the center of the spectrum; and (2) Labor and the Likud share the center of the spectrum, and are not at the continuum's extremes. Labor and Likud formed the arithmetic center of any coalition. Together, winning a majority of the 120-person Knesset was easy. Without one of them, it was an extremely difficult task.

It is not helpful to think of Labor as left and Likud as right. Likud is hawkish, but there are more extreme militant parties; Labor is dovish, but other parties are more conciliatory, and many Labor supporters are hawks. In reality, the two parties competed for the center of the Israeli political universe, despite the fact that their own ideological assertions sometimes provided a more extreme image.

On the whole, Labor's policy positions were hard-headed and security-oriented. They were, at one and the same time, pragmatic and flexible. Were they operating in a political vacuum, Labor would likely take more risks on the road toward peace than would the Likud. But it is important not to fall into the media trap which sometimes portrays Israeli politics as dominated by hard-line Likud and soft-line Labor. There is a difference of degree between them, but there is also a wide sphere of agreement.

The positions which Labor has adopted fall far short of a "dovish" stance. Since it was composed of both hawks and doves, Labor had to strive hard to find wording acceptable to both. Inevitably, this blurred the party's image.

Like Likud, Labor opposed the establishment of a Palestinian state and ruled out negotiations with the PLO, while supporting negotiations in principle. Agreeing on a good deal allowed the two parties to participate in the national unity governments before and after the 1988 elections. These national unity governments had institutionalized the avoidance of major policy decisions regarding the future of the territories. When a major departure from the no-decision pattern seemed to be reached, the unity government collapsed.

The Labor platform differed from the Likud's in that Labor conceded the possibility of territorial concession for true peace. But Labor's was also a tough, security-first platform. In its 1969 platform, Labor announced:

Until peace comes, our forces will remain on all the cease-fire lines.... Israel will never return to the armistice lines used before the Six Day War.... Additional settlements will be established in the border areas.

In the platform drafted for the 1973 elections

Table 1-1: Party Positions on the Arab-Israeli Conflict and Seats Won in the 1988 Elections

	Seats*	Notes			
		1	2	3	4
Left					
• Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Rakah)	4				
• Progressive List for Peace	1	+	+	+	+
• Daroushe	1				
• Mapam	3				
• Civil Rights Movement	5	--	+	+	+
• Shinui	2				
• Agudat Israel	5	--	--	+	+
• Labor	39				
• Likud	40				
• National Religious Party	5	--	--	--	+
• Shas	6				
• Torah Flag	3				
• Tehiya	3				
• Tzomet	2	--	--	--	--
• Moledet	2				

Right

Total: 120

Key:

1. Agrees to: return to the pre-1967 cease-fire lines; return Jerusalem to its pre-1967 status.

2. Agrees to: the final status of Jerusalem will be negotiated in a final peace agreement, the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the territories, the PLO should be a negotiating partner after Arafat's 1988 statement.

3. Agrees to the PLO as a negotiating partner if the PLO renounces terrorism and formally recognizes Israel. Supports the convening of an international conference to facilitate the peace process. Rejects settlements in the territories except for reasons of security. Agrees in principle to territorial compromise in the territories. Agrees to consider granting sovereignty over the territories to a foreign power.

4. Objects to planning for and encouraging Arab transfer.

Source: Party publications and platforms for the 1988 elections.

*(120 Seats in the Knesset)

before the outbreak of the Yom Kippur war, Labor hardened its stance, declaring that the scope of the settlements in the territories was to be increased and the pace of their construction accelerated. The 1973 Labor platform also supported settlement anywhere in the territories, and not only for security considerations according to government plan, as in the past.¹

Labor referred to the territories as Judea and Samaria in its 1984 platform, partly in response to the Likud's electoral success. This value laden usage bearing nationalistic connotations had been championed by Begin and the Likud. But Labor also reiterated its call for territorial concessions for a true peace. Labor was playing to both the doves and the hawks, trying to appeal to the hard-liners yet placing themselves in firm opposition to the Likud government.

In the 1988 campaign, Labor presented itself as the nation's hope for peace. During the campaign, the Likud appeared successful in equating Labor's positions with those of extreme doves, willing to give away everything quickly. This was hardly the case, but Labor's image was of a party softer on standing up to Arab demands than the Likud.²

Labor's stated goals in 1988 were security, peace, and a democratic Jewish state which would assure equal rights to all its citizens; in that order. According to the platform:

The permanent borders of Israel will be defensible ones, allowing Israel efficient defense using her own military forces. Israel will not return to the borders of 4 June 1967. She will retain, under her own control and under her sovereignty, even during periods of peace, the security deployment of the Israel Defense Forces and the settlements, including the Jordan Valley and the northwest section of the Dead Sea, Gush Etzion, and the environs of Jerusalem. The Jordan River would be the security border, and no foreign army would be west of it.

Labor's 1988 platform specifically accepted the United Nations resolutions 242 and 338. It rejected the establishment of a Palestinian state, but hinted at a form of confederation with the kingdom of Jordan, thus proposing a formula to relinquish control over the territories while avoiding the formation of a state. Unfortunately for Labor, King Hussein of

Jordan relinquished his claims to the territories formerly under Jordanian control before the November elections, thus undercutting Labor's platform. The Likud spoke simultaneously of peace, retaining the territories, and preventing the establishment of foreign sovereignty in them.

Regarding the Golan Heights, Labor expressed its willingness to enter into peace negotiations with Syria without preconditions. The platform stated that the Golan Heights represented an area important for the peace and security of Israel, and that the settlements there must be strengthened. There was no contention that the Golan Heights had been annexed and must, therefore, remain under Israeli control.

Party Arithmetic

In addition to coalition arithmetic, the Labor party's future policies are imbedded in the structure of the party. The leaders emerge from its midst, and the leader must know how to manage that structure. Labor's structure is hierarchical and oligarchical. Accordingly, leaders of the Labor party (and of other Israeli parties as well) have a very long life expectancy rate in power; similarly, there are few surprises when power is finally passed to a new group of leaders. Ben Gurion, Eshkol, and Golda Meir held effective power until the generation of Rabin and Peres assumed power. For all the sound and fury, the stability is impressive.

Labor's oligarchic structure is expressed in its indirect representation as "an admirable means of banishing democracy while pretending to apply it."³ Only the broadest-based institution is selected by the membership; this broad-based institution then elects the next-highest-level institution, the members of the third tier are elected by the members of the second, and so on. Indirect democracy represents a many-layered pyramid with power distilled at each level until the top is reached.

In the case of the Labor party between 1986 and 1988, a 3201-member convention selected a center of 1340 members; the center in turn elected a leadership bureau of 123 members, which elected a smaller executive. The process culminated with the selection and approval of the 1988 Knesset list. In addition, the Knesset members from the Labor party and the ministers from the Labor party comprise parallel and often overlapping foci of power.⁴

The party displays a wide array of opinion. "Doves" and "hawks" are vague indications; they refer to a best guess regarding an individual's willingness to be more or less conciliatory on matters of security and defense. In general, the tone is more conciliatory and pragmatic in Labor than in the Likud.

Many activists (at the level of the leadership bureau, for example), form internal groupings to solidify their positions and to determine tactics. Often these groups form around ideological orientations, but they are not limited to defense policy, and these groups have no formal standing. The groups are also concerned with social and economic policies, with questions of the identity of the top leadership, and with the political careers of the members. These groups are important because they provide their members the support of numbers in reacting to events and in striving for appointments. For example, within minutes of the fall of the Shamir government, after it had lost the no-confidence vote in the Knesset in March 1990, Labor's hawkish Knesset members met to demand appropriate representation for its members as ministers in the government that Peres would attempt to establish.

Younger politicians, those in their thirties and forties, are especially active in these groupings. Politics in Israel start at a young age and peak late, if ever. Older politicians and those higher in the hierarchy are more cautious about ideology, either because they have learned to be wary with age, or because their wariness has aided them in surviving in Israel's compacted political environment. The party's top leaders and ministers shy away from direct involvement in these groups, although many of them emerged from similar organizational efforts in the past, and have on-going connections with the groups.

Three identifiable groupings of the younger generation operating today include Chug Mashov, Chug Hakfar Hayarok, and Dor Hemshech.⁵ The first two are dovish, the third is hawkish. The leading group of Labor doves is Chug Mashov led by Yossi Beilin and Avraham Burg. These young leaders support direct negotiations with the PLO and withdrawal from all the territories. These are radical positions in terms of Israeli politics, similar to those taken by more left wing parties, but too extreme for

the mainstream Labor leadership and to much of the electorate, according to public opinion polls. Chug Mashov strongly opposed the national unity government set up with the Likud, and favored a narrow government headed by Peres.

Another group of Labor doves is Chug Hakfar Hayarok, headed by Chaim Ramon and Nissim Zvili. The views of these leaders are very similar to those of Chug Mashov, and, on the whole, they support Peres and his dovish plans. While the leaders of this group are strong Peres supporters, some of the activists are less committed to Peres than are Mashov activists; many in Hakfar Hayarok do not rule out the leadership of Rabin under certain unspecified circumstances.

The major hawkish group of the younger generation of politicians is Dor Hemshech, headed by Moshe Cohen, Raanan Cohen, and Micha Goldman. This group sees itself as a hawkish alternative to the Kfar Hayarok group, affording its activists a platform and exposure. Dor Hemshech applauded Labor's participation in the national unity government and Shamir's peace initiative, and strongly opposed the plan to attempt to have Peres form a narrowly-based government in 1988. In 1990 they changed their view, after their undeclared leader, Yitzhak Rabin, became discouraged with the possibility of moving the peace process forward under the national unity government headed by Shamir. Following Rabin's lead, the Dor Hemshech group agreed to withdraw from the national unity government and supported Peres's effort to form his own. In general, Dor Hemshech's candidate for prime minister is Yitzhak Rabin. They are considered to comprise the hardest core of Rabin's supporters.

The middle-aged politicians (fifties and sixties) also have their groups. The leading group of Labor hawks is Hazerem Hamerkazi, literally meaning the Central Current. In it are Labor leaders such as Mordechai Gur, Michal Bar-Zohar, and Shimon Shitrit. The veteran Shlomo Hillel and Shoshana Arbeli-Almozlino buttress this group. Hillel held a number of positions in the past, including Minister of Police and Chairman of the Knesset. Arbeli-Almozlino was number two in the 1984 Labor list, and she served as Minister of Health.

Hazerem Hamerkazi sired the ideology adopted by the Dor Hemshech group and strongly support

Rabin-for leader. They argued that Labor's dovish image must be altered if it is to reestablish itself in the political system. They support the Allon plan, which calls for retaining the Jordan Valley as Israel's security border and establishing sovereignty over Jerusalem and Gush Etzion near Hebron. They would be willing to give up a part of the territories on condition that Israeli control would not be replaced by an independent Palestinian state. They would accept a Jordanian-Palestinian federation, but only after an interim period of autonomy during which confidence-building measures would be implemented.

Two other groups should be noted. One is a loose grouping of older Labor doves to be found in the Shiluv (Integration) group. Another are the members of kibbutzim who are active in Labor politics. Many of them, although by no means all, are doves. Two Knesset members (Yaacov Tzur and Edna Solidor) from one part of the kibbutz movement were more hawkish, while two others (Avraham Katz-Oz and Hagai Marom) were more dovish.

During the 1988-90 national unity government, the ten Labor party ministers did not belong to any of these groups. The Knesset members who were not ministers were divided: eight belonged to the two dovish groups, and eight belonged to the two hawkish groups. The rest did not belong to any group, but more of them seemed to identify with the doves.

Table 1-2 reports the results of a survey of Knesset members conducted in 1985. While Knesset membership has since changed in some cases, and the Intifada had not yet begun, the results are instructive. On many of the issues, the responses of Labor and Likud Knesset members are not significantly different.

Most Knesset members from both the Likud and Labor believed or believed strongly that co-existence between Jews and Arabs was possible. The Knesset members did not take extreme positions regarding civil rights for Arabs of the territories. Most of the Likud members favored the status quo, while most of the Labor members supported increasing their civil rights, without giving them the right to vote. The plurality position was negative for Knesset member from both parties regarding the question of whether the government

should encourage Arabs to leave the country. Labor members were more distinctly negative about this possibility than were the Likud members.

Strong differences emerged when policy declarations were posed: the Labor party members favored returning territories, the Likud members favored annexing them. These positions have been carefully rehearsed in election campaigns and they are expressed clearly. There were large differences between the Knesset members of the two parties, but there were also tantalizing similarities.

In 1990, the doves appeared to have a majority in Labor's leadership bureau and among Labor's Knesset members, although not a very large one. It is difficult to estimate the division in the party's center between hawks and doves and between Peres and Rabin supporters.

Changes in Selection

For the last decade and a half, since the traumatic loss of 1977, Labor has been trying to bounce back. The Labor party appeared to be undergoing a quiet revolution on the eve of the 1988 elections, introducing important structural and procedural changes. These included a more democratic process for choosing candidates, and an electoral list more diversified than former lists.

Compared to the past, the 1988 list was selected in a more democratic fashion. Previously, a nominating committee controlled by the party leadership presented an election list which was approved by the party center. In 1988, a complex system decentralized the system somewhat. The democratic nature of the exercise was immediately tarnished by the fact that the important leaders were granted the luxury of being placed on the list without facing election within the party. Those who made the head of the list without election included Peres, Rabin, former President Yitzhak Navon, Knesset Speaker Shlomo Hillel, party secretary-general Uzi Baram, and Histadrut head Israel Kaisar. In addition, in the agreement that brought Ezer Weizman's Yahad list into the Labor party, it was agreed that Weizman would automatically be put in one of the top ten positions.

But the change in selection procedure resulted in many first-time Labor candidates being elected to the Knesset. A third of the 39 elected from Labor in 1988 (and eight of the 40 from Likud) had never

**Table 1-2: Attitudes of Labor and Likud
Knesset Members, 1985**

	<u>Knesset members</u>	
	<u>Labor</u>	<u>Likud</u>
	(28 members)	(33 members)
Co-existence between Jews and Arabs		
• strongly believe it possible	32%	39%
• believe it possible	57	39
• other	11	22
Civil rights to Arabs of territories		
• Increase, including the right to vote in Knesset elections	11	0
• Increase, without the right to vote	78	32
• Leave things as they are now	11	61
• Decrease their civil rights	0	7
Government should encourage Arabs to leave		
• definitely and yes	0	19
• maybe	15	31
• no	48	41
• definitely not	37	9
Future of territories		
• Return	93	0
• Status quo	7	39
• Annex	0	61

Source: Data collected by Dr. Michal Shamir.

served in the Knesset before. The Labor party delegation's average age was a year younger than was the Likud's: 51 for Labor, 52 for the Likud. But Labor's Knesset members tended to be older, the higher on the list they were; this was a throwback to the good-old-days and a clear indication that the oligarchical tendencies of the party persisted. When studied in groups of ten, the average age of the first Labor group was 60.7, the second 50.7, then 46.7 and 44.1. For the Likud, the first group of 10 elected was oldest (56.8), but the second group was youngest (47.7), with the other two 51 and 52.5 years of age. The introduction of younger members did not effect the one-sided gender distribution of Knesset members. Only seven women were elected to the Knesset in 1988, four of them from the Alignment.

Labor, like the Likud and many of the smaller lists, placed Sephardi candidates in prominent places on the list. But there was no evidence that their place on the list improved Labor's success among Sephardi voters. In a major revision compared with past lists, Labor in 1988 fielded 11 candidates born in Asia or Africa among the first 40 on its list. The parallel number for the Likud was six. A year after the election, many of Labor's back-benchers were publicly expressing their frustrations at being unsuccessful in gaining access to the inner-circles of their party.

Twenty of Labor's first 40, and 29 of the Likud's first 40, were born in Israel. The leaders of the parties (Peres and Shamir) were both born in Poland.

To date, Labor's success at changing its electoral fortunes has been marginal. The party has not been successful in penetrating the growing ranks of the Israel-born middle class Sephardim. Labor has declined to rejuvenate its senior leadership, with Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin (in 1977, head of the list and prime minister, respectively) still the major leaders at the beginning of the 1990s.

At the time of this writing, Peres and Rabin seemed to be getting along together. They had coordinated the 1988 Labor campaign together, and they were generally united regarding the handling of the Intifada and the continuance of the peace process. Peres's leadership was challenged a number of times in the year following the 1988 electoral loss, but never successfully and never directly by Rabin. Rabin was the major force that held the national

unity government together, and his loss of patience with Shamir's indecision led to the fall of that government in March 1990. Peres, however, was the party's designated choice to form an alternative government.

The symbols which it once monopolized (strength, loyalty, security, defender of the national interest) now elude it; at best, these must be shared with the Likud. Labor had failed to convince the electorate that its pragmatic and conciliatory vision of the peace process with the Arabs was realistic or feasible.

An Emerging Center?

There appeared to be three simultaneous processes operating on the Israeli party system and public opinion at the beginning of the 1990s which presented the observer of Israeli politics with fascinating paradoxes. The processes were: (1) a generalized, hardening of short-term positions since the beginning of the Intifada; (2) a steady and increasing moderation of Israeli public opinion on certain long-term issues of security policy over the past few years; and (3) a growing polarization of attitude and political power between the more conciliatory left and the more hard-line right.⁶

Centrifugal forces prosper on polarization, and they pull adjacent parties from the center to the extreme pole.⁷ Rabbi Kahane's Kach and the Tehiya party had that kind of influence on the Likud, and Labor was effected, but to a much lower degree, by the Arab parties, Mapam, and the Civil Rights movement.

Polarization of opinion flourishes in periods of intense ideological difference and is reinforced by a system which encourages the existence of many parties. In such a period, some opposition groups are tempted to act irresponsibly, and anti-system parties foster disloyalty.⁸ This polarization is not only characteristic of election periods, but becomes a more enduring political attribute. The Likud and Labor countered these trends in the 1980s with attempts to outlaw the extreme parties and by fashioning that unique centripetal political mechanism called the national unity government.

Israeli democracy has successfully dealt with threats from political extremes throughout its history. Ben Gurion stigmatized the communists and Herut in the popular mind and removed them

from his coalition calculations. He also refused the plans of his more ardent socialist colleagues and marched the country to the center. Ben Gurion initiated the status quo arrangements which allow the religious parties to participate in the Establishment while struggling against it. Menachem Begin also displayed centrist tendencies: he did not annex the territories, and Israel withdrew from the Sinai as part of the peace treaty with Egypt. The Likud and Shamir in the last few years also inched toward the center.

To offset political disintegration, past experience would suggest that a centrist force is likely to emerge in Israeli politics. To be sure, that new center may be considerably to the right of the one that had previously dominated Israeli politics. Based on the information available to date, it seems more likely that the Likud will emerge as that party of the center, rather than Labor. The fact that Likud bears a right-wing label does not prevent it from playing a centrist role. For an historical analogy, the socialist origins of the Labor party were not very relevant in understanding Labor policy of the 1960s and early 1970s; what was of note was that Labor was then a party of the center which tried to retain the loyalty of what it considered to be the central stratum of the electorate.

The reforms Labor introduced in 1988 and the greater number of Sephardim on its list were to no avail. Perhaps these changes need time to set in; in 1988, these changes did not help Labor win the votes of the largest and fastest growing segment of the electorate--the Sephardim. And until that happens, the electoral decline of Labor will persist.

Labor will have to fashion an electoral appeal which provides for security while adhering to its conciliatory policies. In addition, it will have to project the image of being tough bargainers. Shimon Peres does not have a popular image as a tough negotiator. Few Labor leaders generate the electoral excitement that some Likud leaders do. Labor is not perceived to have the bench strength that Likud does; the young politicians popularly considered as future national leaders are mostly in Likud.

These leadership qualities are crucial because Israeli public opinion, while split, is not fixed in stone. It is malleable, and has often responded in the past to appropriate leadership. If moderation on long-range policies continues to grow, Labor will

enjoy a relative advantage.

The demography of the country is shifting in a way which will facilitate the appeals of a party of the "extreme center." The dominant group in Israel's future will be the native-born. Already in 1992, a majority of the Jewish voters will be Israel-born. As the importance of the ethnic background of the parents and the grandparents recedes, and as Israelis become more educated, this Israel-born group will become more and more important. It will be a salaried and middle class group on the whole. As a group, it is likely to opt for middle of the road political positions, as long as its social and economic status can be maintained. The headlines will be grabbed by the religious fundamentalists and the super-nationalists, and the opponents of each, but the elections will be won by that party which is most successful in attracting the votes of the extreme center.

Because of the size of the immigration, the impact of Soviet Jewish immigration on the politics of Israel will also be important. In 1988, a little over two and a quarter million voters participated in the election. If the estimates of 750,000 new immigrants to Israel within the decade are correct, then the voting population may be increased by them by 15 to 20 percent. By comparison, the religious parties won 15 percent of the vote in 1988, and Arabs made up 10.6 percent of the electorate.

Assuming that immigrants from the Soviet Union will vote as a block, however, flies in the face of the Israeli experience. Immigrant groups have not entered Israel's political life by organizing new and independent lists. The general pattern has been to support existing parties. Sephardim originally supported Labor, as did most other groups. It was only in the early 1970s that the Sephardim switched to the Likud.

If it is hard to know how they will vote, it is easier to speculate about how they will not vote. We know that most of them do not have strong religious or Zionist backgrounds. On the other hand, their experience with a communist regime is unlikely to lead them to an orthodox socialist party (and Labor uses red flags and other socialist symbols in its electoral campaigning). They are likely to support a firm hand against violence and lawlessness, and a modified social welfare state. Many are well educated and professional; there are both

Ashkenazim and Sephardim among them. All this suggests that they will not massively support religious parties, extreme nationalist parties, or orthodox socialist parties. If these presumptions are correct, the vast majority of them are likely to find themselves choosing between parties of the center, specifically the Likud and Labor. They will want what many Israeli voters say they want: a firm leader who knows what must be done for Israel's security.

Success with the native-born voters and the new immigrants will give Labor the opportunity to reestablish itself as Israel's dominant party. If the competition again focuses on Labor and Likud, and not on the splinter parties, centrifugal processes may be stymied and the disintegration of the political system may be stemmed. To be successful in the long run, Labor will have to show that its conciliatory stand can be translated into national security and political achievements on the international front. Labor will have to generate a new image and a new leadership as well. Labor will be faced with a determined challenge by the Likud. Assuming that the Likud can overcome the serious crises which it will soon face regarding succession and policy, its chances seem good, better than Labor's, to dominate Israel's 1990s.

The party of the 1990s will be forced to be more

pragmatic than ideological, more middle-class than working-class, more attuned to the growing native-born segment of the population. That growing and key part of the electorate is likely to express nativist sentiments and to demand security, prosperity, and peace, in that order.

Endnotes

¹Yael Yishai, *Land or Peace: Whither Israel?* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution, 1987).

²Michal Shamir and Asher Arian, "The Intifada and Israeli Voters. Policy Preferences and Performance Evaluations," in *The Elections in Israel--1988*, eds. Asher Arian and Michal Shamir, (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1990).

³Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties* (New York: Wiley, 1963), 140.

⁴Asher Arian, *Politics in Israel. The Second Generation* (Revised Edition), (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House, 1989), chapter 6.

⁵The names of the various groups are not indicative of their positions. Chug Mashov means Feedback Circle; Chug Hakfar Hayarok means the Green Village Circle, after the place it was founded, and Hazerem Hamerkazi means the Center Current.

⁶Asher Arian, Michal Shamir, and Raphael Ventura, *Public Opinion and Political Change: Israel and the Intifada*, forthcoming.

⁷See Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, eds., *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

⁸Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems* (London: Cambridge University Press), chapters 6 and 10.

Israel and the Palestinians: Influence and Interests of Likud

Bernard Reich

George Washington University

Introduction: Security as a Core Issue

Survival and security in a hostile regional environment has been, since independence, at the core of Israeli concerns and actions in a way that is rarely matched by other entities. Security issues have been a part of every election campaign and at the heart of the debate for many of the political parties. Israelis discuss, participate in, and worry about security more than most populations, even of small states. The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) is, essentially, a civilian force in which virtually everyone participates both on active duty and, over an extended period, in the reserves. This centrality helps assure all elements of the security question are thoroughly discussed and debated and that a range of positions and choices will be available to the voter (whether for or in the Knesset).

Israel's preeminent concern and preoccupation with national survival and security derives from conflict with its Arab neighbors and its geostrategic situation. Israel has fought six wars with the Arab states and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and still remains at war (technically, if not actually) with all but Egypt. It spends on a continuing basis a major portion of its budget and GNP on defense and defense related items and has a sizable standing army and mobilizable reserve force that involves nearly all of its citizens. Virtually all aspects of foreign policy are dominated by a focus on the survival and security of the state and, hence, on the Arab world. The pursuit of peace through negotiations with the Arab states, the assurance of security in a region of hostility through an effective defense capability, and the attainment

of international support continue to be the central and dominating elements of Israel's political life and foreign and security policy.

The hostility of the Arab world (with the exception of Egypt since the peace treaty of 1979) tends to color and affect all other aspects of Israeli life. Six wars and countless skirmishes and terrorist attacks, as well as the Holocaust and Arab hostility during the mandate period, have all left their mark on Israel's national psyche and perceptions. The Arab threat is not seen as an aberration of history but as its latest manifestation. This historical psychological perspective is supplemented by Israel's geographical and political isolation and the lack of an alliance structure that formally commits a state to come to its defense or provide support in the event of war, although there have been tacit alliances and various linkages that have had a deterrent value.

Likud's perspectives and policies respond to this environment and are drawn from it.

Likud and the Political Right: A Note on History and Structure

Likud was established in 1973 as a political bloc composed of the Gahal alliance (Herut and Liberals); the La'am alliance (the State List and the Free Center); Achdut (a one-man faction in the Knesset); and Shlomzion, Ariel Sharon's former political party. Likud came to power in Israel in 1977, ousting the Labor government for the first time since Israel became independent and ending its dominance of Israel's political life. Although Likud retained its government position after the 1981 election, it was only by a narrow majority in the Knesset on most votes. In 1984, it lost plurality and joined with the Labor Alignment to form a Government of National Unity in which it shared power and ministerial positions. The position of

prime minister (and of foreign minister) rotated between Shimon Peres of Labor and Yitzhak Shamir of Likud. By the time of the 1988 Knesset election, Likud essentially was a coalition of four smaller parties that ran together on one list: Herut, Liberals, Ometz, and Tami. Likud today is a party rich in young political figures of which a significant number are of Oriental background.

The backbone of Likud is the Herut party, which comprises some 60 percent of the Likud election list. Herut was founded and dominated until his retirement by Menachem Begin and was built around him. It was his personality as well as his interpretation of Vladimir Zeev Jabotinsky's ideology that gave the party its shape.

Herut is a nation-wide grass-roots political movement with branches throughout Israel through which the election campaign is run. There are some 2000 central committee members who select the Herut candidates for the Knesset and decide where they will appear on the election list. Central committee members are chosen because of their involvement in the movement or their allegiance to a particular person or faction in the party. These are desirable positions, as they decide who will lead the party and who will represent them in the Knesset. Thus, committee members tend to form the constituencies of the Members of the Knesset (MKs).

Within the Herut component there are three major camps. Shamir-Arens, Levy, and Sharon. Both MKs and central committee members generally identify with one of the three camps, although there are exceptions.

The Shamir camp is the largest (probably about 50-60 percent of the membership) and generally considered to be the most intellectual. It has been described as a group of "pragmatic hawks". The largest number of Knesset members belong to this camp, and among them are the young rising stars (some of whom are referred to as "princes" of the party and some of whom come from distinguished Herut/Irgun families). They include Moshe Arens (Minister of Defense), Benjamin (Bibi) Netanyahu (Deputy Foreign Minister of Foreign Affairs, former Ambassador to the United Nations, and a protege of Arens), Benjamin "Benny" Begin (MK, geologist, and the son of Menachem Begin), Minister of Justice Dan Meridor (the son of Yaacov Meridor), Minister

of Health Ehud Olmert, Minister of Police Affairs Ronnie Milo, and Tzachi Hanegbi (the son of Geula Cohen of Tehiya), amongst others. Arens is seen as Shamir's successor, and the group looks to Arens for leadership and to resolve internal disputes. Under Shamir, this younger generation has been groomed for leadership and given important positions. They tend to be well-educated and less ideological than the older generation of the party. Nevertheless, some are clearly identified with hardline positions on the political right.

The Levy camp, led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs David Levy, is the second largest group with some 30 to 40 percent of the party stalwarts. This camp generally represents the Sephardic element in Herut and, overall, tends to be less educated than the Shamir camp. There is an intense rivalry, characterized by some as "hatred", between Arens' supporters and those of Levy. In the 1984 election, Arens allowed Levy to have the number two spot on the election list for the sake of party unity. Levy has threatened to upset the party if he does not secure his demands. Although Sharon and Levy don't like each other, they share a common antipathy to Arens, and periodically, it is alleged, Levy and Sharon have combined efforts against Arens and even Shamir. Among the MKs that support Levy are Minister of Economics and Planning David Magen, Ruby Rivlin, Yehoshua Matza, Ovadia Eli and Shaul Amor.

The Sharon camp is the smallest of the three groups and is led by General (Res) Ariel Sharon, currently Minister of Construction and Housing. This camp probably is composed of only several hundred at most (and no MKs) but they are drawn from the party hard-liners and support Sharon's policies. They tend to be vocal and active.

The Liberal Party component of Likud held 12 of Likud's 40 Knesset seats after the 1988 election. The Liberals had their own central committee which selects representatives to the Knesset, who are then placed on the Likud list. There has been constant bickering between Herut and the Liberals regarding how many candidates the Liberals should be allowed and what positions they should have. To a great extent, because of the control of Herut and Likud by Menachem Begin, the Liberals have always been in a secondary status in the party and have not generated a major figure of national stature

(with the exception of Yitzhak Modai, currently Minister of Finance). The relationship between Herut and Likud has been regulated by the formal rules to which they agreed, but also by practical political accords and compromise.

In August 1988 Herut and the Liberals signed a merger agreement that technically put an end to the bickering and formally established a single party called "Likud: The National Liberal Movement." The idea was that the separate caucuses will cease, and candidates for the Knesset will be elected by a joint central committee of 3000 members. This could foreshadow a complicated internal election process for party positions and the election list.

The Liberal party is divided into three camps headed by Yitzhak Modai, Moshe Nissim, and Avraham Sharir. The largest camp belongs to party leader Modai. Following the 1988 election, Modai became Minister of Economics, and Nissim became minister without portfolio. Sharir was excluded. Both positions were marginal, reflecting limited Liberal power in Likud and in the coalition. This was to play a role after the March 1990 vote of no confidence and the subsequent efforts to form a coalition government. When the new Shamir government was formed in June 1990, Modai became Minister of Finance while Nissim became Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry and Trade.

Rafi-Ometz was created as a one issue party in 1981 to solve the economic crisis, but later merged with Likud. The merger agreement has been challenged by Herut-loyalists who have wanted to drop them. Nevertheless, Yigal Hurvitz, the head of the party, gained the sixth position on the Likud election list in 1988.

Headed by Aharon Abuhatzcira, Tami broke away from the National Religious Party to run for the tenth Knesset. Tami won three seats but later lost two of them when Shas was established. It was the first Sephardic-based religious party to successfully contest the Knesset elections. Abuhatzcira signed an agreement with Likud that merged the two parties and gave him a safe place on the Likud list. He is popular in Sephardic communities.

The Camp David Accords (1978) and the peace treaty with Egypt (1979) saw the beginning of the emergence of new political organizations to the right of Herut. The Tehiya (Renaissance) party emerged

when Herut leaders Geula Cohen and Moshe Shamir led the party in opposition to the peace treaty with Egypt, which required Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula. Tehiya was led by Yuval Neeman, a nuclear physicist and former president of Tel Aviv University. In 1984, Tehiya was joined by Rafael Eitan's (former Chief of Staff of the IDF) party (intersection). "Rafael" Eitan was a former Chief of Staff of the IDF. In 1984, Tehiya was the main party, winning five Knesset seats. In 1988, Tehiya and Tzomei ran separately, and won three and two seats respectively in the Knesset.

In the 1988 election, Moledet (Homeland), led by former Chief Minister Yehoram (Gandhi) Zeevi, won two seats. Moledet called for the transfer of the Arabs from the territories to Arab states. This idea was first introduced into Israel's political discourse by Rabbi Meir Kahane, but his list, Kach, was banned from the 1988 elections. The Central Elections Committee, in a decision upheld by the Supreme Court, disqualified Kahane's party because it had an anti-Arab racist platform. Some of the votes that might have gone to Kach were won by Moledet, while others probably went to Likud and various religious parties.

The Ideological Base of Herut and Likud

Although ideology should not be seen as a perfect and complete guide to policy, it places constraints on policy and policymakers. At the heart of the Revisionist Herut and Likud ideology is the concept of shlemut hamoledet (the completeness of the homeland), which implies a complete Eretz Israel and the consequent rejection of any independent Arab state west of the Jordan River.

The origins of the Revisionist movement can be traced to the period immediately after World War I, the creation of the Palestine Mandate, and the British decision to exclude the territories east of the Jordan River from the mandate. The British action limited the applicability of the Balfour Declaration, and, therefore, the prospective national home for the Jewish people, to the territory west of the Jordan river. This decision was accepted reluctantly (but pragmatically) by the mainstream Zionist leadership under Chaim Weizmann, but was rejected by Vladimir Jabotinsky and led, ultimately, to the establishment of the Revisionist party and the New Zionist Organization.

Jabotinsky's ideology was well articulated in

numerous speeches and writings. Complex in nature, the basic points involved the concept of exclusive Jewish sovereignty in all the territories previously held by the Jews. This included the territory of the League of Nations Mandate on both sides of the Jordan River. Jabotinsky rejected all proposals for the partitioning of Palestine into Jewish and Arab state, and, consequently, he also rejected any conception of Jewish/Arab power sharing. Civil rights were to be accorded to all, but "national rights" for the Arabs of Palestine were rejected. The Revisionists were activists and were not prone to compromise on the major questions facing the Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine) and the Zionist movement more generally. Many of these perspectives appear in viewpoints and policies of Begin and Shamir and of Herut and Likud.

The Likud view of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its resolution gained ascendancy at the time of the 1977 Knesset election which brought Begin and Likud to power. The Begin government maintained Israel's focus on the goal of establishing peace that would include the end of war, full reconciliation and normalization with the Arab states, and an open border across which people and goods could cross without hindrance. On the question of occupied territories, the new government could rely on a general consensus opposing a return to the armistice lines of 1949. This would rule out total withdrawal, although there was disagreement concerning the final lines to be established and the extent of compromise on territorial retention. The focus of territorial disagreement was the West Bank, referred to within Israel by its Biblical names of Judea and Samaria, where there was a substantial difference between the Begin-Likud view, which opposed relinquishing any territory, and the compromise views articulated by Labor and others to Likud's left. Begin's position was rather specific:

I believe that Judea and Samaria are an integral part of our sovereignty. It's our land. It was occupied by Abdullah [King of Jordan] against international law, against our inherent right. It was liberated during the Six Day War when we used our right of national self-defense, and so it should be You annex foreign land. You don't annex your own country. It is our land. You don't annex it.¹

In the presentation of its policy to the Knesset on 21 June 1977, the new Begin government noted, "The Jewish people has an eternal historic right to the Land of Israel. The inalienable legacy of our Forefathers. The Government shall plan, create, and encourage urban and rural settlements on the soil of the homeland."² The Begin government supported settlement as a natural and inalienable Jewish right in Judea and Samaria. The broadest and most articulate consensus continued to revolve around the question of a Palestinian state and the PLO. Israel's refusal to negotiate with the PLO and its opposition to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip was reaffirmed.

With the resignation and retirement of Menachem Begin from public life, Yitzhak Shamir won the mantle of leadership of Likud in an internal party election in which he defeated David Levy by a two to one margin. Since his assumption of power in October 1983, Shamir has lead Herut and Likud as well as the National Unity Government (from 1986 to 1988), the Likud-led national unity government coalition established in 1988, and the Likud-led government formed in June 1990. Shamir's perspectives on foreign/security policy issues have become clear over time despite some initial uncertainty about his views and the policy course over which he might lead the government of Israel.

Shamir's initial effort in 1973 was to reconstitute the government on the same terms as the outgoing one, with certain required changes. At the time of his accession to office, he highlighted the accomplishments of Begin and the Likud in achieving agreements with both Egypt (the peace treaty of 1979) and Lebanon (the 17 May 1983 accord). He argued, "It must be clear to all that the Camp David Accords are the only document agreed on by all and, therefore, the only way to continue the [peace] process."³

Shamir has a virtually religious belief in Zionism. He joined the Irgun, the military arm of Jabotinsky's Revisionist Party, in 1937 and later left with the faction led by Abraham Stern and helped to establish Lehi (Lohamei Herut Yisrael, or Israel Freedom Fighters, popularly known as the Stern Gang). After Stern's demise he was one of a committee of three which ran Lehi. He later worked in the Mossad and joined Herut in 1970.

Shamir's views on foreign policy are complex. He abstained in the Knesset vote on the Camp David Accords, in part because they required Israel to dismantle the Sinai settlements. He believes that Israel should maintain its presence on the West Bank and supports the continued construction of settlements there. He sees Israel's pre-1967 frontiers as indefensible. Shamir supports the peace treaty with Egypt, although he disagreed with some of its clauses, and believes that Israel must work within its framework. He saw a security risk in giving up Sinai, but believed it was necessary for the peace he sees as essential for Israel. He preferred a faster and smoother normalization process with Egypt but recognized that there were obstacles. Shamir has suggested that a stand softer than that adopted by Likud would probably have helped the autonomy talks go more smoothly, but this would be "at the expense of our vital interests." His views on autonomy are summed up in the following comment: "We are very flexible, and we have already reached the limit of the concessions we are able to make. Do not forget that in Camp David, we have paid a tremendous price for the peace. We have taken great risks and made great sacrifices. And I don't think that anybody is entitled to ask from us more sacrifices and more risks." He supported the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor in June 1981, the "annexation" of the Golan Heights in December 1981, and the war in Lebanon in 1982. In retrospect, he sees actions such as these contributing to Israel's security.⁴

Shamir continues to see the PLO as an inappropriate and unacceptable partner in the peace process. He opposed the December 1988 United States decision to open a dialogue with the PLO and hoped it might be reversed as the "true" position of the PLO became clear with its continuation of terrorist activities. "The establishment of a Palestinian state for them is a means, a stage, in their goal of the destruction of the state of Israel."⁵ In response to the question, "Could you under any circumstances see the creation of a Palestinian state in the occupied territories or part of the occupied territories?" Shamir responded, "Never."⁶ Shamir was asked, "Is there anything the PLO could do that would make it acceptable as a partner to the talks?" He responded, "No. The only thing it should do is dismantle itself. Because its minimal demand is a

Palestinian state. And a Palestinian state cannot coexist with Israel."⁷

Shamir's opposition to the participation of East Jerusalem Arabs in the election process proposed in 1989⁸ stems from his view that East Jerusalem is part of Israel and that it has no connection to the autonomy process. If Israel were to agree to participation by East Jerusalem Arabs it would raise questions about East Jerusalem remaining Israeli territory.⁹

Likud's Internal Divisions

When Shamir became Prime Minister in 1983, many observers suggested that, to a great extent because of his age, he might be little more than an interim prime minister. Rivals and potential successors were identified and remain active today. Soon after Shamir's accession to office, I wrote:

Several names have been mentioned as potential Prime Ministers: David Levy, whom Shamir defeated for the leadership of Herut but who has a strong base among the considerable Sephardic membership of Herut and its Central Committee as well as in the population at large, Moshe Arens, the new Minister of Defense (replacing Sharon) and former Ambassador to Washington, who lacks a political base and even a seat in the Knesset but who has impressive credentials and skills, and Ariel (Arik) Sharon, the former Defense Minister who is popular among various segments of Israel's population but lost much of his prestige after the war in Lebanon, the Shatilla and Sabra massacres, and the Kahan Commission report and his consequent resignation as Minister of Defense.¹⁰

The early months of 1990 provide some indication of the problems and positions of Likud and Yitzhak Shamir, the party leader, on issues of peace and security. Shamir faced a series of challenges on different levels: external pressures concerning the peace process (mostly from the US); divisions within the coalition government concerning the peace process as well as the usual political jockeying; and divisions within the Likud party based on varying positions concerning the peace process as well as the usual political jockeying.

There are a number of different political "games" being played simultaneously on different levels.

There is contest for control of the party and its constituent units among such players as Shamir, Levy, and Sharon. There is the special issue of the Liberals and the role of Modai. There is the related issue of succession to the leadership after the departure of Shamir. Ultimately these decisions will depend, to a great extent, on the ideological and political stances that the party will take.

Shamir has been challenged within the Likud almost continuously since his replacement of Menachem Begin as Prime Minister and party leader in 1983. Shamir is not a charismatic figure, but he has shown remarkable political skills since first assuming the leadership of the party and of the government following Begin's retirement from public life. He has usually been able to outmaneuver his more charismatic opponents. In general, the challenges against Shamir have focused on two themes. Succession desires are based on political grounds and are generally an attempt by others (Sharon, Levy, and, in a different context, Modai) to replace him as prime minister and party leader. Ideological concerns face hardline Arab-Israeli positions to the right of Shamir. In this second category, the focus of negative attention has been on peace propositions they believe will have inherent dangers for Israel. In the debates over the peace process and the Baker proposals of early-1990, they sought assurances that Shamir would not give in on the issues of participation in the Palestinian representation election process by East Jerusalem residents and by other nonresidents of the territories (e.g., deportees).

Shamir's position in 1990 was challenged from all sides. Ariel Sharon staked out a position clearly to the right of Shamir, a perspective consistent with his past views and actions. Sharon regarded Begin's autonomy plan, incorporated in the Camp David Accords, as far-reaching and noted, "with Arab autonomy we are giving up what is ours." As head of the ministerial committee on settlement affairs, Sharon was responsible for increasing settlements in Judea and Samaria (as well as in pre-1967 Israel). He did so with great energy and initiative and argued that those in the West Bank area were primarily designed to serve Israel's security needs. Sharon regards the establishment of settlements in the territories as logical and has also sought to enlarge existing settlements. He believes that the retention

of the Golan Heights and the West Bank and Gaza are all integral to his security concept, as is continued Israeli settlement in these areas. He also appears to believe that the peace agreement with Egypt will have to be scrupulously maintained with no erosion of either the normalization process or the post-peace military status quo.

After challenging Shamir in the Likud convention in 1990, Sharon resigned from his position as Minister of Industry and Trade in the Government and started a campaign to gain control of the party in the branch units of the Likud. Sharon and his supporters charged that Shamir is prepared to give in to the United States on key points of the peace process. These concessions could affect the unity of Jerusalem and the potential inclusion of the PLO in the peace process. The establishment of a Palestinian state in the territories points at the heart of a Likud policy which Shamir has constantly reiterated. Sharon has tried to portray himself as a strong leader that can take Israel out of the problems of the times in the right direction.

Sharon is charismatic and popular. He is seen as decisive and relatively "young" (compared to Shamir). He sought to become prime minister and decided to resign from the cabinet to fight against the government's peace initiative, which he characterized as "dangerous" because it would ultimately lead to a Palestinian state. He sought to prevent the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue in Cairo which he saw as an opening wedge to disaster. He believed that Shamir would yield to US pressures to permit the participation in the peace process of Palestinian deportees and residents of East Jerusalem. Sharon seeks to prevent movement in the direction of a settlement with the Palestinians. He appears to believe that if one agrees to negotiate with a Palestinian delegation, it is the step toward a Palestinian political entity. Sharon therefore accuses Shamir of movement toward a "second Palestinian state."

The Sharon challenge became overt and public during the Likud convention in February 1990. Sharon attacked Shamir, "Under your government, Palestinian terror is running wild in all the land of Israel and causing heavy losses to Jews and innocent Arabs. Your diplomatic plan has put Israel on the road to a second Palestinian state in the land of Israel."¹¹

After a shouting match, Sharon resigned from the government and announced that he had decided to wrest control of the party from Shamir. Sharon argued that he no longer felt constrained from promoting his views since he was no longer a member of the cabinet, and he attacked Shamir as weak and conciliatory. Sharon argued, "I will go from place to place, here and abroad. I will give speeches, write articles, give interviews, all in a democratic way, in order to create a situation that will bring Mr. Shamir back to the principles he promised the Likud."¹²

The Sharon challenge to Shamir focused on a rather straightforward set of concepts: Israel should say no to elections in the territories and no to talks with any PLO supporters. Israel should not loosen its hold on the occupied territories. "The government's initiatives include movement toward Palestinian elections in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. They are paving the way for establishment of a second Palestinian state in the land of Israel, west of the Jordan River, in addition to the existing one, the Kingdom of Jordan ... The Government's policies are also leading to a renewed division of Israel's sovereign and eternal capital, Jerusalem."¹³

There are also the so-called Likud "constraints ministers" (i.e., Sharon, Levy, and Modai) who challenged Shamir with several major demands. East Jerusalem Arabs would not be permitted to participate in the elections, even in other regions of Judea and Samaria. There would be no participation by deportees in the Palestinian delegation. There was also concern about the effectiveness of the government's response to the Intifada and, more generally, Palestinian terrorism against Israel.

On 6 February 1990, Sharon articulated the position in these terms:

Mr. Shamir can get the full support of all the [Likud] Central Committee members for a policy of stopping, and this time for real, violence and terror. Mr. Shamir can get the committee's full support for a resolution of Jerusalem, preventing the Arabs of East Jerusalem from participating in the talks or the elections that will take place. Mr. Shamir can get the support of all the committee members if there is a clear resolution on a policy that says no deportees should be incorporated in the process Each of

them understands if East Jerusalem Arabs are allowed to participate, it would mean East Jerusalem is no longer an inseparable part of the State of Israel Who are these deportees? For the past few days we have been hearing of deportees involved in terror outside Israel. They are active PLO members who were deported as a form of punishment. Can they be partners for talks?"¹⁴

On 5 March 1990 the Likud Ministers (except for Levy and Modai) adopted the following resolutions:

Israel wants to pursue the peace process according to its peace proposal, and conduct the proposed meeting with a Palestinian group to prepare the procedures for elections in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza District. To make sure the meeting is successful, Israel must appear united. For that purpose, it first of all is necessary to have Likud-Alignment agreement on these essential and fundamental issues. a) Securing Israeli sovereignty over united Jerusalem, and, b) Preventing the PLO from taking control of the process.

Regarding Jerusalem, the resolution specifies East Jerusalem Arabs will not participate in the process either by voting or by being elected. As for the PLO, it is detailed that any attempt by that organization to sneak in and take control of the process in any way will result in termination of the process and Israel's withdrawal from it.¹⁵

In an address to the Likud faction of the Knesset on 14 March 1990, Sharon reiterated his conception of the appropriate approach at that time:

We will have to immediately launch a serious discussion of other plans, plans that can bring genuine peace; keep Jerusalem in our hands as Israel's eternal capital; and prevent the establishment of a second Palestinian state, other than the one that already exists in Jordan. In addition, the fact a Palestinian state already exists in Jordan and that no other Palestinian state, nor a corridor to such a state, will be established west of the River Jordan (because a Palestinian state already exists in Jordan on 78 percent of the area of Eretz Yisrael) should repeatedly be stated."¹⁶

After the successful vote of no confidence, the

Likud faction met to reaffirm Shamir's position as the leader of the party and its choice to be recommended to the President as the candidate to be the next prime minister. In the discussions, Sharon emerged as Shamir's strongest advocate.

For many months, I and my colleagues struggled to attain several principles and cautioned against a downhill deterioration. Finally, at the last moment, but a little too late, the prime minister consciously stopped in his tracks. He was prepared to have the government fall and lose his position as prime minister by insisting on those principles with which we tried for months to persuade our colleagues. Therefore, anyone with even a little dignity should realize this attests to some strength. So, at such a time, should we not support a person who was prepared to fall over the principles we struggled for? That is the reason for my support.¹⁷

Nevertheless, when asked whether this meant the end of the constraints camp, Sharon responded, "Not at all. I hope there will be no further need for a constraint camp, because I expect that in the wake of our resolution today, the government will abandon the Baker plan. After all, that was the reason for the government's fall."¹⁸

During the early 1990 maneuvering, Shamir faced questions from within his own camp as well. Benny Begin has asked some questions about the process and seemed upset about rumors that Shamir might accept the proposals of US Secretary of State James Baker for the peace process. Netanyahu has suggested that maybe there should be a "pause" in the process and that maybe the government should slow down. *The Washington Post*, 11 March 1990, reported, "In the last week, both Deputy Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and parliamentary deputy Benjamin Begin, the son of former prime minister Menachem Begin, have been arguing within the Likud that Israel should drop the peace process until it can overcome what is perceived to be a steady deterioration in Washington's willingness to support, or at least tolerate, Israeli policies."¹⁹

In an article in *The Jerusalem Post*, Begin argued that at times there is more interest in a diplomatic "process" than in the end-product of that process. But, this can be self-defeating. Begin argued, "The

only hope for positive progress lies in the possibility that through the proposed elections [for a Palestinian delegation with whom Israel can negotiate], a local Arab leadership which is free from PLO or Hamas intimidation will emerge."²⁰ The PLO must be excluded from the process altogether. He called for "constructive clarity" that must be forthcoming from the United States administration to replace the destructive ambiguity which may lead to disaster.

Over time, Liberal leader Yitzhak Modai has mounted a series of challenges to Shamir and Likud. Some members of the ex-Liberal faction under his leadership sought to leave the newly constituted single party in part because of disagreement on peace issues and political maneuvering (to a substantial degree this meant Modai's political ambitions). They sought to establish a separate faction in the Knesset. Shamir has been very negative concerning Modai and his supporters. At the end of February 1990, five Knesset Likud members under Modai's leadership bolted Likud to establish their own faction which was initially, called "The Party for the Advancement of Zionist Idea" (*Hamiflaga Lekidum Haraayon Hatziyoni*). After substantial political posturing and maneuvering, including flirting with Peres and considering joining a Labor-led government, Modai returned to the fold, supported the June 1990 Shamir government and joined it as Finance Minister.

The position of Likud and Shamir's response to the Baker peace proposal were heavily conditioned by internal party discussions. By early March, the basic elements had been adopted. Moshe Katsav (Transportation Minister) found the US proposal "unacceptable". David Levy threatened to resign if the Cabinet accepted the plan. They both reacted to rumors that Shamir had accepted the idea of participation by some deportees and some with homes in East Jerusalem.²¹ Likud made it clear that Arabs from East Jerusalem would not be allowed to take part in the talks or in the elections that are supposed to follow. Israel would reserve the right to walk out of the talks if there was any PLO role, even one behind the scenes. There was concern that if East Jerusalem Arabs were included, this might open the question of Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem. When President George Bush made his comments about Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem, he heightened this Israeli (and

particularly Likud) concern, which was articulated by Minister Moshe Nissim. "After hearing the declarations made by the American President about Jerusalem, meaning places where 120,000 Jews live, we see the danger Jerusalem is in now, and we couldn't allow ourselves to put any question marks on it."²²

Ultimately Shamir survived the challenges from within by adopting policies that, at least temporarily, satisfied his colleague's critiques. In so doing, however, he ultimately lost on the vote of confidence.

A New Game?

After the vote of no confidence which terminated the Shamir-led national unity government (the first such successful vote in Israel's history), it was widely suggested by leaders in other political parties that Shamir should be replaced as leader of the Likud. This was to facilitate the formation of a new Likud-led government, especially one in which Likud would form a coalition with the religious parties. There were also rumors of a similar view (although generally for other reasons) within Likud itself.

The Likud faction met and discussed the issue at length. Shamir emerged as the party's candidate to form the next government. Although there were some who spoke against Shamir, he gained support from a variety of unexpected sectors. Sharon supported Shamir. "Until today, I was Shamir's biggest rival and fought him. Now he is heading in the right direction, and we should all unite behind him and support him."²³ In the short run, Shamir is the leader of Likud, and the principles of the party include a refusal to compromise on the immediate issues of the peace process that involve the construction of the Palestinian delegation in Cairo. Shamir clearly remains concerned about the role of the PLO in the process and the ultimate results of such a negotiation. He also is concerned about the US position. There is a crisis of confidence with the US administration (i.e., Bush and Baker) concerning recent statements and positions on such issues as the PLO, the PLO and terrorism, and the status of East Jerusalem.

In presenting the new government to the Knesset on 11 June 1990, Shamir noted it included "all the national forces which have fought and worked for

the sake of Eretz Yisrael, for settlement of all parts of Eretz Yisrael."²⁴ The government approved by the Knesset, by a vote of 62 (including Agudat Israel member Rabbi Eliezer Mizrahi and Labor Party member Ephraim Gur) to 57 with one abstention (Avraham Verdiger of Agudat Israel), is a relatively narrow and potentially fragile government. Its narrow nature is a consequence of the fall of the government of national unity in the spring and the failure of the Labor portion to form its own government and, failing that, to join once again with Likud in a government of national unity.

The fragile nature of the new government is a direct consequence of the fact that the political "price" for participation in governments in the form of ministerial and sub-ministerial positions, patronage to reward and generate supporters, safe places on election lists, support for particular policies or institutions, and related matters, have become very commonplace, public in nature, and inflated in content in recent years. The coalition is vulnerable to threats from small parties or even individuals with their own agendas. The delicate balancing of competing demands and the quest for the funds to pursue specific policies at times of budget stringencies complicates the issues for the prime minister and makes coalition bargaining a continuous and more complex process. Nevertheless, the relative stability of the government seems assured in the short term, barring a major international challenge relating either to the prospects for war or peace or a major domestic challenge that would be more politically focused on particular policies, political maneuvering, or patronage related issues.

In the immediate future, Likud is likely to focus its leadership demands on the main figures which have emerged since the resignation of Menachem Begin in 1983. Despite his advancing years and numerous challenges to his authority, Shamir remains the leading figure in the party. His potential successors remain in that next rank of party senior figures: Arens, Levy, and Sharon, with Modai a dark horse with limited potential primarily because of his Liberal Party origins. The ideological and policy proclivities of this group remain reasonably clear.

The central and dominating themes of Likud policy have not undergone substantial alteration, although some of the specific elements of the policy

have been subjected to intense scrutiny and debate.

In the presentation of the government to the Knesset in June 1990, Prime Minister Shamir outlined its policy guidelines. These reiterated some standard themes but also stressed the need for action in the areas of immigrant absorption and socio-economic policy. In foreign policy, it reiterated some of Likud's (and the parties to its right on the political spectrum) central perspectives in ways not previously stated in formal government guidelines. For example, it noted, "The eternal right of the Jewish people to Eretz Yisrael is not subject to question and is intertwined with its right to security and peace." Also, "Settlement in all parts of Eretz Yisrael is the right of our people and an integral part of national security, the government will act to strengthen settlement, to broaden and develop it."

Some of the more specific aspects of the government's foreign and security policy were incorporated in the guidelines. These restated the refusal to negotiate with the PLO. They also reiterated the view that Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Israel, but added that Jerusalem would not be included in the framework of autonomy for the Arab residents of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip, and that its residents could not be either voters or candidates in the elections for representatives of the residents of these areas.²⁵

In a general sense, the overriding goal is the security of Israel within a relatively peaceful environment that reduces, if not eliminates, the prospects for full scale war with the Arab states. The strength of the IDF remains a central element of thinking and planning. Tactical, and even strategic, planning for future conflict remains beyond the political sphere and is concentrated in the IDF and in the Ministry of Defense. The political-diplomatic sector is the purview of the political figures, and the basic outlines are clear. The lack of a detailed long-term peace scenario, a factor which has characterized past Israeli policy under both Labor and Likud, as well as that of the National Unity Governments, remains a feature of Israeli (and other parties) policies concerning the conflict. Nevertheless, the main outlines have been reaffirmed.

Israel sees itself as a legitimate Jewish state in the Middle East seeking to promote immigration of

distressed and other Jews who wish to come. Likud sees the Israel in question as a Jewish state located in pre-1967 Israeli frontiers, with the addition of the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) and East Jerusalem, as well as, probably, the Gaza Strip (Gaza District). Jerusalem remains the undivided eternal capital of the Jewish state. Palestinian rights of a civil and religious nature, and probably some form of autonomy within Israeli sovereignty in the administered (occupied) territories, can be negotiated with the Arabs of the territories excluding those of the PLO (and probably of Hamas also).

The end of the Intifada and relative quiet within an Israel so defined would be an element of such an arrangement. The end of war and the establishment of an Arab-Israeli peace should be a result of negotiations with the Arab states who have the will and the capability to launch and sustain full-scale war against Israel. The precise programs and procedures to achieve these ends remain subject to discussion and difference within the Likud hierarchy and, lacking a viable and acceptable negotiating partner, not articulated in precise terms in public debate.

At some point in the not too distant future, there is likely to emerge from the younger group of "princes" a somewhat altered Likud. This next generation, not all of whom are "princes" in the strict sense of that term, has begun its breakthrough into the senior ranks of the government and the more identified public strata. Ministers and Deputy Ministers such as Meridor, Olmert, and Netanyahu, are part of that younger generation now just beginning to become more well known and more important in the decisionmaking process. Exactly what role they will play in the future remains somewhat premature to determine, although it is likely that each will hover near the top of the party and the government, and one or more might eventually become Prime Minister.

Their views have been expressed on various occasions and with varying degrees of specificity. In general they seem to support the more pragmatic hard-line positions of the Shamir/Arens camp and have not deviated substantially from the general perspectives of the two senior ministers. When they form the senior ranks of the party and occupy the senior ministerial positions in the government, there

is likely to be a change in Israel's position if for no other reason than the fact that they are a generation that has grown up in a different political and political environment. But, at least thus far, there is little to suggest the precise nature and extent of policy change that will result.

Endnotes

- ¹Begin interview on "Issues and Answers", 22 May 1977.
- ²Text provided by Embassy of Israel, Washington, DC.
- ³Quoted by Bernard Reich, "The Shamir Government: Policy and Prospects," *Middle East Insight* 3 (January/February 1984), 26.
- ⁴Reich, 27.
- ⁵Shamir interview in *Newsweek*, 2 January 1989, 42.
- ⁶Shamir interview in *Newsweek*, 2 January 1989, 42. See also his interview in *The Jerusalem Post International Edition*, week ending 3 March 1990, 3.
- ⁷Shamir interview in *Newsweek*, 2 January 1989, 42.
- ⁸"People living in Jerusalem cannot participate in the elections." Shamir interview in *The Jerusalem Post International Edition*, week ending 3 March 1990, 3.
- ⁹Shamir interview in *The Jerusalem Post International Edition*, week ending 3 March 1990, 3.
- ¹⁰Reich, 31.
- ¹¹Quoted in *The Washington Post*, 13 February 1990. See also *The New York Times*, 13 February 1990.
- ¹²Quoted in *The New York Times*, 18 February 1990. See also interview on Israel Television, 14 February 1990, in FBIS 15 February 1990.
- ¹³Ariel Sharon, "I Quit to Sound an Early Alarm," *The New York Times*, 5 March 1990.
- ¹⁴Sharon Interview on IDF Radio, 6 February 1990, in FBIS 6 February 1990. In an interview on 13 February 1990, David Levy described the constraints in these terms: "... the constraints camp ... stands on the principles decided upon yesterday at the Likud Central Committee: no to the deportees; no to the Arabs of East Jerusalem; and no to the PLO." Quoted in FBIS, 13 February 1990.
- ¹⁵Text as broadcast on Israel radio, 6 March 1990, as quoted in FBIS 6 March 1990.
- ¹⁶Sharon address broadcast on Israel radio, as quoted in FBIS 14 March 1990.
- ¹⁷Sharon Interview on Israel radio, 18 March 1990, as quoted in FBIS 19 March 1990.
- ¹⁸Sharon in FBIS, 19 March 1990.
- ¹⁹See the text of an interview with Netanyahu on IDF Radio, 1 March 1990, as published in FBIS 1 March 1990, 30.
- ²⁰*The Jerusalem Post International Edition*, week ending 17 February 1990, 17.
- ²¹*The New York Times*, 5 March 1990.
- ²²*The New York Times*, 7 March 1990.
- ²³Quoted in *The Jerusalem Post International Edition*, week ending 24 March 1990, 1.
- ²⁴Text of Shamir's address to the Knesset in FBIS 12 June 1990, 24.
- ²⁵The policy guidelines identified the main political goals of the government in these terms. The central political goals of the government in this period will be ensuring the independence and sovereignty of the state, strengthening security, preventing war,

and achieving peace with all its neighbors. To these ends, the government will act as follows. (A) The government will be vigilant in increasing the strength of the IDF, its power of deterrence and its fitness to withstand threats from the states of the region, including threats of unconventional missile weaponry. (B) The government will act forcefully against terrorism, from all sources. The IDF and other security forces will act emphatically and with perseverance to ensure peace for all residents, to uproot the phenomenon of violence and disturbances and to generate calm throughout the country. (C) The government will place the desire for peace at the top of its concerns and will not spare any efforts in the advancement of peace. (D) The government will act for the continuation of the peace process along the lines of the framework for peace in the Middle East, agreed upon at Camp David, and of its peace initiative of 14 May 1989, in its entirety. (E) Israel will encourage representatives of the Arabs of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza to take part in the peace process. (F) Israel will oppose the establishment of another Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip and in the territory between Israel and the Jordan River. (G) Israel will not negotiate with the PLO, directly or indirectly. (H) Israel will call upon all the Arabs states to enter into peace negotiations in order to turn over a new leaf in the region, so that it may prosper and flourish. (I) The government will act for the furtherance and strengthening of bilateral relations with Egypt in accordance with the peace treaty between the two states. The government will call upon Egypt to fulfil its obligations as set forth in the peace treaty with Israel, including its commitments laid out in the Camp David accords, and to bestow upon the peace treaty meaning and content as per its clauses, spirit, and the intentions of its signatories. (J) 1. The government will act to foster relations of friendship and mutual ties between Israel and all countries which seek peace. 2. The government will continue to maintain the relations of friendship and understanding which exist between the United States and Israel and will seek to deepen them in all areas, including strategic cooperation. 3. The government will continue the movement of renewing diplomatic relations with the countries of Eastern Europe and other regions, especially with the Soviet Union, and will seek to establish diplomatic relations with China. (K) United Jerusalem, Israel's eternal capital, is one indivisible city under Israeli sovereignty; members of all faiths will always be ensured freedom of worship and access to their holy sites. Jerusalem will not be included in the framework of autonomy which will be granted to the Arab residents of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip, and its Arab residents will not participate, either as voters or as candidates, in elections for the establishment of representation of the residents of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip.

Moshe Arens: Some Thoughts

Source: Merrill Simon. *Moshe Arens: Statesman and Scientist Speaks Out* (Middle Island, New York: Dean Books, 1988).

"The dominant objective of Israel's foreign policy is Israel's security. Most countries in the world don't feel there is any real threat to their security, so they have other primary objectives. We are still under the influence of the Holocaust where 6 million Jews were killed; we still see Jewish communities in

various parts of the world being persecuted, and we've had to fight six wars since the State of Israel was established in 1948. Had it not been for our ability to withstand these onslaughts, Israel could have ceased to exist within a matter of days. This threat of destruction is still directed against us today by surrounding hostile Arab countries supported by the Soviet Union.

"From a purely military standpoint, Israel is outmanned and outgunned by the Arab standing armies by a ratio of 15 to one. Israel has a fighting chance only after we have our reserves mobilized, bringing the force ratio to four or five to one. But it takes time to mobilize the reserves, so we need space within which to absorb any initial onslaught to give us time. If not, our population centers could be hit in the initial hours of a war, and Israel's ability to defend herself would deteriorate. Territory, therefore, is an essential element of Israel's defense posture and of eventual peace in the area." (151)

"The areas of Judea and Samaria are essential to Israel's defense. They are right in the heart of Israel. They border on the municipal boundaries of Israel's population centers. Under the circumstances, losing control of these essential areas is not paving the road to peace. It's paving the road to war. I think most Israelis understand that. Most public opinion polls indicate that the vast majority of Israelis are against making these kinds of concessions and don't believe that such concessions actually would lead to peace. Since Israel is a democratic country and the Israeli government essentially must represent the feelings of the people of Israel, I don't think we will see governments in future years pursuing the course of giving up territories in the quest for peace." (104)

"We must remember that Judea and Samaria are very small areas in terms understood by the people who live in the United States or even in Western Europe. They are, however, an integral part of Israel, so I don't expect that settlements in those areas would be essentially any different from what they are in the rest of Israel." (105)

"First of all, in my view, the greatest Zionist leader was Jabotinsky, the greatest by far. With all due respect for all the Zionist leaders since Theodore Herzl, I think Jabotinsky overshadowed them all. As time goes by, and we're able to distance ourselves from the party struggles that characterized the Zionist movement throughout the years and view in

perspective the contributions of different people in the Zionist movement, the stature of Jabotinsky looms larger and larger." (110)

Yitzhak Shamir: Some Thoughts

Source: Yitzhak Shamir, "Israel at 40," *Foreign Affairs* 66 (America and the World 1987-1988): 574-590.

"... Judea, Samaria and Gaza, as much parts of the Land of Israel as any other..." (576)

"... it is quite unthinkable that we should allow Judea and Samaria, the cradle of our nation and culture, to revert to being *Judenrein*, forbidden to Jews, which was the case during the Jordanian occupation..." (579)

"Jordan ... is, therefore, a Palestinian Arab state in every respect except in name." (576)

"... another Palestinian state between Jordan and Israel ... makes no sense politically, cannot be viable economically and can only serve as a terrorist, irredentist base from which both Israel and Jordan will be threatened." (576)

The peace process should involve "direct negotiations between the parties to the conflict." (576)

"... only direct, independent, open-ended, face-to-face negotiations can provide the unpressured atmosphere that is absolutely vital for reaching an agreement." (578)

"... representatives of the Arab residents of Judea and Samaria, not members of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and not terrorists, should of course participate." (578)

Selected Bibliography

The literature on Israel is massive. Much has been written about Israeli positions and perspectives on all aspects of security and the Arab-Israeli conflict and about (and by) the major figures in the Israeli political system. The following represents only a brief selection of works that may prove useful for the reader to pursue some of the themes considered in this paper.

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Asad's Syria: Into the Nineties

Kurt L. Mendenhall

University of Texas at Austin

Introduction

If 1980 ushered in a period of almost unprecedented global tension, 1990 seems to promise an amazingly rapid relaxation, except in the Levant. The fratricidal strife within Lebanon's Maronite community continues on its fitful course under the wary eye of Syria's army of occupation. Syria's attention is justified for a variety of reasons.

The creation of greater Lebanon by the French in 1920 opened a wound in the Syrian body politic that has not healed 70 years later. Shorn of 75 percent of its coastline, and finding the remainder under an autonomous French-administered minority Alawite regime, Arab nationalists in Damascus have kept a nervous watch over Lebanese events. Presently in occupation of 60 percent of Lebanon, the Syrians are prepared to stay as long as it takes to see a regime established there that meets Syria's minimum conditions of sectarian balance and anti-Zionism.

Another important reason for Asad's fixation on Lebanon is the ongoing tension between his regime and that of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. At a time when Iraq's prestige is quite high, and as a border, seeking revenge for Syria's perceived treachery in the Iran-Iraq war, tries to destroy Syria's hegemonic role in Lebanon, Syria will not risk any diminution of its role there. Iraq's growing power also accounts for Syria's agreement to renew relations with Egypt. The situation seems to be returning to that of the 1950s and 1960s, where Syria attempts to balance Cairo and Baghdad against one another while maximizing its own influence.

Third, and most important, the sectarian nature of Lebanese strife is decidedly relevant to Syrian political experience; Syria is an equally complex multi-communal society. The Syrian Baath party's

traditional goal of a secular society has proven to be difficult to achieve in Syria, yet the struggle cannot be given up. The ramifications of a failure to establish a more equal communal balance of power in Lebanon can only be taken as further proof of the failure of the secular ideal in the Arab East.

The fratricidal nature of the most recent round of fighting in Lebanon also furnishes proof, paradoxically, of the bankruptcy of the old French thesis that communal identities in the Levant preclude any larger or more secular political identities or formations. We see that the Maronite identity, like other communal identities objectified by the French, is a rather artificial construct. The ongoing Maronite strife, when considered along with the intracommunal violence of the Lebanese Shia pitting the essentially secular southern Lebanese Amal movement against the more radical Hizballah and its tribal cadres from the Biqaa valley who favor an Islamic state as the solution to Lebanon's woes, should lay to rest any notion of automatic sectarian solidarity.

Asad won't tolerate an Islamic state as a solution to Lebanon's political difficulties, nor will he tolerate a Maronite state built on the ruins of the old Maronite heartland north of Beirut. But with Iran, Iraq, and Israel all playing a spoiler role in Lebanon, Asad will have his hands full trying to maintain Syria's prominent role there.

The intricacy of Syria's regional role is matched by the complexity of Syria itself. The sectarian thesis, which claims that the sectarian identity of Levantines takes precedence over other identities, is frequently advanced to explain and describe Syrian politics under the regimes of the Baath party. But the sectarian thesis is no more valid for explanations of Asad's policies in Syria than it is for other groups in Lebanon or Syria. The thesis of this paper is that the Alawite identity is a residual category. Alawites comprise an ethnic category, not an ethnic group. Anthony Smith has posed the question in the

following manner:

*But what of those units of population which lacked any sense of identity or community, and yet were distinguishable from their neighbors by the foreign or indeed native observer? They do not form communities, since they lack any shared attachments or common sentiments Such a unit of population could best be termed an "ethnic category," rather than an "ethnic community."*¹

Ethnic categories are mostly composed of scattered peasants and a few priests and headmen, and usually lack large upper and middle strata. The Alawites fit this model exactly. "Ethnicity" in this case represents an objectification of an aggregate of individuals who shared very few common sentiments. Asad does face legitimacy problems, but the precise nature of these problems needs explanation.

It has been argued that no regime ruling over Muslims is legitimate in the absence of the caliph or successor to the prophet. In the case of the Shia, which includes Asad's Alawite sect, the absence of the Imam, or rightly-guided inheritor of the prophetic mantle, is similarly delegitimizing. Asad comes from an extreme Shiite sect which, among other things, deifies Ali, the fourth caliph and cousin and brother-in-law of the prophet. The problem of legitimacy is, in the view of many Sunnis, even more clearly evident.²

First, the Shiites and Sunnis have clashed from the very earliest period over the successorship to Muhammad's position of Muslim leadership. In the chaotic mixture of sects and movements that sprang up in the first century of Islam, none was more esoteric than that of the Alawites, the sect from which Asad comes. The term Alawite dates from the period of the French Mandate in Syria (1920-1946). The community was formerly called the Nusayris, after the founder of the sect, Muhammad ibn Nusayr al-Abdi al-Bakri al-Namiri (d.883).³ The Nusayris are an extreme Shii sect whose *Shahada* or testament of faith claims that there is no God but Ali ibn Abi Talib (d. 661), the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet and the fourth Caliph.⁴ Ibn Nusayr lived in Samarra, Iraq, and was a contemporary of the eleventh Imam Hasan al-Askari. After the occultation of the twelfth or "hidden" Imam, Ibn

Nusayr claimed to be the Imam and declared that his love for Ahl al-Bayt (the family of the Prophet) led him to deify the Imams.⁵ This deification of Ali and the Imams places the Alawites beyond the pale of orthodox Islam which abhors any hint of polytheism.

In 1031, at-Tabarani (d. 1034), the fourth leader of the Nusayris, moved his headquarters from Aleppo to Latakia, an ancient seaport on the Mediterranean coast. The mountains behind Latakia would come to be known as the *Jabal al-Nusayriya*, or the Mountains of the Nusayris, after the Nusayris were forced to find refuge there from numerous repressive Sunni dynasties, beginning with the Mameluke Turks (1260-1518). Moosa has written:

*Al-Tabarani was the last religious leader to keep the whole Nusayri community united after al-Tabarani's death, the Nusayri community split into different factions ruled by independent shaykhs.*⁶

Recurrent tribal, class, and cultic factionalism remains a prominent feature of Alawi society right up to the present.

The French attempted to capitalize on the traditional Alawite alienation from the more mainstream Sunni Syrian society as soon as they established their colonial regime under a League of Nations Mandate. But the French immediately faced a revolt by an Alawite notable, Shaykh Salih al-Ali, which lasted three years. A great debate rages over whether Shaykh Salih's movement represented a nascent Arab nationalist tendency on the part of the peripheral Alawites or a more traditional movement of separatism. Regardless of the precise nature of Shaykh Salih's motives, the French policy of divide and rule was predicated on the assumption of Alawite hostility to Damascus.

In 1919, the French changed the name of the Nusayris to "Alawites" and the territory was renamed accordingly.⁷ Colonel Nieger, the region's first French military governor, created a separate Alawi court system staffed with Alawi muftis as part of his policy to create a completely independent Alawi sect. A Representative Council was established on sectarian lines and was dominated by an Alawite majority. The first head of this Council was Jabii al-Abbas, paramount shaykh of the major

al-Khayyatīn confederation.⁸

Territorial division was one of France's basic tools for hindering the Arab nationalist forces in their bid to extend their sway across Syria. In 1920, France created separate states out of the Aleppo and Damascus provinces and established the Autonomous Territory of the Alawites, which in 1922 became the State of the Alawites.⁹ The French also created an independent government in the Jabal Druze. Later that year, these areas were incorporated into the Syrian Federation, which lasted until 1924. After this, the Alawite and Druze regions were again separated into autonomous regions, as was Alexandretta, which became a separate Sanjak. The Alawite region became the Independent State of the Alawites.¹⁰ On June 26, 1924 Damascus and Aleppo were united into a unitary state.

*The French wished to create a permanent cleavage between the coastal states and the predominantly Sunni Muslim interior With a Christian dominated Lebanon and an anti-Sunni Alawite state placed tightly in their orbit, the French would be in possession of a coastal rampart into which they could retire with a fair prospect of safety.*¹¹

French attempts to redraw Syria's map resulted in many problematic and anomalous political groupings. In response to the ill-considered pleas of their Maronite clients in Beirut, the French appended to Lebanon the four districts of the Bīqāa, Baalbak, Hasbaya, and Rashaya. All were formerly part of the Wilayat of Syria and overwhelmingly Muslim. The Syrians have never forgotten the loss of these districts. Having occupied them in 1976, they may never relinquish control over them.

French gerrymandering of the formerly Ottoman districts was equally pronounced in the Latakia area, where the French sought to create a unified Alawite state from the disparate districts where members of that sect could be found. The Liwa of Latakia comprised three Qadas of Jabla, Marqab, and Sahyun, whose centers were the towns of Jabla, Baniyas, and Baban (the latter shifted to Haffa after World War I). To these three districts, the French appended the predominately Alawite Qada's of al-Husn, Safita, and the two Directorates of Tartus and Arwad. These areas were all originally part of the Mutasarrifiya of Tripoli which, like the Liwa of

Latakia, was part of the Wilayat of Beirut. Thus the French gave the Maronites with one hand and took with the other.¹²

From the Liwa of Hama the French detached the Qada of Masyaf and from the Wilayat of Aleppo the Qada of Jisr al-Shughur. Four other Qadas taken from Wilayat Aleppo were merged to form the newly created Liwa of Alexandretta, with its capital at the town of the same name.¹³ Alexandretta contained a large number of Alawites, many of whom, unlike their rural southern brothers, lived in the towns of Tarsus, Antioch, and Alexandretta and were heavily involved in trade. The Alawites, then, constituted a nationality only in a tenuous sense. Their territorial unity was the result of a great deal of gerrymandering.

The autonomous nature of this regime was affirmed by the Statute Organique of 14 May 1930. The Governor was French as were the Directors and the counselors assigned to the eight regions. The regional counselors belonged to the Special Service of the Armée du Levant and had the primary responsibility for local administration.¹⁴ The name of the region was changed from the Independent State of the Alawis to the Government of Latakia in 1930 as a sop to the Nationalists in Damascus and the interior.

Among the most important features of the French minority policy was the creation of the Troupes Spéciales du Levant, a local military force drawn overwhelmingly from religious and ethnic minorities who were considered more reliable than the Sunni Arab majority. By the mid-1950s, Alawites were a clear majority of the non-commissioned officers in the Syrian army. With this brief historical sketch in mind, a more conceptual analysis is in order.

Sect-Class

Isolated in their mountain fastness for most of this millennium, the Alawites suffered from severely impoverished physical circumstances and from occasional persecution by the various Turkish dynasties that ruled Syria for most of the last thousand years. A study prepared by two Ottoman officials in 1913 noted, for example, that in the region of Tal Kalakh, just north of the modern Lebanese border, only 0.6 percent of the Alawites could read or write at a basic level.¹⁵ Conditions

seemed to reach their nadir in the early part of this century, when the exceptional degree of impoverishment of many Alawites led to such practices as the selling of daughters into indentured service to the wealthier families of the interior. The opportunities for material advancement presented by the regimes of the Baath party since 1963 have been seized upon with alacrity by the Alawites, who in some cases evinced a perfectly natural resentment against the traditionally dominant Sunnis of the towns of the coast and the interior.

Hanna Batatu presented the dominant concept purporting to describe Alawi society before independence. In his analysis of the social origins of the Asad regime, he suggested, "Until recently the Alawi community was in an objective sense a sect-class."¹⁶ Economic divisions within this society, he claims, are of recent origin:

*In the Ottoman period the economic distance between their peasants and religious and administrative chiefs, the shaykhs and muqaddams, was not wide or pronounced. Their conditions did not become markedly unequal in the first half of this century.*¹⁷

Class differences are important in analyzing contemporary Alawi factionalism. But it can be shown that these distinctions predate the 1950s, that the Alawis were more socially heterogeneous than Batatu's analysis supposes, and that this heterogeneity accounts primarily for the failure of Alawi separatism. In fact, the "big five" Alawite chiefs during the Mandate were all landlords and the most important of them, Sulayman Murshid, controlled as many as 50 villages. This class of Alawi landlords developed in much the same way and simultaneously with the Sunni landlord class in the Syrian interior. Another point to be kept in mind is the fact that the Alawites of Antioch, Tarsus, and Alexandretta were heavily involved in trade and crafts.

A critical analysis of the sect-class is warranted, as the concept has been used by in several recent studies. Philip Khoury, in his excellent study of Syria under the French Mandate, states, "Although the Alawites were internally divided, when they were threatened with domination by a more powerful urban absentee Sunni landowning class

which supported unity with Damascus, they responded as a 'sect-class.'¹⁸ This conclusion is problematic. It is possible to show that the Alawis did not comprise a sect-class and that there were Alawis who favored unity with Damascus and opposed separatism.

Another author utilizing the sect-class concept is Jean Leca. "The Alawis who ... were formerly a sect-class ... are the central faction of Hafiz al-Asad's rule."¹⁹ While admitting that this concept does not account for all the regime's actions, he nevertheless concludes, "The sect-class faction occupies a disproportionate place for its numbers, and its group feeling allows it to respond impressively on behalf of the regime."²⁰ By a process of reification and objectification, the sect-class has become a faction. Yet if, as Leca states, the Alawis were "formerly" a sect-class, one wonders how this concept can be carried over into a more contemporary analysis.

Leca's analysis of Syrian politics is confusing, as he concludes his discussion by saying that the difference between the Algerian and Syrian processes stems not from the nature of the social base or the nature of the regimes' elites, but from political culture, "perhaps more 'Khaldunian' in Syria, where the notion of holding state power and wielding it in the interests of one formerly excluded group has remained stronger."²¹

Any link between a Khaldunian analysis and the sect-class is not immediately apparent. In fact, the sect-class and Khaldunian analysis are contradictory. Ibn Khaldun's classic analysis of tribal society is very relevant to a study of the Alawis, however, as the Alawis were manifestly a segmented, or tribally-based, society.

Tribalism

Alawite society is divided into four major tribal confederations (the Khayyat, Haddadin, Matawira, and Kalbiya) and three major cults (the Shamsiya, Qamariya, and Murshidiya). Tribal societies are segmented societies, or formations wherein conflict is nearly permanent. To posit "ethnic" identity of tribal societies is very difficult. Yet this is what many analysts seek to do. Asad comes from the Kalbiya, not the Matawira, as Hanna Batatu claimed in his important article in 1979.²² The Alawites are mostly derived from Arab

tribes from the Jabal Sinjar region straddling the Syro-Iraqi frontier just south of the Turkish border and who migrated in the 1120s with Shaykh Muhammad al-Makzun. Tribalism is a feature primarily of mountain Alawite society, as those groups who migrated off the mountain onto the surrounding plains in the course of the last several centuries to search for better opportunities tended to lose their tribal identity. This was also the case for those Alawites residing in the districts of Antioch and Alexandretta, in modern day Turkey. There seems little doubt that tribal identities will continue to wane in the face of the rising salience of other ideological and party identities.

In light of the recurrent rumors of Maronite separatism as a solution to the threats posed by the Muslim majority in their demands for a fundamental redistribution of political power in Lebanon, the historical issue of Alawite separatism gains a degree of importance. It is an interesting, if ironic, fact that Alawite factionalism along the lines of class, cult, and tribe posed the greatest problem for the attempts to foment Alawite separatism. The complex interplay of these factors is best demonstrated by the case of Sulayman Murshid, founder in the 1920s of a new cult and tribe.

Cult

French attempts to foster a separate Alawite identity failed for a variety of reasons, including the French withdrawal after World War II, but more importantly, because of the very serious socioeconomic differences that divided the impoverished mass of peasants from their religious and tribal leaders. Sulayman Murshid, the illiterate shepherd boy who came to be worshipped as a God in 1924 and founded a new cult, tribe, and mini-state under French patronage, was the individual most frequently advocating separation.²³ His attempts failed primarily due to the gross injustice with which he treated his own population, the inability of the Alawite notables to unite, and the French withdrawal in 1946. Murshid was hanged in 1946 for murder, though he was acquitted of the charge of treason. He was responsible for armed uprisings against the central government on the eastern slope of the Alawite mountain in February 1945 and a later, and more serious rebellion in September, 1946. He was succeeded as leader of the movement

by his second son Mujib (his first son Fatih was sentenced to ten years hard labor for his part in the rebellions). Mujib was in turn killed in a separatist movement in 1952. His movement continues, however, and the fourth *Rab* or God, that is to say the fourth son to have inherited his divinity, still controls a movement with perhaps 170,000 followers.²⁴ The current *Rab*, like many Alawites and Syrians in general, seems to straddle the chasm between tradition and modernity, with one foot in the old world and one in the new. Thus Nur seems to have two wives, one in Homs and one in Damascus. This may seem the height of moderation, as his father had thirteen. It seems that he sends two of his children to the American Community School in Damascus. One can hardly blame him for not wanting to live in Homs. Evidence from several sources indicates that the Murshidiyun, as the cult is known, is generally hostile to Asad. The class of Alawite notables that was largely stripped of its prerogatives as a result of the land reforms of the fifties and sixties can also generally be considered hostile to Asad, witness Shawkat Abbas, formerly paramount shaykh of the Khayyatun tribe (as was his father before him) and Governor of Latakia from 1939-43. His son likes to tell listeners that Asad used to work for his father.

Five of the 13 leading separatists (38 percent) in the Alawite province in 1945, the last year for which we have any information, were Sunnis. The two Sharifs, Fadl and Zayn, were distant cousins of King Abdallah of Jordan and rumored to support his Greater Syria plan to combine Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon into a confederation under Hashemite Jordanian influence. This may account for their separatist proclivities. Moreover, four of the 14 unionists (28 percent) were Alawites. The simplistic notion that Alawites were separatists and that all the Sunnis were unionists is simply untenable. Hafiz al-Asad's father, Ali Sulayman al-Asad, however, was a leading Alawite separatist in the 1930s and 1940s.²⁵

Ali Sulayman al-Asad was a petty notable of Kalbiyah and a candidate in elections in the 1930s. He may have been successful in a bid for a Parliament seat in 1950, but his candidacy was invalidated because of a false affidavit of elementary education.

Hafiz al-Asad was born in 1930 and joined the

Baath party in 1946. He first came to prominence in 1951 when he was elected President of the Syrian Union of Students. He entered the Military Academy the same year and became a pilot in 1955. While serving in Egypt during the union, he was one of five officers who formed the secret Military Committee of the Baath Party. This faction would emerge successful after the 8 March 1963 coup which brought the Baath to power. In 1964, he became Commander of the Air Force, and in 1966 Defense Minister in the radical regime set up after the coup of February 1966. In 1970, he became President after his overthrow of the radicals.

That Asad's base in the Alawite community is far more problematic than is generally supposed is evident from the fact that his brother Rifaat, who unsuccessfully challenged Asad when he was ill in late 1983, was unceremoniously exiled along with several other opponents in 1984. Rifaat returned in November 1984 at the time of Francois Mitterrand's visit to Damascus, but was thrown out again in early 1986. He has not been allowed to return.

Yahya Sadowski noted that several recent coup attempts have been mounted by Alawites, including one as recently as 1987.²⁶ Furthermore, thousands of Alawites, many of them Communists, help fill the jails of the Syrian security services.

The divisions into tribes, classes, and cults that are a prominent feature of Alawite society hinder any larger identity. Thus Asad, far from being able to count on the automatic support of his co-sectaries, must keep an eye open for the appearance of opposition on this front.

Other Minorities

The Christian population of Syria is generally supportive of Asad's regime, although many are leaving because of the economic difficulties the country has been experiencing. Many Christians worry about the overly close identification of their coreligionists with Asad's regime and the implications of this for their future in Syria after Asad.²⁷

The concentration of Christians in the Jazira region of northeastern Syria also represents a problem in an already tense area. A series of arrests occurred in February 1987 that involved many of the leading figures among the Syrian Orthodox and Syrian Catholic communities. The arrests may have also

included Assyrians (Nestorian Christians, both Orthodox and Catholic, who immigrated to Syria after a series of massacres in Iraq in 1933). As many as 150 individuals may have been involved in this event, which seems to have been a nascent autonomy movement. Kiriakos, the Jacobite Archbishop of Hasaka, also known as the "King of the Jazira", was forced to intercede with Asad to obtain the release of these individuals. Asad reportedly obtained very firm guarantees that there would be no repeat of these activities. The population of this region is primarily Kurdish, with many Christians living in the towns. There are approximately 200 Jews living in Qamishli, a town on the Turkish border. Asad has relocated many of the Arabs who were forced to move as a result of the rising waters behind the Asad Dam to this area to strengthen the Arab population of this tense and complex region.

It should be noted that alone among their fellows in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran, the Kurds in Syria have not mounted a serious attempt at political autonomy. Their condition in Syria, if not uniformly enviable, is at least better than that enjoyed by Kurds in any of the neighboring countries.

Economic Difficulties

Further complicating Asad's efforts to govern this land are a set of ongoing economic difficulties stemming from many factors. While Asad is generally considered a master of political intrigue, the same cannot be said of his economic management skills. The gross inefficiency of the bloated public sector, chaos in planning for the various state enterprises, recurrent shortages of everything from water to electricity (including medical supplies), recurrent crises in the balance of payments that occasionally reduce hard currency reserves to near zero, a growing population that reduces Syria's ability to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency in food production, and many other factors are indicative of the scope of this crisis. Inflation between 1980 and 1988 has been estimated at 500 percent, while public sector wages have increased by only 200 percent in the same period.²⁸

With his bloody repression of the rebellion at Hama in 1982, Asad showed that he was equal to any threat to his power base. At the time when the Muslim Brotherhood posed its greatest challenge,

Asad could count on thousands of supporters organized into the Revolutionary Youth Brigades as well as students and a formidable military and security structure. As Syria's economic system continues to deteriorate, however, the hardship will continue to fall disproportionately on the poorest families, and the regime's legitimacy as a socialist vehicle of progress will continue to decline. If economic liberalization is the cure for Syria's ills, then the hardships and dislocations will only increase before they get better.

The crucial question in any examination of Asad's role in Syria and the future of the Alawites is the issue of succession. Asad's health is the critical problem. While his health is thought to be good, rumors abound of occasional relapses of a heart condition. Asad's eldest son Basil has been playing an increasingly visible role in the regime. He was given command of a unit of Presidential Guards and seems to be a major player in any succession struggle.

The president's younger brother Rifaat is rumored to still harbor ambitions of leadership, although a prominent Christian who knows Asad well told me that Rifaat seems to have lost interest in playing a hand for the succession, given his numerous enemies within the Syrian military and security apparatus. It is hard to guess what Rifaat's intentions may be. I know, however, that Rifaat has a large and very devoted following in Syria that he could call on for support in a succession struggle. Most of his supporters were purged following his abortive "coup" in 1984. The purge even extended to the University, where ten of the students most closely associated with Rifaat (many of whom I knew personally) were expelled. Rifaat's son Mudar occupies one of three plush villas below Rifaat's estate in Mezza (the other two occupied by Jamil Asad, the President's other younger brother, and Muin Nassif, Rifaat's son-in-law). This may represent the core of a future Rifaat fifth column.

Armed force may be the determining factor in the succession struggle. There is no reason, however, to suppose that recourse to armed force is inevitable in determining the outcome of the struggle. What is certain is that the number of internal and external characters with an intense interest in the outcome will assure a lively and unpredictable course of events.

Endnotes

¹Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 67.

²Legitimacy refers to a "set of norms and values relating to politics that are sufficiently shared to make a political system possible ... the significant issue is not so much the existence of inequalities, restraints on individual freedoms, and the use of force ... as it is whether the degree to which these features exist is considered just or unjust." See G. Hossein Razi, "Legitimacy, Religion, and Nationalism in the Middle East," *American Political Science Review* 84, no.1 (March 1990): 70.

³Matti Moosa, *Extremist Shiites* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988), 258. This recent work contains the most comprehensive treatment of the Alawis to date, and draws upon many sources not available in North America.

⁴Al-Adani, *Kitab al-Bakura*, 14.

⁵Moosa, 262.

⁶Moosa, 268.

⁷This was in "accordance with their desires." See Yusuf al-Hakim, *Suriyya wa al-Ahd Uthmani* (*Syria and the Ottoman Era*) (Beirut: Dar al-Nahar Nashr, 1975), 68.

⁸Yusuf al-Hakim, *Syria and the French Mandate* (Arabic) (Beirut: Dar al-Nahar lin-Nashr, 1983), 64.

⁹Arrete 1470 of 12 July 1922.

¹⁰Arrete 2979 of 5 December 1924.

¹¹Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 138.

¹²These geographic details are drawn from two sources. Hakim, *Syria and the Ottoman Era*, 68. Also, Hakim, *Suriyya wa al-Ahd al-Faysali* (*Syria and the Era of Faysal*) (Beirut, 1986), 52.

¹³Hakim, *Syria and the Era of Faysal*, 24.

¹⁴Jacques Weulersse, *Le Pays des Alaouites* (Tours: Institute Francais de Damas, 1940), 121.

¹⁵Muhammad Bahjat and Rafiq Bey Tamimi, *Wilayat Bayrut: Al-qism al-Shamal* (*The Vilayet of Beirut: The Northern Section*) (Beirut: Matba al-Wilaya, 1913), 308.

¹⁶Hanna Batatu, "Some Observations on the Social Roots of Syria's Ruling, Military Group and the Causes of its Dominance," *Middle East Journal* 35 (Summer 1981): 333.

¹⁷Batatu, 336.

¹⁸Philip Khoury, *The Politics of Arab Nationalism: Syria and the French Mandate* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 520.

¹⁹Jean Leca, "Social Structure and Political Stability: Comparative Evidence from the Algerian, Syrian and Iraqi Cases," in *Beyond Coercion. The Durability of Arab States*, eds. A. Dawisha and I.W. Zartman (London: Croom Helm, 1988), 185. Faction may refer to the sect-class wholly or in part. If Leca's sense is the second, other variables must be added to explain the faction within the sect-class.

²⁰Leca, 185.

²¹Leca, 185.

²²Hanna Batatu, "Some Observations on the Social Roots of Syria's Ruling, Military Group and the Causes of its Dominance," *Middle East Journal* 35 (Summer 1981): 333; and Patrick Seale, *Asad. The Struggle for the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 13, n.15. Seale's information comes from a list prepared by a British official in Latakia in 1942. My information comes from several independent American diplomatic dispatches from the same period.

²³Murshid united disparate elements from two previously hostile tribes of the Khayyat federation, the Daryus and

Amamira. These tribes were part of a common cult, the Ghaybiya. The Ghaybiya, and its related cult the Haidariya, are subcults of the Shamsiya or "Sun" cult, also known as the Shimaliya or "Northern" cult since many of its adherents reside in northern districts of the mountain.

²⁴Michel Seurat, "Les Populations, L'etat et la Societe," in *La Syrie d'aujourd'hui*, ed. Andre Raymond (Paris: CNRS, 1980), 87-142, at 101.

²⁵Moosa, 287-88. Also see US National Archives, 783.00/3-1450, 3/14/1950, where individuals with the names Ali Asad and Ibrahim al-Kinj, another Alawite notable and notorious separatist, had their elections to the Syrian chamber in 1950 invalidated because they submitted false affidavits of elementary education. Asad's father was, according to another source, a candidate for elections in the 1930s, and may be the individual referred to in the report above.

²⁶Yahya Sadowski, "Patronage and the Baath. Corruption and Control in Contemporary Syria," *Arab Studies Quarterly* IX, no. 4: 442-461, note 12.

²⁷This concern was expressed to the author by a prominent Armenian businessman at his home in Damascus in 1987.

²⁸See Volker Perthes, "Syrian Economic Development in the 1980s: Some Critical Remarks," forthcoming in *The Middle East Journal*. Batatu, Hanna. "Some Observations on the Social Roots

of Syria's Ruling Military Group and the Causes of its Dominance," *Middle East Journal* 35 (Summer 1981).

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Table 3-1: Separatist Leaders in Latakia, 1945*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
Munir Abbas	Deputy, former Minister and Paramount Shaykh of al-Khayyat in of Safita
Ibrahim al-Kinj	Vice President Council of the Muhafizat and Chief of the Haddadin of Safita
Aziz rawwash	Paramount Shaykh of al-Matawira of Safita, Muhafiz of Damascus at one time
Salman Murshid	Deputy, God, Shaykh of Ghassaniya
Ibrahim Nasr Hakim	Deputy, of al-Khayyat in of Baniyas
Said Darwish	Sunni Deputy of Haffa, Chief of al-Akrad
Muhammad Amin Raslan	Alawi Deputy, Chief of Raslan of Safita
Nuri Hajji	Sunni Deputy from Haffa, Chief of al-Akrad
Ali Sulayman al-Asad	Kalbiya notable of Qardaha, father of President Hafiz al-Asad
Nadim Aziz Ismail	Kalbiya notable of Qardaha
Majid Saffiyah	Sunni from Latakia
Sharif Fadl Bey	Sunni from Latakia
Sharif Zayn Bey	Sunni from Latakia

*The separatists in the Latakia province in 1945 (the last year for which we have any information) organized a party called *Hizb al-ahrar al-Qawmiyyin*, or the Party of National Liberals. This is a list of their leaders.

Source: USNA, Suitland Annex, Damascus Legation Confidential File, *Political Report on the Djebel Alawite*, October, 1945, p. 2-3.

Table 3-2: Nationalist Leaders in Latakia, 1945

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
Abdul Qadir Shraytih	Ex-Deputy, Major Nationalist in Latakia
Asad Harun	Sunni notable of Latakia
Ali Harun	Sunni deputy of Latakia, son-in-law of Shraytih
Majd al-Din al-Azhari	Sunni notable and member of Muhafiza Council
Adnar al-Azhari	Sunni notable and President of Latakia Municipality
Wadih Saade	Deputy, Greek Orthodox of Latakia
Jules Nasri	Greek Orthodox notable, member of Latakia Municipal Council
Ali Asad Ismail	Alawi deputy, chief of Kalbiya of Qardaha
Bahjat Nassur	Alawi deputy, chief of Haddadin of Jabla
Badawi al-Jabal	Proper name: Muhammad Sulayman al-Ahmad, Deputy, member of Muhafiza Council, son of Shaykh Sulayman al-Ahmad, the leading Alawi religious Shaykh
Hamad al-Mahmud	Alawi deputy, chief of Haddadin of Tartus
Riyad Bey Abdal-Razzaq	Sunni deputy, President of Municipality of Tartus
Isa Jamil Arnuk	Greek Orthodox notable of Tartus
Jamal Ali Adib	Sunni deputy of Jabla

Source: *Political Report on the Djebel Alawite*, p.3-4.

Palestinian Security Fears

Emile Sahliyah

University of North Texas

Over the years, the Palestinians have confronted five different types of threats. Since the unfolding of the Palestine Zionist drama, the Palestinians have suffered greatly at the hands of Israel. In addition to the loss of their land, the Palestinians have become subjugated to Israel's military occupation or dispersed among different Arab countries. In addition to the threat from Israel, the Palestinians have had tense relations with Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. The final source of threat stemmed from within the Palestinian national movement itself. On several occasions, the leadership of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) faced challenges and sometimes splits. This essay examines the Palestinians' current and future security fears.

The Palestinians and Israel

Given the Palestinians' profound anguish and feelings of injustice, a common aversion emerged among them against the division of Palestine and the acceptance of Israel. Yet, by the late 1980s, the PLO dropped many of its traditional stands and launched a new diplomatic initiative. In November 1988, the Palestine National Council (PNC) endorsed formally the principle of a two-state solution in Palestine, accepted UN resolutions 242 and 338, and renounced terrorism. A month later, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat recognized Israel and renounced terrorism.

The Political Context. The changing conditions in the Middle East, the world at large, and within the Palestinian national movement in the 1970s and the 1980s prompted the Palestinians to embark upon this major political initiative. First, the Palestinians' political moves came in response to their

recognition of the colossal gap between their capabilities and those of Israel. In terms of manpower, geography, military arsenal, and economic resources, Israel has a decisive edge over the Palestinians. In addition to its massive conventional superiority, Israel has nuclear and chemical weapons. It also possesses satellite capability and medium range missiles. By contrast, the Palestinians have light arms and hand grenades.

The vast gap in the capabilities and the resources of both the Palestinians and the Israelis casts serious doubts about the Palestinians' strategy of military struggle. These doubts were reinforced by the PLO's loss of its independent bases of military operations in both Jordan and Lebanon in 1971 and 1982, respectively. The fragmentation of Arab politics impeded the emergence of an Arab deterrent capability. Egypt's defection from the Arab fold following the signing of a peace treaty with Israel further dealt a debilitating blow to any Arab credible military posture.

Far from realizing the national aspirations of the Palestinians, the PLO strategy of armed struggle hardened the Israeli attitudes towards the Palestinians. Israel continued to deny the Palestinians their rights for self-determination and the formation of an independent state. In the 1980s, the stance of the Israeli government became even more inflexible and Israeli public opinion more polarized. Rather than forcing the Palestinians into more radicalism, the military weakness of both the Arabs and the Palestinians together with Israel's military superiority, compelled the Palestinians in the late 1980s to reevaluate their options.

Second, the unfolding of regional and international political trends bolstered the Palestinians' propensity towards pragmatism and moderation. The 1980s have witnessed a decline in the utility of military force. After eight years of bloodshed, the outcome of the Iraq-Iran war was ambivalent. The declining usefulness of military force as an

instrument for political influence has been also evidenced in the inconclusive outcome of Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon and the protracted nature of the Syrian involvement in that country. Similarly, Israel's harsh security measures failed to prevent the outbreak of a major uprising (Intifada) inside the occupied territories.

The 1980s also witnessed the emergence of another tendency of finding political solutions to regional problems. In addition to the Soviet Union's decision to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan, a decision over the independence of Namibia was reached. A political liberalization program was undertaken within the Soviet Union, and, in late 1989, a more far-reaching political change was begun in Eastern Europe. Thus, the propensity of finding a political solution to the regional problems and the inconclusive outcome of the use of military force in many places convinced the aging leadership of the PLO that time was not working on their side and that they needed to launch a major political initiative.

Third, the developments within the Palestinian community reinforced this trend towards moderation. The 1980s were marked by the drop in the political influence of the hard-line groups and the concomitant increase in Fatah's popularity. Prior to Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the hard-line groups enjoyed significant political influence within the PLO's various councils incommensurate with their numerical size. The decisive shift in the PLO's balance of power in favor of Fatah was brought about by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the subsequent dispersal of PLO troops to several Arab states. The Syrian-PLO rift after 1983 and the ensuing split within Fatah² diminished the political weight of the rejectionists within the PLO's decisionmaking structures.

As a result of these events, the West Bank and Gaza became the PLO's primary constituencies and its principal source of legitimacy. The mounting Syrian threat to the PLO's integrity compelled Arafat to forge a Palestinian-Egyptian and a Palestinian-Jordanian rapprochement. These new conditions strengthened the PLO's moderate course.

Impact of the Intifada. It was, however, the uprising of the Palestinians within the occupied territories that made the most discernible impact upon the PLO's political orientation. The Intifada

changed the Palestinian perceptions and attitudes and developed among them a strong sense of self-reliance and confidence.³ This renewed self-confidence enabled the Palestinians to make concessions for the sake of peace and to seek direct talks with Israel. It also permitted them to abandon their former rejectionist stands. The Intifada made it possible for Arafat to renounce violence and recognize Israel.

The Intifada created a new frame of mind among the Palestinians. On one hand, the Palestinians are no longer fearful of the Israeli army, while, on the other hand, they are convinced of the inevitability of their state. In this context, Hani al-Hasan (Arafat's political advisor) remarked that the continuation of the Intifada "will force Israel to reach a strategic decision: to sit at the negotiating table and to accept the principle of withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip."⁴ The Palestinians would like to reach an agreement with Israel on the basis of mutual accommodation. This is evidenced in the PLO's new political strategy adopted during the nineteenth session of the PNC.

The new policy, approved by a majority of 253 to 46 with 10 abstentions, called for a just peace settlement based upon the Palestinian right for self-determination, the endorsement of the principle of a two state solution, acceptance of Israel, and the renunciation of terrorism.⁵ Arafat and his senior political advisors have elaborated upon the PLO's stands regarding the peace process, interim measures, PLO charter, "right of return," confidence-building measures and security assurances, and the nature of the relationships between Palestine and each of Jordan and Israel.

The leaders of the Intifada have expressed similar views of wanting to settle their dispute with Israel through peaceful means. In its call for freedom and peace in early February 1990, the United National Command for the Uprising (UNCU) spelled out its conditions for starting a dialogue with the Israeli government. These conditions include the right of the PLO to declare the names of the Palestinian delegation, the need for international supervision of the talks with Israel, and the open-ended nature of the agenda for the talks.

The Palestinians do not dispute the need for bilateral talks with Israel in the initial phase, but are unlikely to go for a separate peace settlement the

way Egypt did. In their effort to allay Israeli security anxieties, the Palestinians have communicated their readiness to accept interim arrangements and other confidence-building measures. In this connection, they are not against a provisional order for the occupied territories as long as this accord would lead to the formation of a Palestinian state. The PLO, for example, accepted the American Secretary of State's five point proposal for the meeting of a Palestinian-Israeli team in Cairo to discuss the conducting of elections in the occupied territories. The PLO's leaders, however, will not agree to such elections if they will be used to thwart the Intifada or subvert the PLO's exclusive role to speak in the name of the Palestinians. For this reason, the PLO believes that there is a need to have international supervision to assure the integrity of the elections.⁶

The PLO's charter, the right of return, and the use of violence are three additional issues that have caused concern among the Israelis. The Palestinians contend that the various PNC resolutions superseded the PLO's original constitution. The two state solution and the Declaration of Independence of 1988 has reversed the charter. During his meeting with France's President Mitterand in May 1989, Arafat stated the charter was obsolete.⁷

The Palestinians have also tried to allay Israeli worry with regard to the right of return. The Palestinians want from Israel a symbolic recognition of their historic rights in Palestine and want to have free emigration of the Palestinians to the new State of Palestine in the West Bank and Gaza. As it was stated earlier, the PLO renounced the use of violence as a tool to achieve its political objectives. Likewise, the leaders of the Intifada have imposed the non-use of firearms as a tactic to achieve their political objectives. The Intifada activists employed mostly nonviolent methods, such as economic boycotts, commercial and labor strikes, demonstrations, refusal to pay taxes, and stone throwing. Various PLO leaders expressed a willingness to reach a peace settlement that would ensure Israel's security. Hani al-Hasan said the PLO "has no objection to the mutually agreed border modifications (in the 1948 cease-fire lines) insofar as they may be necessary for genuine Israeli security concerns and needs."⁸

Likewise, the PLO realizes that the future relationship between Palestine, Jordan, and Israel will have to be based on mutual cooperation. The

Palestinians are not opposed to the confederation of their state with Jordan provided that such a confederation comes after political independence. Since 1983, the various PNCs have called for the formation of confederation between Jordan and the State of Palestine. The PLO understands also that cooperation with Israel would be inevitable. Arafat suggested forming an economic union among Palestine, Israel, and Jordan.⁹

Palestinians and the Question of Israeli Security

The Palestinians believe the concessions they have made are sufficient to provide Israel with security. Given the severe limitations upon their military capabilities, the Palestinians cannot see how they can endanger Israel's security. Political, economic, geographic, and military factors will severely constrain the behavior of the future Palestinian state.

Political and Economic Limitations. Unlike many Third World countries, the State of Palestine will not be able to afford a military program. The state's involvement in economic development and the terms of the final peace settlement will not allow the Palestinians to have a military force to speak of. Likewise, the absorption of the new emigrants will place heavy constraints upon the state's budget. The West Bank and Gaza Palestinians would serve as a powerful lobby inside the state. Once the government is established, the West Bank elite are likely to strive for maximum representation in the new government.

Furthermore, the fact that Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf States will be the main financiers of the State of Palestine will allow them to exercise a moderating influence upon the behavior of the state's elite and will check their belligerent behavior towards Israel.

The Palestinians also believe that the institutionalization of a security regime and confidence-building measures will stabilize the long-term relations between Israel and the Palestinians. Such measures will include limitations on force deployment, regulation of the size of the Palestinian army, and the quality of weapons available to it.

Military Constraints. The military conditions under which the State of Palestine is created would constrain its behavior. Israel possesses a vast arsenal of conventional weapons that far surpasses the

military capabilities of the Palestinians. According to a report by the Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University, the Israeli government can mobilize half a million men, equipped with 700 advanced war planes and 4,000 modern tanks, in a relatively short period of time. In addition, the Israeli army has thousands of artillery and electronic devices. The same report estimated the PLO's forces at around 8,000 fighters who are scattered in different parts of the Arab world armed with stones, hand grenades, and machine guns. The PLO's troops do not possess any aircraft or battle tanks.

Besides its vast conventional arsenal, Israel also has highly sophisticated early warning systems and reconnaissance aircraft. More importantly, it possesses a high quality nuclear weapons program. Several scholarly and media reports affirmed that the Israeli government has nuclear and chemical warheads that can be mounted on the missiles available to the Israeli army. The Israeli defense industry has developed medium-range missiles. In 1988, Israel became the first Middle East country to launch its own space satellite, and in September 1989 the Israeli army tested a 1500 km medium-range ballistic missile in the Mediterranean.

Undoubtedly, Israel's massive conventional superiority and its monopoly on nuclear weapons will make the Palestinian state totally vulnerable while at the same time making Israel totally invulnerable. Israel's colossal military arsenal will frustrate any conceivable attack or provocation by the Palestinian state. Any attempt on the part of the political elite to attack Israel will be a suicidal act, since it will lead to a massive Israeli counterattack that will not only inflict heavy casualties among the Palestinians, but will also jeopardize the continued survival and political independence of their state.

Given the security environment within which the Palestinian state will be created, it is difficult to imagine how the new unarmed entity could jeopardize the safety of Israel and threaten its existence. Israel's equation of territory with security is illusive. The significance of geopolitics to a state defense is increasingly rendered unimportant.¹⁰ The advent of sophisticated military technology and the availability of various types of long-range delivery systems to both sides of the conflict enable them to attack each other from well beyond present borders.

The acquisition of additional territory does not necessarily provide for more security. Given the possession by some of the Arab countries of long-range missiles, the West Bank and Gaza lost much of their military value.¹¹ Israel's early warning systems and its satellite technology rather than land possession will increase its ability to prevent any surprise attack. The advancement of Israel's surveillance capabilities makes it thus unnecessary for Israel to maintain ground troops inside the West Bank.

The political behavior of the Palestinian government will be markedly different from the political discourse that the PLO followed. As a national liberation organization, the PLO had to pursue for the most part haughty goals that would appeal to most of the Palestinians. The PLO's search for such indubitable objectives compelled its leaders to advance revolutionary perspectives. By contrast, the Palestinian government will have to adhere to the domain of pragmatism. Preservation of the state and attendance to the welfare of the citizens will make up the immediate tasks of the leaders of the Palestinian state.¹²

The foreign policy orientation of the State of Palestine will also be dictated by its geographic position. Three aspects of the geographic context are pertinent: encirclement, accessibility, and proximity. With the exception of its eastern boundaries (where Jordan borders the Palestinian state), Israel surrounds the new state. Moreover, the two parts of the State of Palestine (the West Bank and Gaza) will be connected through a narrow corridor that will be under constant Israeli surveillance. As a consequence, the Palestinian leaders will always be reminded of the possibility that Israel can split their state in half.

Similarly, the absence of natural barriers, including rivers, high mountains, forestry, and difficult terrain, will make their state easily accessible to Israel's ground troops. The geographic proximity and narrow size of the State of Palestine will allow no warning time against attacking aircraft.

Palestinian Security Fears

Past and current debates about an overall solution to the Palestinian-Israeli dispute have been dominated by an excessive fixation on Israel's

security needs to such an extent that the anxieties and the security concerns of the Palestinians are overlooked.¹³ The attainment of peace has become commensurate with meeting Israel's foremost security concerns. Despite this fixation, by the 1980s the question was no longer the threat to Israel's security from the Palestinians, but rather Israel's threats to Arab and Palestinian interests.

Current Threats and Fears. Palestinian security concerns revolve around long-term and immediate threats. Their current security predicament emanates from the dispersal of the Palestinians over different parts of the Arab world. The security needs of those Palestinians who live in refugee camps in Lebanon are different from those who live inside the occupied territories, Jordan, or Syria. At any rate, one of the foremost security concerns of the Palestinians stems from Israel's resolve to indefinitely hold on to the occupied territories. The construction of settlements and the expropriation of Arab lands are of paramount concern for the Palestinians. The Israeli government confiscated 50 percent of the West Bank land and 30 percent of Gaza by the mid-1980s. The harsh manner in which Israel treats the Intifada activists is another source of deep worry for the Palestinians. Since the beginning of the Intifada, more than 700 Palestinians were killed, approximately 40,000 injured, and more than 10,000 are in jail. With the decline in the interests of world media in the Palestinian question and lack of any serious efforts by the Israelis and the Americans to address the Palestinians' right for self-determination, an escalation in the level of violence may be inevitable.

Another source of fear for the Palestinians is Israel's attacks upon the political leadership of the Palestinians inside and outside the occupied territories. Since 1967, the various Israeli governments through deportation, arrests, or removal from office, limited the opportunities for the emergence of local leadership.

The Palestinians are also concerned about the safety and the physical survival of their outside political leadership. Over the last two decades, Israel's secret agents have been engaged in attempts to assassinate leading PLO figures. In the summer of 1973, Israeli commandos killed three PLO leaders in Lebanon. In October 1985, Israel attacked the PLO's headquarters in Tunis in an attempt to

assassinate Arafat. In April 1988, an Israeli commando group assassinated Abu Jihad (Arafat's deputy). These assassinations highlighted the vulnerability of the PLO leadership to Israeli assaults.

Attacks upon the Palestinian civilians and the Islamic holy places at the hands of resurgent underground Jewish terrorist groups is an additional basis of consternation for the Palestinians. On numerous occasions, Jewish settlers were involved in attacks upon the Palestinian civilians in Jerusalem, Hebron, and Nablus. The increase in the use of firearms by the baffled young Palestinians would lead to a greater participation by the settlers in putting down the Intifada. In addition, the Israeli air force conducts regular raids upon the Palestinian refugee camps in southern Lebanon. Those Palestinian camps and urban centers have also been subject to extreme pressure from the Phalanges, the Lebanese and Syrian armies, the Shiite Amal organization, and the internecine conflict among the Palestinians themselves.

Finally, the emigration of a significant number of Jews from the Soviet Union to Israel constitutes another security problem for the Palestinians. A Likud-led government may try to settle many of the newcomers within the occupied territories. Indeed, Israel's Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, remarked that the influx of thousands of Jews requires the presence of the greater land of Israel.

Some of the Palestinians' security concerns go beyond the immediate anxiety of the Palestinian community to include the threats to the Arab countries in general. Israel's military and economic assistance to separatist elements in the Arab world constitutes a foundation for the apprehension of the Palestinians and the Arabs alike. Since the mid-1970s, the various Israeli governments supported the Kurds in northern Iraq. They have been actively backing the Christians in southern Lebanon. During the Iraq-Iran war, the Israelis sided discretely with Iran.

The joint Palestinian-Arab fears also emanate from the possibility that Israel may launch a direct military attack upon an Arab state, as was the case when it invaded Lebanon in 1978 and 1982 or when Israel destroyed an Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981. On numerous occasions, several Israeli Likud politicians threatened Jordan's national identity by

asserting that the East Bank is a Palestinian state. Based upon Israel's past military behavior, the Palestinians cannot rule out the possibility that Israeli hard-line groups may try to use again their country's military superiority against their Arab neighbors.

Finally, Palestinians and Arabs alike are apprehensive about the continued pressure by Israel and its supporters within the US upon the various American administrations to avoid taking a more balanced approach towards the Palestinian question or the sale of sophisticated arms to the Arabs. Both are also genuinely concerned about America supplying the most sophisticated arms to Israel and Israel's own military industry, particularly Israel's nuclear weapons program, missile technology, and satellite and chemical warfare capabilities.

The Palestinians' Future Threat Perceptions. The Palestinians' security fears are not confined to the present state of affairs. Once established, their state is likely to encounter a new set of threats. Four types of security concerns are particularly salient in Palestinian thinking. First, the stability of the Palestinian state may be undermined by terrorism emanating from within the Palestinian state itself or from inside Israel. Terrorism against Israel by extremist Palestinian groups will risk the safety of the Palestinian state and increase the prospects for a confrontation with Israel. Alternatively, the security of the state may be imperiled by the terrorist activities of extremist Jewish groups. The Palestinians are concerned that disillusioned and displaced Israeli settlers could carry out cross-border subversive activities to sabotage the steadiness of the new state. Terrorism may also stem from those settlers who choose to remain within the Palestinian state. After all, those settlers are the most fanatic. On numerous occasions in the 1980s, Jewish extremists were engaged in clandestine activities against the Palestinians within the occupied territories.

A second source of security fear for the Palestinians relates to the possibility of a conventional Israeli attack upon the Palestinian state. Israel's military superiority will always haunt the leaders of Palestine. In this connection, the Palestinians fear that the military vulnerability of their state may entice a future irredentist Israeli government to reconquer the West Bank and Gaza.

Justification for such an attack may be found by a rightist Israeli government that wants to undo the Palestinian state. The presence of international peace-keeping forces and superpower security guarantees will be mandatory to guard the new state against an Israeli surprise attack.

Third, still another potential source of instability may stem from the dissatisfied refugees who lost their land in 1948 and who would find it very difficult to abandon their historical rights to pre-Israel Palestine. This contingency would demand that the new state facilitate the rapid absorption of refugees and clearly state that the right of return is confined to the new state of the West Bank and Gaza.

Fourth, granting of an extraterritorial status to the Jewish settlers who may choose to stay within the Palestinian state, will make them a target for the Palestinian rejectionists and will also undermine the sovereignty of the state. In a move to protect the endangered settlers, Israel may invade the Palestinian state. In the event of allowing the settlers to stay inside the Palestinian state, no extraterritorial status should be granted to them. Both the settlements and their inhabitants should be under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian state.

Palestinian Relations with Both Syria and Lebanon

While security threats to the Palestinians would continue to arise primarily from Israel, past experience suggests additional serious sources of danger to the safety and the security of the Palestinians. A great deal of suffering was inflicted upon the Palestinians by their fellow Arabs. While providing the Palestinians with a sanctuary, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan fought bloody wars with the Palestinians during the last two decades.¹⁴ For the time being, the threat to the Palestinians' national interests from Jordan seems to have receded. On 31 July 1988, King Hussein renounced his country's legal and political ties with the West Bank and recognized the newly formed Palestinian State.

Syria: A Future Ally or a Foe? Palestinian-Syrian relations have been characterized by mutual suspicion and tension. Since 1970, the Syrian government continuously tried to control the PLO. In its effort to achieve this goal, Syria did not hesitate to use military power. In

1976, Syria employed its army against the Palestinians in Lebanon, and, in 1983, it supported a rebellion inside Fatah culminating in the eviction of pro-Arafat troops from northern Lebanon later that year. The War of the Camps (1985-1987), between the Syrian-supported Amal militia and pro-Arafat forces in the Palestinian refugee camps around Beirut, led to a further deterioration in the relationship between both. Yet the savage and harsh manner in which Amal conducted the war against the Palestinian refugee camps made it difficult for some of the members of the Palestinian National Salvation Front (PNSF) to stand by as Amal's forces were encircling the camps and killing innocent Palestinian civilians. Thus, rather than helping to assert Syria's hegemony over the Palestinians, Amal's military pressures alienated many Palestinians. By 1987, a new sense of communal solidarity began to appear among Arafat's critics, despite their bitter opposition to his political moves. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a key member of the PNSF, joined the battle against Amal.

In April 1987, the PFLP along with the Democratic Front and the Palestine Communist Party returned to the ranks of the PLO in the eighteenth meeting of the PNC. The reconciliation among the PLO's factions and the downgrading of the PNSF lessened Syria's influence inside the Palestinian national movement.

The late 1980s were marked by a further drop in Syria's authority and stature. The deteriorating economic conditions in Syria and the decline in its prestige in the Arab world diminished its capacity to dominate the Palestinians or to obstruct their political moves. Moreover, the presence of a moderate Arab camp and the pressure of Lebanon have weakened Syria's ability to concentrate its resources and energies on confronting Israel. Syria's military posture was adversely affected by the unfolding of events in the Soviet Union. Under the leadership of Gorbachev, the USSR is no longer supportive of Syria's desire to achieve a strategic parity with Israel.

It was, however, the Intifada that weakened Syria's ability to challenge the PLO's legitimacy. It thwarted whatever support Syria and its Palestinian proteges had inside the occupied territories. By maintaining their allegiance to the PLO, the

Intifada's activists did not create new opportunities for Syria to boost its influence among the Palestinians. On the contrary, with their pro-PLO stands, the Intifada's leaders largely discredited the Syrian government.

The drop in Syrian influence in the Arab world and the PLO was not, however, associated with a noticeable improvement in the relationship between both. With the exception of the Syrian decision to allow Abu Jihad's burial in Damascus after his assassination in April 1988 and Arafat's subsequent visit to Damascus, the Syrian-Palestinian relationship remained cool. Two years after the declaration of the Palestinian state, Syria did not recognize that political entity. The government rationalized its refusal to offer diplomatic recognition on the grounds that such a step would entail the recognition of Israel.

Yet despite the cool nature of the status of the Palestinian-Syrian links, the Palestinians believe the participation of Syria in negotiations is inevitable in order to ensure the durability of any settlement. Notwithstanding the official rhetoric, the Palestinians do not believe the Syrian government is opposed to a peaceful settlement to the conflict. Since the mid-1970s, the Syrian-Israeli borders have been calm. The Palestinians' desire to include Syria in the peace process does not mean they will subordinate their interests to those of Syria. On the contrary, the Palestinians will continue to insist upon their right to make independent decisions free from any outside pressure. As was the case in the past, they will not hesitate to resist Syrian attempts to impose its hegemony upon the Palestinians.

At any rate, it is not an exaggeration to argue that Syria may soon begin to advocate publicly a political accommodation with Israel. The far-reaching changes inside the USSR and Eastern Europe (Syria's traditional allies) have already compelled President Asad to be more realistic in his foreign policy behavior. Syria has already resumed diplomatic relations with Egypt (despite the latter's peace treaty with Israel). Asad also informed former American president Jimmy Carter in March 1990 of his desire to join the peace process. Despite Syria's misgivings about Arafat's diplomatic moves, President Asad (unlike in the mid-1980s) did not confront the PLO nor did he try to form an alternative leadership for it.

Lebanon: A New Role for the Palestinians? The Intifada also positively affected the PLO's position in Lebanon. Syria could not afford to continue to support Amal's war efforts against the Palestinians. This led Amal (the pro-Syria Shiite group) to lift its siege of the refugee camps in late January 1988, ostensibly in support of the Intifada. The uprising also ended the fighting between the forces of Arafat and Abu Musa. These developments enabled the pro-Arafat Palestinians in Lebanon to rebuild some of their organizational infrastructure, particularly in the camps.

The change in Lebanon's political landscape also facilitated the reemergence of the Palestinians as a political force. The mobilization of the Shia and their division between the pro-Iran Hizballah and pro-Syria Amal, together with the bitter divisions among the political and military bosses of the Maronite Christian community, led some of them to downplay the risks to Lebanon from the Palestinian presence.

The emerging Palestinian influence came also in response to the ongoing rivalry between Asad and Michel Awn (Lebanon's acting prime minister). Awn's confrontation with the Syrian army and his bloody quarrel with the Lebanese forces led by Samir Jaja compelled Awn to reconsider his stand concerning the Palestinians' presence in Lebanon. In this connection, Awn stated after his meeting with Arafat in early February 1990, that since the setting up of the Palestinian state, the Palestinian presence in Lebanon does not threaten that country's security or internal stability.¹⁵ Though Awn's statement was part of his efforts to enlist some support in the Arab world and to mobilize additional opposition against President Asad (Arafat's long-term adversary), the Palestinian political presence in Lebanon was strengthened.

As a consequence of these developments, Arafat's supporters became increasingly important crisis managers on the Lebanese local scene. In January and February of 1990, his forces tried to put an end to the bloodshed between the rival Shia Amal and Hizballah militias and between Awn's troops and those of Samir Jaja. While trying to mediate between Lebanon's contending factions, the Palestinians remained militarily disengaged from the intra-Lebanese and the Lebanese-Syrian struggles.

Though the contradictions of the Lebanese

political scene have relatively improved the position of the Palestinians, it is unlikely that the PLO would be able or be allowed to reestablish its power position to the pre-1982 level. Though some of Arafat's troops were able to return to Lebanon in the second half of the 1980s, the bulk of the PLO's military troops continue to be outside that country after their withdrawal in the wake of the 1982 war. The opposition to the regrouping of the Palestinian troops in Lebanon will come from a variety of sources, including Syria, Israel, and various Lebanese factions. Finally, having embarked upon a new diplomatic discourse that promises the formation of a Palestinian state, the PLO is unlikely to jeopardize such a goal or to undermine the political gains of the Intifada and of its own political initiative. The Palestinians' emerging role as a crisis manager in Lebanon will, however, be used to bolster the PLO's new image as a peace advocate.

Concluding Remarks: The Future of Palestinian Secular Nationalism

Needless to say, the Intifada played an important role in forcing the PLO to show political flexibility and articulate a pragmatic program that would translate the Intifada's achievements into tangible political gains. The PLO understands that the lack of any progress towards a political solution will increase the frustration of Palestinians inside the occupied territories.

Due to the slow pace of the peace process and Israel's adamant refusal to talk to the PLO, a growing number of Palestinians began to question the value of diplomatic flexibility and moderation. There are signs of an increasing disagreement among some of the members of UNCU leadership revolving around the need to further escalate the Intifada. There is also a mounting disillusion among the established Palestinian politicians with regard to the lack of an effective response to the Palestinians' diplomatic initiative. A survey of opinion among 20 leading pro-PLO figures in the occupied territories indicated that many of those politicians were dismayed by the lack of progress in the peace process and proposed that the Palestinians should reassess their present strategy.¹⁶

In addition to these signs of unhappiness on the part of the established elite, three potential challenges may confront the PLO's mainstream.

The first such challenge emanates from the UNCU. Unlike the pre-Intifada West Bank political elite who derived most of their legitimacy from their association with the PLO, the UNCU developed its own resource of legitimacy. Its calls for strikes and demonstrations are obeyed by the different political forces inside the occupied territories. The leadership exhibited a high degree of unity and cohesiveness. Unlike the PLO's political arrangements, power is equally distributed among the elements that constitute UNCU. Having to face the cost of Israel's harsh treatment of Palestinians within the occupied territories, the Intifada activists are more hardline in their political stands than the PLO.

A second challenge to the PLO may arise from the fact that the Intifada led to the consolidation of the Islamic movement as an ideological, political, and institutional rival of the PLO. Indeed, to an increasingly energized number of Palestinians, Islam is a source of hope and a point of reference. The trend towards the Islamization of the occupied territories is a cause of deep anguish for the secular Palestinians. The characterization of the Palestinians' Israeli struggle with an Islamic coloration will only complicate more the conflict and make it unamenable to a political solution.

The emergence of the modern Islamic movement in the occupied territories can be traced to the late 1970s and early 1980s, when several Islamic blocs were formed among the college students to contest student council elections.¹⁷ The dissatisfaction with secular nationalism, the mounting Israeli challenges and threats to Palestinian interests, and the availability of organizing resources were behind the rise of the Islamic movement. Yet, until the outbreak of the Intifada, the Islamic groups were reluctant to engage the Israeli army.

During the uprising, the passive phase of the Islamic movement came to an end. In the summer of 1988, Hamas (the Islamic Resistance Movement) was established. Hamas presents a long-term challenge to the UNCU and the PLO. The two ideological rival groups have so far avoided any major confrontation in order to preserve the national unity that was brought about by the Intifada. Nevertheless, Hamas and UNCU differ over a variety of cardinal issues. Unlike the UNCU, Hamas does not accept the partition of Palestine or the establishment of a separate Palestinian state in the

occupied territories. They certainly want to establish an Islamic state in all of Palestine rather than a small secular political entity. The rise of the Islamic trend as a major political force within the occupied territories was a clear signal to the PLO that continued political stagnation in the peace process would certainly strengthen the radical Islamic camp inside the Palestinian community. In this context, Abu Iad (Salah Khalaf, the PLO's second man) warned that if Israel and the United States do not deal with them now, they will eventually have to deal with the Islamists at a later stage.¹⁸

The Islamic syndrome made it imperative upon the PLO to produce tangible political outcomes. But at the same time, the ascendancy of the Islamic movement placed limits beyond which the PLO cannot proceed without risking the loss of its legitimacy. Given the Islamic challenge, the PLO will be unable to make far-reaching substantive concessions without any reciprocal moves by both the United States and Israel.

The third challenge may emanate from within leftist circles in the Palestinian community. Those forces may ultimately challenge, singularly or in conjunction with the Islamic movement, Arafat's moderate political course.

Endnotes

¹For a more useful analysis of the impact of the Arab regional system upon the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, see Tareq Y. Ishmael, *International Relations of the Contemporary Middle East: A Study in World Politics* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986), chapter 3.

²For more detailed information, see Emile Sahliych, *The PLO After the Lebanon War* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), chapter 6, "The Split Within Fatah and the Rift With Syria."

³For example, see Graham E. Fuller, *The West Bank of Israel: Point of No Return?* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1989).

⁴*Al-Hayat* interview, 15 December 1989.

⁵For the text of the PNC communique, see *Journal of Palestine Studies* 47 (Winter 1989); Salah Khalaf's statements in *The New York Times*, 26 and 27 April 1989, the declaration issued by 80 leading Palestinians from the occupied territories in *The Washington Post*, 27 April 1989; and Arafat's statement in *The New York Times*, 3 May 1989.

⁶See *The New York Times*, 3 May 1989, and *The Washington Post*, 4 May 1989.

⁷Arafat used the French word *caduque* (null and void).

⁸*Al-Hayat* interview, 15 December 1989. Also in *Al-Qabas* (Kuwait), 13 December 1989.

⁹Arafat's interview on *Sixty Minutes*, CBS News, 19 February 1989.

¹⁰For further elaboration, see Emile Sahliych, "Israel and the Question of Security and Peace," *New Outlook: Middle East*

Monthly (February/March 1981): 15-20.

¹¹Ze'ev Schiff, *Security for Peace. Israel's Minimal Security Requirements in Negotiations with the Palestinians* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1989).

¹²Jerome Segal, "The Foreign Policy of the Palestinian State," *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 19 (Winter 1989).

¹³The following analysis draws upon a paper presented by Ahmad Khalidi at the American Academy for Arts and Science, Boston, 7 December 1989.

¹⁴The discussion in this section draws upon Lauri Brand's

paper, entitled, "The Implications of the Intifada to the Arab World," presented at the annual meeting of the American Arab University Graduates Association held in Washington, DC, in November 1989.

¹⁵*Asharq Al-Awsat*, 4 February 1990.

¹⁶*Asharq Al-Awsat*, 4 May 1989.

¹⁷For background information, see Emile Sahliyeh, *In Search of Leadership. West Bank Politics Since 1967* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1988), chapter 7.

¹⁸*The New York Times*, 15 December 1988.

The Maronites and the Future of Lebanon: A Case of Communal Conflict

Iliya Harik

Indiana University

Introduction: Ethnicity and Conflict

An explanation of the role of the Maronite community in Lebanese politics should begin with some theoretical principles regarding ethnic conflict in general. Introducing the details of the crisis first would only make a difficult problem even less coherent. The main lines of cleavage in Lebanon are along communal, non-ethnic dimensions, although this makes very little difference in practice. The concept of ethnicity stresses language and physical features, while communalism draws attention to cultural factors and an historical identity of community. In essence, ethnicity is the more comprehensive term which subsumes communal differences.

An ethnic community will be defined here as one which is conscious of sharing similar characteristics, such as a distinct language, religion, culture, or an historical experience of its own. These characteristics also make communities conscious of their distinctiveness. When viewed as a characteristic of an independent political community, ethnic identity is usually called nationalism. When the group is part of a pluralist commonwealth, however, it is referred to as ethnic. Let us show how the Maronite community fits into this picture.

When defining ethnicity in a political context, the psychological dimension is important, namely the conscious awareness by a community of its identity and its differences with other communities. This is what makes ethnicity a political issue. Ethnic awareness is translated by the community into political demands ranging from ordinary concerns

of daily life to political autonomy and even independence.

Consistent with the understanding of politics as an activity related to the allocation of resources, ethnic politics is in a way similar to political party or trade union politics. It is an activity aimed at the acquisition and preservation of resources for the ethnic group. As such, ethnic solidarity serves as an access or avenue to resources for the members of the community. Access to resources contributes to the solidarity of the community, but also to the heightening of competition and hostility against other communities within the same commonwealth. This is almost always at the heart of severe conflicts between communities in pluralist societies.

To assume the existence of ethnic diversity in a society does not necessarily mean conflict, intense or otherwise. It has been the tendency among writers on Lebanon or Third World countries to take conflict and disintegration for granted. In the case of Lebanon, a time-honored attitude among observers produces vicious circular reasoning.

One side argues that since the country is composed of too many religious groups with different outlooks, the system will break up, and Lebanon will disintegrate. The obverse side states Lebanon has not yet disintegrated simply because cooperation was necessary or the system would collapse. The fallacy in the first argument is that diversity is considered to mean disintegration, clear and simple. In the second, the fallacy is the belief that the dangers inherent in diversity are sufficient to induce rational behavior among political actors and forestall disaster. The actual world is much more complex, although, here only the nature of the complexity is outlined.

In an ethnically pluralist polity, the chances of ethnic conflict are directly related to the factors constituting social solidarity among members of the

community. An intense sense of communal identity contributes to the struggle for control over resources, thus causing intense conflict among various communities for control of the machinery of the state system.

Conflict is more likely to be greater in situations where *concurrence* of ethnic and social characteristics distinguish one community from another. Concurrence appears in many ethnic communities and may be defined as existing when a group characterized by one ethnic quality tends to enjoy other characteristics as well. Thus, when a group has a distinct language, it will also tend to have a distinct religion, geographic location, economic practice, standard of living, and historical associations and memories. Concurrence may be strong or weak, depending upon how many and which vital characteristics are enjoyed by the group. Religion and language are among the most significant characteristics, and, therefore, more likely to affect the communal behavior and solidarity of the group.

Should the general environment be laboring under a prolonged and intense state of turmoil, a participatory and pluralist system linked demographically or ideologically with other countries in the region will have no chance of maintaining neutrality and domestic tranquillity. Cyprus, Lebanon, and Ireland are perhaps the more celebrated cases. In such cases, external sources of interference are the most significant factors in creating ethnic conflicts, especially in pluralist societies whose populations have external affinities.

Ethnic Conflict and the Maronites of Lebanon

When we apply the principle of concurrence of ethnic characteristics to Lebanon, intercommunal relations become easier to understand. It also becomes clear that communal differences are not intense despite the recent record of bloodshed. The principle of external interference from within the region explains much of the stimulation of communal tensions beyond normal expectations. Communal war, as we shall see later, was partly the product of external encroachment and regional problems which found fertile ground in the Lebanese domestic scene. However, communal strife in Lebanon during this century has been quite limited, except, of course, for the current civil war:

15 years of war versus 75 of peace.

The reason for the usually moderate level of communal tension in Lebanon is in the low level of concurrence of ethnic characteristics among the population. Almost all Lebanese share the same language and its culture. Almost all speak Arabic as their mother tongue and identify as Arabs. A qualification, however, may need to be made here regarding the Maronites, whose ethnic roots go back to pre-medieval periods.

Ethnically, the Maronites are Aramaic and belong to the Aramaic culture; traces of the language are still used in their church liturgy. This has had an important effect on the Maronites' definition of self-image and national identity. Despite this, the Maronites have been Arabized culturally since the Middle Ages. In the modern era, they stand out not only in Lebanon, but in the Arab renaissance for their contribution to the revival of classical Arabic culture and language.

Some Maronites developed a link to French culture, cultivated a sense of superiority, and denied any identification with Arabism (*al-Urubah*). Even though they speak Arabic, some identified themselves politically as non-Arabs and traced their roots to the Phoenicians. The first to do so was nineteenth century Maronite historian Tannous al-Shidiaq, but Maronite attitudes on this question have varied dramatically depending on the circumstances. When they have felt threatened by Arab nationalism and Arab unity, as during the Nasser era, Maronites hastened to stress their Lebanese, non-Arab identity to ward off the danger of having to merge with other Arab countries. With domestic stability and peace, the idea of non-Arab identity among the Maronites weakens. As a matter of fact, surveys (1972) have shown that among Christians, the young in general identify more often as Arabs than do their elders, while young and educated Muslims identify increasingly as Lebanese in addition to being Arabs. In short, a consensus on national identity as Lebanese Arab was emerging at the very moment that the threat of a civil war had become imminent.

The Maronites can prove flexible on many political issues except two: the independence of Lebanon, and a Christian presidency. Those two principles are the *sine qua non* of their political ideology. Cooperation and building bridges with

Arab countries are fine within the framework of this understanding. These principles which go back to their early political development are at once a shield against becoming reduced to a marginal minority in a larger Arab commonwealth and a need not to lose the freedoms they enjoy in democratic Lebanon. The fact that democracy is not practiced nor is it called for by Arab political intellectuals makes the Maronites and many other Lebanese particularly sensitive to the issue of Arab unity.

Ethnically, the Maronites have lost some of their identity with time, including the Aramaic language, the most obvious reminder of their ethnic background. Aramaic origins are not limited to Maronites or Christians for that matter, but as far as the other Lebanese are concerned, it is a dead issue.

What the Maronites seem not to shed easily is their memory of strife and struggle with the Muslims: the Arabs, Mamelukes, and Turks. Their early literature is rife with records of their ordeals and heroic depictions of struggles with Muslims. By the sixteenth century, however, they struck a major link with a Muslim chief and dynasty, bringing them out of isolation in a small region of northern Lebanon and into cohabitation with Muslims and Druze.

This new development, more significantly, integrated them into the political system of that dynasty, and members of Maronite families were endowed with aristocratic titles and given fiefs. The encounter forced the Maronites to eventually define their political identity in terms broader than those of their old Maronite chiefs struggling against Muslims.

Some of their nineteenth century intellectuals, hardly known outside Lebanon or even the Maronite community itself, made a significant redefinition of their political identity, basically one of identification with the feudal principality of Mount Lebanon, which was dominated by a Muslim dynasty and Druze feudal lords. They identified with the Mani and later the Shihabi *Imarah* because they shared in the political power of that system and reaped valuable economic and social benefits. The free and secure life they enjoyed in the *Imarah* made it irreplaceable for them. As their power grew demographically and politically, they challenged the preeminent position of the Druze feudal lords. Around mid-century, they developed the idea which is being put to the test currently: a Lebanese state of

pluralist composition with a preeminent position for the Maronites. That idea became reality under the Mutasarrifiyah period (1861-1914), then under the French Mandate (1922-1943), and on through the independence period.

If one leaves aside small ethnic minorities such as the Armenians and Kurds of Lebanon, the ethnic identity of the Maronites is the most clearly distinct. The Druze may be a more cohesive community, but they are not ethnically distinct like the Maronites. Living memory of the Maronites traces them back to a non-Arab origin, while Muslim Shia and Sunnis, some of whom still carry Aramaic names, have lost identification with that origin.

Aside from that observation, the Maronites, like other Lebanese communities, enjoy communal characteristics which set them apart from their neighbors. Geographic homes can be defined across communal lines. Most Christians, and Maronites in particular, live in central and northern Lebanon; most Shia live in south and northeastern Lebanon; most Druze live in the Shuf mountains of southern Lebanon; and most Sunnis live in coastal towns. There are also differences in the socio-economic standards of these communities, most visibly between the Shia and the other five major communities. The Christians seem to enjoy higher educational standards, and perhaps there are more of them who could be characterized as middle class, but it is not certain that they enjoy a higher standard of living economically. The Sunnis and the Druze are often rated high on the economic scale.

At any rate, in comparative perspective, the communal differences among the Lebanese are not as intense as among other societies, even in the Middle East. For one thing, they share a common Arabic culture and language, they live in proximity to an extent that more of them lived in mixed quarters before the war than separately. They generally enjoy a higher standard of living than other Middle Eastern (non-oil) and Third World countries, and the much celebrated difference in the living standards of the communities fades in comparison to Third World countries. Even Communist China has more marked regional differences in economic standards of living than Lebanon.

The limited intensity of the concurrence factors in Lebanon and the growing integration into a more

unified political system that had been observed in several studies before the war broke out in the 1970s, calls for an explanation of the subsequent bloody events, probably in terms of some of the principles of ethnic conflict enunciated earlier. However, at present, it is important not to depart too far from the central concern of this paper, namely the Maronites. Fortunately, tracing the Maronites' perceptions and objectives in the last ten years will shed light on the general problems of Lebanon and offer some explanation of the causes of the explosion and breakdown in the system.

The Lebanese tradition of coexistence goes back to centuries past. It is not the product of French political wisdom. The French simply developed what they found *in situ*. The problem of a multiplicity of communities with political and social identities of their own was solved in the 1920s along the traditional lines that prevailed in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Accommodation was the name of the game. Each community would have a share in the system commensurate with its numerical strength and, to a certain extent, traditions, hence the slight edge enjoyed by the Maronites and Druze over and above their numerical strength. In the first census held under the French in 1932, the Maronites were shown to make up 29 percent (226,380) of the population, compared with the Druze 6.7 percent (53,000). Sunnis were listed as 22 percent (175,925), and Shia 19.6 percent (154,208). Those ratios were used to apportion political seats in parliament for the various communities. Refusal by Christian leaders to publicly acknowledge demographic changes is at the center of the conflict today, but it is not the most potent force.

The Maronites were unquestionably the community enjoying the greatest power under the French Mandate, and they carried their advantages to the early years of independence. Allocation of the office of President of the Republic to the Maronite community recognized in the early 1940s their larger population, political legacy of historical ascendancy, and the mystique of being at the origin of this whole idea of a Lebanese state. Others acquiesced, whether they believed in these factors or not, to ward off a possible Maronite concert with a foreign power.

The Maronites, on the other hand, took their

preeminent position, particularly the Presidency, as their historical right and guarantee against becoming reduced to the traditional position of a Christian in a Muslim commonwealth, a *dhimmi*. Furthermore, they felt holding the Presidency and the commander-in-chief of the army was also a guarantee that Lebanon would not melt into some other Arab country.

By the 1960s, the possibility of a Maronite link with a foreign power was becoming negligible because of the changes on the international scene and a sense of relative security among the Maronites after the debacle of Nasserism and the break-up of the UAR. Maronite attachment to the office was intensified by insecurity, as they were becoming aware they no longer constituted the largest of the six religious communities.

One of the paradoxes of the Lebanese scene is Maronite attachment to the Presidency was getting stronger at a time when their domestic power was getting weaker and the powers of the office itself were becoming increasingly limited. This tendency on their part was a response to the increasing attachments for what they saw as increasing attachment by Muslim Lebanese to outsiders, or, Arabs. A fine distinction should be made here regarding this point. The conventional Muslim leaders of Lebanon had not grown more prone to Arab attachments after the 1960s.

What alarmed the Maronites was not so much the Muslim leaders with whom they learned to manage the political game, but rather the growing number of Lebanese Muslims breaking loose from conventional leaders, those who signed and lived by the National Pact. Events putting the Maronites to the severest test were actually undermining the powers of most Muslim political leaders. Maronite leaders had sensed this momentous and encroaching force, and they reached an independent evaluation of their Muslim counterparts. They in effect decided that Muslim conventional leaders had not grown sufficiently in strength to stand with them against popular turmoil or outside encroachment. In the late 1960s, that threatening outside force was coming from Syria and the Palestinians.

The Palestinian Challenge

Political tension in Lebanon became very intense after 1967. With the demise of Nasser, the Palestine

Liberation Organization (PLO) emerged as the hero of Arab nationalism attendant. The Lebanese did not have to wait long to appreciate the effects of the rise of Palestinian power and status as the PLO succeeded in building a state within a state in Lebanon. The preeminent political position of the Maronites was undermined, and they felt more trouble was coming.

The course of events filled Maronite leaders with alarm. They failed to reach firm agreements with their Muslim counterparts who, in any case, had lost power within their own community. Maronite leaders could not meet the demands of the newly rising Muslim groups since they would settle for nothing less than supreme power in alliance with the PLO, which would bring Lebanon into full confrontation with Israel. Meanwhile, Syria became more deeply involved in building the strength of radical opposition groups and the PLO in Lebanon, making the Maronites even more wary of the situation.

The breaking point came after the defeat of the PLO in Jordan in 1970 and transfer of the bulk of the organization into Lebanon. At this point, the Maronites became convinced that the state had lost its capacity to act because the Muslim wing of the National Pact, the other half of Lebanon, was no longer willing to cooperate. The Maronites feared that the basis for the National Pact, the Maronite-Sunni Concordat, had died. In the early 1970s, and up to the middle of the war period, Muslim leaders openly denounced the National Pact as an outdated arrangement, while the Maronites continued to uphold it. By the end of the 1970s, the Maronites were dismissing the National Pact as an already abandoned or violated arrangement, just as the Sunnis decided to back it and call for its revival. By the end of the 1980s the positions were reversed again as the Shia and the Druze abandoned the National Pact.

In essence, by 1969, the Maronites' traditional fears about their security had revived. They felt the Lebanese state had become paralyzed, so they began to act on their own. They established Christian militias composed mainly of Maronites. They saw their political position endangered by Syrian exploitation of the PLO in Lebanon, Syrian use of Lebanese allies to force Lebanon into an alliance against Israel, and Syrian efforts to dictate Lebanese

foreign policy. They saw the danger that the PLO and its Lebanese allies might overthrow the government. Last but not least, they saw a mortal danger of losing their power under the threat and/or use of force by very hostile groups such as the PLO and their radical Lebanese allies. Giving up their preeminent position to such conventional Sunni leaders as Salam or a Sulh was one thing, but to a radical group aided and dominated by the PLO was another.

The bloody story of the war in Lebanon will not be retold here. The foreign elements involved in the war confirms the proposition made earlier regarding susceptibility of an open and pluralist society to outside forces. Not only was the Israeli-Palestinian struggle waged on Lebanese territory drawing the Lebanese into the fray, but outsiders were at least partial partners to the conflict. The most prominent and direct participants were, of course, the PLO, Syria, and Israel. The first two had the greatest direct involvement in terms of men and support groups. Direct confrontation, when numbers of armed personnel involved are taken into account, becomes clearly one between the Christian militia and the PLO. Outsiders who were partially involved in providing fighters, training, arms, and money included Iraq, Libya, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. The Maronites linked up with Israel sometime during the middle of the two-year early phase of the war, particularly at the beginning of 1976.

It is not clear what to make of the Christian-Israeli link, for it was conducted under considerable secrecy. It is clear the Maronites obtained arms and some military training from Israel. What they offered in return is not clear. How the Maronites reconciled this with their objectives of maintaining their Arab link and membership in the Arab League is also not clear. It seems, however, they entered into this relationship under duress and not until pushed beyond the limit of endurance by the allied forces of Palestinians and Lebanese Muslims. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in the summer of 1982 revealed an understanding between Israel and the Maronites but not a specific pact, or even a smooth, easy relationship.

The Maronites benefited politically from, or were the prime beneficiaries of, the Israeli invasion, but only in the short run. Israel, it turned out, did not have full confidence in the Maronites and was

particularly annoyed that the Maronites under Bashir Jumayil were not willing to act as clients and submit to their wish of signing a peace treaty. The independent and rather hostile stance taken by President Amin Jumayil strained relations between the two sides even further. No sooner had Amin Jumayil been elected President than Israel removed whatever restraint they had placed on the Jumblatts in al-Shuf to fight against the Christian Lebanese Forces. They used their options freely to undermine his authority and prevent him from establishing a strong central government.

It is obvious Israel does not consider the Maronites their only allies in Lebanon or as a reliable group to deal with. They had already been dealing with more than one community and did not place much weight on any one of them.

Needless to say, the Maronite link with Israel contributed to worsening communal relations with the Sunnis, in particular. The Shia and Druze have been generally vague on the question. While they publicly denounce it, they have not made an issue of the subject. The Druze themselves developed working relations with the Israelis assisted by the Druze in Israel. The firm policy of President Jumayil not to give in to Israeli demands for a peace treaty and normalization of relations with them did win reserved approval from the Sunnis. With the emergence of Hizballah among the Shia after 1985, Israeli-Shia relations have worsened.

Maronite Vision of the Future

The Maronites, surprisingly enough, continued to be the most ardent advocates of unity in Lebanon and national sovereignty over all its territory until the mid-1980s. From the very early period of the conflict, the Maronites were constantly accused by their opponents of wanting to establish a separate Maronite state along Israeli lines. The Maronite expressed preference for unity was a triumph for the Kataib (Phalange), who, more than any other Maronite group, held fast to their commitment to the unity of Lebanon. However, this sacrosanct position is no longer in evidence, or not to the same extent. The emergence of General Aoun as a very strong leader among the Maronites and his rejection of the legitimacy of Parliament and the elected president is tantamount to a call for secession.

Among the many Maronite scenarios for the future

of Lebanon, the main Kataib and Lebanese Forces scenario posits that the Christians are now the only Lebanese group who are free from outside control and thus able to save and protect the country from outside forces. Aoun is an extreme advocate of this view. The Christians, drawing on the turmoil and conflict in Lebanon, feel deeply disappointed. The Lebanese Muslims, whom they feel left them and the Lebanese democratic system and defected to the Palestinians and Syrians as soon as they had the opportunity. The main line of thought during the early fighting was that the Muslim groups had no strong leaders with whom the Christians could negotiate a lasting agreement. At present, the Maronites and the Sunnis are the ones who have no strong leaders with whom to negotiate. The Druze and the Shia have firm leadership, though the latter are divided.

In the case of the Sunni community, the main pillar of the Concordat, the Maronite complaint was that the Sunnis relied too heavily on the Palestinians and did not develop the organizations or the leadership necessary for political change. The old leadership was weakened but not replaced with new competent leadership. In the Maronite view, the case of the Shia community differed considerably.

Looking beyond Maronite opinion to their actions, one finds they harnessed few resources during this war to confirm their faith in their ability to govern effectively and without the cooperation of other communities. They built a united militia, the Lebanese Forces, but so did other Lebanese. The Lebanese Forces managed to protect Christian areas from being overrun and cleared pockets of non-Christian communities in and around their main land base. Beyond that, however, they have not registered any military successes to justify much confidence in greater Maronite power.

Tendencies among Christians, as with other Lebanese communities, pull in opposite directions both toward unity and division. Efforts to unite Christians behind the Lebanese Forces have to a certain extent been offset (a) by the alienation of the Franjich Maronites of the north, and, (b) by General Aoun and his army. Moreover, the easy election in 1982 of the Kataib candidate for president was linked to the impact of the Israeli invasion and devastation of PLO forces in Beirut. However, by 1989, the Maronites could no longer elect a

president not endorsed by Syria.

Now, the Lebanese Forces' scenario, and that of General Aoun, have no foundation in reality. The country no longer enjoys its past sectarian harmony. No one has been left unaffected by the conflict, in fact, the sectarian feeling now is much more intense. As the central power disintegrated, so did control over groups. Not only has this produced several different sectarian groups, but it has contributed to the fragmentation within each group. The Druze excepted, having preserved the Jumblatt ascendancy. For a while, the majority of the Maronites seemed united under the Lebanese Forces, but General Aoun proved that false.

Putting the country back together by force might overcome these intense and divergent feelings, but there is no force to do it, even though General Aoun may hold such an illusion. Any single community, even the Druze, the smallest community, can impose a veto on a political arrangement it does not favor. Syria and Israel also have the ability to subvert the installation of a strong central government, and Syria still is.

Another scenario, that of former President Amin Jumayil, proposed the restoration of the Sunni-Marionite Concordat. His goal was to return to the National Pact which called for a strong President as in the early days of independence. To achieve this, other communities had to be convinced of the need to free the country from foreign invasion, shown an open heart, and encourage consensus. The new consensus theory, however, also has serious problems. At present, the six main communities, with the exception of the Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholics, have gone to extremes in terms of their demands for share of power in the system. None seems to be willing to give up or make allowance for any reversal. These needs may be legitimate and worth fulfilling, but it is not clear that even the Jumayil scenario would go that far. Furthermore, it should be remembered that the political pie is a zero-sum game; everyone perceives his loss as a gain to his opponent or opponents.

What about the army? Some in the Lebanese Forces clearly sympathize with or admire the Asad regime in Syria for bringing about unity by a minority through effective use of force. Strangely enough, this is the view of General Aoun. Be that as it may, there is no comparison between Syria's

situation and Lebanon, or even any hope for applying it there. Aoun has demonstrated the point by trying it, without discretion. If one community could not do it, it is still less likely to be implemented among several. The problems of the army remain. It is sectarian, and, therefore, could not be used domestically outside a framework of consensus. If a community feels the army is likely to play a unfavorable role, it will charge the army with bias in favor of another community, undermining its integrity and unity. This has been the practice since the early 1970s and paralysis and timidity in the army continue to this day.

As for the Lebanese Forces, they could continue to guarantee protection for the Christian population from outside attack in the event that the national government failed to endure. Since the central government is far from achieving that objective, the Lebanese Forces are unlikely to disband. Up till the mid-1980s, they were spread thinly beyond their stronghold and resented by Muslims for their encroachments into other communities' traditional areas. They no longer have any role to play nationally but can be expected to be restricted to a narrow Christian role.

Future Prospects for the Maronites and Lebanon

Where does the community stand at present, and why? The Maronite community is currently divided, reduced, and lacking leadership. Compared with the 1970s and early 1980s when Maronites were by and large united behind the Lebanese Front, today they are fragmented into several camps: the militia force under Samir Jaja, an army faction under general Aoun, the Phalange party under George Saadeh, an independent parliamentary bloc, and President Ilyas Hrawi. The Maronite Church under Patriarch Sfeir and the orders of monks hover among the various camps without a united position, except that the Patriarch has taken a stand with President Hrawi and the Taif agreement. The Church represents prestige and influence, but it has never been in the driver's seat in Lebanese history. Maronite clerics have always been second in order of political importance to secular leaders. This was true during the feudal period, the mandate period, and independent Lebanon. The treatment of Patriarch Sfeir at the hands of Aoun's supporters is not without an historical precedent.

These camps are not necessarily exclusive, but at this point they are distinct from one another. The major conflicts are between those who control the community through armed force, like Aoun and Jaja. Aoun's failure to dislodge the militias has been very damaging to his claim for leadership of the country and the Christian enclave as well. It is a matter of time before he exits the scene. Such an eventuality would reduce tension within the community and the country as well. Jaja would become a central figure in the enclave and in negotiating with the government. Thus far, he has taken a moderate position toward the Taif agreement and President Hrawi.

Why has the Maronite community found itself in this position? The civil war has undermined the power of the Maronites and the Sunnis, the two major communities which created the National Pact of 1943. Though they have lost ground militarily, they still hold their own regions. The important loss has been political and is reflected in the institution of the presidency, a Maronite preserve and power barometer. As other forces grew in importance, especially Syria and the Shia, the Maronite president found himself either making unpalatable concessions or incapacitated. Pressure on the presidency from the other groups made Maronites feel that the president was no longer their man. The Phalange party, who had always supported the Maronite president, found themselves often vehemently opposing President Amin Jumayil, one of their own! This major event marked the awareness by the Maronites that their control over the presidency was slipping, and that they should put their trust elsewhere.

A diluted presidency and a loss of Maronite trust in the president has weakened not only their community, but the country as a whole. Political reality tells us clearly that Maronite power has shrunk as the power of other groups has grown. These changes are permanent. Hence, the Maronite insistence on the old formula with a Maronite president, a Sunni prime minister, and a Shia speaker is no longer feasible. The longer they hold on to this idea, the longer the crisis will last. Political facts have changed radically, making the National Pact formula obsolete and not possible to implement. The Maronites now have a choice of seceding or consenting to a new arrangement which

would reflect the changing relative power of the various communities in society.

The spirit of the National Pact, however, is still relevant. The Pact was based on a number of useful principles, and may be the only possible basis for continued Lebanese unity. First, one must recognize that the country is composed of collectivities and the system has to represent these collectivities, not only individuals. Communities would remain the pillars of the political system. Second, the political system should be based on democratic representation. Third, this representation should be proportional and reflect the actual weight of each community, numerically and politically.

Given these premises, one must note the Maronites are no longer the largest or the strongest political community. There is no strong community now which can enjoy a preponderant position. There is no place for the relatively hierarchical arrangement of the National Pact. In the absence of a preponderant community or communities and due to the chasms separating Christians from Muslims and Muslim communities from one another, each will have to stand for himself. There are six main sects in Lebanon: three Christian and three Muslim. The Maronites and Sunnis will now have to accept parity and form a presidential council and a rotating council chair.

The thesis of this paper is simple: the political formula of 1943 which guided Lebanon through a difficult four decades is dead. Maronites and other communities are called upon to renew their faith in Lebanon by establishing a new national pact which rests on the realities of the day. The old assumption by the Lebanese that the regional environment could remain constant or would leave them alone is no longer feasible. Lebanon can deal with a minimum or even a normal degree of regional tension, but not with a very heightened state of violence and warfare in the region. The would-be founders of a new Lebanese system have to take this into account and plan on the basis of a moderate degree of tension. No one can guarantee them anything in case of severe turbulence. That is the nature of small countries.

Pluralist countries such as Lebanon often have built-in tendencies to be related and involved in the lives of groups outside their border. Lebanon is a case *par excellence* of easy entanglement with the

outside world. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict on Lebanese soil since 1968 has cut deep into the lives of the various communities. Given a normally stable regional environment, this transition could have taken place with a minimum degree of agony and unrest. Indeed, Lebanon was moving in the direction where power was shifting gradually from the Christian President to the Muslim Prime Minister, and a cabinet system of government was emerging, slowly but definitely. This required time and quiet, but neither was available.

At present, there are four strong communities in Lebanon politically and numerically: the Shia, the Maronites, the Sunnis and the Druze. Each one of these communities is sufficiently strong and proud not to allow itself to be overwhelmed or taken advantage of by another under any pretext. All three are armed. Translated into political terms, this means that not one of these communities will be willing to give its allegiance to a Chief Executive from either one of the other communities. A Shia president is no less objectionable to Maronites than to Sunnis, and a Sunni president would be opposed by the other three sects just as the Maronite president now finds it difficult to win the allegiance of the other sects.

Add to this the fact that not a single one of these communities, not even when it combines with one or more other sects, is capable of holding the country together alone. Even if one and only one community is seriously dissatisfied, it could strangle the national peace simply by seeking support from outside and increasing the level of external interference in the affairs of the country.

What are the alternatives, then, to the 1943 formula? There are two: one, partition, the other, a new formula acceptable to all. Not only is partition repugnant to most Lebanese, it may also not be easy to execute. The country under occupation may never be itself again, and should partition be pushed forward, large parts of Lebanon would go to outside invaders. This would be a disaster of untold magnitude.

A positive formula with the potential to restore national peace should be based on the following principles: (1) a sense of real and equitable participation in national matters by all six sects must be generated; and, (2) a degree of freedom for each community must be developed to protect them from

an overbearing national government. These principles can be attained only if each of the communities shares in the executive office and retains a measure of local autonomy in managing its own internal affairs. The formula combines a presidential council and decentralization. The idea of a presidential council has already been suggested by noted Lebanese Saib Salam and Manuel Younis. At first, the idea did not fall on fertile ground, but perhaps its time has come. It satisfies and guarantees rights to the major communities and reduces the sectarian tug of war and the impasse in which Lebanon finds itself.

The idea of a presidential council linked to a decentralization plan would be more effective than the *musharakah* proposal advanced by many Muslim leaders calling for equal sharing of power between Muslims and Christians. *Musharakah* would create a two-headed state, inviting immobility and deadlock as in the Lebanon of the early 1970s. Then, an equally capable president and prime minister vetoed each other and contributed to the paralysis of the state.

The six member presidential council would be directly elected by universal suffrage in one national constituency. Each one of the six large communities (Maronites, Sunnis, Shia, Orthodox, Druze, and Catholics) would be represented by one member. This proposition gives rise to two technical problems. First, voting may end up in a deadlock of three votes against three, thus creating a two-headed state. Second, small communities like the Catholics and Druze are given equal weight to that of much larger communities.

In order to avoid these technical problems, the presidential council (PC) of six should elect a council chairman (*wakil*) once every year on a rotational basis among the six sects. Each community would occupy the position of chairman for one year, with a Christian succeeded by a Muslim on a rotational basis. This should occur automatically in a prearranged formula without the need for a special instrument. The council tenure would be six years. The serving head of the PC would enjoy two votes during his one-year tenure, his only privilege. Consequently, the total number of votes in the PC comes to seven, an odd number to make a simple majority possible. A simple majority should be the minimum basis for reaching

a decision. All decisions constitutionally defined as the responsibility of the PC should be made by majority vote.

The second sensitive question in this respect is the office of the commander of the army, the occupant of which would be appointed by the PC. This office should also rotate among all six communities with a duration of one year for each. At no time should a head of the PC be of the same sect as that of the commander-in-chief.

The cabinet should be appointed by the PC, with ministers selected more for their expertise than for political power. They would be the same high level officials as cabinet members in the United States. The office of Prime Minister could be either abolished or retained on a similar basis as those of the other ministers. He would be a high level official, whose function would be to coordinate, communicate, and follow-up on decisions made by the PC and entrusted to the specialized ministries for implementation.

The previous propositions are conditional on the establishment of a decentralized administration. PC functions should be constitutionally defined to cover the basic national concerns: defense, foreign policy, fiscal policy (national currency and central bank), customs, courts of appeal, and national guard (security forces). The national guard would function in cooperation with local police in matters of national import such as criminal cases and cases that involve more than one autonomous unit.

Since the population of the provinces (*muhafadhat*) is often mixed, and drawing new boundaries is practically impossible, the idea of autonomy should be based on cities and towns. There would be no need to redraw maps, and local units would benefit from the relative demographic homogeneity of urban population. Villages could be drawn into the town units, or they could be grouped in communes with local government councils.

Beirut, with its mixed population, deserves special attention. The city should not be partitioned. This statement probably reflects the wishes of most Beirutis and Lebanese. Since the city consists of Muslims and Christians in relatively equal number, it should be governed on a rotational basis, once by a Muslim and once by a Christian. Sectarian purity is neither possible nor necessary, relative homogeneity of units should suffice.

The autonomous units should be large enough to provide an adequate economic base for local taxation to raise sufficient funds to sustain services for residents. Naturally, national taxes should be reduced in favor of allowing local government to levy taxes for its own needs. Some present ministries on the national level such as information, tourism, public works, and education should be downgraded to the level of departments. This would avoid duplication and reduce national expenditure.

Conclusions

This sketch of the political history and social composition of the Maronite community showed how and why it became embroiled in civil war and how it might effect Maronite political fortunes. The principles of ethnic conflict outlined here, applied broadly to Lebanon, show more precisely the nature of the Lebanese problem.

The war has created a new situation in Lebanon. The National Pact formula of power sharing was destroyed, but Muslim demands for sharing power equally with a Christian president seem unfeasible, for no state can have two heads. A system based on collective leadership and a decentralized system of government could be a viable alternative. Imaginative and courageous steps are in order if the country is to move out of the dark impasse it has been in for so long. Procrastination, pretending nothing happened, and believing old ways are still viable may lead to what no one really wants: partition. It is of the utmost importance for Lebanese of all sects to realize the only meaningful guarantee of security is the democratic system of government, not sectarian shelters.

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Contributors

Asher Arian - Dr. Arian is a Professor of Political Science at Tel Aviv University, and since 1986, Distinguished Professor in the Graduate Program in Political Science at the City University of New York. He has also taught the Universities of California, Michigan, and Minnesota. Dr. Arian has published analyses of every Israeli national election since the 1960s, including most recently *The Elections in Israel -- 1988*, edited with Michael Shamir. His major study of Israeli politics is *Politics in Israel: The Second Generation* (1985).

Iliya Harik - Dr. Harik is Professor of Political Science at Indiana University, where he was also Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies from 1980 to 1983. He has also been visiting professor at Cornell University and a Visiting Fulbright Professor at the American University of Beirut. Dr. Harik has served on the editorial board of the *Journal of Arab Affairs*, as director for education and social science in the North African office of the Ford Foundation, as a member of the Board of Directors of the Middle East Studies Association (1973-76), and as a consultant for USAID and other private institutions. His publications include an edited volume, *Local Politics and Development in the Middle East* (1984); "Communism and National Cooperation in Lebanon," in Barbara F. Stowasser, ed., *The Islamic Impulse* (1987); and "The Origins of the Arab States System," in Ghassan Salame, ed., *Foundations of the Arab State* (1987).

Kurt L. Mendenhall - Mr. Mendenhall is completing his doctoral dissertation on *Class, Cult, and Tribe: Alawi Separatism under the French Mandate*, at the University of Texas at Austin, where he has taught since 1984. He studied at the University of Damascus under a Fulbright Fellowship in 1982-83 and pursued his doctoral

research at the Syrian Historical Documents Center and the Institut Francais d'Etudes Arabes de Damas in 1986-87. He has delivered papers on this subject at universities in the US and Canada and has published article and reviews in several journals.

Bernard Reich - Dr. Reich is Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Chairman of Political Science at George Washington University. He is a consultant to various US Government agencies, Chairman of Advanced Area Studies for the Fertile Crescent at the Foreign Service Institute of the State Department and an adjunct faculty member of the Defense Intelligence College. Dr. Reich has served as a Member of the Board of Governors of the Middle East Institute and is a member of the Advisory Council of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. He has lived and continues to travel in the Middle East at the invitation of local governments and for the US Information Agency. He has also visited the USSR. Dr. Reich's recent works include *Quest for Peace: United States-Israel Relations and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* and *Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa*.

Emile Saliyeh - Dr. Saliyeh is an Associate Professor of Political Science at North Texas State University. He taught previously in the Department of Middle East Studies at Birzeit University on the West Bank. His research has been supported by grants from the Ford Foundation and fellowships with Brookings Institution and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Dr. Saliyeh is a frequent lecturer on Palestinian political issues, and his published works on the topic include several articles and book chapters as well as two recent books: *The PLO After the Lebanon War* and *In Search of Leadership: West-Bank Politics Since 1967*.